



Educational Oversight-Exceptional Arrangements: desk-based analysis of SwaN Global Education LLP, December 2021

Outcome of the desk-based analysis

1 From the annual return and documentary evidence, the monitoring team concludes that SwaN Global Education LLP (the College), is continuing to maintain academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities since the December 2020 [Educational Oversight-Exceptional Arrangements review](#).

Changes since the last QAA review visit

2 The College intakes for September 2020, January and June 2021 have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. For the academic year 2020-21, the College recorded a total of 212 student enrolments. Enrolments for the academic year 2021-22 have now closed culminating in 157 current international student numbers. The College programmes are under the management of the College Director/Principal, Director of Academic and Student Experience, Director of Learning and Teaching, Director of Marketing and Recruitment, and a teaching complement of 31 staff - down from 34 in the previous academic year.

3 No substantive changes have taken place since the previous review. New pathways and additional entry points have been introduced which have had a positive impact on student recruitment. Further integration between Swansea University and the College structure has required a working group to be set up to consider the role of the College's Link Tutors within the University Faculty structure. Other changes include the transition from Blackboard to Canvas for the delivery of online teaching.

Findings from the desk-based analysis

4 The review team considered the Annual Monitoring Return Form, supporting evidence and a wide range of additional supplementary evidence. The College has responded to the features of good practice about flexible and responsive student support, and support for staff in moving to online learning. The desirable recommendation was to improve student engagement and participation on the deliberative committee (paragraph 5). Clear steps have been taken to improve student engagement, with further actions required to increase attendance on the college committees (paragraph 5). The College has introduced a range of activities to improve study skills (paragraph 6) and devised a specific Student Experience Action plan (paragraph 7). In addition, the College has developed mechanisms to support enrolment and induction during the pandemic and has produced a communication plan to support the student enrolment journey (paragraph 8). The College adopted blended learning and teaching approaches with live online teaching which has received positive feedback from students in a pilot survey review (paragraphs 9 and 10). Two internal audits have taken place - one undertaken by Navitas and a second by Swansea University - with each achieving successful outcomes and some recommendations (paragraph 11).

5 The previous review in December 2020 identified two features of good practice and one recommendation. The College has implemented an action plan to build on good practice

and respond to the desirable recommendation to review and improve student engagement and participation on the deliberative committee. To improve student engagement more generally, work has been undertaken with the Students' Union to review the information provided to the college students during the student representative training to provide greater clarity about the role. The College further felt that the current student representative application process was a barrier and have held discussions with University Academic Quality Services to understand how they could integrate the college students into the university online application process and the University's structures. However, less evidence could be found that participation at deliberative committee meetings had improved. For example, the team found no evidence of SU attendance at Academic Advisory Committee meetings. The team further found the Terms of Reference for the College Learning and Teaching Committee include student representation as part of their membership on an 'as-required' basis and confirmed that from three reviewed committee meeting minutes, the representative had attended only one of the meetings. However, the College was meeting with the University's Academic Quality Services in the autumn term to explore how the College can use best practice to encourage students to participate in this area of the student representative role.

6 Throughout the academic year 2020-21, the College has worked closely with the University Centre for Academic Success team to support the taster week and help embed study skills into the first year of study, with Link Tutors appointed to support this initiative. A process has also been put into place whereby if a student has a case of academic misconduct at the College, they will be referred to the Centre for Academic Success Link Tutor for additional support. This process was only implemented during 2021 and a review of effectiveness is due to take place near the end of the 2021-22 academic year. All students at the College study the Interactive Learning Skills and Communication module, which includes key study skills. Should students fail this module, they potentially miss out on key study skills as recovery is only available at the end of their first academic year; therefore, the College plans to introduce voluntary development sessions with a pilot session held June-September 2021. The effectiveness of this session is expected to be evaluated by a survey conducted in January 2022. To further endorse the academic principles of the Interactive Learning Skills and Communication module and ensure a consistent approach to referencing, the College has recently approved and introduced a new referencing policy.

7 The College has developed a comprehensive five-year strategic plan and a Student Experience Action Plan specifically designed to support the students throughout their academic journey and prepare them for their studies at Swansea University. The plan includes clear actions, performance indicators, deadlines and specified outcomes. It is expected that the Student Experience plan will be continually developed and reviewed at each of the College's Learning and Teaching Committees.

8 Enrolment and induction for the academic year 2021-22 has taken place over an extended period with the Academic and Student Experience team ensuring all sessions for enrolment and induction were made available online, in particular for those students travelling or in quarantine during the enrolment period. Recorded lectures and seminars were also made available and live chat for contact with the Academic and Student Experience Team. It is expected that this level of accessibility will continue into the 2021-22 academic year. Feedback from students has highlighted some potential gaps in communication through their enrolment journey and, as result, the Admissions, Marketing and Recruitment and Academic and Student Experience teams met in July 2021, to produce a communication plan which is expected to be reviewed following the autumn 2021 enrolment.

9 During the pandemic, the College introduced blended learning approaches in line with the rest of Swansea University. To support their learning and teaching approach, the

College has continued to access staff development opportunities through both Navitas and Swansea University, and continues to be an active member of the Swansea Academy of Learning and Teaching community. The College is also working with the Academy of Inclusivity and Learning Success on the remodelling of assessment for Levels 3 and 4.

10 As an early adopter of live online teaching and a pilot college for the new Canvas virtual learning environment, the College was part of the Jisc Digital Experience Insights Student Survey which ran between 17 March 2021 and the 9 April 2021, culminating in 32 responses. Although this response rate was relatively low, the feedback received was positive with the students placing value on the ability to study in their home country during the pandemic and the support they received from academic staff at the College with online learning.

11 The College has been subject to internal audits by Navitas and Swansea University. The internal audit by Navitas, carried out in May 2021, reviewed a sample of the student, employee and academic teaching records, as well as subject matter interviews with key personnel. The audit concluded overall compliance, although noting a need to improve attendance and engaging monitoring and the benefits of developing a collaborative operations manual to improve internal quality assurance arrangements for day-to-day operational processes. Meetings have been scheduled and actions identified to address recommendations. The audit by Swansea University in June 2021 focused on governance structures between Swansea University and the College and raised recommendations for the College to improve its management of risk and implement succession planning to increase its resilience to the loss of key colleagues. The implementation date in the action plan is by the end of Quarter 4 in 2021.

12 Despite the difficulties that the pandemic and remote delivery presented, student progression was in excess of 80%, which was consistent with Swansea's performance of direct entry students during the same period. The relative maintenance of these figures is attributed to the stability in academic resources and the longevity of several of the senior teaching staff.

Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

13 The College Academic Advisory Board is responsible for the College's quality assurance and enhancement processes, and in these matters takes account of best practice guidance as contained with the recommendations of QAA and other relevant benchmark statements, and guidance from external bodies.

Background to the desk-based analysis

14 The desk-based analysis serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review/annual monitoring. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring process or review.

15 The desk-based analysis was carried out by Barbara Howell, Reviewer, and Julian Ellis, QAA Officer, in December 2021. No meetings were held with students or staff, and the conclusions presented in this report are based on the analysis of documentary evidence submitted by the provider.

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