



Educational Oversight for embedded colleges: report of the monitoring visit of Navitas UK Holdings Ltd, May 2018

Cambridge Ruskin International College

1 Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the monitoring team concludes that Cambridge Ruskin International College (CRIC) is making acceptable progress with implementing the action plan following the April 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Embedded Colleges\)](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 Since the last QAA review in 2016, a number of changes have taken place at the College. An internal appointment has been made of a new Principal, providing continuity at senior management level. The other significant changes relate to growth in student numbers and changes to the College's governance.

3 Over the past two years student numbers have roughly trebled. Growth has been planned but at times exceeded targets as a result of a buoyant market. This growth makes CRIC the largest college within the provider network. Over the same period the profile of students has changed significantly. Recruitment has targeted new markets, in particular the EU and domestic markets. Recruitment targets for autumn 2018 envisage almost a third of new students will be from the UK. Some programmes such as nursing already have a majority home intake.

4 A revised governance structure has been introduced at the College. The Academic Advisory Committee has been disbanded. The partnership retains a Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board with revised terms of reference to which reports a new Anglia Ruskin University - Cambridge Ruskin International College Operational Board and the Marketing Advisory Committee. As part of the restructuring, the University has delegated certain responsibilities such as approving minor changes to the newly formed Operational Board. The new Board is chaired by the University's Academic Registrar and the majority of its membership is drawn from the University.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

5 The College has developed further the strengths identified by QAA in the last review. The last full QAA review in 2016 made no recommendations for action at provider or College level. The report on the College identified five features of good practice. All remain strengths of the College. The monitoring and maintenance of action plans within the College is the responsibility of the management team led by the Principal. The plan developed following the 2016 review identifies actions, targets, lead responsibilities and the committees or groups responsible for monitoring and oversight of activity.

6 The first area of good practice concerned the caring and supportive learning environment developed through the College's holistic approach to academic and pastoral support. Initiatives that have been taken include enhancing the use of technology in teaching; staff development; better timing of examination re-sits; and improvements to pre-arrival information and induction for new staff and students. A new induction programme was introduced for the last intake of students, which preliminary feedback suggests was well received. With respect to the second feature of good practice, the College continues to provide effective support for transition to University study. Students who have progressed recently to the University state that they were well prepared through the materials taught and contact with the University while studying at the College.

7 The third area of good practice identified in the report concerned the recognition of individual student participation as an effective contribution to the collective student voice. The College continues to identify and reward student achievements in order to encourage student engagement and aspiration. Multiple channels continue to be provided through which students can express their opinions and contribute to the enhancement of the College and its courses. The fourth area of good practice concerned assessment feedback mechanisms. Feedback has been enhanced by using electronic tools, feed forward concepts, peer assessment and small group tutorials. Staff development has been provided. The fifth area of good practice that was identified was the effective use of tracer data. Such data can be used to track the performance of the College's students as they progress through the University. The data continues to be used for annual monitoring and allows comparison of CRIC students with those directly recruited to the University.

8 Expansion has brought challenges in terms of staffing, space and maintenance of pass and completion rates. Most teaching staff are fractional with the capacity for additional hours and additional support staff are being recruited. The University has provided additional space and plans are in place to increase this if necessary. Students reported that they experienced operational issues at the beginning of term as timetables were adjusted to accommodate increased numbers. However, additional teaching was made available to affected students to ensure that none was disadvantaged. The changing profile of students has also posed challenges for the College. While student performance overall remains high, there have been small but significant declines in rates of retention and in pass rates. These changes have been attributed to the greater potential mobility of UK and EU students and a rise in students in employment while studying.

9 The College is planning for further expansion. A new agreement has been signed between the provider and Anglia Ruskin University. Under this agreement, from September 2019 the College will likely take over the level 3 provision in the Faculty of Science and Technology and Faculty of Medical Science currently provided by the University. This will result in a significant expansion of teaching by the College at the University's Chelmsford campus which currently houses only a very small number of Navitas students. Future consideration will need to be given to the College's management of increasing numbers on two campuses and the College's response to the challenges stemming from changing student profiles.

10 The College's admissions policy has been developed within the framework laid down by the provider. Admissions requirements are agreed with the University and published on the College's website and in brochures. Numbers targets are also agreed with the University. Admissions are undertaken centrally by the provider. Unlike previously, all standard offers are made by the provider but non-standard applications are first reviewed and signed off by the College and on occasion the University. Non-standard applicants include those with alternative

qualifications, those applying on the basis of experiential learning and candidates required to demonstrate additional entry requirements for their preferred course. International students must meet English language entry requirements, assessed through the use of Home Office approved Secure English Language Tests (SELTs). Steps are taken to ensure that candidates have a genuine intention to study.

11 Some 80 per cent of UK candidates are recruited through clearing. The process is integrated into the University's clearing process. Staff from the provider's admissions team are present in the College during clearing to process offers efficiently.

12 The annual monitoring process is aligned with the requirements of both the University and the provider. Annual monitoring reports draw upon a range of quantitative and qualitative data relating to student performance, course and module reviews, student feedback, and external examiner comments. Student statistics include tracer data supplied by the University which permit comparison of the performance of College students after progression with those entering the University directly. The review reports also discuss engagement with the University, enhancement and staff development; proposals for action are included. The report is discussed internally and presented to a panel of the University's Senate, which confirms the report and action plan. It is also presented to the provider's Learning and Teaching Committee.

4 The embedded colleges' use of external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

13 The College uses relevant external reference points, including the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) to shape its policies and procedures. An example of the use of the Quality Code is the close attention that was paid to *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education* in the drafting of the College's Policy and regulations for admissions. Information about the Quality Code and other relevant frameworks is made available to staff on the website and reinforced through induction and training, both at the College and at the University.

5 Background to the monitoring visit

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

15 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Cameron Waitt, QAA Officer, and Dr Carol Vielba, QAA Reviewer, on 2 May 2018.

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