

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Nursing from Heilongjiang Nursing College

Context and scope

Heilongjiang Nursing College commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Nursing which was completed in March 2025.

The Diploma in Nursing is one of 18 programmes delivered by the College including nursing, health management and promotion, traditional Chinese medicine, clinical medicine, and pharmacy.

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 Nursing aims to develop students' knowledge and skills in [Areas of study that modules focus on]. 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 2804 hours' guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning and a 1200-hour internship within the final year of study in which students can get hands-on experience within a workplace environment.

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 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.

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

The study revealed several strengths of the Diploma in Nursing, namely that it demonstrated:

- Subject-specific modules include robust medical/nursing skill content which is pertinent for a Nursing curriculum rich in practical application.
- High levels of contact hours ensure students experience significant levels of teacher-led instruction and feedback.
- College facilities are well-maintained, technologically advanced, and numerous, enhancing the students' overall educational experience.
- International exchanges and cooperation occurs with various countries worldwide, facilitating the sharing of knowledge and best practices, which in turn continuously enhances educational programmes.
- High prevalence and relevance is maintained by researching industrial trends, involving industry experts, and considering the relevant occupational roles.
- Financial aid is provided to underprivileged students, ensuring a fair and equal admission process

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Nursing 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

Heilongjiang Nursing College 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 of knowledge and critical thinking skills, in line with RQF Level 5 descriptors.
- Developing a programme assessment framework/plan and 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.

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.