



## Educational Oversight for Embedded Colleges: report of the monitoring visit of Navitas UK Holdings, April 2019

### The College, Swansea University

#### Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that The College, Swansea University (The College) is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the April 2018 [monitoring visit](#).

#### Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 There have been several changes since the last monitoring visit. There has been a change of address and site, a change of name, and a merger with the University to form a joint venture. There is a new governance structure and The College follows Swansea University regulations and is a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP), part of Swan Global. Well-organised, transitional arrangements were put in place which limited any disruption to the student experience. The first intake of students under this new arrangement was in February 2018.

3 The review team was informed that the most significant change since the last monitoring visit was the change of status of The College. The focus on this to ensure a smooth transition and the physical move to the new, purpose-built accommodation, resulted in the delay of some enhancements to integrated programmes. However, the review team is of the view that considerable and commendable progress has been made in all areas, including those delayed.

#### Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The review team considered evidence including: policy documents; annual monitoring reports; data concerning students during their time at The College and in the later stages of their degree at Swansea University; together with information published on The College's website. Meetings were held with senior teaching and support staff from both The College and Swansea University and with a cross-section of students and alumni. It was noted that The College had built further on the four areas of good practice identified in the 2016 Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) and revisited in the 2018 monitoring report.

5 Considerable progress has been made with the 'One Swansea' philosophy. All students are now enrolled at The College which is housed in a new, purpose-built building on the Bay Campus. All Swansea University students are encouraged to make use of the facilities of this building and rooms can also be booked for university teaching, encouraging integration of The College students from their arrival. The College has migrated to the University's virtual learning environment (VLE) and all students are issued with a single Swansea University email address and a Swansea University ID number. All regulations and policies were reviewed between May 2017 and May 2018 resulting in The College's regulations being embedded in

those of the University, and allowing a seamless transfer for students between The College and their receiving college at the University. Students have access to all the University's facilities including support, healthcare and social activities.

6 The College has continued to receive and evaluate data concerning the progress of its students once they transfer to the University. While they generally do well, some areas have shown a decline in the percentage of good honours achieved; evaluation of this suggests students may not always understand the grading system and its importance to employers, and need to be encouraged to aim for higher classifications. The College has taken measures to address this matter. Discussion of this has been included in the skills module taken by all students; the impact of this will be evaluated once further cohorts have completed their Swansea University programmes.

7 Actions to encourage student engagement include merit awards offered each semester for high academic achievement and, occasionally, for non-academic achievement, such as involvement with college activities. Students told the review team that the award system with certificates and prizes, such as gift cards presented at a formal ceremony, motivated them. A 'buddy' system has been introduced with alumni who have progressed to the University available for contact by current students. Some students have also become ambassadors - this is a paid role where alumni are used to help with enrolment and similar activities. Students found such interaction helpful; they also appreciated the availability of external trips such as, a visit to the British Parliament in London and a tour of the Gower. The student representative system continues to be effective and examples were provided of significant change resulting from student feedback - for example, the inclusion of further biology material on the foundation course for students planning to progress to osteopathy.

8 The strong working relationship between the embedded college and its partner university has been further enhanced by the appointment of academic leads for each subject area. Academic leads coordinate the activities of teaching staff within their areas; they attend The College's Learning and Teaching Committee and are closely involved in the new Annual Programme Review process. In addition, they represent The College on several partner university committees.

9 The process for admissions remains a function of the Navitas central Admissions and Recruitment Centre (ARC) with agents working to a Code of Ethics to ensure alignment with the Quality Code for Higher Education. The overall admissions process follows guidelines to ensure alignment with UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) Tier 4 Regulations. Applications considered as non-standard or borderline are referred to The College, which makes a decision together with the partner university. Students admitted in this way are tracked and offered additional support.

10 Module guides are available on the VLE for all modules and indicate learning outcomes and how these will be achieved and assessed. Students who met with the review team were clear about grading criteria which are summarised in writing and indicated that they received marks and helpful feedback within two weeks of each assessment. They were also well informed about the need to avoid plagiarism or other forms of academic cheating. Examinations are marked within three weeks. Assessments are set by staff of The College and examination papers and mark schemes are moderated prior to the examination period. Moderation is carried out as follows: foundation courses internally by staff of The College; Level 4 assessments by the University School of Management; and Pre-Master's by the relevant external examiner. Post-assessment, there is a system of anonymous double-marking and moderation by the same groups. Examination papers are kept secure by a system of encryption and locked away prior to

the examination date. Link tutors from the academic colleges within the partner university are invited to attend Progression Boards, as are members of the University's Examination and Assessment Team, to ensure rigour in The College's assessment process.

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

11 Navitas and its embedded colleges make extensive use of the Quality Code for Higher Education. With respect to The College, it should be noted that the newly-introduced Annual Programme Review Process was reviewed in the light of the relevant chapters of the Quality Code, and that information technology and Maths workshops are open to all students to enable development of skills in these areas in line with Indicator 6. Navitas admissions processes adhere to UKVI policy and guidelines.

## **Background to the monitoring visit**

12 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.

13 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Philip Markey, QAA Officer, and Professor Gaynor Taylor, QAA Reviewer, on 10 April 2019.

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