Navitas UK Holdings Ltd

Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

May 2012

Annex 1: Cambridge Ruskin International College

Introduction and background

Navitas signed a Recognition and Articulation Agreement with Anglia Ruskin University (the University) in 2007 to set up Cambridge Ruskin International College (CRIC). Its current student numbers are 385, and there are circa 15 administrative and 25 academic staff. CRIC has its main operational base at the University's Cambridge campus, but it also has a limited administrative facility and delivers a part of its programme portfolio at the University's Chelmsford campus. Academic staff travel between the two campuses to facilitate delivery, and virtual technology is used to maintain communications between the two locations.

Programmes which are offered are as follows:

- University Foundation in Architecture
- University Foundation in Art and Design
- University Foundation in Business
- University Foundation in Computing and Technology
- University Foundation in Communications and Humanities
- University Foundation in Engineering and Built Environment
- University Foundation in Law
- University Foundation in Optometry
- University Foundation in Medical and Life Sciences

- First year degree in Architecture
- First year degree in Art and Design
- First year degree in Business
- First year degree in Computing and Technology
- First year degree in Communications and Humanities
- First year degree in Engineering and Built Environment
- First year degree in Medical and Life Sciences

- Pre-Master's in Management

The foundation and pre-master's are Standard Delivery Model Programmes, delivered and assessed by CRIC staff, whereas most of the first year degree undergraduate programmes are Integrated Delivery Programmes, with the curricula taught by the University to both its own and CRIC students, with some additional teaching and support from the CRIC.

The CRIC has recently introduced the standard committee structure for Navitas, albeit the marketing and operations committees have been merged into a single Marketing and

Operations Advisory Committee. Although it was initiated by CRIC, the University said that it was comfortable with the revised governance arrangements, which reflect the standard approach being taken by Navitas across all its embedded colleges.

The self-evaluation document was written by Navitas, but the University had been given the opportunity to see it and comment. A copy of the Recognition and Articulation Agreement was seen by the review team and considered appropriate. This document is reviewed regularly by Navitas and the University.

Key findings

Academic standards

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **confidence** that academic standards at Cambridge Ruskin International College are managed appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of the provider and the partner higher education institution (HEI).

The review noted the **features of good practice** as detailed in the main report are evident at this college.

Quality of learning opportunities

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **confidence** that the quality of learning opportunities at Cambridge Ruskin International College is assured and enhanced appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of the provider and the partner HEI.

Public information

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that CRIC is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The review noted the **features of good practice** as detailed in the main report are evident at this college.

Detailed findings

How effectively do Navitas and CRIC fulfill responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this college?

1   Navitas aims to engage in long-term sustainable partnerships and to this end commissioned consultants to suggest potential partners, although some universities approached Navitas directly. As a result of the selection and approval process a contractual relationship between Navitas and the University in respect of CRIC is contained in the Recognition and Articulation Agreement (RAA) signed in 2007. The RAA will be revisited at periodic institutional review, but the schedules for the RAA are regularly renewed.

2   CRIC largely uses the standard governance structure as detailed in the main report, that is, a Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board with supporting subcommittees, although it operates a single Marketing and Operations Advisory Committee. Staff are fully

aware of the Quality Handbook and its policies and procedures. CRIC Director and Principal, the Director of Marketing and Recruitment and the Director of Academic and Student Services are part of the senior management team of CRIC.

3   Staff use standard monitoring reports, informed by the management information system, to manage the academic health of CRIC. Assuring academic standards was undertaken at initial approval of the relationship, using the University's standard programme approval procedures, with subsequent monitoring to ensure standards continue to be maintained. There has been no further approval of programmes since CRIC was formed. Additional pathways have been created from foundation programme modules already approved at the outset of the relationship in 2008. However, the review team was told that, as and when new programmes needed to be approved, the same procedure as for initial approval would be utilised. CRIC is regarded by the review team as having appropriate structures in place to manage the quality of learning opportunities and standards.

Approval

4   The review team did not see any documentation relating to the initial programme approval. However, it was told that this had involved the University's standard programme approval procedure which included scrutiny by approval panel members external to the University. Any future programme approvals would use the same approach. The team had noted, and sought, clarification concerning a problem of curriculum misalignment, which had potentially meant some students could not progress on their intended pathway in Tourism because they had not studied a prerequisite module. The team was told that this had arisen since the University faculty had made changes to its curriculum without communicating these to CRIC, and this had been exacerbated since the faculty had not appreciated CRIC had three intakes in the year. Hence early notification of curriculum change was essential.

5   In the short term, the University had resolved the problem by allowing the small number of affected students to progress on their chosen pathway, even though they had not studied the prerequisite module. In the longer term, the importance of timely communications between faculties and CRIC concerning curriculum changes had been reinforced.

Annual Monitoring

6   The review team noted that one of the elements in CRIC Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) 2011-14 was a commitment to undertake annual monitoring of pathways by July 2012, and they queried whether this meant that no annual monitoring had previously been undertaken. CRIC indicated it currently implemented the standard Navitas monitoring procedures based on end of semester reports together with an annual summary report, all of which went to the Academic Advisory Committee and Navitas Quality and Standards Office. The reference in the strategy related to the intention of introducing the Annual Module Monitoring procedure currently being piloted at International College Wales Swansea (ICWS). This would be subject to a satisfactory outcome to the ICWS pilot, so that it was now improbable the July 2012 implementation date would be met. CRIC does not make use of the Anglia Ruskin University Module Evaluation process, though modules delivered by the University as part of an integrated programme would be covered.

7   CRIC implements a tracer report which tracks the performance of CRIC students as they progress through the University delivered part of their programme. This was discussed at the Academic Advisory Committee, although no outcomes or actions appeared to have been identified.

Periodic Review

8   The provision at CRIC is too recent for periodic review to have taken place. However, the approach had been discussed, and the University indicated it would apply its standard institutional review process for collaborative provision, that would look at both the partnership and the programmes implemented through CRIC. The CRIC LTAS expected the University review procedure would be completed by the end of 2011-12.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

9   For the Standard Delivery Model (SDM) foundation programme modules, CRIC staff set assessments and there is no oversight by the University. Modules which are part of integrated programmes for the first year of the degree are moderated by University staff, though College staff may have some involvement in marking. Where the University moderates assessments that have been set and marked by CRIC, the outcomes of moderation are communicated to CRIC staff at the Module Assessment Boards which the University staff attend. CRIC operates the Navitas standard procedure of module assessment boards and a Progression Board. Students on Integrated Programmes have their module assessments considered by University Departmental Assessment Panels alongside University students, and these assessment boards are able to identify CRIC students within the results presented. The University undertakes its own version of a tracer study on these students as they progress through the University. The link tutor attends the University assessment boards where the results of CRIC students are being considered.

10   Students indicated the assessment process was very clear to them, and they understood what they needed to do to progress. Feedback on coursework was timely and helpful, and provided both in written format and as one-to-one oral feedback.

11   There was some uncertainty among students about the certification, if any, which would be provided when they completed that part of their studies delivered within CRIC. They did not appear to be familiar with the Navitas Confirmation of Attainment statement (CAS) as the evidence of their achievement. The University stated it had overall responsibility for standards on CRIC delivered part of the programme and considered CRIC as a 'fifth faculty'. International students are incorporated within the University's CAS for UK Border Agency purposes. However, the University does not include in its transcript or diploma supplement credit achieved as part of the programme delivered by CRIC. Only credit gained by College students as part of an Integrated Programme featured on the University transcript or diploma supplement. Students entering the university-delivered part of the programme, following completion of a College programme, were simply shown in the transcript as articulating into the programme. In part, this was because there was no transfer of assessment data or credit achieved in College to the University's student record system. The review team considered the absence of a formal record of the volume and level of credit achieved by students within CRIC delivered part of their programme placed them at a disadvantage, and should be addressed by CRIC in discussion with the University.

12   At the time of the review, CRIC was in the process of appointing its own external examiner. The purpose of the appointment was to provide CRIC with reports which would give an overview of its assessment processes and also identify areas of good practice. The external examiner would report to CRIC, but the University would have access to these reports through the committee structure. This was a College initiative and, if it proved fruitful, it would in due course be reported as good practice for dissemination at the Navitas Learning and Teaching Forum and Learning and Teaching Committee.

Where appropriate how effectively are UK external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

13   The Academic Infrastructure had been referenced as part of the University approval procedure, and also informs the Navitas College policies and regulations which CRIC utilises. Teaching staff the review team met at CRIC said they focused on the use of the standard definitive module documents in planning and scheduling delivery of their modules and are less familiar with programme specifications.

How effectively are external examining, moderation, or verification used to assure academic standards?

14   CRIC is exploring the feasibility of trialling the appointment its own external examiner (see 'Assessment' on page 4), but this will not be a conventional external examiner role. University staff moderate assessment outcomes for SDM programmes and University staff attend CRIC module and programme boards. For integrated programmes, assessment outcomes go through the standard procedure used by the University on the programmes for which it is responsible for delivery.

How effectively is statistical information used to monitor and assure academic standards?

15   Navitas has implemented a management information system, known as MAZE, across all its embedded colleges. The data generated is used in the preparation of module reports, which inform the semester and annual reports. The reports go the appropriate committees such that the University is aware of information relating to student progression and achievement. Data relating to assessment of integrated programmes is entered into the MAZE system. Overall, the use of statistical information by CRIC to monitor and assure standards was deemed to be effective.

How effectively are responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities fulfilled?

16   Students at CRIC make use of learning resources provided by the University, and have the same entitlement to use learning resources as those on University delivered programmes. The required learning resources to support delivery of a module are detailed in the Definitive Module Descriptor. CRIC has its own dedicated teaching space but makes use of University specialist teaching facilities such as laboratories where required. Any issues relating to space or library and information resources are shared with the University. Students are very positive about the availability and quality of learning resources available to them, and in particular commented on their ability to access specialist facilities such as laboratories outside scheduled teaching sessions.

17   Students are supported by both CRIC and the University virtual learning environments which operate on different platforms. The review team was told CRIC manages the issues of operating from different platforms proactively at induction. Students said they are able to easily move between the two virtual learning environments and experienced no problems. Students also reported that access to support from staff, both academic and administrative was good, with email contact supplementing face-to-face contacts, and response times of staff reported to be very rapid.

18   In relation to quality enhancement, CRIC makes use of the Navitas Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) pro forma to identify areas for development and approval, and the review team was told this incorporated CRIC's continuous improvement approach. The University had no specific enhancement expectations of CRIC.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

19   The Academic infrastructure, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and subject benchmarks are used as reference points in the development of curriculum.

How effectively do Navitas and CRIC assure themselves that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

20   Manager observation of teaching is used alongside the outcomes of peer observation, student feedback, and analysis of module assessment results and trends in order to assure CRIC that the quality of teaching and learning is secure. The review team considered that this provides CRIC with effective oversight.

How is student feedback used to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

21   CRIC makes use of the standard Navitas approach of locally designed module and programme questionnaires to obtain student feedback. The outcomes inform the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy, and go to the Learning and Teaching Board and Student Council, as well as being incorporated into semester level monitoring reports. CRIC uses a 'You said, We did' format to close the loop with students on their feedback, and these responses are posted on the virtual learning environment. These arrangements and their effectiveness was confirmed by students.

22   There is no formal student representational system. All students are eligible to attend the Student Council, and there is no student representation on other College committees, although this is under consideration. However, CRIC has arranged for the University Student Union to give training and support to students to enable them more effectively to articulate their views.

How effectively do Navitas and CRIC assure themselves that students are supported effectively?

23   Personal and academic support for students begins with induction. Foundation and standard delivery model programme students have a College induction delivered by College Student Support Services, but with no teaching staff inputs. Integrated programme students are inducted by the University alongside University students on the same programme. There is no formal personal tutor system. However, students indicated they are able to access both academic and personal support from teaching and administrative staff, through drop-in sessions, booked meetings and electronically. Students reported the excellent quality and availability of staff to support them and their learning is a most positive aspect of their experience at CRIC. Senior University staff the review team met endorsed this view. The Navitas Student in Jeopardy Scheme is identified by CRIC as good practice in the support of students experiencing academic or personal problems and the review team concurred with this view.

How effectively does CRIC manage the recruitment and admission of students?

24   CRIC has an Admissions Coordinator who reports to the Director of Academic Support Services, rather than to the Director of Marketing and Recruitment. This separation of marketing and admissions is the result of deliberate policy. The Learning and Teaching Board has a role in relation to consideration of non-standard applications. Most students are recruited through Navitas appointed agents in their own country, and reported that this had been a good experience.

What are the arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

25   The agreed outcomes from peer observation are available to managers in CRIC, and may be used to inform staff development. Staff development opportunities are available to College staff through the University, including fee waiver for staff pursuing postgraduate programmes in the University and more general training in new University learning technologies such as the interactive whiteboard. Staff told the review team they regarded the training and support they received as 'more than adequate'. There was also some limited evidence of research-informed teaching, while the one PhD student delivering teaching at CRIC had been inducted into the role and is being mentored by an experienced member of staff.

How effectively do Navitas and CRIC ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

26   Learning resources are detailed at programme approval and recorded in the definitive module documents. By scrutiny of student feedback and regular contact with students, staff are able to ascertain if problems are arising.

How effectively does Navitas' public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides at this college?

27   In relation to pre-entry information, students said they used the website, but also received information from agents operating on behalf of Navitas and through in-country presentations by Navitas staff. They said the information provided had been accurate and, generally speaking, their experience once they joined CRIC had exceeded their pre-entry expectations. Students received information on their entitlements and their obligations as students of CRIC through induction and through the student handbook. The College's virtual learning environment provide guidance on assessment requirements and regulations, and students felt confident in their knowledge of such issues as progression and assessment regulations and plagiarism. Students are also keen to emphasise the ease of access they enjoyed to both teaching and administrative staff, which enable them readily to seek clarification on any issues about which they are unsure.

How effective are Navitas' arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing at this college?

28   CRIC has sound procedures based on standard Navitas guidelines and templates for the production of both hard-copy and electronic information sources. There is a sign-off procedure in place involving the Director of Marketing and Recruitment and CRIC Director

and Principal. The University confirmed it also approved all publicity and information material produced by CRIC.