



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

### University of Plymouth International College

#### 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 University of Plymouth International College (the College) is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the April 2017 [monitoring visit](#).

#### Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 There has been a change in the legal trading name of the College to University of Plymouth International College in line with the University's branding and marketing strategy. The College recently renewed its contract with the University. Student numbers have remained the same.

#### Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The review team considered evidence including: policy documents; annual monitoring reports; data concerning students during their time in the College and in the later stages of their degree at the University of Plymouth; together with information published on the College's website. Meetings were held with senior teaching and support staff from the College and a representative of the University of Plymouth; and also with a cross-section of students and alumni. The College Action Plan 2018-21 includes actions relating to Navitas priorities and themes, the Navitas Learning and Teaching Strategy, and actions resulting from college performance in the Navitas-wide student survey, in addition to the College enhancement plan. Colour coding is used to indicate progress. The document is monitored and updated on a regular basis by the management team. It is clear and easy to comprehend demonstrating commendable progress across all activities.

4 Staff indicated that changes impacting most positively on the quality of provision since the last review, were the input of students at all levels, digital literacy enhancement and the integration of students with the partner university.

5 Student representatives are chosen for all cohorts and meet as a committee (the Student Council) each month. Students who met with the review team gave examples of issues such as, the availability of certain software which had been resolved. They indicated that most feedback through the committee was positive. A more recent initiative is the invitation to matriculated students to return for discussions with the College's Manager of Academic Services concerning teaching and learning, and the transition to the university. Such discussions targeted specific issues such as, the need for practical sessions with certain specialist software and more homework - these issues were discussed with tutors and change

implemented for the January 2019 semester. The review team particularly commends the inclusion of students in its discussions about the updated Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), the involvement of students in 'flipped learning' when they research a topic before a class and present it to their peers, and the inclusion of a student representative on both the College Enhancement Team and the College Teaching and Learning Board.

6 With respect to digital literacy, students informed the review team that they experienced IT classes covering a wide range of skills including those needed to make an effective digital presentation. Digital poster presentation is used as part of assessment in some modules and students have access to digital information about their programmes, including module details, course regulations and some teaching material.

7 Students have access to most university facilities including social/sporting clubs and can meet university staff and UPIC alumni who are now studying at the University. A transition event is held for students before they complete their UPIC programme and progress to the University and specific support is provided for individual pathways such as preparation for interview for those progressing to health-related courses and inclusion in an industry insights day for those wishing to study travel and tourism.

8 The process for admissions is managed through the Navitas central Admissions and Recruitment Centre (ARC) with agents working to a Code of Ethics to ensure alignment with the Quality Code, and the overall admissions process following guidelines to ensure alignment with UK Visa and Immigration Tier 4 Regulations. Applications considered as non-standard or borderline are referred to the College which decides together with the partner university. Students admitted in this way are tracked and offered additional support.

9 Assessments are set by course tutors and a wide range of assessment techniques are used. All modules have a mixed assessment that includes both coursework and examination. 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. The college has a protocol for double-marking and this, and the maximum time for issuing feedback, are summarised in the Operational Staff Teaching Handbook. Students were aware of the necessity to avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic cheating and this is clearly explained in the Student Study Guide.

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

10 Navitas and its embedded colleges make extensive use of the Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A is used to set and maintain academic standards, Part B to assure and enhance academic quality and Part C for guidance and information about higher education provision. The College has also made progress with engaging the new Quality Code. The Quality Code is reflected throughout the College's provision, processes and regulations. The review team noted the commendable involvement of students in discussions about revisions to the Quality Code.

## **Background to the monitoring visit**

11 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.

12 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Philip Markey, QAA Officer, and Professor Gaynor Taylor, QAA Reviewer, on 3 April 2019.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB  
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel 01452 557050  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)