

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Global Higher Education Cornerstone Course from Beijing Foreign Studies University

Context and scope

Beijing Foreign Studies University commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Global Higher Education Cornerstone Course, which was completed in January 2025.

The Global Higher Education Cornerstone Course is one of 121 qualifications delivered by the University across a range of subjects such as foreign languages, law, accounting, and computer science.

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 University's underpinning quality assurance meets a set of international standards.

Key findings

The Global Higher Education Cornerstone Course seeks to develop students' knowledge in economics, maths, business and management, and statistics.

The general entry requirement for the Course 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 University's own tests.

The Course is a one-year full-time programme equating to approximately 840 hours' guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Course combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning.

Upon completion, many students enrol in university level studies internationally. Therefore, the Course provides similar opportunities to those of UK qualifications such as A-Levels and BTEC Diplomas which also enable students to apply for universities. The Course has similar progression routes to UK qualifications at RQF Level 3.

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 Global Higher Education Cornerstone Course, namely it demonstrated that:

- Students are able to progress both their knowledge and skills in both the chosen subject (Economics and Management) and activities that are specific to academic learning. These are complemented well by the teaching of transferable skills.
- A comprehensive 'Skills Development Framework' document allows content to be mapped against skills that the GHCC programme looks to develop.
- There are opportunities for both English and Spanish language skills to be developed whilst studying.

In terms of international comparability, the Global Higher Education Cornerstone Course has been found comparable to Level 3 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

Beijing Foreign Studies University has successfully completed all required engagement activities, ensuring effective communication with stakeholders. The University has ensured that they are delivering a high-quality Course that suitably prepares students for further education.

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.