Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Cross-Border E-Commerce from Zhengzhou Technical College

Context and scope

Zhengzhou Technical College commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Cross-Border E-Commerce, which was completed in November 2024

The Diploma in Cross-Border E-Commerce is one of over 59 qualifications in the areas of Material Engineering Technology, Internet of Things technology, and Bioengineering.

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 Cross-Border E-Commerce seeks to develop students' knowledge in marketing, management, accounting, B2B (Business to business) operations, and customer service 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 2844 hours' guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning and a practical internship that totals 712 hours of real-world work within an enterprise.

Upon completion, many students enter the workforce[2]; however, some students will be eligible to apply for top-up Benke (本科) / Bachelor degree programmes. These require a minimum of

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[1] To date, a total of 36 countries have now referenced their national education systems to the EQF.
[2] The employment rate of graduates is typically 95%.

two years of further study, which shows that the Diploma has similar academic progression routes to that of HNDs, Diplomas of Higher Education and other UK Level 5 awards.

The study revealed several strengths of the Diploma in Cross-Border E-Commerce, namely it demonstrated that:

- The Diploma in Cross-Border E-Commerce's subject-specific modules include key areas of cross-border e-commerce such as cross-border operations, trade and transportation, logistics management, consumer behaviour, engagement and relationship marketing with data analysis for an E-Commerce curriculum rich in practical application.

- The Diploma employs a robust assessment system that are designed for critical engagement with theoretical and practical aspects of e-commerce.

- High levels of contact hours ensure students experience significant levels of teacher-led instruction and feedback.

- The incorporation of value-added elements in the overall module motivates students to engage in extracurricular activities like skills development, benefiting their future industry pursuits.

- A good balance of teacher-guided and student-centred approaches to learning cross-border e-commerce content, appropriate at RQF Level 5.

- The College commits to creating a barrier-free environment, and ensures equal access to education for all, including people with disabilities and students with Special Educational Needs.

- The teaching staff receive specific training for policy implementation, and the Independent Monitoring Committees oversee the effective execution of policies, maintain a feedback mechanism for continuous improvement, ensuring fairness and impartiality.

- The College has a central body ensuring consistency in decision-making and assistance throughout the admission process.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Cross-Border E-Commerce 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

Zhengzhou Technical 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. Ensuring 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. 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