



Educational Oversight for embedded colleges: report of the monitoring visit of Navitas Holdings UK Ltd Edinburgh International College, April 2017

Edinburgh International College

1 Outcome of the monitoring visit

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

2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 Since the last QAA review in April 2016, the former head of another college in the Navitas UK network has been appointed on an interim basis as Principal of the College. Efforts have continued to fill the post on a permanent basis and the College is confident that a new College Principal will be in place before the start of the next academic year. Student numbers remain stable. As discussed below, a number of new pathways are in the process of approval. No other significant changes have occurred.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The College has addressed the recommendations from the 2016 review and has built further on the feature of good practice identified in the report. Some of the actions taken following the review have led to change and enhancement of the provision. Other actions require a longer lead time before results can be measured. These areas of continuing action do not put academic standards or quality at risk. The College is working effectively with the University to gather tracer data. A marketing strategy has been developed and a significant increase in pathways has been proposed to increase student numbers. Successful expansion will depend on increased staffing to cover new subjects and new levels. Staff development is encouraged and records of activities are maintained. The next annual monitoring visit should review these matters. The College has structures and processes in place that monitor the effectiveness of actions being taken and foster continuous improvement and enhancement.

4 The feature of good practice identified in the 2016 review was the effectiveness of the critical thinking strand in the pre-master's ILSC programme, providing excellent preparation for postgraduate students in business management. The College staff made a webcast, supported by guidance notes, which has been made available globally through the Navitas Teaching and Learning Network. The module continues to support good student performance both in the College and when students progress.

5 The 2016 review contained four recommendations for improvement. The first of these was to undergo a periodic review to monitor the quality and standards of the programmes offered at the College. A review took place in October 2016, chaired by the principal of another college in the Navitas network. The panel included staff from the University, Navitas UK and an independent external member. The report of the review included a number of commendations and recommendations. Following the review an action plan was produced to address the recommendations, all of which have now been signed off as complete.

6 The second recommendation related to effective use of tracer data in reviewing existing curricula in order to enhance student learning opportunities. The College receives basic data on the performance of students who progress to the University annually. The College is working with the University to obtain more detailed data, which is expected later this year. Data feeds into annual monitoring and committee discussions, but small numbers limit the conclusions that can be drawn.

7 The third recommendation was to continue to support the growth of international students at the University. The College and the University have taken steps to work jointly to market and cross-sell their programmes in targeted markets. A new marketing plan has been developed and is monitored by the Marketing Planning Advisory Committee, reporting to the Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board. In addition to marketing activities, the College has proposed a significant expansion in available pathways for the next academic year. A new Creative Industries pathway, and provision relating to sport and exercise, are under consideration. An approval event has recently taken place to provide either standard or integrated delivery of all level 7 provision at level 8, with level 8 entry for most pathways. The College stated that it was confident that staffing could be found to support the expanded provision.

8 As yet, the impact of these initiatives on student numbers is uncertain. The College aims to mitigate the limitations of very small cohorts by grouping students together and providing opportunities to experience larger classes. Students welcome studying in small classes and individual attention. However, they also comment on the desirability of belonging to a larger diverse student body.

9 The fourth recommendation was to develop further the EIC Good Scholarship Policy and the Academic Merit Recognition Policy for both academic merit and academic engagement. The Good Scholarship Policy is introduced to students at induction, made available on the VLE and covered in teaching. Following recommendations made by the periodic review, steps have been taken to introduce a consistent policy for the use of plagiarism-detection software, aligned to the policy in place at the University. Students now upload all non-science work electronically using the software and are able to upload drafts and receive feedback on originality. Policy documents and guidance to staff have been distributed and training provided. Merit awards are made each semester and the College has undertaken work with students to develop and issue a local version of the Independent Learning Charter.

10 The College's admissions policy and procedures, which are derived from the provider Navitas UK's overarching admission policies and regulations, are agreed with the University. Entry requirements for each pathway are also agreed with the University, set out in brochures, and published on the College website. Entry requirements are reviewed annually. The College admissions policy embodies key expectations of the Quality Code and aligns with UKVI Tier 4 regulations. The policy is made available to staff on the VLE. Students confirm that the admissions process is transparent and efficient. Operationally, the College's Admissions Office

works closely with the Navitas UK Admissions and Recruitment Centre and the University. English language competence is measured using tests approved by UKVI. Applicants whose qualifications do not meet standard requirements are considered by the College Admissions Board and may be referred to the University. Credibility interviews are conducted where an applicant's intention to study is in doubt.

11 College policies for annual monitoring are aligned with those of the University. An annual monitoring report is compiled for the programmes delivered at the College by the College Manager of Academic and Student Services using a standard template. The report includes statistical analysis of student numbers and performance, and qualitative data derived from staff and student feedback. It is expected that future reports will include more detailed analysis of tracer data. The Annual Programme Monitoring Report includes an action plan. The report is discussed at the College Learning and Teaching Board and the joint Academic Advisory Committee. The Academic Advisory Committee prepares a semesterly report for the College as a whole. Student performance, measured by retention, completion and progression, remains satisfactory.

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

12 The expectations of the Quality Code are embedded in the quality assurance systems, policies and practices of the provider, Navitas UK, and the University: these underpin College policies. Staff have access to these policies through the VLE. In subjects such as engineering, attention is paid to the requirements of the relevant professional body. Staff also use Subject Benchmark Statements to inform their courses. The College encourages enhancement and has in place a three-year quality enhancement strategy. Staff who met the review team explained the work done to enhance the student voice in line with the expectations of the Quality Code. Initiatives include improving the module survey forms, establishing a Student Forum and starting a monthly College newsletter. Sharing of good practice is encouraged and the College has been active in this across the Navitas network. The College encourages training and development for its staff and maintains a record of activities.

5 Background to the monitoring visit

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

14 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Philip Markey, QAA Officer, and Dr Carol Vielba, QAA Reviewer, on 6 April 2017.

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