



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

### 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 continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision following the April 2017 [annual monitoring visit](#).

#### **2 Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit**

2 The last monitoring visit in April 2017 noted that EIC was making acceptable progress. Since this visit there have been no significant changes other than the appointment of a new Principal. Student numbers, premises and programmes remain the same. At the time of the review there were 35 students. Navitas Holdings Ltd decided to close EIC, with the last intake being in January 2018.

#### **3 Findings from the monitoring visit**

3 The review team considered a wide range of evidence, including strategic, policy and programme documentation, information on EIC's website and on the virtual learning environment (VLE). Meetings were held with senior and teaching staff and the University link tutor to discuss progress made during the past year against the action plan from the Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) in April 2016. The review team also met representative undergraduate students. The QAA action plan had been updated in December 2017. EIC subsequently developed its own consolidated action plan into which ongoing actions from the QAA action plan were merged. The action plan was a standing item on the agenda of the College Learning and Teaching Board (CLTB). All action plans were dealt with by the College Enhancement Team (CET). EIC had also developed a three-year strategic business plan, aimed at expanding the provision, but this plan was set aside with the announcement in October 2017 of the closure of EIC. The team found that EIC has continued to make acceptable progress in building on the single feature of good practice (paragraph 7) in addition to four points to consider and address from the report (paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12).

4 EIC underwent a periodic review in October 2016, the findings and actions from which were reported in the 2017 QAA annual monitoring review. Further actions have been reported at Academic Advisory Committee meetings, but have not been cascaded to programme managers at the University. The development of an independent learning charter was detailed in the 2017 annual monitoring review, and further developments have been reported to the Learning and Teaching Boards and the CET.

5 New initiatives to support student growth included the alignment of marketing activities in specific countries between the College and the University. These were undertaken after the appointment of a new College Senior Marketing Manager in May 2017, and focused on the September 2018 intake. However, activity was suspended when the decision to close EIC was taken.

6 After some initial difficulties, EIC considers that it now has useful tracer data from the University. Reports have had to be generated manually by the University in order to obtain the required information. Useful tracer data was produced in November 2017. The tracer data is required for the production of EIC's annual monitoring report. The Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) also receive regular data reports, as do the Navitas Quality and Standards Office.

7 The effectiveness of the critical thinking strand in the pre-master's ILSC programme was reported as providing excellent preparation for postgraduate students in business management. Regular reports continue to be made to the AAC and the Navitas Quality and Standards Office.

8 Students were informed of the closure of EIC by Navitas UK in November 2017. Students confirmed that they felt well supported currently, and considered that most activities appeared to be operating normally. Students were content with the small classes and found them enjoyable. They were also very appreciative of the efforts being made by the remaining staff at EIC. Students have little engagement with the University, but continue to be well prepared for the transition by EIC.

9 EIC had offered a number of opportunities for student engagement. There had been a system of elected student representatives attending a Student Council, which met regularly. Feedback to students had included 'you said, we did' initiatives. Following the announcement of the closure of the College, the system of electing representatives and holding formal meetings was discontinued. Aiming to provide a relevant avenue for all remaining students, and conscious of immediate rather than longer term needs, the College has initiated a series of open student forums to which all students are invited. Rather than being a formal meeting, the forums are run as social events with activity and food included. The focus of the debate is on short-term issues and arrangements. Visits and issues for the remaining students are discussed, actioned quickly and arrangements fed back to all students through informal mechanisms. Students confirmed that this was working well.

10 EIC adheres to clear procedures on admission. Its policy, regulations and procedures on admission align with Chapter B2 of the Quality Code and are compliant with UKVI Tier 4 regulations. International students must meet English language entry requirements assessed through the use of the Home Office approved Secure English Language Tests. All Navitas UK colleges use a common set of policies and procedures that are agreed between the company, EIC and partner university for local variations. EIC agrees entry criteria with University faculties and the International Office. English language entry requirements are stipulated in terms of an IELTS score of 5.5 across all components. All institutions and qualifications are verified through UK NARIC and relevant national bodies for examinations. Non-standard applications are reviewed by the EIC Admissions Board, and if necessary referred to the University Academic Registry. All applicants supply a personal statement to help to substantiate genuine intent to study, and some are interviewed by telephone or video call. All Navitas staff and recruitment agents are required to abide by a Code of Ethics which aligns with the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) guidelines. Offers of admission are produced by

agreement with all three parties, EIC, Navitas UK and the University. The formal offer letter to applicants is issued by the central Admissions and Recruitment Centre (ARC) at Navitas UK. Compliance checks are undertaken at random times of year by ARC. EIC contributes to the production of a detailed set of information for students at enquiry, applicant and pre-arrival stages. Materials designed and produced by the ARC ensure consistency of information across colleges. EIC becomes most involved at the post-offer stage, to ensure that students have the appropriate local information for their arrival in Edinburgh. Students confirmed that information provided to them was in general accurate and helpful. They were surprised about the small size of the classes, and would have wished to know at application stage if classes only consisted of one or two students, but recognised that they have benefited from this. Students also confirmed that EIC was very responsive to any queries. Induction was also well organised, informative and supportive.

11 Navitas UK outlines the policy and procedure for the annual monitoring of EIC's provision. The policies for annual monitoring are aligned with those of the University. In addition to monitoring the provision delivered at EIC, the report also monitors student performance of those who have progressed to the University through the use of tracer data. For the academic year 2015-16, annual programme monitoring was undertaken in conjunction with University departments for individual modules. An annual monitoring report for EIC's provision was completed by the Manager of Academic and Student Services. The report includes both quantitative and qualitative data, drawn from moderation reports, student feedback survey data, feedback from student representatives and staff, and progress and achievement data. The report includes an action plan, and is discussed at the College Learning and Teaching Board. It was presented to the joint Academic Advisory Committee in July 2017. Work was started on EIC's annual monitoring report for 2016-17 in October 2017, but has yet to be completed. Currently, six undergraduate module reviews have been undertaken in conjunction with University departments, and the link report for Life Sciences has been completed. The completed EIC annual monitoring report for 2016-17 is due to be presented to the AAC in July 2018. Completion was affected by the departure of the College Manager of Academic and Student Services, the appointment of a new Principal in July 2017, and the announcement of the closure of the College. Nevertheless, there is evidence to indicate that the annual monitoring process is undertaken.

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

12 The QAA annual monitoring report of April 2017 notes that the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) are embedded throughout the policies and practices of Navitas UK at a national level, and are therefore included in EIC's practices. Individual members of staff appeared unfamiliar with the Quality Code as a document. EIC notes that within the past year its approach to educational scholarship has been informed by the Quality Code. Staff remain very active in sharing good practice in teaching, learning and research internally, across Navitas UK networks, and within other external networks. Two members of staff presented a talk at the QAA Enhancement Conference in Glasgow in June 2017. One member of staff is currently participating in the University's PG Cert in Teaching and Learning. In admissions, the College makes appropriate reference to the requirements and guidelines of UKVI, UK NARIC and UKCISA. EIC links to the Staff Educational Development Association (SEDA) through the membership of the University.

## 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 Phil Markey, QAA Officer and Dr Helen Corkill, QAA Reviewer, on 17 April 2018.

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