0706 Technology · Capability Standard

FDE Level Standard (2026)

Five levels, two tracks: scope of responsibility, step-up matrix, capability marks and evidence packs

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This is a capability reference, not a national qualification. No certificates and no examinations. Big-tech ranges and salary bands are compiled from public sources and are not a promise of employment or pay.

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FDE Level System

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Foreword

This document is drafted in accordance with GB/T 1.1—2020, *Guidelines for standardization — Part 1: Rules for the structure and drafting of standardizing documents*.

This document is proposed by and under the jurisdiction of 0706 Technology (Suzhou) Co., Ltd.

Drafting organisation: 0706 Technology (Suzhou) Co., Ltd.

This is the first edition.

Patents. Some content of this document may be subject to patent rights. The issuing organisation does not take responsibility for identifying such rights.

Nature of the document. This is an enterprise standard, developed and published by the enterprise on its own initiative under the *Standardization Law of the People's Republic of China*. It provides a shared vocabulary for internal talent evaluation and external hiring. It is **not** a national occupational qualification; no certificates are issued and no examinations are held. "Forward Deployed Engineer" is not currently listed in China's national occupation classification.

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Language. The Chinese text prevails. This English version is a working translation provided for reference.

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Introduction

Judgements about who can actually deliver AI work have long rested on two unverifiable signals: a list of tools and a count of years. The first mistakes tool fluency for delivery capability; the second mistakes elapsed time for growth. Employers are left pricing candidates on interview impressions, and practitioners cannot tell which layer they are stuck at.

This document replaces the basis of judgement with one verifiable question: **what is this person responsible for**. Level changes when the object of responsibility changes — not when the toolchain grows or certificates accumulate. To make "responsible" checkable, every level binds to submittable evidence, and the document specifies the evaluation method and the review cycle.

Three trade-offs shape the text: it specifies only what can be verified; it presumes no single technical route; and it does not dress an internal grading scheme as an industry standard. The relationship to external systems is stated in 5.3.

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1 Scope

This document specifies terms and definitions for the Forward Deployed Engineer (FDE), the division of capability levels, requirements and evidence for each level, the correspondence between capability domains and marks, and the evaluation method and procedure.

It applies to:

a) internal evaluation, levelling and promotion review for staff working on AI scenario delivery;

b) grading and requirement descriptions in public job postings for this role;

c) self-assessment and evidence preparation by practitioners.

It does not apply to:

a) vocational skill certification or any activity requiring administrative qualification;

b) salary commitments, employment commitments, or any party's quotation;

c) a final judgement on an individual's capability (see 9.6).

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2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document.

GB/T 1.1—2020, *Guidelines for standardization — Part 1: Rules for the structure and drafting of standardizing documents*

GB/T 20000.1, *Standardization and related activities — General vocabulary*

GB/T 20001.5, *Rules for drafting standards — Part 5: Specification standards*

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3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in GB/T 20000.1 and the following apply.

3.1

forward deployed engineer (FDE)

An engineering role that works inside the customer's operation, takes a measurable business scenario as the unit of work, and completes the full cycle from diagnosis through implementation, evaluation and handover.

Note: Unlike an algorithm engineer or an implementation consultant, this role is accountable for both the business outcome and the engineering realisation, and treats reusable assets as a by-product of delivery.

3.2

scope of responsibility

The sole criterion for level, composed of the object of responsibility, the cost of failure, and replaceability.

3.3

capability mark

A five-step scale describing mastery within a capability domain: guided, independent, adaptive, systemic, industry.

3.4

step-up

The substantive change in scope of responsibility relative to the preceding level.

Note: A step-up shall be an observable change, not an adjective; see Annex A.

3.5

capability domain

One of five observation dimensions: business literacy, scenario engineering, AI engineering and debugging, delivery assurance, delivery engineering.

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3.6

evidence pack

One of six kinds of submittable material aligned with the capability domains: business diagnosis, scenario and acceptance, data and permissions, AI debugging and evaluation, delivery operations, assetisation.

3.7

asset

A reusable output — connector, template or evaluation set — judged by whether a second delivery actually used it.

3.8

two tracks

The technical delivery track (T) and the business delivery track (B), sharing one ladder and one level sequence, differing only in capability weighting.

3.9

metric language

The measurement language appropriate to a level when reporting value; it rises from task effort to business and industry metrics as level increases.

3.10

levelling review

The formal process in which reviewers determine a level from submitted evidence and scope of responsibility.

3.11

self-assessment

A practitioner's own judgement of level and gaps using this document. It is a locator, not a verdict.

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4 Abbreviations

FDE: Forward Deployed Engineer

T track: Technical delivery track

B track: Business delivery track

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

SOW: Statement of Work

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5 General

5.1 Principles

5.1.1 Level follows scope of responsibility. Evaluation shall rest on the object of responsibility, the cost of failure and replaceability — not on breadth of tooling, count of certificates, or years of service.

5.1.2 Evidence before self-description. Every level requires verifiable material (see Annex B). A capability without material is recorded as "to be verified"; self-description shall not substitute for it.

5.1.3 One ruler for two tracks. At the same level, the two tracks carry the same scope of responsibility and the same salary band; only capability weighting differs (see 5.4).

5.2 Correspondence between marks and levels

Table 1 gives the one-to-one correspondence.

Table 1 — Marks and levels

Mark	Meaning	Level	Keyword
Guided	Completes the work with a template or instructions; no judgement required	L1	Execution
Independent	Completes the standard case without guidance	L2	Independent
Adaptive	Handles exceptions and non-standard cases, and makes trade-offs	L3	Coordination
Systemic	Turns practice into a mechanism others follow	L4	System
Industry	Influences outside: adopted by peers, or shapes a standard	L5	Method

Three rules follow, and shall be enforced:

a) two adjacent levels shall not share a mark in the same domain — if they do, that domain cannot distinguish them;

b) marks shall not be skipped; a domain rising one mark shall produce that mark's evidence in the same domain;

c) every domain at every level shall carry a concrete description (see 7.3); a mark name alone is not a requirement.

5.3 Statement of nature

This document is an enterprise standard. Before self-declaration on the public service platform for enterprise standards is completed, only the wording "enterprise standard (draft)" shall be used. After declaration, the wording "self-declared on the public service platform for enterprise standards" may

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be used with the registration number. The terms "industry standard" and "national standard" shall not be used in any case.

5.4 Capability weighting of the two tracks

Table 2 — Capability weighting

Domain	T track	B track
Business literacy	3	5
Scenario engineering	4	5
AI engineering and debugging	5	3
Delivery assurance	3	4
Delivery engineering	5	3

Note: weights guide emphasis in evaluation; they are not summed into a score. Level is determined per 8.3.

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6 Capability levels and requirements

6.1 Division of levels

Table 3 — Levels

Level	Rank	Keyword	Mark	Responsible for	T track title	B track title
L1	Entry	Execution	Guided	Tasks	Junior Delivery Engineer	Junior Business Analyst
L2	Intermediate	Independent	Independent	Scenarios	Delivery Engineer	Scenario Delivery Consultant
L3	Advanced	Coordination	Adaptive	Project groups	Senior Delivery Engineer	Senior Scenario Consultant
L4	Lead	System	Systemic	Organisational systems	Lead Delivery Engineer	Head of Scenario Delivery
L5	Expert	Method	Industry	Industry methods	Delivery Expert	Scenario Expert

Note: "Expert" is the name of L5 in this document, used in the ordinary occupational sense; it is not a claim about any individual or organisation.

6.2 L1 (Entry / Execution / Guided)

Table 4 — L1 requirements

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Item	Content
Step-up	Baseline: from "can use the tools" to "can hand over one clean piece of work"
Mark	Guided
Scope of responsibility	Accountable for: one clearly bounded task delivered on time and to standard. Not accountable for: scenario scope and acceptance, budget, customer relationship
Typical scope	A single task inside one scenario; 1–2 modules in one system; front-line users and a mentor; days to weeks; no budget authority
Mark requirements	Business literacy Guided; scenario engineering Guided; AI engineering Guided; delivery assurance Guided; delivery engineering Guided
Evidence required	a) runs the existing template unaided and explains each step; b) failure samples with fixes, not only success screenshots; c) can state, on handover, where it is most likely to break
Deliverables	A working module or configuration; start-up notes; failure sample log
Metric language	Task-level effort and rework count (minutes / hours)
Promotion	a) three consecutive tasks without rework; b) judges correctly when to pause and ask for help; c) at least one document reused directly by someone else
Fast-track	Not applicable. The value of this level is fundamentals; skipping hands the risk to the next level
Common misconception	Treating tool fluency as capability
Failure mode	Work is finished but not handed over cleanly: no documentation, no failure samples, the next person starts from zero

6.3 L2 (Intermediate / Independent / Independent)

Table 5 — L2 requirements

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Item	Content
Step-up	From delivering a task to owning an outcome — you start signing your name to a process
Mark	Independent
Scope of responsibility	Accountable for: one scenario end to end, from requirement confirmation to live operation. Not accountable for: priorities across scenarios, organisational mechanisms, cross-department resourcing
Typical scope	One scenario full cycle; data and interfaces across 1–3 systems; business owner, front-line staff and IT/data; weeks to months; single-scenario budget subject to approval
Mark requirements	Business literacy Independent; scenario engineering Independent; AI engineering Independent; delivery assurance Independent; delivery engineering Guided
Evidence required	a) a scope sheet (boundaries, baseline numbers, acceptance actions); b) a failure set of no fewer than 20 cases, with the conditions under which it fails; c) one record of a real process running in production
Deliverables	A running scenario; acceptance sheet; failure sample set; first version of the runbook
Metric language	Scenario metrics (accuracy, cycle time, handle time, error rate)
Promotion	a) two scenarios delivered independently, one running 4+ weeks; b) defines the baseline and writes acceptance as a checkable condition; c) at least one deliverable reused by a second scenario
Fast-track	Equivalent-scale evidence (including acceptance and handover) may skip the task-level review, but never the evidence review
Common misconception	Treating go-live as delivery complete
Failure mode	The scenario works but nobody uses it: acceptance measured features, not business change

6.4 L3 (Advanced / Coordination / Adaptive)

Table 6 — L3 requirements

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Item	Content
Step-up	From doing one well to deciding which ones to do — the first time you hold the trade-off
Mark	Adaptive
Scope of responsibility	Accountable for: a portfolio of scenarios, its priorities and resources, and the mechanism that makes hard wins repeatable. Not accountable for: organisational standards and capability development
Typical scope	A portfolio of 3—10 scenarios with prioritisation; cross-system and cross-department orchestration; department heads and multiple vendors; quarterly horizon; participates in budgeting
Mark requirements	Business literacy Independent; scenario engineering Adaptive; AI engineering Adaptive; delivery assurance Adaptive; delivery engineering Independent
Evidence required	a) a portfolio plan: why these three first and those five dropped; b) a repeatable review and operations mechanism (who checks what, when); c) at least one documented cross-department trade-off
Deliverables	Portfolio roadmap; review and operations mechanism; architecture decision records; two or more reusable assets
Metric language	Portfolio value (total cost, total hours, qualification rate, reuse rate)
Promotion	a) coordinates 3+ scenarios, all reaching acceptance; b) built a mechanism or asset used at least twice by others; c) makes an explainable trade-off under resource pressure
Fast-track	L4-grade assetisation on a single complex system (reused 3+ times) may fast-track, subject to unanimous review
Common misconception	Mistaking meeting volume for coordination ability
Failure mode	Everything in progress, nothing finished: no priorities means no priority

6.5 L4 (Lead / System / Systemic)

Table 7 — L4 requirements

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Item	Content
Step-up	From delivering yourself to making the organisation able to deliver — output shifts from projects to mechanisms
Mark	Systemic
Scope of responsibility	Accountable for: the delivery system — quality gates, assetisation, capability building — so that results do not depend on one person. Not accountable for: industry standards and ecosystem
Typical scope	System design across project groups (10+ scenarios, multiple business lines); platform and toolchain; executives and cross-company partners; six months to a year; system-level budget
Mark requirements	All five domains at Systemic
Evidence required	a) SOPs and quality gates actually executed, with records; b) asset-library reuse data with hour savings; c) at least one person brought to independent scenario ownership, with handover records
Deliverables	Delivery system and gates; asset library and reuse metrics; capability development path; cross-project retrospective mechanism
Metric language	Business language (capital tied up, unit delivery cost, capitalised assets, margin impact)
Promotion	a) system in force for 2+ quarters with measurable drops in incidents and rework; b) asset reuse cuts similar-project hours by 30% or more; c) developed at least one L2+ person
Fast-track	An externally adopted method or standard may enter L5 review directly, with adoption evidence
Common misconception	Mistaking headcount for system capability — the test is whether results survive turnover
Failure mode	Policy nobody follows: gates are decorative and problems are absorbed by heroes

6.6 L5 (Expert / Method / Industry)

Table 8 — L5 requirements

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Item	Content
Step-up	From working inside one organisation to outsiders adopting it — judgement moves outside
Mark	Industry
Scope of responsibility	Accountable for: a method adopted by the industry — standards, ecosystem, cross-enterprise transfer. The object is no longer a single organisation
Typical scope	Cross-industry method output (standards, curricula, open assets); industry methodology and ecosystem; industry bodies, partners and standards committees; one year and beyond
Mark requirements	Business literacy Industry; scenario engineering Industry; AI engineering Industry; delivery assurance Systemic; delivery engineering Industry
Evidence required	a) a method adopted by an external body or peer; b) 2+ cross-enterprise transfers outside the same group; c) a publicly verifiable standard, curriculum, open asset or signed report
Deliverables	Industry standard or methodology; ecosystem mechanism; publicly citable research
Metric language	Industry impact (adoption count, ecosystem partners, shift in practice)
Promotion	a) method adopted by 2+ enterprises outside the group with verifiable results; b) a substantive role in an industry body or standards effort; c) developed at least one L3+ person
Fast-track	Judged only by external adoption; self-certification is not accepted
Common misconception	Mistaking speaking volume for influence
Failure mode	Method stays in talks and articles: no external enterprise has actually run it

6.7 Failure modes across levels

Table 9 — Failure modes

Level	Typical failure	One-line diagnosis
L1	Uncleaned handover	Work is done, nobody else can pick it up
L2	No users	The system is live, the process is unchanged
L3	Doing everything	No trade-off means no priority
L4	Empty governance	Gates on paper, problems absorbed by heroes
L5	Talking, not running	No external enterprise actually runs it

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7 Capability domain requirements

7.1 Domains

Table 10 — Capability domains

Domain	Description
Business literacy	Understands industry mechanism, process and roles; describes problems in the customer's metrics
Scenario engineering	Translates vague demands into measurable, acceptable scenarios and locks the baseline
AI engineering and debugging	Model and retrieval selection, evaluation sets, fallbacks and refusal strategy
Delivery assurance	Data and permissions, cost and risk, schedule and stakeholders
Delivery engineering	Assetisation and reuse, so the second delivery costs less

7.2 Mark sequence rule

Each domain shall traverse exactly five marks from L1 to L5, without two adjacent levels sharing a mark and without skipping. Descriptions violating this are void (see 5.2).

7.3 Step-up matrix

Table 11 — Step-up matrix

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Domain	L1 Guided	L2 Independent	L3 Adaptive	L4 Systemic	L5 Industry
Business literacy	Records process and roles from a given outline without error	Runs a process walkthrough alone; states inputs, outputs and owners	Spots metric conflicts and pseudo-requirements; identifies the real bottleneck	Judges where AI applies on a business line and writes a reusable checklist	Publishes an industry problem framework peers adopt
Scenario engineering	Completes scope and acceptance from a template without widening it	Confirms scope, measures the baseline, writes checkable acceptance actions	Prioritises a portfolio and explains what was dropped	Defines organisational admission and acceptance standards and enforces them	Outputs a scenario classification cited outside
AI engineering and debugging	Reproduces correct and failing output from a script and records the phenomenon	Builds a 20+ failure set; separates retrieval faults from generation faults	Resolves model/data/tool interaction faults and designs the fallback	Builds evaluation and regression mechanisms; turns quality into a gate	Proposes an evaluation method or quality metric adopted outside
Delivery assurance	Reports progress and completes handover from a checklist without dropping risks	Connects data and permissions; explains minimisation and masking; drives takeover	Coordinates dependencies and change; controls scope creep and cost overrun	Establishes data governance, incident response and delivery quality mechanisms	Contributes to industry delivery and compliance practice
Delivery engineering	Collects reusable snippets and instructions others can use	Produces at least one asset used in a second place	Designs the reuse interface; accumulates two or more assets and measures reuse	Builds an asset library with reuse metrics and visible hour savings	An asset is adopted externally or reused in the open

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8 Evaluation method

8.1 Modes

8.1.1 Self-assessment — the practitioner judges each item and outputs a suggested level and gap list. It is a locator, not a basis for levelling.

8.1.2 Evidence review — reviewers determine the level from submitted material, recording "verified", "to be verified" or "not met" for each item.

8.1.3 Re-review — per 8.4.

8.2 Evidence rules

a) each requirement needs at least one verifiable item, otherwise "to be verified";

b) material shall be independently verifiable by a third party;

c) customer information shall be redacted without losing verifiability;

d) one item may support several domains but shall not support two different levels.

8.3 Level determination

8.3.1 Bucket rule — the level is the highest level at which all five domains are satisfied simultaneously; a weighted average shall not be used.

8.3.2 Threshold rule — a domain satisfies a level when its mark requirement (6.2–6.6) is met.

8.3.3 Gaps — domains not meeting the next level are gaps; evidence per Annex B shall be supplied.

8.3.4 Baseline — if the five domains do not simultaneously meet L1, no level is assigned and the result is "below baseline".

8.4 Validity and re-review

Re-review shall occur on: a) change of role or scenario; b) cross-industry move; c) 24 months since the last review. A previous level is not inherited automatically.

8.5 Records

Records shall include subject, date, level, per-domain conclusions, gap list and reviewer signature, retained for at least three years.

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9 Evaluation procedure

9.1 Application — the subject submits the self-assessment form (Annex C) and the evidence list (Annex B).

9.2 Acceptance — completeness is checked; incomplete submissions are returned within 10 working days.

9.3 Document review — reviewers examine items per 8.2 and record findings.

9.4 Review — at least two reviewers judge independently; disagreement is resolved by a third.

9.5 Conclusion — a level conclusion and gap list are issued with a validity period.

9.6 Reconsideration and appeal — within 15 working days, the subject may request reconsideration by reviewers not involved originally; the result is final.

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Annex A (normative) Mark determination

A.1 To determine a domain's mark, answer three questions: did someone else supply the method; have you handled exceptions beyond the standard case; has your output been copied by others.

Table A.1 — Mark determination

Mark	Question	Typical counter-example
Guided	Completes with a template or instructions, no judgement	Did it once, cannot explain the steps
Independent	Completes the standard case unaided	Fails on a different scenario
Adaptive	Handled exceptions and explained trade-offs	Applies a "best practice" mechanically
Systemic	Mechanism others follow also works	The mechanism only works when you are present
Industry	Adopted outside, or involved in external standards work	Internal promotion only, no external citation

A.3 Years of service, job titles and certificate counts shall not substitute for the above.

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Annex B (normative) Evidence checklist

Table B.1 — Evidence packs by level

Evidence pack	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Business diagnosis	Records process and roles from an outline	Quantifies the baseline in customer metrics	Separates real pain points from pseudo-requirements	Judges applicability boundaries for a business line	Defines an industry problem framework
Scenario and acceptance	Fills the template without widening	Confirms scope and acceptance independently	Prioritises a portfolio	Defines organisational admission and acceptance standards	Outputs a citable classification
Data and permissions	Connects data under guidance	Connects and explains masking	Designs cross-system permission tiers	Builds governance and audit mechanisms	Contributes to compliance discussion
AI debugging and evaluation	Reproduces failing output	Builds a 20+ failure set	Designs the evaluation system and fallback	Builds regression and quality gates	Proposes an adopted evaluation method
Delivery operations	Hands over from a checklist	Drives pilot and takeover	Coordinates parties and controls scope	Builds quality and incident mechanisms	Advances industry delivery practice
Assetisation	Collects reusable snippets	One asset used in a second place	Two or more assets with reuse measured	Asset library with reuse metrics	Asset adopted externally

B.2 Forms: documents, run records, evaluation sets, reuse records, external adoption proof. All shall be verifiable by a third party.

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Annex C (informative) Self-assessment and scoring

C.1 Items are grouped by domain; each is scored 0, 1 or 2 for "not done", "done but unstable", "done consistently".

C.2 Scoring: compute each domain's average, then apply the thresholds of 8.3; the level is the highest one satisfied by all five domains.

C.3 Reference thresholds (0–2): Guided 0.4, Independent 0.9, Adaptive 1.3, Systemic 1.6, Industry 1.85.

C.4 A self-assessment shall also output the gap list and the evidence packs to supply.

C.5 Online tool: https://fde.0706.tech/self-check/ (Chinese interface).

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Annex D (informative) External level ranges and market salary bands

D.1 External level ranges are given in Table D.1. They are compiled from public information, are not official for any company, and these systems have been reformed repeatedly.

Table D.1 — External level ranges

Level	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D	Confidence
L1	P4–P5	1-1 – 2-1	T1.3–T2.1	T4–T5	Medium
L2	P5–P6	2-1 – 2-2	T2.1–T2.3	T5–T6	High
L3	P6–P7	2-2 – 3-1	T2.3–T3.1	T6–T7	Medium
L4	P7–P8	3-1 – 3-2	T3.1–T3.3	T7–T8	Medium
L5	P8–P9	3-2 – 4-1	T3.3–T4	T8–T9	Low

Note: no exact mapping is provided, because none exists officially; published mappings are third-party reconstructions and would be misused as recruiting promises.

D.2 Market salary bands are given in Table D.2: annual salary in CNY thousands, gross, including bonus, excluding equity, basis October 2026, derived from job postings and cross-checked against salary reports.

Table D.2 — Market salary bands

Level	Suzhou	Hangzhou	Shanghai	Beijing / Shenzhen
L1	12–20	14–23	16–26	18–30
L2	20–33	23–38	26–42	30–48
L3	32–52	36–59	42–68	48–78
L4	50–85	56–95	65–110	75–130
L5	80–130	90–145	100–170	120–200

Note 1: Hangzhou has no separately published band; the figure is interpolated between Suzhou and Shanghai.

Note 2: Industry differences are significant; one figure shall not be applied across industries.

Note 3: These bands do not represent what any employer pays and are not a quotation or commitment.

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