

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Software Technology from Nanning College for Vocational Technology

Context and scope

Nanning College for Vocational Technology commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Software Technology, which was completed in November 2022.

The Diploma in Software Technology is one of more than 50 programmes currently offered by the College across subjects such as Hotel Management, Architectural Design and IT. It aims to develop staff to work in a range of positions in the IT industry, such as, software engineering, computer technology, information technology and network technology.

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 Software Technology is designed to develop students’ knowledge in a range of specialist occupational modules in areas such as software programming, database design, web and mobile application development, systems analysis and network technology. 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 programme when delivered full-time, equating to approximately 2750 hours’ guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical learning with employers. This includes an assessed internship.

¹ To date, a total of 35 countries have now referenced their national education systems to the EQF.

Upon completion, many students enter the workforce upon graduation; 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.

The study revealed several strengths to the Diploma in Software Technology, namely that it demonstrated:

- A strong focus on employability to meet labour market needs.
- An established teacher recruitment and quality monitoring system.
- Excellent support for staff professional development.
- Clear, documented processes in place for programme design and approval, and for regular monitoring and review.
- A good interconnection between programme modules enabling students to develop their knowledge and skills from RQF Level 4 to RQF Level 5 (EQF Level 5).
- A modern teaching and learning environment with students and teachers having access to start-of-the-art IT facilities to support students' learning.
- Integration of wide-ranging consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure the ongoing relevance of the curriculum in a fast-moving industry.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Software 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**

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

Engagement

Nanning College for Vocational Technology has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Review of the Talent Training Programme document to centre programme design around the intended learning outcomes
- A revision of learning outcomes across all programme modules, to ensure they are specific, measurable and feasible, form a firmer basis for assessment design and marking, and demonstrate a stronger emphasis on critical thinking (analysis, evaluation and reflection) skills
- A review of assessment methods to ensure coherence with the revised learning outcomes and assessment objectives
- A review of assessment tasks to ensure there is sufficient scope to assess students' critical thinking skills
- A review of mark schemes to ensure they enable markers to consistently and reliably assess and differentiate levels of performance and clearly set out how students are expected to demonstrate higher-level cognitive and professional skills
- 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.