



Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) of Navitas UK Holdings Ltd

Cambridge Ruskin International College

April 2016

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Cambridge Ruskin International College (CRIC). The review took place from 5 to 6 April 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Mrs Catherine Fairhurst
- Mrs Gillian Butler.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Cambridge Ruskin International College and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code)¹ setting out what all UK [higher education providers](#) expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
 - the quality of student learning opportunities
 - the information provided about higher education provision
- provides a commentary on the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

In Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) there is also a check on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG). This check has the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure of their education provider.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

In reviewing Cambridge Ruskin International College the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland. The [themes](#) for the academic year 2015-16 are Digital Literacy and Student Employability,² and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.³ A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges).⁴ For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

² Higher Education Review themes: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859

³ QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.

⁴ Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Navitas UK's provision at Cambridge Ruskin International College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Cambridge Ruskin International College (CRIC).

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of Navitas UK and CRIC's degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **is commended**
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Cambridge Ruskin International College.

- The holistic approach to academic and pastoral support creating a caring and supportive learning environment (Expectation B4).
- The particularly comprehensive and supportive preparation for transition to university study, which leads to high levels of progression (Expectation B4).
- The arrangements for ensuring that individual student participation is recognised and rewarded, which contribute to the effectiveness of the collective student voice (Expectation B5).
- The flexible and effective assessment feedback mechanisms, which enable and promote student learning (Expectation B6).
- The effective use of tracer data from the University in reviewing curricula and student performance and achievement (Expectation B8).

Enhancement of student learning opportunities

CRIC's strategic approach to enhancement of the student experience is based on Navitas UK policy and procedure. The College Enhancement Team (CET) is the formal quality enhancement mechanism that includes students and staff. Its purposes is to engage students and enhance areas that most directly affect their experience.

Theme: Digital Literacies

CRIC has an overarching Virtual Learning Strategy that aims to promote the development of digital literacy. It has developed a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) policy document to underpin its commitment to implementing the strategy in CRIC, which staff referred to as shaping their practice.

About Cambridge Ruskin International College

Navitas signed a Recognition and Articulation Agreement (RAA) with Anglia Ruskin University (the University, ARU) in 2007 to set up Cambridge Ruskin International College (CRIC). The first cohort of 79 students subsequently arrived in September 2008. The current student population numbers 264. CRIC delivers pathway programmes at NQF Levels 3, 4 and 7 where successful students progress onto ARU's degree courses, leading to the University's graduation and awards. CRIC has its main office at the University's Cambridge campus. It also has clerical and learning support at the University's Chelmsford campus,

where 40 CRIC students study in integrated classes with the University's students. Both administrative and academic teaching staff travel between the two campuses to enable the Chelmsford programmes' delivery. Staff and students have access to the same communications technology as the main campus and interactions continue between the two locations on a daily basis throughout the academic semesters.

CRIC, in line with Navitas UK requirements, uses MAZE data to track and monitor academic Key Performance Indicators as outlined in the Navitas UK Learning and Teaching Strategy. Additionally, CRIC maintains the CRIC College Action Plan (CAP), which clearly incorporates and demonstrates the effective use of MAZE data. CRIC has developed its own Strategic Plan 2014-18, derived from the Navitas strategy development tool. The Strategic Plan incorporates Tactical Initiatives, giving local strategic direction and drive for continual improvement in academic quality and corporate performance.

Additionally, the data captured from MAZE is included in various reports, including the CRIC Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) 2015 submission and the CRIC Annual Report. Furthermore, CRIC receives tracer data from Anglia Ruskin University indicating the academic performance of former CRIC students. The data includes the students' continuation and final performance reports for all disciplines. The latest report shows the performance data for CRIC students after progressing to the University, where former CRIC students are seen to perform well when compared against their peers directly recruited to ARU.

The College structure encompasses a central administrative team that is responsible for the operational duties of the College, including the learning and teaching environment through academic services; student pastoral and welfare support through student services; marketing functions; and admission procedures. The College Director/Principal is responsible for the maintenance of quality and standards in the College and oversees all of the key functional areas. The CRIC internal committees consist of the College Management Team (CMT), the College Learning and Teaching Board (CLTB), and the College Staff Meetings, all chaired by the College Director/Principal (CDP); the College Enhancement Team (CET) and Academic Teaching Staff Meetings chaired by the Director of Academic and Support Services (DASS); and the Student Council (SC), chaired by the Manager of Student Support. The College committees inform the Navitas UK Senior Management Team (SMT), Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) and Learning and Teaching Forum (LTF), as well as feeding in to the CRIC/ARU governance structure.

The CRIC/ARU governance structure was set up following the 2007 agreement renewal and includes three meetings held jointly between the relevant College and University staff and are planned every semester. The Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) is chaired by the Director of the Academic Office from the University; the Marketing Advisory Committee (MAC) chaired by the College Director of Marketing and Admissions; and the Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board (JSPMB) chaired by the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The Operational Advisory Committee (OAC) is held biannually to discuss operational requirements with the University outside academic fora and is chaired by the College Director Principal.

The challenges for CRIC as an embedded College regarding academic quality and learning opportunities are focused around maintaining effective communication and a unified approach with the partner University, as well as internally monitoring and safeguarding the academic quality at the College. To this end, the AAC meets once per semester with the University's Director of the Academic Office as chair to maintain the College's alignment with the University's quality requirements and to discuss any matters relating to academic standards and the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Furthermore, CRIC staff work closely with the Deans, Deputy Deans and link tutors of the ARU faculties to keep up to date with the University's teaching and learning activities and informed of any curriculum changes. Internally, CRIC continually regulates and maintains its students' learning opportunities, specifically through teaching observations, staff development opportunities, providing a vital learning environment through the necessary resources, and making best use of technology, for instance using plagiarism-detection software for marking and feedback.

Subject Benchmark Statements are used throughout the curriculum to ensure that the Levels 3, 4 and 6/7 of *The Framework for Higher Education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) are aligned with that of the onward degree awarded by the University.

CRIC had a QAA review under the Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight (ECREO) process in May 2012. Consequently, at the 2013 monitoring visit CRIC received a commendable rating, thus allowing the planned 2014 monitoring visit to be skipped. The monitoring visit carried out in 2015 also resulted in a commendable rating.

Explanation of the findings about Cambridge Ruskin International College

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding bodies

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* are met by:

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.1 Cambridge Ruskin International College (CRIC), embedded in Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), is not a degree-awarding body, and does not award credit. However, ARU approves formal recognition of modules passed, including credit and level and an appropriate exit award for students.

1.2 Navitas UK's approval process and the templates for programme specifications and the definitive module document (DMD) require the consideration of Subject Benchmark Statements relevant to a module or programme. The learning outcomes described in the programme specifications reflect the qualifications descriptors in the FHEQ, for programmes set at Levels 4-6, and against the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF/RQF) for programmes set at Level 3.

1.3 The Academic Advisory Committee and The Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board have overall responsibility for academic standards and quality of awards.

1.4 ARU and Navitas UK have oversight of the standards of the College provision by receiving summaries of AAC reports and Annual Monitoring reports.

1.5 The application of policies and procedures at CRIC allows the Expectation to be met.

1.6 The team tested the Expectation by examining a range of documents including programme specifications, definitive module documents, procedural and policy documents, and external examiner reports and by holding meetings with academic and support staff, including link tutors and senior University representatives.

1.7 The comprehensive documentation and ARU's expressed assurance/confidence demonstrate that CRIC adheres to both Navitas UK's and the ARU's programme approval, monitoring and review procedures. This safeguards academic standards. These procedures ensure that all programme learning outcomes are aligned appropriately to the FHEQ. The Programme and Module Specifications make it clear that each module and its associated learning outcomes have been developed and calibrated against the requirements of the FHEQ. The student handbooks and programme specifications show that CRIC explicitly maps learning aims and outcomes against assessment tasks. External examiners' reports confirm that academic standards are maintained at appropriate levels and that learning outcomes are being met. The teaching staff discussed the importance of the level of student learning in preparation for transition to ARU. Former students are very positive about how well they had been prepared for progression to the University.

1.8 CRIC is effective in securing threshold academic standards through close adherence to the Provider's and ARU's policies and procedures. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk low

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.9 The academic framework and governance for CRIC is shaped by the requirements of Anglia Ruskin University and Navitas UK, which are designed to meet the Quality Code standards. The College Director/ Principal is responsible for quality assurance and enhancement in CRIC, and accountable to the Executive General Manager University Partnerships Europe. However, the University has responsibility for assuring academic standards and conferring awards. This responsibility is exercised through the joint CRIC and University academic governance structure, established between the University and CRIC, which is responsible for the regulation, governance and quality assurance of the academic work of CRIC. The Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) is chaired by the Director of the Academic Office from the University and is responsible for the regulation, oversight and quality assurance of the academic work of CRIC. This includes oversight of student progress, programme approvals and modifications and alignment with the FHEQ. AAC reports to the Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board (JSPMB), which is where decision making and accountability lie; it is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

1.10 The CRIC academic regulations and policies are based on the Navitas UK Quality Manual but adapted to align with the partner University's Academic Regulations. Oversight of academic standards is also exercised by the Navitas UK Quality and Standards Office; the Navitas UK Director of Learning and Teaching is an ex officio member of the AAC and assessment policies and procedures are subject to monitoring by the Navitas UK Quality and Standards Office.

1.11 The College Learning and Teaching Board (CLTB), chaired by the CRIC Principal, has ongoing operational responsibility for maintaining academic standards, which includes responsibility for convening College Module Panels and Progression Boards and ensuring that all assessment is carried out in accordance with the regulations. This academic framework and the associated policies and procedures would allow Expectation A2.1 to be met.

1.12 In considering this expectation the review team examined the terms of reference of the JSPMB, the AAC and the CLTB; academic regulations addressing programme approval and review, assessment and annual monitoring; the Quality Manual; organisational and committee structures; and reports and minutes from committees, annual monitoring and programme and partnership reviews. The team also held discussions with members of staff from CRIC and the University.

1.13 The College Regulations describe the processes for programme approval, modifications and review; annual monitoring; and assessment, including marking, moderation and the operation of assessment boards. Both the University and Navitas UK have oversight of the standards of the CRIC provision through programme approval processes set out in the regulations and summaries of AAC reports, as well as ex officio membership of AAC. This robust approach to quality processes and oversight ensure that academic standards are appropriately set and maintained. The Provider Quality Standards Office has responsibility for ensuring that policies are regularly reviewed and updated as required by any changes to the Quality Code or other changes in the operating environment.

1.14 The comprehensive assessment regulations address all aspects of the academic arrangements required, including internal verification, coursework submission, marking, internal/external moderation, feedback to students, module panels, progression boards, extenuating circumstances, assessment offences, adjustments for students with disabilities, and invigilation rules. CRIC Module Panels and Progression Boards are responsible for confirming that College and University regulations have been correctly applied to determine assessment outcomes. These are attended by representatives of the University. The Progression Board does not confer awards, but does provide a confirmation of attainment.

1.15 Staff whom the review team met were cognisant of the CRIC regulations, policies and procedures relevant to their respective roles. Information about assessment regulations is available on the virtual learning environment (VLE) and in hard copy. Students whom the review team met knew where to find information that they needed. Reports from external examiners and faculty link tutors from the University confirm that assessment and moderation processes are appropriate and that examination boards operate effectively.

1.16 The review team considers that CRIC, in partnership with the University, has transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern the award of academic credit and that Expectation A2.1 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of Risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.17 Programme specifications identify the intended learning outcomes of each pathway and represent the definitive record of each programme of study that is approved. Definitive module documents (DMD) contain the detailed module outlines. The CRIC provision is part of the educational offering of the University and provides pathways/progression routes to university awards. [The programme specifications and definitive module documents (DMD) are completed using templates from Navitas UK, which require that learning outcomes and credit values are specified and that reference is made to the appropriate FHEQ levels and Subject Benchmark Statements. These documents provide the key reference points for all stakeholders.

1.18 The College process for programme approval and major modifications is aligned with the University Regulations. The programme approval and modification processes require that formal notification of full approval is received by Navitas UK and the partner University before any changes can be made to the records of provision held by Navitas, CRIC and the University. Minor modifications are those not requiring full approval. These require approval within the relevant faculty of the University in accordance with the University's minor modification process and must be notified to the Navitas UK Quality and Standard's Office by the College Director/Principal or nominee via the module management form.

1.19 Annual monitoring entails a comprehensive review of the records and their maintenance, which may result in the revision of programme specifications and DMD. The continued validity and accuracy of programme information is also scrutinised by the partner University through the process of Institutional Review. All CRIC definitive programme records and student achievement records are stored in the College student records system, MAZE, and the University records system. MAZE is due to be replaced in autumn 2016 by a new integrated system, Navigate.

1.20 The requirements of the University and Navitas UK, together with the regulations and procedures of the CRIC, would allow Expectation A2.2 to be met.

1.21 In considering this Expectation, the review team examined the relevant CRIC regulations policies and supporting documentation; sample programme specifications; DMDs; reports from annual monitoring; and institutional review. The review team held meetings with staff and students.

1.22 The documentation seen by the team demonstrates full compliance with the regulations. Learning outcomes are appropriately specified at programme and module levels. The DMD form identifies the module title, the FHEQ level, credit value and any prerequisites that may restrict a student's ability to undertake it. The form includes detailed information and describes the module aims, content, resources and details both specific and generic learning outcomes, along with the assessment types by which they are demonstrated. The programme specifications are properly completed and are available on the VLE. A copy is provided to each student at initial registration and there are links from

Student Handbooks. Students must be given due notice if the programme specification is changed during the period of their registration. Students whom the team met were very clear about the modules they are taking and the assessment requirements.

1.23 Annual monitoring reports seen by the team were fully completed and demonstrated close scrutiny by the University. They were also considered by the Quality Standards Office and signed by the Provider Director of Student Experience and Quality. Further evidence of the scrutiny of programme information to ensure accuracy is also afforded through the report of the periodic/institutional review.

1.24 On the basis of the evidence, the review team considers that programme specifications and DMDs provide a definitive record of the College's provision and are approved and modified through due process undertaken with the partner University and oversight from the Navitas UK Quality and Academic Standards Office. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation A2.2 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of Risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.25 All new programmes and any major modifications to existing CRIC programmes require approval by ARU and Navitas UK. University faculties consider and approve minor modifications.

1.26 Navitas UK has a central process for the approval and periodic review of CRIC stages of programme pathways. Navitas UK gives strategic approval and approval in principal after consideration of the market and resources. The proposed programme pathway is then subject to ARU's approval procedure. ARU has validation responsibility for ensuring compliance with the FHEQ and professional benchmarks, approving module content, associated learning outcomes, and assessment strategies for the programmes.

1.27 All programmes are subject to annual monitoring and to a Periodic/Institutional Review by the University every five years. The last Institutional Review took place in 2012.

1.28 The detail of the approval processes available to CRIC was checked by scrutinising the Navitas Quality Manual, programme specifications and definitive module documents. Discussions with University and CRIC senior staff and teaching staff also contributed to the assessment of this Expectation

1.29 Although there had been no recent programme approvals the policies and processes in place for programme approval are designed to ensure the alignment of content and assessment with the UK threshold standards contained within the FHEQ.

1.30 The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.31 CRIC operates within the Navitas UK academic infrastructure and as an Associate College of the University, with whom it has a Recognition and Articulation Agreement. The standards, purpose and principles of assessment are set out in the localised College Policies and Regulations on Assessment. The governance arrangements and details of processes to be followed are described in the Operations Manual. Guidance on assessment practice, threshold standards and the design of modules is provided by the Navitas UK Academic Quality and Standards Office. These documents, together with the course approval process, provide coverage of credit definition and levels. The College does not make awards.

1.32 The requirements and processes documented in the Assessment Regulations and Operations Manual address the awarding University's academic standards, UK threshold standards and the level and definition of credit. These processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.33 The review team tested the systems in place by reviewing documentation in the Academic Regulations, the Quality Handbook and guidance on best practice in assessment. The review team looked at annual monitoring reports, external examiner reports, programme specifications, definitive module documents and guides. The review team discussed assessment processes in a range of meetings with staff from CRIC, staff from the partner University and students.

1.34 The review team found that CRIC convenes Module Assessment Panels and College Progression Boards of Examiners in accordance with the requirements of the regulatory framework and that the roles and responsibilities of Module Panels and Boards of Examiners are properly fulfilled. The Module Assessment Panel is responsible for considering the academic performance of students on each module and for confirming the integrity and fairness of the assessment process, including marking, grading and moderation. Feedback from external examiners and link tutors confirmed that these boards were properly constituted and operating fairly and in accordance with their terms of reference. Minutes of the College Learning and Teaching Board, Academic Advisory Committee and the Institutional Review confirm that appropriate oversight is exercised.

1.35 The College Assessment Regulations detail the requirements in relation to the assessment of students and stipulate that each student must be assessed in accordance with the approved programme specification. The definitive module documents set out the learning outcomes to be assessed at module level, summative assessment methods and weightings of assessments. Each module is also accompanied by a more detailed module guide, which repeats this information and includes a break down on a week-by-week basis with the details of the assessments. These are available in hard copy and on the CRIC virtual learning environments and follow the relevant guidance. Survey data confirms that a

high percentage of students understand what is expected of them in relation to their assessments and find the feedback useful. Students whom the team met during the review confirmed this. They are clear about the requirements for their assessments and understand the feedback that they have received.

1.36 The Assessment Regulations and the accompanying documentation on moderation and best practice in assessment and feedback provide detailed guidance on the process of assessment, marking, grading and moderation. There was evidence of the effectiveness of staff development taking place in relation to assessment practice. Staff whom the team spoke to were knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed to high quality assessment and feedback practice.

1.37 The College's academic infrastructure and partnership agreements with the University provide an effective framework for the assessment of learning outcomes that is very clearly understood by staff and students. The review team concludes that credit is awarded where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through assessment. The Expectation is therefore met and risk in this area is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of Risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.38 ARU's Annual Monitoring process for Associate Colleges and Navitas UK Policies and Regulations provide the framework within which monitoring and review of programmes is undertaken, to ensure that appropriate academic standards are achieved. CRIC monitors its programmes through the Academic Advisory Committee reports, Annual Monitoring Reviews, and Institutional Review.

1.39 Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) and action plans are reported to the Academic Advisory Committee and to Navitas UK to ensure appropriate oversight.

1.40 The University acts as the external to the CRIC provision. The quinquennial University Periodic/Institutional Review considers both qualitative and quantitative data, and the panels scrutinise information to determine the issues to confirm that academic standards are being maintained, the currency, coherence and continued relevance of the programme, and alignment to Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ.

1.41 The policies and procedures of CRIC would allow this expectation to be met.

1.42 The review team scrutinised a range of evidence to test the success of the framework and its associated processes. This included documentation such as review reports and action plans. Discussions with all categories of staff further contributed evidence that programme monitoring and review processes address the achievement of academic standards.

1.43 CRIC underwent a University Periodic/Institutional Review in 2012; the outcome of this review was that the continuation of the partnership was confirmed and ARU was assured that academic standards were being appropriately maintained. This Institutional Review is augmented by annual programme and CRIC monitoring. University tracer data is used extensively to monitor CRIC students' progression and achievement.

1.44 It is clear that the CRIC maintains regular, clear and extensive communications with ARU both operationally through link tutors and teaching and support staff, and strategically, and more formally, through the CRIC and ARU committee reporting structures.

1.45 The documentary evidence and discussion with CRIC staff confirms that CRIC has in place sound and effective processes of programme monitoring and periodic review that address the achievement of threshold academic standards and those required by the University.

1.46 Navitas UK's and the University's monitoring and review processes are scrupulously followed. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.47 In accordance with the Recognition and Articulation Agreement with the University, the University acts as the external for CRIC and is responsible for assuring the setting and maintaining of academic standards by way of operational mechanisms, including programme approval, moderation and assessment boards. CRIC uses the term 'external' to describe any party external to it, which may therefore include members of staff from the partner University.

1.48 In accordance with the regulations of the University and Navitas UK, the College Regulations stipulate that external advisers must be appointed for all new programme approvals. The development must be undertaken jointly with the University and the scrutiny panels are chaired by the University, operating in accordance with its arrangements for collaborative provision. Guidance on the design of programmes refers to the need for consistency with external reference points.

1.49 The procedure for annual monitoring includes consideration of feedback and reports from external examiners, link tutors and moderators. The University Panel provides externality.

1.50 With respect to external oversight of assessment standards, the University applies its own regulations, which do not require the appointment of independent external examiners at FHEQ Level 4, or for provision not leading to an award. The University therefore provides externality for the moderation of CRIC assessment materials and assessment scripts at FHEQ Levels 4 and 7. Level 3 assessments are moderated and approved internally. However, Navitas UK has appointed an independent cross-college external moderator for the Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC) module (Level 3 and Level 6/7), which affords an external perspective on standards within colleges, as well across of the provision overall.

1.51 Additionally, for the Level 7 Pre-Masters in Management programme, CRIC has appointed an external examiner to provide verification of the delivery at FHEQ Level 7 prior to students progressing to the master's programmes at the University. The external examiner is appointed in accordance with the University Senate Code of Practice.

1.52 The partnership with the University and the regulatory and policy framework of Navitas UK and CRIC allow Expectation A3.4 to be met in theory.

1.53 The review team tested Expectation A3.4 by reviewing documentation and guidance in the Provider Quality Manual and the CRIC and Navitas UK Policies and Regulations relating to approval, monitoring, review and the role of external examiners. The team also reviewed documentation from CRIC in relation to annual monitoring, minutes of meetings, external examiner reports and the responses to them. Additionally, the review team discussed arrangements for the involvement of external and independent expertise in a range of meetings.

1.54 The external examiner and link tutor comments and reports seen by the review team confirm that standards meet the threshold requirements, that courses remain current and that course learning outcomes are in line with the relevant qualification descriptors and Subject Benchmark Statements. Link tutors and external examiners, where appointed, attend CRIC Module Panels and Progression Boards. Evidence from these Panels and Boards provides confirmation of standards and adherence to internal and external requirements.

1.55 Evidence of effective mechanisms for monitoring the ongoing maintenance of standards is provided through annual monitoring, institutional review, the CRIC Learning and Teaching Board, the Academic Advisory Committee and the Navitas UK Quality Standards Office. There was sound evidence of responsive and thoughtful consideration of link tutor and external examiner comments. Meetings with staff from the University and CRIC also demonstrated a robust approach to the maintenance of quality and externality at both strategic and operational levels.

1.56 The evidence provided demonstrated that the regulations of the University and the College are implemented effectively. These ensure that independent external perspectives are used to set and maintain academic standards for all provision from FHEQ Level 4 upwards. The review team therefore concludes that Expectation A3.4 is met and the associated level of risk is low, as CRIC has very clear robust procedures that are implemented effectively.

Expectation: Met
Level of Risk: Low

The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered by on behalf of the awarding bodies: Summary of findings

1.57 In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.58 CRIC uses the processes of its awarding body, Anglia Ruskin University, effectively in ensuring that academic standards are maintained in line with the relevant level of the FHEQ and external reference points. CRIC's own internal processes, including effective programme approval and monitoring procedures, also make a valuable contribution to the maintenance of standards. There are appropriate opportunities for the use of external expertise within these processes.

1.59 CRIC has met all seven Expectations in this area and the associated level of risk is low. Therefore, the review team concludes that CRIC's maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes

Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design and Approval

Findings

2.1 Responsibility for the development, design and approval of programmes is shared between Navitas UK, CRIC and its university partner. When developing a new programme/pathway the head of CRIC and a University proposer submit a strategic proposal to the Navitas UK Senior Leadership Team. When a new pathway has been granted strategic approval by Navitas UK, a draft programme specification and associated marketing material are prepared by CRIC. The Navitas Quality and Standards Office (QaSO) will give initial approval in principle after considering resources. Once given initial approval by QaSO, the documents are passed to ARU for consideration and approval. An ARU scrutiny panel, including external representation, undertakes a detailed review of the proposal and makes recommendations.

2.2 The approval processes available to CRIC were tested by scrutinising the Navitas Quality Manual, programme specifications and definitive module documents. Discussions with University and CRIC senior staff and teaching staff also contributed to the assessment of this Expectation.

2.3 There have been no new programme approvals since the report of the monitoring visit of the Embedded CRIC Review for Educational Oversight 2014, so the review team did not see any documentation relating to programme approval. However, with the support and oversight of Navitas UK and Anglia Ruskin University, CRIC has appropriate policies in place for the design, development and approval of programmes in prospect to enhance the quality of learning opportunities. Expectation B1 is therefore met and the associated level of risk in this area is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission*

Findings

2.4 The College Admissions Policy is based on the standard Navitas UK Policies and Regulations, which align with the Quality Code Expectation B2. The College adheres to the University strategy for internationalisation and is committed to widening participation. This informs the approach to recruitment and admissions, which are overseen by the Joint Strategic Management Partnership Board (JPSMB) and the Marketing Advisory Committee (MAC), with close involvement from the College Director/Principal. Appendices to the policy governing the particular requirements for admission are agreed annually with the Head of the University International Office and approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International). Selection is the responsibility of the College Director/Principal.

2.5 Applicants not meeting the standard entry criteria may be considered within the process for non-standard entry. Where academic judgement is required the Admissions Office at the University is involved.

2.6 The admissions policy emphasises the importance of operating within an ethical framework, and seeks to ensure that the associated procedures select and admit only students who have the ability and desire to study on their chosen course.

2.7 Navitas UK has introduced a comprehensive application verification process across the college network, which may include interviews via video conferencing or telephone with individual applicants. All applicants' qualifications are checked before an offer is made and checks of English language qualifications on verification websites may be undertaken, ensuring that Tier 4 sponsored applicants meet the necessary English language requirements. The Admissions Policy, associated procedures and documentation, and website information would allow Expectation B2 to be met.

2.8 In order to test this expectation the review team examined the Admissions Policy, documentation and information on the website relating to admissions, training for those involved with recruitment, the role of recruitment agents and minutes of committees. The review team met with staff involved with recruitment and admission as well as asking students about their admission experience.

2.9 The review team saw evidence of transparent, inclusive and effective recruitment policies supported by carefully detailed procedures. Student admissions are managed by the Admissions team to ensure a professional approach operating with fairness and consistency. Each Admissions Officer undergoes National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) training and is provided with managerial support in understanding and implementing the Admissions Policy. The Admissions Policy operates within the requirements of the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Policy Guidance, and expectations of the Quality Code *Chapter B2*.

2.10 Agents play a central role in the recruitment process; accordingly, Navitas UK undertakes due diligence and reference checks prior to contracting with and training an agent. The CRIC trains, updates and manages its agents based on the revised Navitas UK Agent Manual.

2.11 The review team found the CRIC website easy to navigate and was able to access a comprehensive range of resources providing clear information to applicants in relation to courses, links to Key Information Sets (KIS) data, admission requirements, language and academic qualification equivalents, the College and its location and the process of applying.

2.12 There is a clear and transparent procedure specifying the grounds for making an appeal against a decision to reject a student. Appeals are made to the Admissions Office, which reports its deliberations and decision to the College Learning and Teaching Board (CLTB). If necessary, the CLTB may refer the appeal to the Quality and Standards Office.

2.13 Students to whom the review team spoke, as well as those involved in the compilation of the student written submission to this review, considered that they had been very well supported and advised through the process of making an informed decision, by marketing and admissions staff and by agents. They understood how the admission process worked and were clear about what they needed to do. They also referred to the clarity of information on the website. They considered that the advice and information that they had received prepared them well for the transition to College.

2.14 Monitoring and review of the operation of recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures is conducted effectively and operates in accordance with the agreed terms of reference. The College Director of Marketing Admissions reports every trimester to the JSPMB on the College's expected recruitment numbers, recruitment strategies and admissions procedures. A senior member of staff from Navitas UK regularly attends the JSPMB to provide strategic input and oversight. Any changes or additions to published information must, however, be signed off by the University.

2.15 The College has clear and comprehensive policies and procedures for the recruitment, selection and admission of students. Practices are transparent and supportive, adhering to the principles of the Quality Code, *Chapter B2*. On this basis the review team concludes that Expectation B2 is met and the associated level of risk is low

Expectation: Met
Level of Risk: Low

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.16 CRIC has a strategic approach to learning and teaching. Its Learning and Teaching plan, based on Navitas UK's Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan 2013-18, sets out the principles, policy and framework for learning, teaching, and assessment. CRIC's Strategic Plan identifies its strengths as high performing teaching and learning provision, utilising training, peer observations, moderation, and evaluation processes. It also recognises the role of learning and teaching technology, use of student feedback, and well-motivated, high performing staff.

2.17 The learning and teaching opportunities include classroom lectures, tutorials, laboratory sessions and workshops, which enable students to achieve the learning outcomes. The students are timetabled in fully equipped lecture theatres, seminar rooms and laboratories sited in the University campus buildings. Two virtual learning environments (VLEs) supplement the classroom-based activities.

2.18 ARU approves staff teaching on the programmes through scrutiny of staff CVs. The many opportunities for staff development include access to ARU staff development, support for the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship, ARU's Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching course and specific enhancement workshops. CRIC operates an annual peer observations scheme and management observations are used for performance appraisal. All new staff receive an induction programme and Academic Teaching Staff Handbook.

2.19 The policies and practices of CRIC would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.20 The review team tested the expectation and the effectiveness of teaching and learning by scrutinising CRIC and Navitas UK strategy documents, student surveys, and external examiner reports and by meeting teaching staff, students and professional support staff.

2.21 Navitas UK's Independent Learning Charter is well publicised at CRIC. The students are well supported in their development as independent learners and are able to study their subjects in depth. They comment positively on the availability of learning and support resources and services, and on the availability and quality of the support they receive from both academic and support staff. They also comment positively on the content of, and access to, the VLE and specialist digital learning resources.

2.22 The students are particularly positive about how well prepared both personally and academically they are for the transition to university study. Tracer data shows CRIC students equalling or exceeding the performance of other international students on their subsequent university programme. The staff say this is achieved because CRIC has very good links with ARU and is based on the University campus. Other features that facilitate this transition include experience days, module teaching structured specifically to support transition, co-teaching, regular tutorials to develop independent learning, individual assessment feedback,

the compulsory weekly Interactive Learning Skills and Communications modules and extracurricula activities.

2.23 Learning resources and student support are in place to support student learning and achievement and prepare students for university study. There are systematic and effective assurance and review processes in place to ensure that the quality of provision is enhanced. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Findings

2.24 CRIC's Strategic Plan and the College Charter articulate how the College develops the students' academic, personal and professional potential. The Charter states that CRIC is committed to providing a challenging learning environment for its culturally and geographically diverse international student population. CRIC considers its commitment to the academic personal and professional potential of students to be a particular strength.

2.25 The support systems in place suggest that this Expectation is met.

2.26 The team tested the Expectation by examining a range of policies, documents including the Student Charter, the College Charter, the College's Strategic Plan, committee minutes and handbooks. They also met teaching staff, professional student support staff and students.

2.27 The students obtain specialised support from the Student Skills Unit, the ILSC module, University Immigration Advice and the CRIC and University Student Services Team.

2.28 There is a comprehensive Induction (and pre-induction) programme for newly arriving students, an induction social event to meet fellow students, campus tours and further activities. The new students have a mentor from the student body and progressed students are keen to be part of this system.

2.29 There is a student-led Events Programme with extracurricular activities such as trips, sports, talent shows and cultural events, as well as the clubs and societies offered by the ARU Students' Union. In order to provide students with wider experiences this has been outsourced to an independent company.

2.30 The Self Improvement Time initiative has been developed further and allows increased tutorial access to teaching staff. The Students in Jeopardy programme has been enhanced by Student Champions, staff members without any academic connection to the student. This programme also identifies staff development needs because of the changing student profile, such as mental health training for support staff.

2.31 Joint staff student twilight sessions include careers and employability advice and the use of technology in learning. The ILSC module encourages students to take proactive developmental steps throughout their study at CRIC.

2.32 CRIC has a dedicated Student Services Team, enhanced student support initiatives and a close relationship with the support services of the University. These enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The annual monitoring process evaluates these activities. The students report both in meetings and in their submission to this review that their introduction to CRIC and the UK, and transition to the University, has been very well supported. This support contributes greatly to their development and achievement. CRIC's holistic approach to academic and pastoral support, creating a caring and supportive learning environment, is **good practice**. Another feature of **good practice** noted by the team was the particularly comprehensive and supportive preparation for transition to university study, which leads to high levels of progression.

2.33 This holistic approach within the frameworks of the University and Navitas UK, and the commitment of the staff, enable the Expectation to be met and the associated level of risk to be low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement

Findings

2.34 CRIC's arrangements for student engagement are based on Navitas UK's Enhancement Strategy. Students sit as members of the CRIC Student Council and the CRIC College Enhancement Team (CET). These committees report to the College Teaching and Learning Board, which has a student member. Students elect their representatives each semester. Information to students on the range of opportunities and training available for student engagement is made available through handbooks, verbal briefings and meetings with the College Director/Principal. CRIC seeks individual student feedback at regular intervals.

2.35 The review team found that CRIC has appropriate policies and processes in place for effective student engagement.

2.36 The team tested the Expectation by examining a range of documentary evidence including minutes of relevant committee meetings and the Student Council, and in meetings with teaching staff, professional student support staff and students.

2.37 CRIC employs a wide range of mechanisms for engaging its students and these are effective in ensuring that the learning experience is adequately informed by the student voice. The students show a good level of awareness of the engagement opportunities available to them. Student representatives are given a participation certificate to include in their experiential portfolio, along with gift vouchers in recognition of giving their time and effort towards any of the CRIC committees. The arrangements for ensuring that individual student participation is recognised and rewarded, which contributes to the effectiveness of the collective student voice, is a feature of **good practice**.

2.38 Individual student feedback includes module surveys, internal satisfaction surveys, external surveys, and meetings with external examiners or review panels. The committees evaluate the results and take appropriate action. The committee minutes reveal that explicit consideration is given to feedback from students. Students whom the team met, and the student submission to this review, confirmed that CRIC responds very well to their feedback. The examples of improvements initiated in response to student feedback include a new Student Handbook for integrated students, different assessment methods and changed length of lectures. The responses to survey feedback and student-led initiatives are published in a 'You said, we did' format on the VLE, placed on noticeboards and discussed at Student Council meetings.

2.39 CRIC has a coherent approach to student engagement and takes deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The establishment of an effective College Enhancement Team is one such deliberate step and consequently the expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning

Findings

2.40 The College Assessment Regulations are based on the Navitas UK framework, but are localised in order to align with the regulations of the partner University: they govern all aspects of assessment practice. The implementation of the regulations is the responsibility of the College Learning and Teaching Board, which is monitored by the Academic Advisory Committee and the Navitas UK Quality and Standards Office. The regulations are accompanied by pro formas and a guidance document that supports the implementation of the Assessment Regulations.

2.41 Procedures for the recognition of prior learning are detailed as part of non-standard entry in the admissions policy. This provides for the accreditation of prior learning or admission with exception and is then referred to the College Academic Board as a non-standard application. The Academic Regulations, Policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation B6 to be met.

2.42 The review team scrutinised relevant regulations, policy and strategy documents, minutes of meetings, minutes of annual monitoring, assessment panels and boards, staff development resources and workshops relating to assessment, student survey data and a range of link tutor and external examiner comments and reports. The team met with staff and students and viewed assessment related information for students on the CRIC virtual learning environment.

2.43 CRIC operates a two-tier system of formal processes to agree assessment outcomes: College Module Panels and College Progression Boards. The composition, terms of reference and process to ensure the secure recording of results are set out in the assessment regulations and College operations manuals. The effective operation of the boards was confirmed by the external examiners, with only one minor exception relating to the timing of boards, following a change in the structure of the partner University's academic year.

2.44 Level 3 and 7 assessments are moderated and approved internally at CRIC, whereas FHEQ Level 4 assessments are moderated and approved externally by the University link tutors. The arrangements for moderation of the ILSC module across Navitas UK colleges provides an additional mechanism for ensuring parity of standards in assessment. The evidence confirms that the comprehensive processes for marking and moderating assessments are clearly articulated, understood and implemented by those involved in the assessment process.

2.45 The regulations and guidance support academic staff in designing assessment strategies and tasks. Templates are included for programme specifications, definitive module documents, module guides and assessment feedback. Effective use of the framework provided by the Navitas UK policies and guidance was revealed in the programme specifications, definitive module documents and module guides seen by the team. These reveal an inclusive approach to assessment, designed to accommodate diverse student needs and prepare them for summative assessments.

2.46 Meetings with students and staff confirmed that the good practice highlighted in the 2012 Navitas UK Institutional Approval in relation to providing timely, individualised feedback on coursework assignments is firmly embedded in practice in accordance with the requirements in the Assessment Regulations.

2.47 There is also evidence of a continuing commitment to building on the good practice identified in the 2015 ECREO monitoring visit. All academic staff had received a copy of the Provider Best Practice in Assessment and Feedback guidance, highlighted as contributing to a feature of good practice for Navitas UK (Expectation B6). Twilight staff development sessions have included a focus on assessment and feedback practice. Meetings with staff revealed awareness of the Best Practice guidance and a very thoughtful understanding of the role of assessment in learning, combined with a proactive approach to providing individualised, timely and useful feedback in ways that responded to students' needs. Students gave examples of feedback that responded to their individual needs and enabled their learning. Student surveys reveal high levels of satisfaction with assessment and feedback, which was also confirmed in meetings with students and by students involved with compiling the student submission to this review. The flexible and effective assessment feedback mechanisms, which enable and promote student learning, are **good practice**.

2.48 The Interactive Learning Skills and Communication module is taken by all Navitas UK embedded college students. The development of good academic practice is a central part of this module. Within the assessment regulations there are appropriate mechanisms for defining, explaining and addressing academic misconduct. The College also makes use of electronic plagiarism-detection methods as a developmental tool, as well as for detection for all text-based submissions. Students whom the team met feel that they have received very helpful instruction in this and progressed students were subsequently able to advise their peers on aspects of referencing. Staff were attuned to the particular needs of international students and the cultural differences in academic practice.

2.49 Students have an adequate understanding of the existence of appropriate mechanisms for making reasonable adjustments and reporting mitigating circumstances. They are confident about how to access help if needed and see the student services staff as key in signposting them to whatever help they require. They do not have experience of needing to be reassessed, but were confident that, if needed, they would have an opportunity to be reassessed and that the information would be available to them.

2.50 Rigorous oversight of the academic progress of students is ensured through careful monitoring internally, as well as externally by the partner University and Navitas UK. Tracer data is produced by the University, which enables a comparison of the performance of the College students with those directly recruited to the University. Key Performance Indicators focus on pass rates, progression rates and retention. Monitoring takes place within the partnership with the University through JSPMB, AAC and annual monitoring; within the CRIC through the College Learning and Teaching Board, as well as at programme and module level; and by Navitas UK through the Senior Management Team and the Quality and Standards office.

2.51 The review team finds that the College has in place comprehensive and thorough assessment regulations, policies and processes that support all students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes, as required by expectation B6. The flexible and effective feedback mechanisms are **good practice**. The review team concludes that Expectation B6 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of Risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.52 The College operates within the framework of the Navitas UK Regulations and Policies, which stipulate that partner universities have operational responsibility for assuring academic standards. As part of this responsibility, the partner University acts as the external examiner for CRIC. Accordingly, where the University regulations do not require the appointment of an independent external examiner, external scrutiny is provided by the link tutor or a subject specialist within the University. The role of the link tutor is clearly specified in the College Operations Manual. In the case of the Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC) modules where there is no equivalent provision within the Universities, externality is provided by a Navitas-UK appointed external moderator.

2.53 Operational responsibility for the appointment and removal of external examiners lies with the College Learning and Teaching Board. This enables CRIC to use the services of an external, who is independent from the University and the College, for specific purposes as part of the quality assurance processes. CRIC has chosen to exercise this option and has appointed an external examiner to provide an annual overview of the FHEQ Level 7 programme, Pre-Master's in Management.

2.54 In accordance with the Recognition and Articulation Agreement with the University, external examiners are appointed using the University regulations and code of practice for external examining. They are designed to ensure that external examiners are independent and can fulfil their duties without conflict of interest.

2.55 This regulatory and policy framework would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.56 The review team tested the application of the policy and procedures by scrutinising relevant regulations and guidance, link tutor and external examiner reports, College responses to link tutor and external examiner reports, minutes of annual monitoring and the action planning arising from it. The review team also discussed the sharing of link tutor and external examiner reports with students and with staff from the University and CRIC.

2.57 There is a robust approach to oversight of the link tutor, moderator and external examiner reports, which is ensured through the respective requirements of the University, CRIC and the Navitas UK Quality Standards Office. It also exercises scrutiny over the response to reports through its own procedures for quality assurance of external examiners' reports.

2.58 The CRIC Quality Manual provides guidance on the role of link tutors, supplemented by guidance from Navitas UK, on the role of external examiners. This clarifies the responsibilities of the colleges in relation to the appointment and induction of external examiners. The evidence from the link tutor whom the review team met, and from the external examiner report, confirmed their understanding of their roles in maintaining standards and affording independent external perspectives.

2.59 Examination Practice and Policy is clearly set out, as is the schedule for marking and moderating assessments. The moderation process involves the partner University as the external. The link tutors from the relevant department are closely involved in the moderation of marks exercise, which provides them with a clear remit in terms of independent quality assurance. There is evidence of an appropriate level of challenge.

2.60 The external examiner (where appointed) and link tutors are present at College Module Panels and Progression Boards. The minutes of the College Learning and Teaching Board and annual monitoring overview report confirm that due consideration is paid to the comments of external moderators, link tutors and the external examiner.

2.61 The reports seen by the review team were fit for purpose and predominantly very positive about the quality of provision, confirming that standards meet the threshold requirements, that courses remain current and that course learning outcomes are in line with the relevant qualification descriptors and Subject Benchmark Statements.

2.62 External examiner and link tutor reports form a key part of the data considered at annual monitoring and periodic/institutional review. Oversight and monitoring is provided by the Navitas UK Quality and Standards Office, the College Learning and Teaching Boards and the Academic Advisory Committee and the requirement to produce action plans.

2.63 External examiners' reports are placed on the CRIC VLE so that all students can view the comments made. Students are able to discuss any items with CRIC through the College Enhancement Team (CET) via a representative on the student council. Students whom the review team spoke to showed little awareness of the availability of the external examiner report; however, as there is only one external examiner, it is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach.

2.64 CRIC has made effective use of feedback from link tutors and the external examiner. The appointment of an external examiner for the pre-master's programme demonstrates the value accorded to external perspectives as part of an ongoing commitment to quality assurance. The review team therefore concludes that the current policy and regulatory framework of Navitas UK enables proper use of external examiners and concludes that Expectation B7 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of Risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

Findings

2.65 CRIC is responsible for the annual monitoring of its programmes. Navitas UK's Policies and Regulations framework has been localised and CRIC participates in ARU's Annual Monitoring process.

2.66 CRIC's Academic Services team produces the Annual Monitoring Report and Action Plan . The report includes assessment moderation reports, student feedback, teaching staff feedback, student progression and achievement data. This is considered by the CLTB, then an ARU Faculty meeting and Academic Advisory Committee. It is also forwarded to Navitas UK's Quality and Standards Office, where any trends and common issues will be identified for action, as well as features of good practice for dissemination across the Navitas UK Colleges via the Learning and Teaching Committee.

2.67 The policies and procedures of CRIC would allow this Expectation to be met.

2.68 The review team scrutinised a range of evidence to test the success of the framework and its associated processes. This included annual monitoring reports and action plans. Discussions with all categories of staff further contributed evidence that programme monitoring and review processes assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities.

2.69 Annual monitoring reports show thorough consideration of module and programme performance with clear actions, targets and goals identified. The completed actions from the 2014 report included manual reporting of student data to faculties; reviewing the Art and Design programme structure; and identifying easily measureable student performance targets. CRIC uses a tracer report that tracks the performance of its students as they progress through ARU. This compares CRIC international students with those directly recruited to the University. The tracking identified that cultural aspects were disadvantaging CRIC students in some modules so CRIC introduced extra support. The effective use of tracer data in reviewing existing curricula, which enhances student learning opportunities, is **good practice**.

2.70 CRIC has appropriate and effective policies and procedures in place for the annual monitoring of its academic provision. Programme monitoring takes place against clear criteria. The processes are firmly embedded and well understood by staff, who contribute through generating module summaries . Students are involved in the monitoring and review processes through module feedback and membership of the CRIC Enhancement Team , the Student Council , and the CRIC Learning and Teaching Board . The minutes of meetings show their attendance.

2.71 The monitoring and review processes are scrupulously followed. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Findings

2.72 CRIC has a Student Appeals and Grievances policy, which is based on a standard Navitas UK policy, but which has been customised to the requirements of the College as an Associate College of the University. As students are enrolled at an Associate College of the University, CRIC's Appeals and Grievances policy is the sole method of appeal or complaint open to them. The exception to this rule is for students on the integrated delivery pathway, who may submit an academic appeal or complaint through the University's procedure.

2.73 The College Learning and Teaching Board has responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Appeals and Grievances Policy. The Policy includes a procedure for appeals on formal grounds against the decision of Module Boards or Progression Boards, and a procedure for complaints, by students who hold grievances about aspects of their learning experience. The appeals procedure identifies four possible grounds on which an appeal can be made. With respect to complaints, there is an informal stage followed by a formal two-stage procedure.

2.74 The complaints and appeals procedures are appropriately detailed and timescales are included. They are signposted in the College Operations Manual, on the student VLE and in the Integrated Student handbook. CRIC has in place appropriate policies and procedures that would enable Expectation B9 to be met.

2.75 The review team tested the effectiveness of the procedures by examining documentation, including the policies for complaints, student handbooks and the VLE. The review team also held meetings with staff and students.

2.76 The policy is appropriately detailed and comprehensive, without being overly lengthy. The procedure and grounds for making an appeal against the outcome or conduct of an examination or coursework is very clear and straightforward. Students were able to confirm that they had experience of the satisfactory operation of the policy.

2.77 The procedure for complaints includes consideration of complaints made by students under the age of 18 years and of complaints brought by groups of students. It gives due regard to confidentiality for staff and students and seeks to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by bringing a complaint. There is encouragement within the policy to try to resolve complaints at the informal stage. If a complaint has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction under the informal procedure, the student submits a complaint form to the College Learning and Teaching Board, which must be acknowledged by the College Director/Principal within five working days. Attempts to facilitate conciliation are encouraged where appropriate. If there is no resolution an appeal can be made to the Navitas UK Director of Learning and Teaching Quality, who may convene a panel chaired by the Executive General Manager of Navitas UK, so providing some separation from those in direct contact with the student and the issues raised.

2.78 Students whom the review team met are aware of the existence of the policy for Appeals and Grievances and said that they contact the student services office if they need any help, such as finding out about how to access or use the policy. For students who wish to consider raising matters of concern without letting staff know, the student handbook for

Integrated Delivery Pathway students did contain some signposting, indicating which policy to use and a hyperlink to the University Academic Regulations; there was no equivalent signposting in the Standard Delivery Pathway student handbook. However, the demonstration of the VLE confirmed that the information is also available on the VLE.

2.79 The students confirmed that the College is very responsive and that any issues that they had raised were resolved through discussion without resort to formal processes. They were clear about the distinction between an academic appeal and a complaint about a grievance. They were also aware that they could be accompanied and could seek support from the Students' Union if they wanted independent representation or advice.

2.80 The evidence from the documentation and the meetings shows that staff and students are sufficiently clear about the policies and procedures in place and how to access this information, if needed. The review team concludes therefore that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of Risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.81 In reaching its commended judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.82 All of the Expectations in this area are met and the associated level of risk is low in each case. The team identifies five features of good practice in this area. There are no recommendations.

2.83 The features of good practice identified include the holistic approach to academic and pastoral support, creating a caring and supportive learning environment, the particularly comprehensive and supportive preparation for transition to university study, which leads to high levels of progression, and the arrangements for ensuring that individual student participation is recognised and rewarded that contribute to the effectiveness of the collective student voice. In terms of assessment, the review team recognises the flexible and effective assessment feedback mechanisms that enable and promote student learning.

2.84 The effective use of tracer data from the University in reviewing curricula and student performance and achievement was also recognised as good practice.

2.85 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at Cambridge Ruskin International College is **commended**.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 CRIC adopts a multi-faceted approach for information delivery to stakeholders, using printed material, comprehensive online information, recruitment fairs, virtual presentations and social media. Navitas UK has a centralised design department that assists with the design of communication and marketing materials and ensures oversight, including compliance with Navitas UK brand guidelines.

3.2 All CRIC published content is managed under the remit of the College Director of Marketing and Admission and subject to approval by the University. Approved marketing materials are reported and noted at the joint Marketing Advisory Committee, which meets once per semester. College website content is reviewed quarterly to ensure its accuracy and the main student guide is revised annually. CRIC's Policies and Regulations are included in the Operations Manual, which is reviewed annually by the Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board (JSPMB). They are available to staff and students on the VLE and in hard copy in the College.

3.3 Full information about CRIC, the location and courses available, along with the process for application and admission, is provided on its website, with links to the University website and other useful sites.

3.4 Course outlines and course progression opportunities are published on the web pages, as well as information about teaching staff and the approach to learning and teaching.

3.5 Detailed information for enrolled students is provided on the VLE, in handbooks, by email and by text. There is a College Charter and a student independent learning charter, clearly setting out the responsibilities of CRIC and the responsibilities of students.

3.6 CRIC does not make any awards; on completion of their studies with the College, students receive a Confirmation of Attainment certificate, detailing their achievement at CRIC. This approach to the quality of the information about learning opportunities is consistent with the Quality Code, Part C and allows the Expectation to be met in theory.

3.7 The review team examined the effectiveness of the policies and procedures in place for information by examining relevant documentation, including minutes of meetings demonstrating oversight, and by exploring the extensive information available on web pages. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching staff and professional services staff.

3.8 The information on the web pages and the VLE seen by the review team was very clear, current and accurately reflected CRIC and the provision available to students. It was accessible and comprehensive, with links to other resources that students might need to refer to in order to make choices and to apply. Minutes of meetings and email correspondence confirmed the involvement of the University in ensuring that information is current and accurate.

3.9 The students whom the review team met were very satisfied with the information that they had received through the process of application and arrival as students. Student satisfaction with pre-arrival information is also reflected in pre-arrival survey findings. As enrolled students, they confirmed that detailed course information is provided, including information about assessment, in hard copy and through the student VLE. Students were confident in their knowledge of College policies and procedures, and if unsure about anything, were confident that they knew how to find the information. Students involved in compiling the student submission to this review also considered that information is clear and concise. They valued information being published on different platforms to ensure all students are aware of their exams and assignment deadlines. They also highlighted the willingness of staff to respond to any queries that they had.

3.10 The College makes available clear and accurate information to prospective and current students enabling them to make informed choices about programmes of study. The College has appropriate mechanisms in place to check that information is accurate. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of Risk: Low

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.11 In reaching its judgement relating to the quality of information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. There are no recommendations or affirmations in this area.

3.12 The College has robust systems for the production and monitoring of information. The team also recognises the effective use of the virtual learning environment for the provision of information for prospective students and for the management of assessment for current students.

3.13 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at Cambridge Ruskin International College **meets** UK expectations.

4 Commentary on the enhancement of student learning opportunities

Findings

4.1 CRIC's strategic approach to enhancement of the student experience is based on Navitas UK policy and procedure. The College Enhancement Team (CET) is the formal quality enhancement mechanism which includes students and staff. Its purposes is to engage students and enhance areas that most directly affect their experience.

4.2 The CET at CRIC reviews strategic enhancement priorities annually and identifies specific themes. For 2015-16, the themes are enhanced mechanisms for student success; better use of technology in learning; more effective use of student feedback; and enhancement of student success. These contribute to achieving the CRIC four-year strategic plan and are informed by the monitoring and review processes, student surveys, staff feedback, the CLTB and Navitas LTC. The impact of enhancement initiatives is measured through the AMR and student feedback. The CET reports to the College's Learning and Teaching Board (CLTB).

4.3 The Navitas UK Director of Student Experience and Academic Quality reports on the activities of the College CET to the Learning and Teaching Committee Navitas UK.

4.4 The focused CET identifies deliberate steps to improve the quality of the students' learning experience with clear commitment from senior staff. There is evidence of systematic enhancement embedded across the College. The AMR demonstrates that the themes of 2014-5 were completed and reviewed with positive feedback received from students and staff. All the priorities have been addressed with some being developed, contributing to further enhancement.

4.5 For example, the pilot student Self-Improvement Time (SIT) initiative, which was designed to enhance students' independent learning skills, has since been integrated as standard into delivery and feedback practices. Also, the Students in Jeopardy programme has been extended and is not now exclusively for students at risk. New initiatives include the Student Champion system and Student Meetings Agreement for those with marginal academic performance.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Digital Literacies

Findings

5.1 The Provider has an overarching Virtual Learning Strategy that aims to support and promote the development of digital literacy throughout the network of UK Navitas Colleges. This strategy provides the direction for the development of digital literacy within CRIC, which has identified Better Use of Technology in Learning Initiatives, as a key enhancement project for 2015-16 to be taken forward by the College Enhancement Team (CET).

5.2 CRIC provides leadership in the development of digital literacy primarily by ensuring the provision of appropriate resources for all students and staff, enabling them to have access to adequate information technology (IT) resources, regardless of their financial position. IT hardware is available at the College campuses in Cambridge and Chelmsford, where there is ratio of one student to one workstation in all information communication and technology classes. The simultaneous access to workstations is seen by CRIC as the essential benchmark for successful enhancement of digital literacy. Additional IT resources are available across the University campus. Students valued the resources and opportunity to use both University and CRIC VLEs, where they could access information, news, course materials, timetables, assessment results and communicate directly with staff and peers.

5.3 Students saw the development of digital literacy as a strong point at CRIC. They were able to describe a range of ways in which the development of digital literacy is embedded in the curriculum, from support for the development of basic skills within the Interactive Learning and Communication Skills module, to the use of discipline/profession-specific software within particular pathways. CRIC is also using innovative in-class software, enabling more interaction within teaching sessions, using podcasts and video recording presentations.

5.4 The VLE is used extensively to support and enhance assessment. Where appropriate to the nature of the assignment submission, electronic plagiarism detection software is used as a developmental tool, enabling students to identify clearly any potential academic misconduct. Additionally, marking and feedback can take place online, in accordance with the University practice.

5.5 Staff development is recognised as central to the development of digital literacy in students. New staff receive support as part of their induction; continuing staff development is provided through a mixture of in-house and external training. Staff are able to access the University training, including the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, which has a significant digital literacy component. Learning from the course has been shared in twilight sessions focusing on the enhanced use of technology in learning.

5.6 There is a firm commitment to the ongoing development of digital literacy within CRIC, supported by enthusiasm and a willingness to experiment within the staff team. Students took the need for digital literacy as a given and valued the access to resources and opportunities provided to use technology to enhance their learning.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 24-27 of the [Higher Education Review \(Embedded Colleges\) handbook](#)

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx

Academic standards

The standards set by **degree-awarding bodies** for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)

A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-awarding body

A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning

A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.

See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award

The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Embedded college

Colleges, often operating as part of a network, that are embedded on or near the campuses of two or more UK higher education institutions (HEI) and that primarily provide preparatory programmes for higher education

Enhancement

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

Expectations

Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.

See also **distance learning**.

Framework

A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

Framework for higher education qualifications

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FHEQIS).

Good practice

A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities

The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcomes

What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Operational definition

A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

Programme (of study)

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Programme specifications

Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

Public information

Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

Quality Code

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Subject Benchmark Statement

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation

Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557 050
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk