

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Nursing from Cangzhou Medical College

Context and scope

Cangzhou Medical College commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Nursing which was completed in February 2023.

The Diploma in Nursing is delivered by the College's Department of Medicine which includes programmes such as medical technology, pharmacy, dentistry, health management and services, and basic medicine. It aims to equip students with the required professional knowledge and technical skills to practice in a range of nursing roles.

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 is designed to develop students' knowledge and skills in a range of specialist occupational areas such as psychiatric nursing, gynaecology, public health nursing and paediatrics. 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 simulated 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 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:

- Flexible modules and structure for teaching.
- Varied teaching methods suitable for all learning styles.
- A clear progression in student learning through the programme.
- A clear assessment process, with robust and timely feedback in place for interns.
- Rigorous and fair admission processes, with ample pre-enrolment support for candidates.
- Detailed, robust monitoring and review processes with clearly articulated lines of responsibility and a strong focus on improvement.
- Stakeholder consultation and involvement for ongoing alignment with employability aims, market trends and employer requirements.

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

Cangzhou Medical College has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Rewriting the learning outcomes at programme and modular level to establish the critical thinking skills that students are expected to demonstrate in the programme, thereby ensuring the learning outcomes link appropriately to the assessment methods of the programme.
- Extending the in-class learning of 'team working', such as case discussion, group discussion, practical and mind mapping, into the placement setting.
- Undertaking of a review of assessment, both for the overall assessment framework and the existing assessments to ensure assessments are designed to link clearly to the stated learning outcomes. This includes ensuring that assessments test higher cognitive skills expected at Level 4 and 5 through longer examination questions and a reduction of the number of MCQ and gap-fill questions used in tests.
- Development of assessment criteria which clearly set out how students are expected to demonstrate higher-level cognitive and professional skills.
- Development of an overarching assessment framework, to strengthen the overall validity and rigour 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.