



Navitas UK Holdings Ltd

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

May 2012

Annex 6: London International College of Business and Technology

Introduction and background

London International College of Business and Technology (LIBT) in collaboration with Brunel University delivers educational pathways which incorporate Navitas provision initially, with the student then proceeding to Brunel University (the University) to complete their award. A Recognition and Articulation Agreement (RAA) sets out the legally binding arrangement with the University. LIBT was established in 2003 and provides a foundation year which leads to year one of an undergraduate degree in three related areas and two pre-masters programmes. New management and governance structures were introduced in 2007 and 2009 respectively and arrangements for a further structural change with the introduction of a Joint Strategic Management Board in two to three months' time have been finalised. The Navitas standard approach to the management of standards and quality is in operation at LIBT.

Programmes available at the College include the following:

- University Foundation in Business and Management
- University Foundation in Information Systems and Computing
- University Foundation in Economics and Finance

- First Year Degree in Business and Management
- First Year Degree in Information Systems and Computing
- First Year Degree in Economics and Finance

- Pre-Master's in Business (Business/Management)
- Pre-Master's in Information Systems and Computing

Key findings

Academic standards

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

Quality of learning opportunities

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

Public information

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

Good practice

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

Detailed findings

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

Selection and approval of UK partnership arrangements

1 LIBT does not engage in any international collaborative activity. As noted earlier, there is a formal Recognition and Articulation Agreement (RAA) in place between LIBT and the University. Navitas uses a standard template for the RAA which has been adapted for LIBT.

2 Navitas adopts a corporate approach to academic standards and learning opportunities through its use of College Policies and Regulations and a Quality Manual. Staff at LIBT and Senior staff at the University confirmed their use. LIBT's Learning and Teaching Committee and its Learning and Teaching Forum represent both formal and informal mechanisms for overseeing academic standards and learning opportunities. An Academic Advisory Committee chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor of the University meets each semester thus providing a formal opportunity for both College and University staff engagement. The College Director and Principal is responsible for academic standards and submits a report addressing Key Performance Indicators and academic outcomes to each Academic Advisory Committee meeting.

3 Navitas exercises general oversight of academic standards across its UK based Colleges through regular reporting arrangements. The College Director and Principal confirmed the submission of both monthly and annual reports to Navitas.

4 An Operations Advisory Committee chaired by the LIBT Director and Principal considers all matters relating to learning resources and the review team confirmed that students at LIBT have access to all the University resources applicable to their respective course of study. The team heard that LIBT is currently linking with four Schools at the University. Staff at both the University and LIBT acknowledge the significance of the role of the University link tutors in ensuring academic standards. The team heard that a fourth link tutor is due to be appointed soon, ensuring all the University Schools are represented. Given the apparent variation in the link tutor role, the team concluded that LIBT should seek to

ensure a greater level of transparency in relation to the link tutor role through the development of a role descriptor.

5 The review team considered that the academic standards of LIBT's provision are secure, and appropriate learning opportunities are provided so that students can achieve the defined academic standards.

Approval

6 The review team confirmed that LIBT's approach to course approval is aligned with the University's processes and procedures. The University staff reported that all recommendations resulting from validation events have been addressed and met by LIBT and subsequently approved by the University Senate Body.

Monitoring

7 In keeping with Navitas expectations, the review team heard that LIBT engages in regular monitoring activity. Once approved, LIBT engages in an annual review of each Definitive Module Document (DMD).

8 The review team noted that reports prepared by LIBT Director and Principal are submitted to the Academic Advisory Committee and to the Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board (JSPMB) in addition to formal consideration at Navitas through its Learning and Teaching Committee structure. The University staff reported a high degree of confidence in the information and statistics contained within LIBT reports, stating that they had access to all the raw data collected by LIBT. They commended the tracking activity being undertaken whereby College students are monitored once they progress to the University. Analysis of the tracking data demonstrated that College students were performing very well in comparison with students admitted directly to the University programmes. The review team regarded that the monitoring of programmes is both rigorous and appropriate.

Periodic Review

9 LIBT has undergone two periodic review exercises and is about to engage in a third in May 2012. The review team learnt that College programmes are included in the University periodic review cycle. The University staff confirmed that there would be external experts involved in the forthcoming periodic review process. The review team concluded that appropriate arrangements for course approval, monitoring and review are in place at LIBT.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

10 The review team confirms that the assessment regimes are approved by the partner University as part of the approval process. The team noted that College Policies and Regulations Section 11 sets out the expectations in relation to assessment and also confirmed that stated learning outcomes are published to students.

11 University module leaders are involved in the sampling of student work and the moderation of marks. The review team noted that the Link Tutor plays a significant role in overseeing assessment by attending monitoring panels and progression boards. Students the team met are generally clear about assessment requirements and progression regulations, and had received briefings in relation to the assessment process.

12 The teaching staff the review team met reported that they provide generic feedback to students in classroom sessions and in addition to the individual feedback provided to all

students, they engage in one-to-one tutorials to provide feedback to students needing greater assistance. Students reported that the feedback they received was generally prompt, constructive and useful.

13 The certification of study in the form of Confirmation of Attainment statements is seen as the responsibility of LIBT and students confirmed the receipt of these documents. As Navitas does not make any awards the review team was unable to see how students received formal certification for their achievement of credit at LIBT. The review team formed the view that the high quality, timely feedback provided to students is effective.

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

14 LIBT Policies and Regulations governing the management of academic standards are closely aligned with the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*. All programmes are reviewed at validation events to ensure a good alignment with the Academic Infrastructure including *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. The University staff confirmed the effectiveness of the use of Navitas's College Policies and Regulations.

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

15 The University staff confirmed to the review team that in keeping with the University policy, external examiners are not involved in the oversight of LIBT undergraduate programmes.

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

16 The review team noted that LIBT makes extensive use of statistical data. The team heard that the Navitas management information system (MAZE) is used to produce the regular reports prepared by the LIBT Director and Principal. As data includes pass rates, withdrawal rates and attendance, it is possible for LIBT to monitor student progress and assure standards. The team noted the pride taken by the teaching staff in the achievements of their students following transfer to the University programme pathway as demonstrated by the tracer studies. The review team concluded that effective use is being made of data including the tracer studies.

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

17 The review team heard that the budget for learning resources is managed through the LIBT's Learning and Teaching Committee. Access to the University learning resources is budgeted for on an annual basis. In the absence of a formal enhancement strategy, LIBT staff cited the example of a recent upgrade in the provision of computers for the Information Systems students as being responsive to student need. Students the team met indicated that learning resources are sufficient to meet the intended learning outcomes and that in addition to College resources they also had access to resources at the University.

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

18 The University's processes and procedures are used throughout the approval process, thus setting standards for learning opportunities. Use is made of student feedback for the enhancement of learning opportunities. Students the review team met confirmed that LIBT listen to their feedback about learning resources and are responsive.

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

19 The self-evaluation document claimed, and LIBT Senior staff state, that there is a robust approach to the recruitment and induction of teaching staff with the requirement for the University to approve all appointments. This was confirmed when the review team met teaching staff and senior managers from the University.

20 The review team heard that LIBT implements a robust system whereby all tutors have their teaching reviewed at least annually with some staff being observed more frequently. Link tutors at LIBT are also involved in the review of teaching, and discussions with teaching staff confirmed this. A standard template is used in preparation for teaching observations and also to provide staff with feedback. Where appropriate, feedback forms part of the staff appraisal process. LIBT staff also stated that they felt very well supported and had absolute clarity in relation to what was expected of them. The team heard that as a result of the teaching observation exercise, workshops were introduced to assist staff with the use of modern technology in the delivery of teaching. The review team noted that PhD students were supported to access teaching modules at the University, they received additional support from College module leaders and had their teaching observed regularly.

21 The tutors claimed that they are very student focused and the review team met students who confirmed this. Students reported easy access to LIBT staff. Students confirmed that the standard of teaching met their expectations and that they felt very well prepared for the transition to the University.

22 The review team formed the view that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced and that the consistent and effective use made of teaching observation was a key strength of LIBT.

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

23 The review team noted that students are able to provide feedback through formal and informal routes. Students are members of LIBT's Learning and Teaching Committee. Students also complete module questionnaires and the findings are analysed and communicated to teaching staff.

24 The review team saw evidence of a very active Student Forum with the production of a Student Forum Enhancement Action Plan. Actions taken by LIBT in response to student feedback are formally recorded and monitored. Students the review team met are aware of the existence of a student's charter which provided clarity in terms of expectations. The review team considered that LIBT makes effective use of student feedback.

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

25 Students receive an induction pack prior to arriving at LIBT. They are supported by a student mentor during induction week and reported that the input from student mentors was particularly valuable. All staff at LIBT adopt a student-centred approach, which is commended by the staff at the University. The review team heard that LIBT staff facilitate the transition to higher education and are particularly attentive to student needs. The team considered the introduction of the student mentor role to be a strength of LIBT.

26 Students have access to information through a range of mechanisms, including the Student Portal, the University website, the social networking page and the Student Handbook. In addition, students the review team met reported that the learning outcomes for all modules were explained in detail by the teaching staff. For day-to-day information a plasma screen is utilised for communication within LIBT. Students reported the value of the easily accessible online platform and the e-learning portal.

27 Within the workload allocation model, time is set aside for teaching staff to provide academic and personal support to students. This is in addition to the support provided by the Student Support Staff team. Staff check, and respond to, student email on a daily basis and the students the review team met commented on the effectiveness of the communication with teaching staff.

28 Student attendance is monitored closely and any absence is investigated to ascertain what can be done to assist the student. This may include a home visit. Students under eighteen years of age, with a disability, or students with falling grades were immediately placed on the Student in Jeopardy Programme to ensure appropriate levels of support. The review team considered the Students in Jeopardy Programme to be a strength of LIBT.

29 The review team heard that students were incentivised through a special recognition award scheme designed to promote and commend student achievement. The scheme was reported by the teaching staff to be valued by the students. The effective team working which has created a caring, accessible and responsive learning environment was viewed by the team as a strength of LIBT.

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

30 Students are recruited via agents and LIBT and Navitas marketing staff. The admissions team scheduled meetings on a weekly basis and communicated with the University International Office on a daily basis to ensure the smooth running of this function. LIBT staff reported that the University had oversight of the admissions process. Agents are subject to the very rigorous Navitas recruitment processes and some agents also operate on behalf of the University.

31 The review team learnt that induction packs, sent to students as part of the admissions process, were comprehensive and useful. Students reported that they felt part of The University on arrival. They reported, however, that they were not full members of the University Students' Union and were not able to take advantage of all facilities. This had been brought to the attention of LIBT and the University confirmed that this had been addressed and that students will in future be full members of the Student Union. The review team concluded that the careful recruitment and effective use of agents was a strength of LIBT.

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

32 The review team learned that all LIBT staffing posts were advertised and that the University approves all teaching appointments through the Link Tutor.

33 The review team noted the induction programme in place for newly appointed staff, and teaching staff the team met stated the benefits of formal and informal opportunities for staff development. These ranged from shadowing experienced staff members to accessing workshops and courses. The University staff reported that the Link Tutor contributed to the identification of staff development needs.

34 PhD students are recruited to teach and this is seen as a developmental opportunity with LIBT providing support and access to in-house staff development. Overall attendance at staff development events was reported to be between 70-100 per cent. The review team also heard that staff are able to access developmental opportunities at the University.

35 The review team found LIBT to be a very collegial, with staff assisting each other and sharing good practice. This way of working is facilitated through regular email and telephone contact and through the effective use of the web portal. The review team regarded the provision of staff development to be a key strength of LIBT.

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

36 The review team learned that students at LIBT have access to all the University resources applicable to their respective course of study. Detailed consideration is given to the resource requirements of any new proposals in order that appropriate learning opportunities can be secured. The University staff confirmed that LIBT's requests for teaching space were considered alongside in-house requests.

37 The review team saw evidence that confirmed the LIBT's responsiveness to student feedback regarding learning resources. Students are able to feedback to LIBT staff through module evaluation questionnaires at the completion of each module. In addition, students reported being active members of the Learning and Teaching Committee where learning resource matters were discussed. The review team viewed that LIBT was effective in providing appropriate learning resources to students.

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

38 The review team learned that the information provided to student both prior to arrival and while at LIBT was comprehensive, accurate, and helpful. Definitive module documents and programme specifications are freely available and provide adequate information for both staff and students.

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

39 The College Director and Principal is responsible for the accuracy of all published material. Students confirmed that the material they received was comprehensive, accurate and helpful. LIBT conform to the standard Navitas approach for the review of the accuracy

and completeness of information. A Marketing Planning and Advisory Committee also assists in ensuring the accuracy of marketing material. The review team viewed the arrangements to be effective.

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