

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Planning Packaging and Design from Zhongshan Torch Polytechnic

Context and scope

Zhongshan Torch Polytechnic commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Planning Packaging and Design, which was completed in January 2023.

The Diploma in Planning Packaging and Design aims to serve the economic and social development of Zhongshan Torch High-tech Industrial Development Zone, Zhongshan City and Guangdong Province.

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 Planning Packaging and Design sets out to develop student's skills and knowledge in areas including product packaging development, planning and design. 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. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with project-based learning and assessed professional practice in the form of an internship.

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

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

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 Planning Packaging and Design, namely that it demonstrated:

- A varied approach to learning modes providing students with a good range of packaging planning and design skills.
- Content covering a broad spectrum of subject areas relevant to packing planning and design.
- An excellent range of facilities allowing students to gain practical experience on design machinery across various packaging formats.
- A well-established relationship with the local packaging industry who provide input on programme content, internships, and graduate job opportunities.
- A strong success rates of graduate employment.
- A wide range of materials, such as a student handbook and a well-resourced website to ensure that students are well informed in a timely and accurate manner.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Planning Packaging and Design 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

Zhongshan Torch Polytechnic has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Undertaking a comprehensive revision of the Diploma in Packaging Planning and Design documents at programme and module-level to centre programme design around the intended learning outcomes.
- Rewriting the learning outcomes at programme- and modular-level, using clear command words and context to ensure that wherever possible these are specific, measurable, and feasible and form a firmer basis for assessment design and marking.
- Ensuring that the module-level learning outcomes link appropriately to the assessment methods of the programme.
- Developing a mapping document, showing how each assessment links to the programme learning outcomes.
- Reviewing current assessments and approaches to marking in order to assess higher cognitive skills expected at Levels 4 and 5. This includes more integrated and/or extended questions testing analysis and evaluation skills, and assessments such as portfolios of work and group presentations that explicitly allow demonstration of critical thinking in line with the RQF Level 5 descriptors.
- 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.