

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Big Data and Accounting from Shenzhen Institute of Information Technology

Context and scope

Shenzhen Institute of Information Technology commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Big Data and Accounting, which was completed in October 2023.

The Diploma in Big Data and Accounting is one of 170 programmes delivered by the College in areas such as software engineering, information communication, computer science, finance and economics, and applied foreign languages.

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 Big Data and Accounting seeks to develop students' knowledge in financial big data collection, analysis, and management. 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 2797 hours' guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning and a three-month internship, which allows students to enhance their knowledge and skills in a professional setting.

Upon completion, many students enter the workforce; however, some students will be eligible

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

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 of the Diploma in Big Data and Accounting, namely it demonstrated that:

- Students are provided with extensive resources to practice industry skills through training rooms and access to computing devices and software applications.
- Due to the growing demand for digital analysis skills in financial accounting, the blend of Accounting and Big Data into one unified programme reflects international best practice.
- There is a clear progression in terms of the complexity of content delivered to students that require them to gradually increase their skills and understanding as they progress through the programme.
- The College offers opportunities to students to acquire skills certificates which will enhance their employability.
- The inclusion of the internship facilitates a range of experiences not typically available to students on similarly focused UK programmes.
- The College publishes annual regulations and rules that clearly set out minimum entry and eligibility criteria, admission processes, roles and responsibilities and oversight mechanisms. Admission processes are underpinned by the principles of openness, fairness and impartiality and there are robust oversight mechanisms.
- There are clear, documented processes in place for programme design, development and approval which integrate strong engagement with industry experts, consideration of market demand, benchmarking, and College-level oversight.
- There are appropriate and sound rules in place to govern the exam lifecycle.
- Students receive a comprehensive handbook and the campus intranet is a significant source of information.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Big Data and Accounting 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

Shenzhen Institute of Information Technology has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Writing new learning outcomes at programme and module level, ensuring these are specific, measurable, and feasible. Ensure that learning outcomes explicitly target higher level knowledge and critical thinking skills, in line with RQF Level 5 descriptors.
- Developing a programme assessment framework/plan.
- Adopt 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.

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.