

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Architectural Engineering Technology from Rizhao Polytechnic

Context and scope

Rizhao Polytechnic commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Architectural Engineering Technology, which was completed in February 2024.

The Diploma in Architectural Engineering Technology is one of 51 qualifications delivered by the College in areas such as construction engineering, road and bridge engineering, and engineering costing.

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 Architectural Engineering Technology seeks to develop students' knowledge in areas such as building construction, structural mechanics, and architectural graphics. 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 2764 hours' guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning and a three month off-campus internship in which students are able to develop their practical tourism skills within a real work setting.

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

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

routes to that of HNDs, Diplomas of Higher Education and other UK Level 5 awards.

The study revealed several strengths of the Diploma in Architectural Engineering Technology, namely it demonstrated that:

- The organisation of modules allows students to progressively develop their knowledge and skills over the duration of the Major.
- The forward looking nature of the Major, embracing emerging trends and teaching students' new innovations within the discipline, is a strength of the programme.
- The use of a compulsory internship deepens students' knowledge and skills in professional environments.
- There is evidence of a vibrant and active studio culture which can benefit students through peer support and dialogue.
- The College applies good practice in programme development, approval monitoring and review, as these measures seek to ensure programmes are continually up-to-date and incorporate the latest trends and needs in the subject.
- There are rigorous feedback mechanisms in place and well established professional development support in place for teaching staff.
- There are appropriate structures in place to ensure that published information is accurate, clear, and up to date.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Architectural Engineering 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

Rizhao Polytechnic has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Writing new learning outcomes at programme and module level, ensuring these are specific; measurable; and that an indicative 60% of the programme targets a higher level of knowledge and critical thinking skills.
- Developing a programme assessment framework/plan. 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.
- 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.