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Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Intelligent Food Processing Technology from Jiangsu Food & Pharmaceutical Science College

Context and scope

Jiangsu Food & Pharmaceutical Science College commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Intelligent Food Processing Technology, which was completed in March 2024

The Diploma in Intelligent Food Processing Technology is one of 39 programmes delivered by the College in areas such as food processing, pharmaceutical engineering, nursing, and intelligent manufacturing.

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 Intelligent Food Processing Technology seeks to develop students' knowledge in areas such as food standards and regulations, innovation and entrepreneurship, food biochemistry, and food design and production. 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 2596 hours' guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning and a 24-week internship which allows students to apply their practical skills and knowledge within real-world enterprises.

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

Upon completion, many students enter the workforce[2]; 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.

The study revealed several strengths of the Diploma in Intelligent Food Processing Technology, namely it demonstrated that:

- The programme covers a wide spectrum of knowledge, spanning from foundational to advanced concepts.
- The programme covers a high proportion of training hours with at least 50% of the entire programme integrating theory and practice modules.
- Students are offered a diverse range of assessment opportunities to evaluate their knowledge, comprehension, and skills in accordance with predetermined learning outcomes.
- The practice modules and graduation project prove highly beneficial for students, which is well in line with the aim and objectives of the programme.
- Students receive a comprehensive handbook covering rules and regulations for student education and management.
- The College implements a robust and comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- The College has comprehensive and sound rules in place for teaching and learning during student internships.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Intelligent Food Processing Technology 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**

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[2] The employment rate of graduates is typically 98%.

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> The information available to prospective students, current students and other interested stakeholders is accurate, transparent and clear for the intended audience.

Engagement

Jiangsu Food & Pharmaceutical Science College has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Writing new learning outcomes at programme and module level, ensuring these are specific; measurable; and that an indicative 60% of the programme targets a higher level of knowledge and critical thinking skills.
- Developing a programme assessment framework/plan.
- Adopting assessment and marking approaches that sufficiently test critical thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation.
- Ensuring that there is a clear policy on programme assessment plans. Assessments should be developed so that they are clearly linked to intended learning outcomes. There should be clear limits on the use and weighting of attendance as part of the assessment.
- Developing a unified internal quality assurance 'handbook' for the College to bring together all existing written policies and processes, and formalise any unwritten policies or processes.
- Maintaining and ensuring adoption by all staff of the unified quality assurance handbook.

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