

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Pharmacy from Guangxi Health Science College

Context and scope

Guangxi Health Science College commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Pharmacy, which was completed in January 2024.

The Diploma in Pharmacy is one of the programmes offered by Guangxi Health Science College after the merging of three medical schools: Guangxi Health Administration College, Guangxi Pharmaceutical School, and the Health School attached to Guangxi MCH.

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 Pharmacy seeks to develop students' knowledge in areas such as drug analysis, clinical pharmacotherapeutics, and medicinal chemistry. 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 2867 hours' guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning and a 38-week internship in which students can develop their practical skills within a real workplace setting.

Upon completion, many students enter the workforce; 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 HNDs, Diplomas 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.

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

- The design of the programme demonstrates a clear focus on employability, with content and assessment informed by an analysis of core competencies for a range of pharmacy professional role including sales positions in pharmaceutical stores.
- Effective processes are in place for programme monitoring and review, with clearly defined timeframes. This helps to ensure the ongoing validity and relevance of the curriculum.
- The range of stakeholders that includes industry experts and experts from other higher educational institutes alongside reference points included within programme monitoring and review processes ensures a sufficient degree of externality in the process.
- The programme demonstrates a clear integration of the “teaching, learning, doing” approach, with a focus on student-centred learning. Teaching and learning approaches are well supported by the resources and facilities available for laboratory work, roleplays, and simulations.
- Students at Guangxi Health Science College have access to an extensive library and considerable range of advanced facilities and equipment, relevant to higher education studies in pharmacy; of note were the logistics training facilities which help to prepare students for a range of internship roles.
- There is a clear quality monitoring and continuing professional development system for teachers.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Pharmacy 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

Guangxi Health Science College has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Undertaking a review of the Talent Training Programme document to re-focus programme design around the intended outcomes reflecting international best practice and ensuring a clear, central, and overarching specification for the programme.
- Reviewing the learning outcomes at programme-level and, where possible, those within final year modules, editing any references to “mastery” or “familiarity” and replacing with measurable command words.
- Reviewing existing assessments and marking approaches with a particular focus on establishing a clear and explicit pre- and post-issue moderation process for assessment.
- Developing a unified College-level quality assurance handbook
- 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.