



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

### The College, Swansea University

#### 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 The College, Swansea University (the College) is making commendable progress with implementing the action plan following the April 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Embedded Colleges\)](#).

#### 2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 There have been no changes to premises, programmes, ownership or student numbers. A new College Director/Principal has been appointed. The College has been in negotiation with Swansea University (the University) to establish a Joint Venture College. This is now in place and known as The College, Swansea University. There are 399 students.

#### 3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The review team considered a wide range of evidence, including strategic, policy and programme documentation, and information published on the College's website. Meetings were held with senior, teaching and support staff from the College, staff from Navitas UK, and staff from the University to discuss progress made during the past two years against the action plan from the April 2016 review. The review team also met a cross-section of students and alumni. The QAA action plan from 2016 considered four points of identified good practice - there were no recommendations. The College is currently working from two separate action plans, one for the Joint Venture group and one to address points arising from the annual monitoring process 2016-17. The College contributes to regular reports to the Joint Board, the Academic Advisory Committee (AAC), and the Navitas Learning and Teaching Committee. The team found that the College has continued to make commendable progress in building on the four features of good practice.

4 The relationship between Navitas UK, the College and Swansea University started in 2007 and has matured during that time. Most recently, the three parties have been working together to strengthen the partnership further and to develop a new Joint Venture College, known as The College, Swansea University. The College was launched in February 2018, with a relocation to new purpose-built academic premises on the University's Bay Campus scheduled for October 2018. New on-campus accommodation will be available from January 2019. The first cohort of students is due to start in May 2018. The new College is governed by a new board of directors. It will provide a wider range of services and a broader portfolio of programmes.

5 The smooth transition from the College to the University is underpinned by the 'one Swansea' philosophy. Since being commended as a feature of good practice, the College has built on this by holding more transition events, and ensuring that College students have as similar access as possible to memberships, services and facilities as other students of the University. During 2016-17 a joint review of integrated provision viewed through the student lifecycle was undertaken between the College and the University College of Arts and Humanities. Several aspects of transition were highlighted, both good practice and issues to address. College staff now have access to modules on the University's virtual learning environment (VLE), which helps to aid progression. Student focus groups were held in June 2017 to consider some aspects of transition. Recommendations were presented to the AAC in June 2017 and the annual Link Tutor meeting in October 2017. An integrated health check has been developed as a result of the review and is now used by all University Link Tutors. This process will be reviewed at the end of 2017-18, informed by student focus groups. Evaluation of these activities is undertaken by the College Enhancement Committee (CEC) and the mechanism for the sharing of good practice is through the Navitas Learning and Teaching Forum.

6 The College, Swansea University students play an active role in the quality agenda and contribute at both College and University levels. The College has effective processes for encouraging and rewarding student engagement, ensuring that the student voice is heard and responded to. The College has many mechanisms through which students can engage with their learning environment, including participation in the Student Forum, College Enhancement Committee, and AAC, as well as surveys at programme, College, Navitas, and graduate levels. Student representatives receive training from the Student Union and a handbook. The College promotes an active culture of 'you said, we did' to encourage participation and engagement. The College also feeds back to students through the student representatives, the information hub and use of notice boards. The Student Forum and the CEC evaluate these activities. The annual monitoring process is informed of the activities and the evaluations, and there are regular reports to the AAC, Navitas Quality and Standards Office and to the University via The College, Swansea University Annual Report.

7 The College continues to make effective use of tracer data. This is supplied by the University on an annual basis, to be used in the annual module and programme monitoring processes. Trends are identified and changes to modules or programmes are made as a result. The College supplies a consolidated Annual Assessment Report to the University, which includes actions, targets and identified goals. The annual monitoring process is informed of the activities, and there are regular reports to the AAC and Navitas Quality and Standards Office.

8 The College uses the Navitas UK policy, regulations and procedures on admission. These align with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, *Chapter B2* and are compliant with UKVI Tier 4 regulations. Local variations are agreed collaboratively between The College, Swansea University, the University and Navitas UK. Policy documents are published on the College InfoHub, together with supporting documents that include fees information and the complaints and appeals procedures. The admission policy includes a summary of the Code of Ethics that all Navitas agents, Navitas UK representatives and College staff must abide by when considering applicants for entry into the UK according to the UK Council for International Student Affairs guidelines. The College agrees entry criteria for all the College's pathways with University faculties and the University's Admission Team.

9 The College operates as an 'embedded college offering integrated programmes' on Swansea University's UKVI Tier 4 licence. This requires that the College implement and

maintain comprehensive recruitment, admission, enrolment and information management processes in order to comply with sponsorship responsibilities as set out in the UKVI's Tier 4 Guidelines. The assessment of a student's English language ability is governed by the Tier 4 Guidelines. International students must meet English language entry requirements, assessed through the use of Home Office approved Secure English Language Tests (SELTs). English language entry requirements are stipulated in terms of an IELTS score of 5.5 across all components for foundation stage and 6.5 for pre-master's stage. All institutions and qualifications are verified through UK NARIC. Only applicants from high risk countries and non-standard applicants are interviewed. Non-standard applications are reviewed by the senior admissions manager for Navitas UK, and if necessary referred to the College and/or University admissions team. Non-standard applicants are monitored and checks are made to see if the admissions decision was correct. All applicants have to supply a declared statement of intent to study. Formal offers of admission to the College are produced only within the prescribed criteria set by the College, Navitas UK and the University. The process is overseen by the Head of Admissions, Navitas UK. Compliance checks are undertaken at random times of year by Navitas UK central ARC.

10 It was reported to the AAC in August 2017 that College students do not currently receive any pre-arrival information from the College, only on enrolment and that the welcome pack is not specific to the College. The team found that the new College website was very well presented, and offered a wealth of relevant information for prospective and arriving students. The Student Guide 2018-19 is a well-illustrated, useful document providing clear information about the College, the University and the Swansea area. Students and alumni confirmed that the information they had received had been useful and relevant. In addition to printed and web-based information, the College arranges campus visits for prospective students and their parents. A welcome presentation is included at induction to ensure that new students have all the basic information that they require.

11 Navitas UK sets out a policy and procedure for the annual monitoring of the College's provision and the University Annual Programme Review process and timeline is clearly documented. The College adopts similar procedures for the annual monitoring of modules and programmes (AMMP) to that of the University. In 2017 the College revised its AMMP form to facilitate closer alignment with the University and TEF returns. Completed AMMP forms include analysis of staff evaluation, analysis from student feedback mechanisms and academic outcomes. The AMMP process also monitors student performance of those who have progressed to the University through the use of tracking data and tracer studies. Completed AMMP forms are discussed at a review meeting by senior management and academic staff from the College, in addition to University link tutors and a representative from the University Academic Quality Office. Issues to be addressed are identified and good practice is shared. The College intends to invite student representatives to this meeting in 2018. An action list is drawn up following the AMMP meetings, and followed up by the College's DASS.

12 In 2017, the College monitored provision at the module level only. The completed module evaluation form was 18 or 19 sides long. A detailed AMMP is drawn up. Due to the scale of monitoring of modules, monitoring was not undertaken at programme or pathway level, or at the College level. The Annual College Assessment Report is a quantitative report and is prepared for the whole provision. This includes statistics drawn from tracer data. For 2018-19, and in conjunction with the University, the College is proposing to monitor at the programme level and to report on modules by exception.

13 Annual monitoring is underpinned by periodic reviews that take place every five to six years. A periodic review of the pre-master's pathways in Management was conducted in November 2016. The College worked closely with the School of Management to carry out the resulting recommendations. A follow-up report was sent to the University in September 2017 and a new module diet has been implemented in the 2017-18 academic session. The implementation will be reviewed jointly by the College and the School of Management at the end of the 2017-18 academic year with a view to continuous improvement.

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

14 Staff at the College are very familiar with the Expectations of the Quality Code and use the Code widely across a range of activities, including for the development of action plans. Information for staff on the Quality Code is posted on the VLE, and drop-in staff development sessions are arranged. In conjunction with Navitas UK, the College makes reference to resources provided through Staff and Educational Development Association, the Higher Education Academy and BAPEAP. For admission, guidance issued by UKVI is a key external reference point, as are the services of UK NARIC.

#### **5 Background to the monitoring visit**

15 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.

16 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Phil Markey, QAA Officer and Dr Helen Corkill, QAA Reviewer, on 25 April 2018.

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