

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Marketing from Harbin Vocational and Technical College

Context and scope

Harbin Vocational and Technical College commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Marketing, which was completed in December 2023.

The Diploma in Marketing is one of several programmes delivered within the College's Modern Service faculty. In addition the College delivers programmes within accounting, architecture, art and design, and medicine.

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 Marketing seeks to develop students' knowledge in marketing analysis, planning, and market research. 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 2851 hours' guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning and an internship element in which students are able to apply their practical skills in a real workplace..

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

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

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 Marketing, namely it demonstrated that:

- There is excellent integration of academic teaching and industry experts through dual enrolment, whereby applicants are selected simultaneously by the College and partner organisation.
- There is close involvement of industry professionals in programme design and review, as well as wider and substantial consideration of employment needs through the enterprise staff “8199” framework of knowledge, skills and qualities.
- Industry specialists are employed as part-time teachers and small-group mentors within the Diploma.
- There are high-quality simulation environments, such as mock retail units to facilitate connections with the real-life contexts in which students will need to be able to operate upon graduation. Students also have access to good computing equipment.
- There are a range of assessment methods, with a clear focus on testing students’ practical skills, thereby aligning with the Programme’s aim to develop and certify work-ready graduates for the region.
- There are clear processes in place for design, development and regular review, which – in keeping with the Diploma’s focus on employability – integrates wide-ranging consultation with industry experts and consideration of market demand to ensure the ongoing relevance of the curriculum.
- There is an established teacher quality monitoring system which encompasses regular and unannounced teacher observations and a clear grading system, enabling identification and management of any teachers needing to strengthen their performance. There is a clear message on the role of the teacher as a facilitator, designed to promote active learning through student-centred approaches and peer work.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Marketing 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

Harbin Vocational and Technical College has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Undertaking a comprehensive review of the Talents Training Program document to centre programme design around the intended outcomes.
- Reviewing the learning outcomes at programme-level, and where possible, those within final year modules. These need to be specific, measurable and feasible and form a firmer basis for assessment design and marking.
- Developing an overarching assessment framework, to strengthen the overall validity and rigour of the assessment to enable closer alignment with international standards and expectations at RQF Level 5.
- Reviewing existing assessments and marking approaches, in particular for the end-of-module examinations.
- Developing a concise list of the main programme's aims would further support its understanding among prospective students and international stakeholders.
- Publishing the programme-specific scores for entry on the College website.
- Developing a unified quality assurance handbook, consolidating existing policies and ensuring all other supporting processes are suitably documented.
- 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, and our UK China Council and UK NARIC China Council projects, 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.