

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Audit from Qinhuangdao Vocational and Technical College

Context and scope

Qinhuangdao Vocational and Technical College commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Audit, which was completed in February 2023.

The Diploma in Audit is delivered by the College's Department of Economics. The College also delivers programmes in the areas of mechanical and electrical engineering, tourism, physical education, and commerce.

The main aims of the benchmarking were to:

- Establish comparability in the context of the UK through reference to the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), and by extension, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)¹
- Assess the extent to which the College's underpinning quality assurance meets a set of international standards.

Key findings

The Diploma in Audit seeks to develop students' knowledge in the areas of financial accounting, auditing, tax services, and statistics. In line with national requirements, the Diploma also encompasses "public basic courses" which include topics from arts, social sciences and science domains.

The general entry requirement for the programme is the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE, popularly known as the *gaokao* 高考) – comparable to GCE A Level / RQF Level 3 in the UK – or suitable marks in one of the College's own tests.

The Diploma is a three-year full-time programme equating to approximately 2728 guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning and a six month internship in which students can develop practical skills within the workplace that are necessary for professional auditing.

Upon completion, many students enter the workforce²; however, some students will be eligible to apply for top-up Benke (本科) / Bachelor degree programmes. These require a minimum of two years of further study, which shows that the Diploma has similar academic progression routes to that of HND, Diploma of Higher Education and other UK Level 5 awards.

¹ To date, a total of 36 countries have now referenced their national education systems to the EQF.

² The employment rate of graduates is typically 89.3%.

The study revealed several strengths of the Diploma in Audit, namely that it demonstrated:

- Content that aligns with present, future, and emerging needs of the employment market.
- A good balance in the course components including theoretical, practical, and real-world elements.
- A well-considered teaching approach which is based on the flipped classroom method. This is favourably comparable to similarly focussed UK programmes.
- Assessment types that are comparable to similarly focussed UK programmes.
- An interview panel involved in the selection of suitable students for admission to the Diploma that includes industry experts ensuring that students are capable of moving into the world of work for their enterprise project.
- Thorough investigation of developments in industry and occupational practices and standards. This ensures the programmes ongoing CPD and relevance.
- A high rate of employment at 89.3% suggests that the content of the programme is aligned well with industry requirements.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Audit has been found comparable to Level 5 of the RQF and EQF. It has also met international quality standards in the following five areas:

- **Admission**
There is a pre-defined and published admissions policy ensuring transparency in the admissions policy and supporting consistency in admissions decisions
- **Programme development, approval, monitoring and review**
There is a clear process in place for the design, approval and monitoring of programmes
- **Teaching and learning**
There is a formalised process for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of delivery, relevant to the modes of study employed
- **Assessment**
Assessment provides a sufficiently fair, valid and reliable evaluation of the intended knowledge, skills and competencies
- **Information**
The information available to prospective students, current students and other interested stakeholders is accurate, transparent and clear for the intended audience.

Engagement

Qinhuangdao Vocational and Technical College has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Undertaking a comprehensive revision of the programme and module level documentation to centre programme design around the intended learning outcomes.
- Revision of both the overall assessment framework and existing assessments. Assessments need to be revised to allow for critical thinking skills that are expected at RQF Level 5.
- Expanding the College malpractice policy by considering the anonymisation of learners' scripts to ensure objective marking takes place.
- Developing an appeals policy in relation to assessment. A students should be able to appeal an assessment decision.
- Maintaining and ensuring adoption by all staff of the unified quality assurance handbook.

Ecctis is a gold-standard provider of services in international education, training, and skills, and in the development and recognition of globally portable qualifications. We are an internationally trusted and respected reference point for qualifications and skills standards.

We are UK-based and operate worldwide, with a global network and client base spanning 62 countries and 5 continents. We have a 20-year track record in international consultancy and development.

Ecctis provides official UK national agency services on behalf of the UK Government in qualifications, skills, and migration – including UK ENIC, formerly UK NARIC.

UK ENIC is the UK National Information Centre for global qualifications and skills. Following the UK's leaving the EU, the former UK NARIC recognition agency function changes from a NARIC (which is an EU-only title) to an ENIC (the wider European title for national recognition agencies) in order to meet the UK's continuing treaty obligations under the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#).

Since 2019, through our China representatives and Beijing office Nalike we have conducted qualification benchmarking in China and fostered educational links between China and other countries, to support the internationalisation efforts of China's higher vocational colleges.