



# Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) of Navitas UK Holdings Ltd

## Edinburgh International College

April 2016

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## About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Edinburgh International College. The review took place from 12 to 13 April 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Anne Peat
- Professor Alan Jago.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Edinburgh International College and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code)<sup>1</sup> setting out what all UK [higher education providers](#) expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
  - the quality of student learning opportunities
  - the information provided about higher education provision
  - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that Navitas UK is taking or plans to take.

In Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) there is also a check on Navitas UK's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG). This check has the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure of their education provider.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

In reviewing Edinburgh International College the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland. The [themes](#) for the academic year 2015-16 are Digital Literacy and Student Employability,<sup>2</sup> and Navitas UK is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.<sup>3</sup> A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges).<sup>4</sup> For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code)

<sup>2</sup> Higher Education Review themes: [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859)

<sup>3</sup> QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us).

<sup>4</sup> Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges): [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx)

## Key findings

### QAA's judgements about Navitas UK's provision at Edinburgh International College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Edinburgh International College (EIC).

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of Navitas and EIC's degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

### Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Edinburgh International College.

- The effectiveness of the critical thinking strand within the pre-master's ILSC programme, providing excellent preparation for postgraduate students in business management (Expectation B3).

### Enhancement of student learning opportunities

EIC has developed its approach to enhancement within the framework set out by Navitas UK. EIC is party to the strategic aims of Navitas UK and is committed to enhancement, which includes the establishment of a College Enhancement Team (CET) reporting to EIC Learning and Teaching Board.

### Theme: Digital Literacies

Digital Literacy Strategy is part of Navitas UK's enhancement framework; the Virtual Learning Strategy 2015-16 applies to the UK College community who use the VLE and is a key element of the Navitas UK Student Experience framework. The strategy is to ensure that all College students can access appropriate material to support their studies, encourage and support College staff to take an active role in student learning, promote staff development, ensure the tools are appropriate to support student learning, and ensure that appropriate training is provided for staff and students.

## About Edinburgh International College

EIC is an Associate College of Edinburgh Napier University. EIC first enrolled students in October 2011. Since then EIC has had three intakes a year (February, June and September). EIC welcomes students to first and second year pathways in Business, and first year pathways in Computing, Engineering, Hospitality, Life Sciences and Tourism. In addition, there are pre-masters programmes in Business (including routes to accounting, tourism and the MBA).

EIC works closely with the University on the assurance of standards and in quality assurance and enhancement, with processes such as moderation and joint Boards of Examiners happening every trimester, and annual monitoring, periodic review and programme approval taking place to agreed timescales. EIC had the first ECREO in spring of 2012 with additional review visits in 2013 and 2014. At the most recent QAA review an outcome of 'commendable' was confirmed without the need for a visit from QAA.

EIC regularly seeks student feedback through module and student satisfaction surveys, the Student Council and the EIC Enhancement Team, and is committed to a cycle of continuous improvements to the student experience. Data collected about student performance once students progress to the University show that EIC students have a high success rate (95 per cent pass rate).

The programmes are all delivered in line with *The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (SCQF) and recognition of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). Modules are taught at Level 7 or Level 8 at undergraduate level and at Level 10 on the pre-master's programme.

The Interactive Learning Skills and Communications (ILSC) module is predominantly a study skills module but studying the module facilitates the improvement of students' English language skills. The assessment of the module is benchmarked to International English Language Testing Scheme (IELTS) outcomes with a view to students' competency being equivalent to IELTS 6.5 on completion of the module. Therefore, the module pass mark is 65 per cent, with no component below 60 per cent.

EIC takes the assurance of quality and standards very seriously, and responded to the outcome of the last QAA review and annual monitoring visits by ensuring that areas of good practice were maintained. EIC's internal monitoring continued to identify and complete actions to assure quality and standards and enhancement of the student experience.

EIC operates robust programme management policies and procedures. The programme approval process was reviewed and revised in late 2014 and was submitted as part of the QAA ECREO Annual Monitoring submission for EIC along with the approval of new programmes in January 2015. EIC will undergo a Periodic Review in summer 2016. The EIC Operations Manual is updated and approved by the Joint Strategic Management Partnership Board in September of each year and at other times as needed.

## Explanation of the findings about Edinburgh International College

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

# **1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding bodies**

**Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:**

**a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* are met by:**

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

**b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics**

**c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework**

**d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards**

## **Findings**

1.1 EIC does not make awards as its provision and levels of study form part of the educational offering of the University's undergraduate and postgraduate degree qualification at the appropriate level of the SCQF. The University awards mark the achievement of the outcomes set out in the SCQF qualification descriptors. The governance structures established between EIC and the University are the principal bodies responsible for the regulation, governance and quality assurance of the academic work of EIC. They approve recommendations for the introductions of programmes of study. Navitas UK has oversight of the standards of EIC provision through the programme approval process, receiving summaries of Academic Advisory Committee reports and Annual Monitoring reports.

1.2 The review team tested the arrangements described in the self-evaluation document by considering documentation including that explaining the processes for the approval and monitoring of programmes, documents produced during programme approval and annual monitoring reports.

1.3 The review team concluded that the policies and procedures that ensured that the programmes met UK threshold standards through alignment with the SCQF were implemented effectively. There was a clear process in place for the approval of programmes. Programme specifications refer to levels of the SCQF, Subject Benchmark Statements and

intended learning outcomes, which are informed by national guidance. Annual monitoring reports include reference to the appropriateness of aims, objectives and intended learning outcomes.

1.4 The consideration of documentation and discussions with staff confirmed that EIC employs qualification frameworks effectively in its published approval, review and assessment processes. The review team therefore affirms the assertions made by EIC, and that EIC meets the Expectation and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards**

**Findings**

1.5 EIC's Interim Principal is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of quality standards in EIC and the Principal and Senior Management Team have oversight of all aspects of the operation of EIC, including quality and compliance management.

1.6 The quality assurance processes, policies and procedures are set by EIC in consultation with the University and documented in the Operations Manual; the nature of the partnership with regards to quality assurance and the approval of relevant documents is added as an appendix to the Operations Manual. The Director of Student Experience and Academic Quality Navitas UK ensures that the Quality Code chapters are mapped to Navitas Policy and Procedures.

1.7 EIC does not award degrees. EIC provision forms part of the educational offering of the University undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The academic credit awarded by EIC is recognised by the University as 120 credits, governed by academic framework and regulations outlined in the Recognition and Articulation Agreement and detailed in EIC Policies and Regulations. These are aligned with the Navitas Framework and appropriate University policies and regulations.

1.8 There are a number of joint EIC and University governance committees with agreed terms of reference, the highest level committee being the JSMPB, with the Academic Advisory Committee feeding into this. It is through this structure that the academic environment and the quality agenda processes are assured and supported.

1.9 EIC Learning and Teaching committee is the key internal academic committee, with membership taken from academic and administrative staff of EIC. It considers module changes, recommendations from Boards of Examiners, student survey results and action plans from quality assurance enhancement events. It also monitors the Students in Jeopardy programme.

1.10 EIC programmes are delivered in line with the SCQF and recognition of the relevant FHEQ. Modules are taught at Level 7 or 8 at undergraduate level and at level 10 on the pre-master's programme. The University, as the degree-awarding body, ensures that the requirements of the SCQF are met. Programme Learning Outcomes are designed to align to the appropriate qualifications statements and characteristics and to take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.11 A number of monitoring processes have been established to enable EIC, the University and the Navitas UK Quality and Standards Office to be confident of the quality and standards of teaching and assessment delivered by EIC. These include robust scrutiny at the approval event of new programmes, student feedback, peer review and management observation of teaching and annual programme monitoring. Annual reports go to Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) and Navitas UK and then to the University.

1.12 Both programme and definitive module descriptor learning outcomes are approved as part of the programme approval process, ensuring that learning outcomes align with the



qualification descriptors of SCQF, and relate to programme aims, Subject Benchmark Statements and the University programmes. Programme specifications are reviewed each summer and any changes are approved by EIC Learning and Teaching Board and reported to AAC and to the Faculty Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee.

1.13 EIC policies and regulations give detailed guidance on curriculum design, working closely with academic experts from EIC and relevant departments in the University, and from Navitas UK. EIC also draws on University documents such as guidelines for writing module descriptors, which include guidance on writing learning outcomes benchmarked to the appropriate level.

1.14 The assessment of learning outcomes is demonstrated through the assessment process, and achievement of grade and credits is monitored and awarded by the Board of Examiners, which include University link tutors, subject specialists and EIC staff

1.15 EIC monitors its programmes to ensure that UK threshold standards are achieved and academic standards maintained. This includes scrutiny of results at Board of Examiners, action taken at College Learning and Teaching Board and external scrutiny by the link tutor. The link tutor provides externality and feedback for the annual monitoring report. Annual monitoring and periodic reviews provide qualitative and quantitative data on academic standards. Navitas conducted a Periodic Review in 2013; this normally occurs every three years.

1.16 The review team looked at the Articulation Agreement, CPRs, Operations Manual, and annual monitoring reports, and discussed with academic and support staff the application of the procedures.

1.17 EIC does not recognise prior learning for the purpose of exemption from a specified assessment.

1.18 Assessment decisions on the award of credit are reached through a process approved by the senior academic authority of the University. EIC operates a three-stage assessment process: Module Panel, Exam Board and Progression Board delegated by the University.

1.19 Academic standards are systematically and consistently applied to ensure that academic standards are met and maintained; they are aligned to the appropriate level of the SCQF. EIC's policies are aligned with the Navitas framework and appropriate University policies and regulations. The review team therefore affirms the assertions made within the self-evaluation document, and that EIC meets the Expectation and that the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of Risk: Low**

**Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards**

**Findings**

1.20 EIC is not a degree-awarding body. The academic credit awarded by EIC is recognised by the University as 120 credits at Level 7 or Level 8. A transparent academic framework is in place, outlined in the Recognition and Articulation Agreement (2011) and detailed in EIC policies and regulations, aligned with Navitas UK policies and regulations and appropriate University policies and regulations.

1.21 EIC's academic delivery is aligned with the appropriate level of the SCQF, in agreement with the partner University.

1.22 The programme learning outcomes are designed to align to the appropriate qualification statements and characteristics and to take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. The University and Navitas UK ensure this through the programme approval process.

1.23 The maintenance of standards is monitored through annual monitoring, moderation of assessments, exam boards and periodic review. Navitas UK has oversight of standards through programme approval and annual monitoring. The link tutor provides externality and is a member of the Exam Board, and feedback from the link tutor is included in the Annual Monitoring Report.

1.24 The approval of new programmes is by EIC Scrutiny Panel, which is responsible for confirming academic standards and ensuring that the learning and teaching assessment approach enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The Scrutiny Panel is a joint University and Navitas Panel with input from EIC. The Policy for governing the operation of the scrutiny panel was revised in 2014 and approved by AAC and the Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board.

1.25 Programme Specifications are the definitive record of each programme, qualifications and intended learning outcomes, with the definitive module document containing the module outlines; these are available for key stakeholders on the Portal.

1.26 The Programme Specifications are publically available. They are used for students, academic staff, and annual review and provide a source of information for University staff during an approval event. They are reviewed each summer and changes are approved by EIC Learning and Teaching Board and reported to Academic Advisory Committee. They are then reported to the appropriate committee in the School.

1.27 The University, through the link tutor, ensures that UK threshold standards and academic standards of the University have been met. The Board of Examiners is responsible for determining the grades and for confirming the integrity and fairness of the assessment process, including marking and moderation. EIC relies on subject specialists at the University to provide externality.

1.28 College programmes are stored in MAZE, EIC's student and course records management system. Details about the storing of College programmes are found in Navitas UK's Introduction to IT. Student details are transferred onto the University system, providing course details for the student's transcript upon completion of the degree. A new system called Navigate is due to be introduced in autumn 2016; it is currently being piloted in Australia.

1.29 The review team looked at the CPRs, programme specifications, definitive module documents, qualification and intended learning outcomes, as well as the access and availability of the Portal for key stakeholders and the links from the College Student Handbook. The team talked to staff and student representatives, who confirmed that information about programmes is available on the VLE.

1.30 The evidence demonstrated that the programme specification is the definitive record of each programme and that the learning outcomes are consistent with the SCQF. They are reviewed during annual monitoring, which involves the University. Students are provided with the appropriate programme specification on registration and due notice is given of any changes.

1.31 The subject specialist and the link tutor from the University provide appropriate externality. All College programmes are stored in MAZE, EIC's student and course records management system, which is due to be replaced in the autumn by a new system called NAVIGATE, currently being piloted.

1.32 A definitive record of each programme and its learning outcomes is maintained and demonstrates compliance with the academic framework. The information is available for staff and student via the VLE. It is used as a reference point for the delivery of the programme, by teaching staff and internal and external examiners and for subsequent monitoring and review. The records are updated as and when amendments are made. Programme information and student achievement is stored on MAZE. The review team therefore affirms the assertions made within the self-evaluation document, and that EIC meets the Expectation and that the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of Risk: Low**

**Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

### **Findings**

1.33 Academic standards for all EIC's provision are set by its partner University, through its formal programme approval process as the degree-awarding body. Such approval requires that the provision meets the requirements of the University's regulations and its academic framework. Any changes to programmes have to be formally approved to ensure that these standards will continue to be met. The approval of new programmes and changes to existing programmes involve EIC, the University and Navitas UK.

1.34 The design and approval of modules and programmes, which ensure that academic standards are set at the appropriate level, meet UK threshold standards.

1.35 The review team tested the effectiveness of EIC's procedures for programme approval by examining policy documents and manuals, and documentation for programme approval and amendment.

1.36 The review team found that the policies and procedures for programme approval and change are effectively implemented. They incorporate the academic regulations of the University and UK threshold standards. All modules have a definitive module document (DMD) which details all learning outcomes and assessment requirements. Staff use standard templates for DMDs and programme information.

1.37 The review team concludes that EIC, with the support of its University and Navitas UK, operates programme approval procedures that ensure that academic standards are set at a level that meets UK threshold standards and are in accordance with the relevant academic frameworks and regulations. Overall, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:**

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

**Findings**

1.38 EIC is not a degree-awarding body. The academic credit awarded by EIC is recognised by the University as 120 credits at Level 7 or 8 and governed by a transparent academic framework aligned with the appropriate level of the SCQF, in agreement with the partner University. Credits are used as a measure of study and assessment.

1.39 The academic framework of EIC is outlined in the Recognition and Articulation Agreement and detailed in EIC's policies and regulations, which align with the Navitas framework and the appropriate University policy and regulations.

1.40 The governance structure established between EIC and the partner University are the bodies responsible for regulation, governance and quality assurance of the work of EIC.

1.41 A robust system is in place for programme approval, with Navitas UK and the partner University taking a strategic decision to go ahead with the development of a new programme followed by the approval in principle. The curriculum is designed involving academic staff from both EIC and the University and the curriculum is reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel assembled by the partner University, which includes an external subject specialist.

1.42 The programme specification represents the definitive record of each programme qualification and its intended learning outcomes. The DMDs contain the module outline; these are available on the Portal for key stakeholders. Programme specifications are reviewed each year and changes are approved by EIC Learning and Teaching Board and reported to AAC.

1.43 The learning outcomes are detailed in the programme specification and define the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes that will be gained from successful completion of the programme. The DMDs allow achievement of particular learning outcomes to be demonstrated by the assessment method. The assessments demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes and the different types of assessment help prepare students for transition to the University.

1.44 The roles of Board of Examiners in the assessment process is clear: panels determine grades and overall academic achievement. Navitas UK has published a Guide to External Examining and appoint the external for ILSC Module; this module is non-credit bearing.

1.45 The link tutor and subject specialist representatives on the various governance committee provide externality to ensure that standards are met.

1.46 EIC makes it clear that each student is assessed in accordance with the approved programme specification. The programme specifications contain generic grade descriptors, which help ensure clarity about what constitutes a threshold level, and parity of standards across disciplines that they are appropriate for each award in accordance with the SCQF. All modules go through moderation and University checks. The link tutor ensures assessments are reviewed by appropriate subject specialists, who check their equivalence and that standards meet with those of the University, in accordance with the SCQF and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.47 Assessment decisions on the award of credit are reached through a process approved by the University. EIC determines the process for the scrutiny of marks awarded by EIC under the partnership arrangements with the University.

1.48 The review team looked at the CPRs, the Operations Manual and the Navitas Guide to the Role of the External Examiner, as well as the terms of reference and membership of the Board of Examiners and the Navitas UK Learning and Teaching Quality Report containing the matrix on achievements across the network. The team reviewed the impact of the policies and the compliance by talking to academics from EIC and the University and the support staff.

1.49 Student representatives who met the review team confirmed they are aware of the assessment guidelines and marking criteria, which is included in the Module Guide, Programme Specifications and DMDs. The Module Guide is intended to be more student friendly.

1.50 Staff and students have access to external examiner reports through the VLE.

1.51 Appropriate assessments are used to judge student performance against the standards set, providing students with an opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes. The University is involved at all levels of the process, from approval, ongoing monitoring to assessment ensuring student achievement relates to the threshold standards in a consistent and systematic manner. The University has ultimate responsibility for the award of academic credits with Navitas UK having the overview. The information on assessments is easily accessible to staff and students through the VLE and it is through the Portal that staff and students have access to external examiner reports. The review team therefore affirms the assertions made within the self-evaluation document, and that EIC meets the Expectation and that the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of Risk: Low**

**Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

### **Findings**

1.52 EIC monitors its programmes to ensure that UK threshold academic standards are being achieved and that academic standards are being maintained. This is achieved by consideration, annual monitoring and periodic review reports. Responsibility for the standards of programmes offered at EIC is through the Academic Advisory Committee (AAC). AAC reports to the Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board.

1.53 The policies and processes in place for programme monitoring and review are designed to see that UK threshold standards are achieved and that the academic standards of the awarding body are being maintained.

1.54 In order to assess the effectiveness of EIC's procedures for programme monitoring and review the review team looked at policy documents, manuals, committee minutes, and annual monitoring reports.

1.55 The review team found that the policies and procedures in place for programme monitoring and review are implemented effectively and demonstrate that UK threshold standards are achieved and that the academic standards of the University are maintained. EIC regularly reports to Navitas UK in its annual monitoring on a number of key indicators including student performance, progression, pass rates, retention and completion. Statistical data on student performance is analysed in the annual programme monitoring report for each programme. The report also contains a commentary on learning outcomes and there is reference to student feedback. University link tutors keep a close eye on the programmes delivered in order to make sure that agreed content is being delivered and that the correct processes are being followed. They report regularly to their Head of School.

1.56 The review team concludes that EIC, with the support of Navitas UK and the University, operates effective monitoring and review processes that demonstrate whether UK threshold standards are achieved and the academic standards are maintained. Overall, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:**

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

**Findings**

1.57 Navitas guidance on programme design emphasises consistency with external reference points. The University and Navitas UK approve all new programmes and major modifications to existing programmes before being implemented to ensure they are aligned with external reference points and that they meet the appropriate standards. EIC uses University documents, guidelines on writing module descriptors and learning outcomes at the appropriate level. The University acts as the external as per the Articulation Agreement, through the appointment of a link tutor, and subject specialists from the appropriate School play a key role in EIC core quality assurance processes.

1.58 The autonomy of EIC in the teaching and assessment of students allows EIC to rely on independent academic specialists at the University to meet the expectations with regards to externality. Academic staff from the relevant Faculty are involved in the programme design and approval event and the verification of assessment and the moderation of students' work.

1.59 The process for approval and review is outlined in EIC policies and regulations: the five-stage process involves the University, Navitas UK and EIC. The Scrutiny Panel has an external panel member who provides independent advice on the robustness of the collaborative approval process and the conduct of the approval event. It is only when full approval has been granted that Navitas Quality and Standards Office (QaSC) informs the EIC Director to notify the University, which assigns a CAS number.

1.60 EIC monitors its programmes to ensure that UK threshold standards are being achieved and maintained. The processes involve the link tutor and subject specialist from the University, who are external to EIC and who are used to moderate students' work and review students results as a member of the Board of Examiners.

1.61 In the case of EIC ILSC and Critical Thinking modules the moderator is a subject specialist and is requested to confirm they are satisfied threshold standards are appropriate at each level and in accordance with the SCQF. Navitas UK appoints the external examiner for the ILSC module and has developed detailed guidelines on the role of external examiners, to ensure understanding of the expectations of the Quality Code. Navitas also engages external experts for particular quality enhancement or assurance projects such as review of CPRs.

1.62 The Recognition and Articulation Agreement clearly states that the partner University acts as the external and plays a key role in EIC core quality assurance processes, responsible for setting and maintaining academic standards. The subject specialist staff from the University, or a member of Navitas staff external to EIC in the case of ILSC and the Critical Thinking modules, moderate a sample of students' work. The University academic is specifically requested to confirm that they are satisfied with the threshold standards set by EIC, to ensure they are at the appropriate level and are in accordance with the SCQF and



Subject Benchmark Statements, as well as whether the academic standards and achievements of students are comparable with those of the University.

1.63 All programmes are subject to Annual Monitoring and Evaluation, which includes feedback from link tutors and subject specialists. The reviews enable EIC to reflect on the academic provision, identify trends, share best practice and ensure development is aligned to strategic priorities.

1.64 The review team looked at the CPRs, the Navitas Guide for External Examiners, Programme Annual Reports and the Operation Manual for details of externality. The team also reviewed the Articulation Agreement and talked to academic and support staff.

1.65 The evidence shows that both Navitas and the University ensure all programmes are consistent with external reference points, Subject Benchmark Statements and the SCQF. There is evidence of external expertise being used at key stages in the setting and maintenance of academic standards. The University link tutor and subject specialist have a significant role in providing externality to EIC on a regular basis, with outside subject specialists being commissioned for key events such as approval and periodic review. The team noted that external examiner reports are available for staff and students on the VLE. The staff who met the review team explained how externals are involved at each level of the process, including development, approval, annual monitoring, periodic review and assessment.

1.66 Navitas UK has commissioned external consultants (CATALYST) to review EIC partnerships, to assess and enhance relationships. Staff are aware and questionnaires have been distributed and telephone interviews arranged.

1.67 There is independent expertise obtained at key stages of the process of setting and maintaining academic standards and the team noted EIC's and the University's commitment to maintaining standards through benchmarking of external reference points and involvement of external subject specialists. Externals are involved in scrutiny panels for the approval of new programmes and the link tutor or subject specialist from the appropriate School of the University participates in ongoing monitoring. The moderation of students' assessed work is through the subject specialist from the appropriate School; the link tutor and subject specialist are members of the Board of Examiners. The review team therefore affirms the assertions made within the self-evaluation document, and that EIC meets the Expectation and that the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of Risk: Low**

## The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered by on behalf of the awarding bodies: Summary of findings

1.68 In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.69 EIC effectively uses the processes of its awarding body, Edinburgh Napier University, in ensuring that academic standards are maintained in line with the relevant level of the FHEQ and external reference points. EIC's own internal processes, including rigorous programme approval and monitoring procedures, also make a valuable contribution to the maintenance of standards. There are appropriate opportunities for the use of external expertise within these processes.

1.70 EIC has met all seven Expectations in this area and the associated level of risk is low. Therefore, the review team concludes that EIC's maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.

## 2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

**Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes**

### **Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design and Approval**

#### **Findings**

2.1 EIC works with its partner University within the overall framework set down by Navitas UK. All the processes and procedures involved in programme design and approval are outlined in the Operations Manual. Any proposal for a new programme from EIC has to be signed off by Navitas UK before it goes to the University for initial approval. There is a close working relationship between the relevant University Programme Leader and EIC in developing any new programme. Final approval for EIC programmes must also be given by Navitas UK. Programmes are subject to University periodic review. There are clear processes in place for making changes to programmes between review periods: firstly, approval must be sought from the link tutor, change is then discussed at EIC Learning and Teaching Board, and, if approved, the change is reported as part of the Academic report to AAC.

2.2 The policies and procedures in place for programme design and approval would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.3 In order to test the effectiveness of EIC's procedures the review team examined policy documents and the Operations Manual. The team read appropriate committee minutes, examined documents associated with developing new modules and new programmes and met staff involved in programme design and approval.

2.4 All the documents seen by the review team showed that EIC implements Navitas UK's and the University's policies and procedures for the design, approval and change of programmes effectively.

2.5 The review team concluded that EIC with Navitas UK and the University operates effective processes for the design, approval and change of programmes. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and that the level of associated risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.**

### **Quality Code, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission**

#### **Findings**

2.6 EIC works closely with the University on their internationalisation recruitment strategy, to open up opportunities for overseas students to access higher education. The Marketing Planning Advisory Committee (MPAC) reports to JSPMB and has strategic oversight of recruitment.

2.7 Navitas Director of Corporate Services has oversight of compliance with Tier 4 requirements. EIC Principal has overall responsibility and manages the recruitment, selection and admission within the requirement of UKVI, Tier 4 sponsor guidance, UK immigration rules and the Quality Code.

2.8 Student admissions are managed by the EIC Admissions Team to ensure fairness and consistency. They have up-to-date knowledge and are appropriately trained to carry out the role. The admissions policy is approved by the JSPMB and aligned with Navitas UK policies and procedures for selection and admission. The Principal ensures entry criteria are localised to that of the University to accurately reflect agreed outcomes.

2.9 All College staff involved in recruitment are well trained. They attend the Learning and Teaching Forum and receive regular updates. In addition, staff employed by EIC use Navitas staff in Source Country Offices who are UK specialists and who are informed about EIC's process for application and provision.

2.10 There is a network of Navitas overseas agents to facilitate overseas recruitment. All agents undergo a due diligence and reference check. The training of agents is conducted by the Navitas UK College Marketing Team, which also maintains a database. EIC uses the Navitas UK Agent Manual 2014-15 and agents and staff involved in admissions have to abide by the Code of Ethics.

2.11 Clear policies and procedures are in place for applying to study at EIC, which assists prospective students in completion and submission of the application. EIC, in line with the University, produces a number of promotional materials, such as brochures and recruitment flyers. Information can be found on the EIC and University websites. This includes information about entry requirements and details of fees and other costs that might apply to each programme.

2.12 Navitas has introduced a comprehensive application verification process across the EIC network; the process regularly involves interviews via video conferencing or telephone with individual applicants. All applications and qualifications are checked before an offer is made and there are checks of English language qualifications on the verification websites of two main test providers, IELTS and PTE..

2.13 Offers of a place are accompanied by information about the procedure to follow in order to accept or reject the offer. Unsuccessful students receive written communication if their application has been unsuccessful. For additional information to help prospective students make an informed choice, students are encouraged to contact EIC Marketing,

Admissions or academic staff. The non-standard applications are referred to the University for a decision and an academic judgement to be made.

2.14 Tier 4 sponsored students must meet English language requirements.

2.15 The University has ambitious growth targets; EIC and Navitas are seen as significant in supporting the growth of international students at the University.

2.16 The Manager of Academic Services keeps the recruitment process under review and changes are made in response to student feedback, which is collected from students during their orientation to EIC. Students from high-risk countries are required to have a credibility interview.

2.17 EIC seeks to avoid making changes to programmes once a student has had an offer accepted but if it is unavoidable then students are informed of options available.

2.18 Support for students' transition starts before the student arrives, in the form of pre-departure information, which supports international students' transition into UK higher education.

2.19 The review team reviewed EIC policies and regulations (CPRs) and the Operations Manual to determine the admissions process and talked to staff and students about the application.

2.20 The evidence demonstrates that EIC, through its policies, makes provision for the equitable treatment of a diverse group of prospective students and that the admissions criteria is clear for non-standard applicants.

2.21 Staff and agents of EIC involved in admissions are appropriately trained for the role and compliance checks are undertaken. Students whom the review team met confirm the information provided is easy to understand and follow.

2.22 The procedure for handling appeals and complaints about recruitment, selection and admissions is communicated to staff and students and students met confirmed they are aware of the procedure.

2.23 Recruitment, selection, and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete a higher education programme. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and that the level of associated risk is low

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of Risk: Low**

**Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.**

### **Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching***

#### **Findings**

2.24 EIC's approach to effective learning and teaching is set out in the Navitas UK Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan and informed by Navitas UK's policy frameworks and the requirements of its partner University. The Strategic Plan sets out the broad aims and objectives, and EIC has produced a Learning, Teaching and Quality Plan, which is informed by Annual Programme Monitoring Reports as well as periodic review. EIC Learning and Teaching Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the learning and teaching objectives. The responsibilities of EIC and the University in relation to learning resources, staffing, and programme delivery are set out in the EIC Operations Manual.

2.25 The policies and processes in relation to learning and teaching would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.26 In order to test the effectiveness of EIC's policies and procedures the review team examined policy documents and supporting action plans. It also looked at committee minutes, items related to teaching staff, including teaching observation, and the Student Charter. The review team met with staff and students to discuss matters related to teaching and learning.

2.27 EIC is responsible for the appointment of staff teaching on its programmes, and recruits staff in accordance with Navitas UK policies and procedures. All EIC staff are associate staff of the University. All staff are given an induction and are subject to both management and peer observation of teaching. Staff have access to both University resources and staff development opportunities. Such opportunities are also offered by EIC and by Navitas UK.

2.28 Students whom the review team met were positive about the teaching and the level of support that they receive. In particular, the students were very complimentary about the effectiveness of the critical thinking strand within the pre-master's ILSC programme, which provides excellent preparation for postgraduate students in business management and is **good practice**. The students confirmed that they receive timely and helpful feedback on their work. In addition, they commented that all the staff are approachable and offer additional support whenever it is necessary. Additional sessions are organised for students needing particular teaching support.

2.29 Students have access to learning resources both at EIC and in the University. Students who met the review team said that they find the learning resources available to them, including the library, computing and laboratory facilities and the VLE, appropriate to all their needs. They particularly welcome their presence on one of the main campuses of the University, having previously been located more remotely. There is a Student Handbook and a Student Academic Handbook and all teaching material and necessary information about their programme, EIC and the University is available online.

2.30 EIC has a Student Charter which sets out the expectations and obligations of both EIC and its students.

2.31 EIC collects feedback on teaching through a student survey each semester for each module, and through matters raised by students at the Student Council, and at the Teaching and Learning Board.

2.32 The review team concludes that EIC, in conjunction with Navitas UK and the University, works effectively with its staff and students to review and improve the provision of learning opportunities that enable independent learning, depth of study and critical thinking. Overall, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement**

**Findings**

2.33 EIC works within the framework set by Navitas UK for supporting student development. It has a strong commitment to enabling students to develop their academic and personal potential. There is a clear structure in place to provide support and academic services, led by the Manager of Academic and Student Services. In addition, students have access to specialist services in the University. The quality of the student experience is seen as key from first contact to graduation.

2.34 The review team found that EIC has appropriate policies and processes in place to monitor and evaluate the services and resources needed to enable students to develop their potential.

2.35 In order to test the effectiveness of EIC's policies and procedures the review team looked at policies and procedures, committee minutes and handbooks. The review team also discussed the availability of academic and support services and the development of skills for higher education with staff and students.

2.36 The review team concluded that EIC provides a range of effective services that enable students to develop their academic and personal potential. Once on the programme the quality of student experience is seen as central, this is achieved by adopting and embedding a number of key principles in delivering and supporting its programmes. A key element of the way in which students are supported is by the provision of a core comprehensive learning skills acquisition module, known as the Interactive Learning Skills and Communication module. The provision of this module prepares students for successful transition to university study.

2.37 To ensure the appropriate level of student support is provided the staff continually monitor each student's academic performance and overall experience during their time in EIC. Students who are underperforming are placed in the Students in Jeopardy programme and they receive targeted additional support. Students are taught in small groups to facilitate the acquisition of module learning outcomes. They receive additional support through tutorial group work. Students whom the review team met were positive about the way in which EIC enables them to develop and achieve. There is a clear focus by EIC on building effective transition processes from its Navitas programmes into its University degrees. A number of different tactics are used to achieve this objective. These include working closely with link tutors, participating in University taster classes and using University laboratories. Information about student services is provided in student handbooks and is available online through the VLE.

2.38 Overall, the review team concludes that EIC, with Navitas UK and the University, operates effectively to enable students to develop their academic and personal potential, and that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**



**Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement**

**Findings**

2.39 EIC works within the framework for student engagement set out by Navitas UK. There are elected student representatives who sit on a number of College committees, including EIC Teaching and Learning Board, EIC Enhancement Team and the Student Council. Following these meetings any actions taken by EIC is fed back to both staff and students. Students are surveyed regularly. They complete module and course evaluations, and the results of these surveys are used in annual monitoring and are sent to relevant service areas for action.

2.40 The review team found that EIC has appropriate policies and processes in place for student engagement.

2.41 In order to test the effectiveness of EIC's policies and procedures the review team looked at relevant policies and supporting documentation, and committee minutes. The review team discussed student engagement with both staff and students.

2.42 The review team concluded that EIC provides numerous opportunities for student engagement that are effective in allowing the student voice to be heard at all levels. The review team also concluded that EIC responds effectively to student views and makes sure that students are made aware of the value of their contribution.

2.43 Students are encouraged to be student representatives and receive training. Students who met the review team said that they are able to make their voice heard at the committees on which they sit, and that College staff listen to their views and take appropriate actions whenever possible. Students who serve as student representatives are given a certificate for undertaking the role. Any action taken by committees is publicised by posters and other forms of communication, including a You said, We did notice. A recent innovation has been the production of a newsletter to keep students informed about both academic and social matters.

2.44 Staff and students who met the review team gave examples of changes that had happened as a result of student comment either at meetings or through student surveys. The review team noted examples in committee minutes of issues raised by students being discussed and action taken as a result.

2.45 As a result, in part, of the relatively small size of the student cohort the level of informal engagement between staff and students is high. Staff have an open door policy and welcome informal contact. In addition, EIC has recently developed an 'Ask EIC Anything' drop box so that students can ask any important questions that they might be worried about asking directly.

2.46 The review team concluded that EIC takes deliberate steps, in conjunction with its student body, to promote a range of opportunities to engage in quality assurance and enhancement. Overall, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning**

**Findings**

2.47 EIC assessment regulations are included in the Operations Manual and are closely modelled on those of the University, and changes are approved by EIC Learning and Teaching Board (CLTB) and ratified by AAC. The assessment is considered an important part of the programme design and careful consideration is given during the approval process to ensure that the assessment tasks, methods and timing are appropriate and allow students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. EIC is supported by the subject specialist from the University, in the development of the assessments and the moderation process. The approval process ensures benchmarking through external academic scrutiny at programme approval and annual monitoring. Assessments are monitored by the CLTB.

2.48 Learning outcomes are explicit and marking criteria included in the assessment brief so that students have a clear outline of how academic judgements are made. The assessment briefs are verified by the Manager of Academic Service (MAS) who checks that instructions are clear, that the marking criteria match learning outcomes and that the marks allocated to each question are fair and calculated correctly. The Academic Service Team ensures that information is posted on the student Portal and available in the Students Handbook, it is monitored by College Learning and Teaching Board.

2.49 Assessment and reassessment regulations are modelled directly on those of the University, adapted for EIC but maintaining the principles outlined in the University's regulations. They are outlined in the Programme Specifications and DMDs to ensure a consistent transparent approach to academic standards is maintained.

2.50 Where students have an Identified Learning Support Plan, developed by the University Inclusion and Diversity Team, reasonable adjustments are made as per the plan to give the student equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement.

2.51 The Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC) module assessment is benchmarked to IELTS outcomes, with a view to competency being equivalent to IELTS 6.5.

2.52 A sample of student work is moderated by a subject specialist from the University, or by a member of Navitas UK staff external to EIC in the case of the ILSC module and Critical Thinking. The external is asked to confirm that they are satisfied with the academic standards and achievement of students. The link tutor acts as an external member of EIC and ensures equity within the cohort and first year students of the University.

2.53 The terms of reference and membership of Module Panels, Board of Examiners and Progression Boards and Mitigating Circumstance Panel are clearly documented in EIC policies. External members to EIC sit on each of these committees/panels. The Board of Examiners is responsible for their fair and equitable application.

2.54 EIC does not recognise prior learning.

2.55 EIC ensures academic staff are competent, assessment workshops are held at the Learning and Teaching Forum and are supported by subject specialist from the University.

2.56 A number of approaches are used to ensure that students receive effective, timely personalised feedback. Feedback on coursework assignments is within 10 days, in some cases much quicker. Feedback on Exams is generally class feedback; however, individual feedback is available on request. The University provides feedback within four weeks and these different approaches are made clear to students.

2.57 Mitigating circumstances is covered in the EIC Student Handbook available through the Portal. Details of extenuating circumstances are in the Student Handbook.

2.58 The Plagiarism and Collusion Policy and Procedure is available and academic teaching staff ensure that students are aware of the requirement to reference correctly. This is a significant component of the ILSC module. The Policy and Procedure is available to staff and students via the student Portal. The policy clearly indicates the process for the reporting of students and the possible outcomes. EIC uses plagiarism-detection software to support students understanding of plagiarism and to help staff detect it. Students are taught how to submit through the software as part of the ILSC module.

2.59 A variety of different summative assessments are used to demonstrate achievement of programme learning outcomes and adequately prepare students for the University stage of the pathway.

2.60 EIC has reviewed the assessment load and deadlines and, where they were deemed too heavy, following discussion with students and link tutors, adjustments have been made. How to Succeed at Your Studies has also been updated to help prepare students for assessment in higher education.

2.61 The review team looked at the Operations Manual, CPRs, and College Plagiarism Guide and checked their application through talking to staff and students. The team also looked at the DMDs and Programme Specifications and reviewed the assessment methods to ensure that learning outcomes are assessed.

2.62 The evidence demonstrates clear EIC policies and regulation, which ensure that standards for the award of credits is maintained. The University is involved in marking and moderation, and, where appropriate, external examiners from outside of the institution provide externality.

2.63 The evidence shows that staff are innovative in their approach to using a variety of assessment methods and that they are appropriately prepared in assessment and feedback and the use of plagiarism-detection software.

2.64 Students whom the review team met are aware of the different assessment methods. They confirm that assessments are appropriate for their course and that the feedback is very helpful. All the information is available on the VLE, including the marking criteria. Students acknowledge the importance of experiencing a variety of methods of assessment in preparation for future higher education studies and feel adequately prepared for progression onto the University pathway. They are aware of the mitigating circumstance, misconduct and appeals policies, information for which is available on the VLE. It is clear that EIC does not recognise prior learning. EIC ensures that students understand how assessment judgements are made through dialogue during tutorials and class feedback. Students describe the feedback as being very effective.

2.65 The team concludes that equitable, valid and reliable assessment processes are in place, enabling every student to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes for the

credit of the qualification being sought. The information provided for staff and students is accessible and easy to understand. Students acknowledge that the different assessment methods adequately prepare them for the University stage of the pathway. Staff and students are adequately prepared. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and that the level of associated risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of Risk: Low**

## **Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.**

### **Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining**

#### **Findings**

2.66 In line with the University regulations governing external examiners, EIC does not employ examiners from outside the University. Navitas UK has recently issued guidance on the role of external examiners to ensure understanding of the expectations of the Quality Code *Chapter B7*.

2.67 The autonomy of EIC in the teaching and assessment of students allows it to rely on independent academic specialists at the University to meet the expectations regarding externality. Academics from the relevant Faculty of the University provide the externality and are involved in programme approval, verification of assessment and moderation of students' work. The link tutor provides externality and acts as a conduit between EIC and the University. The period of appointment is dictated by the University.

2.68 Navitas UK engages experts for particular academic quality enhancement or assurance projects.

2.69 EICs applies the following model as part of its ongoing quality management processes of all modules delivered under the Standard Delivery Model (SDM), Undergraduate Pathway Stage 2, First Year Degree (externally moderated by the University) and Postgraduate Pathway Stage 1, Pre-Masters (externally moderation by the University).

2.70 For the standard delivery model assessments are undertaken by EIC and moderation is undertaken by the University subject specialist; this is clearly set out in EIC policies and regulations, allowing the expectation of *Chapter B7* of the Quality Code to be met. External moderation of all stage 2 modules is carried out by the University academic from the appropriate School.

2.71 The University is responsible for assessment, moderation and external examining of the integrated delivery modules. This is carried out by the relevant School of the University: Integrated Delivery Model (IDM), Undergraduate Pathway Stage 2, First Year Degree (University assessed) and the Postgraduate Pathway Stage 1, Pre-Masters (University assessed).

2.72 The external examiner annually moderates the ILSC Module and Navitas UK can see the CVs of external examiners to review their IELTS experience. External examiners for the ILSC Module are currently being discussed.

2.73 External examiner reports are available for staff and students via the Portal.

2.74 The review team looked at the Articulation Agreement, CPRs, Operational Manual, Navitas UK External Examiner Guidance, the VLE and Programme Annual Reports. The application of CPRs was discussed with staff and students.

2.75 There are clear external examiner guidance, policies and regulations and these are consistently applied across the relevant programmes. Staff and students who the team met confirmed that external examiner reports are made available on the VLE and that the reports are fit for purpose.

2.76 The CVs of external examiners are available to Navitas UK to review IELTS expertise.

2.77 The review team concludes that the expectation is met; it is consistent with the guidance in the Quality Code. The degree-awarding body makes appropriate use of externality for the EIC standard delivery model and the integrated delivery model programmes. The University acts as the external, as per the Articulation Agreement, through the link tutor and subject specialist. EIC may wish to consider, however, identifying the duration of the link tutor or subject specialist's appointment as moderator, to align with the Quality Code *Chapter B7*.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of Risk: Low**

**Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review**

**Findings**

2.78 EIC conducts the annual monitoring of its programmes within Navitas UK's framework. EIC works with the University within an overall framework provided by Navitas UK. Annual monitoring reports are produced for each programme using a standard template. They are submitted to EIC Learning and Teaching Board, and when approved by that Board they are sent to the Academic Advisory Committee. Copies of the reports are also sent to Navitas UK.

2.79 Periodic review of EIC's provision is undertaken using University procedures every three years. These procedures involve a panel appointed by the University, which makes recommendations to AAC and in turn to the University's Quality Assurance and Monitoring Committee.

2.80 The review team found that EIC has appropriate policies and processes in place for the monitoring and review of its programmes in order to maintain standards and enhance the quality of learning opportunities

2.81 In order to test the effectiveness of EIC's procedures the review team examined policy documents; looked at monitoring and review reports; examined committee minutes; and met with staff responsible for annual monitoring and review.

2.82 The evidence seen by the review team showed that EIC implements both Navitas UK and the University's policies and procedures for the monitoring and periodic review of programmes effectively. Annual monitoring reports include data on student numbers and progression, student feedback, a link tutor's report and commentary on the implementation of the previous year's action plan.

2.83 Periodic review of EIC provision is carried out on a rolling programme every three years for each approved programme, following the University's processes.

2.84 The review team concludes that EIC, in conjunction with the University, operates effective processes for the monitoring and review of its provision. Overall, the review team concludes the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.**

### **Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints**

#### **Findings**

2.85 EIC, in partnership with the University, has procedures for handling complaints and appeals in a timely way. EIC instructions on handling of complaints and appeals are contained within the Operations Manual and College Policies and Regulations, which students and staff can access via the VLE.

2.86 Students are subject to EIC complaints procedures for issues relating to their experience at EIC. A register is maintained, as well as an appropriate record of all complaints received.

2.87 EIC receives very few formal complaints; it seeks to resolve issues before they escalate. Complaints to the University can be referred to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman if the internal process has been exhausted. Students may complain directly to the University, through the University's Complaints Procedure, if the complaint is about issues relating to the University, that is, complaints about the student's experience while at the University School or Service. EIC Learning and Teaching Board is informed of complaints with immediate effect. A flow chart demonstrates what to do when and who to make the complaint to.

2.88 An appeal can be made against results, completion of part of the programme, progression to the next stage or the entitlement of an award. Appeal is generally made on an informal basis and records are maintained. The procedures and application form are set out in EIC Policy. Student appeals are normally handled within EIC but can be escalated to the Navitas UK Quality and Standards Office if greater independence is appropriate.

2.89 College students do not have recourse to the University appeals process. They are only subject to University procedures for appeals once they are studying on the University Stage of a Pathway.

2.90 Data on complaints and appeals are included in the Annual Monitoring Report and as such reviewed annually to look at trends and so forth..

2.91 Staff are supported through written guidance and can seek further support from link tutors to understand how the University deals with an equivalent case.

2.92 Information about appeals is available to students on the Portal, and students are informed in the same communication as their results of the right to appeal and their right to seek advice from the Napier Students' Association.

2.93 EIC students being able to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) if the internal College procedure has been exhausted; this was confusing but has recently been clarified in the Complaints Procedure.

2.94 The review team looked at the Operations manual, CPRs, Annual Monitoring Reports and talked to staff and students about the applications and understanding of the process.



2.95 The evidence shows that clear processes are in place for handling student complaints and appeals. Students met were aware of the process for submitting a complaint and consider the handling of complaints reassuring. An example was given of a complaint regarding an agent being handled satisfactorily. Complaints are submitted to the Manager of Academic and Student Services who maintains a record, but there have been no complaints in the last academic year. The evidence shows that very few complaints are made as the majority of issues are dealt with informally through the EIC Enhancement Team.

2.96 The process for making complaints or appeals is clear and easy to access; it is transparent and fair. Although the majority of complaints and appeals are handled informally there is a clear pathway to the EIC Principal should escalation be required. If still unresolved it is referred to the Navitas UK CEO. It is only if a complaint relates directly to the University, for example University resources, that the University's complaints procedure can be used. A log of complaints and appeals is maintained and included in the annual report. Students are now able to complain to the OIA if internal College procedures have been exhausted; this has been clarified in the Complaints Procedure. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and that the level of associated risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of Risk: Low**

## The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.97 In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.98 All of the Expectations in this area are met and the associated level of risk is low in each case. The team identifies one feature of good practice. There are no recommendations.

2.99 The feature of good practice focuses on the effectiveness of the critical thinking strand within the pre-masters ILSC programme, providing excellent preparation for postgraduate students in business management (Expectation B3).

2.100 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at Edinburgh International College **meets** UK expectations.

### **3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities**

**Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.**

#### **Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision**

##### **Findings**

- 3.1 The mission, values and provision of EIC are published online and in print.
- 3.2 EIC works with the General Manager Sales and Marketing Navitas UK to create a coordinated approach to vetting marketing and published information. Navitas UK have a centralised department to assist with the design of communications and marketing material.
- 3.3 EIC's Director of Marketing and Admissions manages EIC's published content, subject to approval of the Universities International UK Marketing teams.
- 3.4 EIC uses a range of media for publishing information. All material is jointly branded, printed material, online information, recruitment fairs, virtual presentations and social media, as well as face-to-face interaction with College, University and Navitas staff and agents. The partner University, in advance of publication, signs off EIC material and Navitas UK has oversight of all published material, with MAC receiving regular reports on EIC's marketing activity. The information is reviewed each trimester and there is an annual sign-off of all material by the University in advance of publication.
- 3.5 The principal vehicle for information about EIC's offer, including programme, entry criteria, fees and how to apply, is found on EIC's website and is available to prospective students and the wider public.
- 3.6 Programme information, programme specifications, DMDs and module guides are available for staff and students on the VLE. Every semester the Student Handbook is updated and uploaded on the document section of the student Portal. It contains all the policies that affect students studying at EIC. New students to EIC attend an induction, during which information is provided through a set of workshops.
- 3.7 Upon completion of the programme College students receive a confirmation of attainment from EIC detailing their achievements. Once the student graduates from the University the credits for the first year of the degree studied at EIC are recognised on the University transcript.
- 3.8 EIC Policies and Regulations are included in the Operations Manual, published on the Portal, and can be accessed by students and staff. The Operations Manual is reviewed each year by JSPMB.
- 3.9 Initial discussions are taking place to align EIC and University marketing material. EIC currently prints a prospectus and plans are being put in place for EIC provision to appear in the University international prospectus from 2017.
- 3.10 EIC recently held a staff workshop and Navitas UK strategic plan formed the basis of the workshop. EIC was invited to comment on the new University Strategic Plan 2020, Internationalisation Strategy. This was followed by a joint strategy day held between EIC and the University International Office.

- 3.11 EIC is involved in the induction of new staff to the International Office to ensure information provided to prospective students is accurate. EIC also trains contracted agents for the same reason.
- 3.12 Information for registered students is via email, VLE and the Student Handbook. Longitudinal induction sessions are also a source of information and developed so that the student is not overloaded with information upon commencement. Information 'Just in Time' is provided as they go through the programme.
- 3.13 Students receive confirmation of attainment from EIC detailing achievement, and on graduation from the University the credits for the first year are recognised on the transcript.
- 3.14 The review team reviewed the online information, printed material, Student Handbook, CPRs and programme specifications/ DMDs available via the VLE. Discussion with staff and students also took place regarding ease of access, accuracy and usefulness of information.
- 3.15 There is evidence of a sound strong relationship between EIC and the University and evidence of good partnership working with regards to published information; the relationship between the Director of Marketing and Admissions of EIC and the University International Office is good. Published material is independently monitored for accuracy, with Navitas UK having oversight. A close working relationship is demonstrated.
- 3.16 The students confirm that the process for application and admission is published on the website and that there is no difficulty accessing it; it is clear and easy to understand and every area of the students' life is covered. It includes information about grades, professors' contact information and timetables.
- 3.17 The evidence demonstrates that changes to admissions requirements are reviewed at MAC and reflected in the new brochure.
- 3.18 EIC's academic regulations, policies and procedures are included in the Operations Manual and published on the website. A guidebook has been produced so that all policies and manuals are in the same place for ease of access. The VLE demonstration confirmed that all relevant programme information is available for staff and students. It is easily accessible and updated regularly.
- 3.19 Students confirm that during the induction they are taught how to use EIC's VLE, which they find easy to navigate. They are also given access to the University VLE; they have no difficulty using both.
- 3.20 The review team concludes that information provided for prospective students, current students and staff is clear, easy to understand and accessible. It is updated regularly and a robust system is in place for checking accuracy of information. There is a good working relationship between EIC and the University. The University signs off the material and Navitas UK has oversight of all published material. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and that the level of associated risk is low

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of Risk: Low**

## The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.21 In reaching its judgement relating to the quality of information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.22 There are no recommendations or affirmations in this area.

3.23 EIC has robust systems for the production and monitoring of information. The team also recognises the effective use of the virtual learning environment for the provision of information for prospective students and for the management of assessment for current students.

3.24 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at Edinburgh International College **meets** UK expectations.

## 4 Commentary on the enhancement of student learning opportunities

### Findings

4.1 EIC has developed its approach to enhancement within the framework set out by Navitas UK. EIC is party to the strategic aims of Navitas UK and is committed to enhancement, which includes the establishment of a College Enhancement Team (CET) reporting to the EIC Learning and Teaching Board.

4.2 EIC has developed a series of objectives that seek to enhance the student experience. These are outlined as a set of actions in the Quality Enhancement Strategy and a more detailed list of action points following discussions at EIC Enhancement Team. These are reviewed at each meeting of the team and updates recorded. Current actions focus on the development of an Independent Learning Charter, developing the EIC Good Scholarship Policy and the Academic Merit Recognition Policy for both academic merit and academic engagement.

4.3 EIC aims to make sure that there is continuous improvement to the students' learning opportunities and the student experience with consequent sharing of good practice. This is achieved by using a number of mechanisms including student feedback, link tutor feedback, and annual monitoring. This is set in the context of the overall Navitas UK Learning and Teaching Strategy, which includes a number of strategic indicators with related objectives to be achieved over the period of the strategy.

## 5 Commentary on the Theme: Digital Literacies

### Findings

5.1 Digital Literacy Strategy is part of Navitas UK enhancement framework; the Virtual Learning Strategy 2015-16 applies to the UK College community who use the VLE and is a key element of the Navitas UK Student Experience framework. The strategy is to ensure that all College students can access appropriate material to support their studies, encourage and support College staff to take an active role in student learning, promote staff development, ensure that the tools are appropriate to support student learning and ensure that appropriate training is provided for staff and students. The strategy makes clear the need to ensure that digital literacy is embedded in the curriculum and that appropriate resources are available.

5.2 EIC has adopted a working definition of digital literacy, which aims to prepare someone for living, learning and working in a digital society. It also includes a safeguarding element, being of aware digital identity and wellbeing. EIC, through the review and development of modules, ensures that academics make use of up-to-date technologies.

5.3 All lecturers and students have access to the VLE, allowing access to coursework, creating discussion forums, and the use of plagiarism-detection software to upload assignments and provide feedback. The VLE is the medium for all resources; a VLE Guide is available to provide staff with guidance on content. Students consider the VLE to be an important component of course delivery, with lecture notes/presentations uploaded before or after the lecture.

5.4 Students are taught how to use the VLE during induction workshops and at the beginning of every module. The ILSC module includes the use of the plagiarism-detection software, digital sources for academic writing and exposure to specialist software.

5.5 Students are encouraged to engage collaboratively through the VLE and social media. The student Portal is a useful way of communication for students through discussion forums. Field trips to a range of industries are considered a significant part of the curriculum to demonstrate the practical application of IT in the workplace

5.6 It is intended that digital literacy will form part of the new College Quality Enhancement Strategy as part of the strategic priority relating to employability.

5.7 Navitas UK's Introduction to IT in November 2015 makes it clear how to get IT support, which is provided to Colleges by the Navitas IT team, which visits periodically.

5.8 Navigate is a new student information system which is currently being piloted in Australia; it is due to be introduced in autumn 2016. The VLE will operate within Navigate.

5.9 The review team concludes while the 2015-16 Virtual Learning Strategy is being implemented across EIC network; digital learning is at an early stage of development. The focus to date has been primarily around the use of the VLE, which is a good medium for staff and students. Students confirm that it is easy to use and access, with all the information required available. It is reassuring to know that with the introduction of Navigate the VLE will still operate, as this appears to be working effectively. While the team acknowledges that there is some good practice among the academics, it is suggested that there is scope for further development to embed digital literacy within the curricula, as identified in the Virtual Learning Strategy aims.

## Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 24-27 of the [Higher Education Review \(Embedded Colleges\) handbook](#)

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality)

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx)

### Academic standards

The standards set by **degree-awarding bodies** for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

### Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

### Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

### Credit(s)

A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

### Degree-awarding body

A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

### Distance learning

A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.

See also **blended learning**.

### Dual award or double award

The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

### e-learning

See **technology enhanced or enabled learning**.



### **Embedded college**

Colleges, often operating as part of a network, that are embedded on or near the campuses of two or more UK higher education institutions (HEI) and that primarily provide preparatory programmes for higher education

### **Enhancement**

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

### **Expectations**

Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

### **Flexible and distributed learning**

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.

See also **distance learning**.

### **Framework**

A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

### **Framework for higher education qualifications**

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FHEQIS).

### **Good practice**

A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

### **Learning opportunities**

The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

### **Learning outcomes**

What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

### **Operational definition**

A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

### **Programme (of study)**

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

### **Programme specifications**

Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

### **Public information**

Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

### **Quality Code**

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

### **Reference points**

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

### **Subject Benchmark Statement**

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

### **Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)**

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

### **Threshold academic standard**

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

### **Virtual learning environment (VLE)**

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

### **Widening participation**

Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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