QAA

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

International College Portsmouth

April 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education at International College Portsmouth. The review took place from 14 to 15 April 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Gill Butler
- Mrs Catherine Fairhurst.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by International College Portsmouth 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)[1] 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 the Navitas UK International College Portsmouth 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,[2] 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.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges).[4] For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
[2] Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges):
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about International College Portsmouth

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

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of Navitas and ICP's degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities is **commended**.
- 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 International College Portsmouth.

- The highly responsive and collaborative approach to new programme development, which recognises disciplinary needs and student potential to succeed Expectation B1).
- The range of activities provided through Careers Week, which supports students' employability (Expectation B4).
- The feedback on assessed work which is prompt, adapted to student needs and systematically monitored for quality (Expectation B6).
- The effective use of tracer data from the University in reviewing curricula and student performance and achievement (Expectation B8).

Theme: Digital Literacies

Navitas UK has established a Digital Literacy Strategy and International College Portsmouth (ICP) has a technology-enhanced learning (TEL) strategy, which provides a context for staff practice in this area. ICP has two TEL champions who provide leadership and assistance to staff in developing the interactive potential of the virtual learning environment (VLE) and strategies such as the 'Bring your own device' campaign. Digital literacy is also developed through routine use of the student Portal as the source of information about programmes and ICP and the college network-wide Interactive Skills and Communication module (ILSC) taken by all students.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining [Higher Education Review](#) (Embedded Colleges).

About International College Portsmouth

The vision of International College Portsmouth is to be regarded as the UK's leading Pathway College providing opportunity and support for its students to achieve academic excellence.

ICP was established in 2009 as an associate college of the University of Portsmouth. It has grown to an annual intake of 450 full-time students across three intakes a year. From an initial nine pathways it now articulates to courses across all five faculties of the University. Its key source countries are Nigeria, Hong Kong, China and UK recruited international students.

ICP has a macro-level strategic plan and a more operational planning framework of four plans: the Navitas ECREO (QAA) action plan; ICP Learning and Teaching Strategy, aligned

with the Navitas strategy; ICP Enhancement Plan; and the Annual Programme Review Action Plan.

There are 15.5 FTE permanent staff working on student and academic support, marketing and admissions and a College Director, together with an academic team contracted to teach specific modules each semester. The partnership governance is invested in the Academic Advisory Committee (AAC), an Operations Advisory Committee (OAC) and a Marketing and Planning Advisory Committee (MPAC). All report to the overarching Joint Strategic Planning and Management Board (JSPMB), chaired by a University Pro Vice-Chancellor.

Since the 2012 review by QAA, ICP has become an embedded college delivering integrated programmes and has moved to more modern and spacious premises at the University. Key pedagogic changes include the establishment of Programme Leaders, ICP Enhancement Teams and online marking and feedback for most coursework.

ICP regards its main challenges as: staying abreast of technology enhanced learning; remaining aligned to the Quality Code; rising student expectations; maintaining the currency of academic programmes; achieving and exceeding parity with international students recruited directly into the University.

Since the 2012 QAA visit, ICP has been regarded as making commendable progress building on the six identified features of good practice, for instance in enhancing the role of the Programme Leaders in drafting the annual programme reviews and improving the presentation of tracer data. The three recommendations have been met through action across the Navitas network. The first, relating to consistent application of procedures for programme approval, has been addressed by adherence to the requirements set out by Navitas and localised to fit the procedures of the University. New programmes require strategic approval from Faculty, JSPMBand Navitas UK and validated through University systems. The second recommendation related to working with the University to provide students with formal recognition of modules passed and any appropriate exit award, which is now in place. In order to meet the recommendation to develop a more consistent approach to student engagement, a College Enhancement Team was established, empowering students through their representatives to contribute to quality enhancement. The Student Council also encourages students to engage in quality assurance.

Explanation of the findings about International College Portsmouth

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 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 International College Portsmouth (ICP), embedded in the University of Portsmouth (the University), is not a degree-awarding body, and does not award credit. However, students receive a Confirmation of Attainment from ICP, and the University's transcript recognises ICP credits.

1.2 Navitas UK's approval process, the templates for programme specifications and the Definitive Module Document (DMD) require the consideration of Subject Benchmark Statements relevant to a module or programme. The learning outcomes described in the programme specifications reflect the qualifications descriptors in *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), for programmes set at Levels 4-6, although the template refers to the old National Qualification Framework.

1.3 The University, through the Academic Advisory Committee and the Joint Strategic Partnership and Management Board, have responsibility for the academic provision of the collaborative programmes. The University and Navitas UK have oversight of the standards of ICP provision through the Programme Approval process, receiving summaries of AAC reports and Annual Programme Reviews.

1.4   The design of policies and procedures in place at ICP allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.5   The team tested the Expectation by examining a range of documents including programme specifications, definitive module documents, approval and review documents, procedural and policy documents, external examiner and link tutor reports and by holding meetings with academic and support staff including University representation.

1.6   The documentation and the external examiners report and the University assurance demonstrates that ICP adheres to both Navitas UK's and the University's programme approval, monitoring and review procedures, which safeguard academic standards.

1.7   These procedures ensure that all programme learning outcomes are aligned appropriately to the FHEQ. The programme and module specifications make it clear that each module and its associated learning outcomes have been developed and calibrated against the requirements of the FHEQ. The programme specifications show that ICP explicitly maps learning aims and outcomes against assessment tasks. Link tutor and external examiners' reports confirm that academic standards are maintained at appropriate levels and that learning outcomes are being met. The teaching staff discussed the importance of the level of student learning in preparation for transition to the University. Former students are positive about how well they had been prepared for progression to the University.

1.8   ICP is effective in securing threshold academic standards through close adherence to Navitas UK's and the University's policies and procedures. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk 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

1.9   The academic framework and governance of ICP is defined by Navitas UK and customised in order to align with the regulations of the University of Portsmouth. ICP thus has a set of regulations that are similar to those of the University, but not identical. ICP does not make awards; it is a collaborative partner of the University and the pathways that it offers form part of the validated provision of the University.

1.10   ICP's Director/Principal is responsible for quality assurance and enhancement in ICP and accountable to the Executive General Manager of Navitas (University Partnerships Europe). The University has responsibility for the assurance of academic standards. Governance is exercised through the Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) which is responsible for the regulation, oversight and quality assurance of the academic work of ICP. The AAC reports to the overarching Joint Strategic Planning and Management Board (JSPMB), which is chaired by a University Pro Vice-Chancellor and which is where decision making and accountability reside. The governance structure is documented in the Recognition Agreement.

1.11   Oversight of academic standards is also exercised by Navitas UK Quality Standards Office and Director of Student Experience and Quality, who is an ex officio member of the AAC. Within ICP, the College Learning and Teaching Board (CLTB), chaired by the ICP Manager of Academic Services, has ongoing operational responsibility for maintaining academic standards, which includes responsibility for convening College Module Panels and Progression Boards and ensuring that all assessment is carried out in accordance with the regulations.

1.12   This academic framework and the associated policies and procedures would allow Expectation A2.1 to be met.

1.13   In testing this Expectation the review team examined the terms of reference of the JSPMB, the AAC and the CLTB; academic regulations addressing programme approval and review, assessment and annual monitoring; the Quality Manual; organisational and committee structures; reports and minutes from committees; annual monitoring and programme and partnership reviews. The team also held discussions with members of staff from ICP and the University.

1.14   ICP Regulations describe the processes for programme approval, modifications and review; annual monitoring; and assessment, including marking, moderation and the operation of assessment boards and student engagement. Both the University and Navitas UK demonstrate effective oversight of the standards of ICP provision through their close engagement in the governance and academic procedures of ICP. Reports from external examiners and faculty link tutors from the University confirm that assessment and moderation processes are appropriate and that examination boards operate effectively. Navitas UK Quality Standards Office has responsibility for ensuring that policies are regularly reviewed and updated as required by any changes to the Quality Code or other changes in the operating environment.

1.15   The comprehensive assessment regulations address all aspects of the academic arrangements required, including internal verification, coursework submission, marking, internal/external moderation, feedback to students, module panels, progression boards, extenuating circumstances, assessment offences, adjustments for students with disabilities, and invigilation rules.

1.16   Staff whom the review team met were cognisant of ICP regulations, policies and procedures relevant to their respective roles. Information about assessment regulations is available on the ICP Portal and in hard copy. Students whom the review team met know where to find information that they need.

1.17   This robust approach to quality processes and oversight ensures that academic standards are appropriately set and maintained. The review team considers that ICP, in partnership with the University, has transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern the award of academic credit and that Expectation A2.1 is met and 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

1.18   Programme Specifications identify the intended learning outcomes of each pathway and provide the definitive record of ICP's academic provision. Definitive module documents (DMD) set out the detailed module outline. The programme specifications and DMD are completed using Navitas UK's templates, which requires that learning outcomes and credit values are specified and that reference is made to the appropriate FHEQ levels and Subject Benchmark Statements. These documents provide the key reference point for all stakeholders and are available on ICP Portal.

1.19   The programme approval and modification processes require that formal notification of full approval is received by Navitas UK and the partner University before any changes can be made to the records of provision held by Navitas UK, ICP and the University. Other changes to a module must be notified to Navitas UK Quality Standards office by the ICP Director/Principal or nominee using the module management form.

1.20   Annual monitoring entails a comprehensive review of the records and their maintenance and may result in the revision of the programme specification and DMDs. Programme information is also scrutinised by the partner University every three years through the process of Periodic Review. All definitive College programme information and records of student attainment is stored in the ICP Student Records system, MAZE, and the University records system. MAZE is due to be replaced by a new integrated system, Navigate, in autumn 2016.

1.21   ICP regulatory and policy framework, supported by the requirements of the University and Provider, would allow Expectation A2.2 to be met.

1.22   In testing this Expectation the review team examined the relevant ICP regulations, policies and supporting documentation; sample programme specifications and definitive module documents; reports from annual monitoring; and annual programme reviews. The review team also held meetings with staff from the University and students and staff from ICP.

1.23   The documentation seen by the team demonstrates full compliance with the regulations. Learning outcomes are appropriately specified at programme and module levels. The DMD form identifies the module title, the FHEQ level, credit value and any prerequisites that may restrict a student's ability to undertake the module. The form includes detailed information and describes the module's aims, content, resources, and details both specific and generic learning outcomes along with the assessment types by which they are demonstrated. The programme specifications were properly completed and displayed on the walls of ICP, as well as being available on the Portal. Students whom the team met were able to identify the credits and learning outcomes of the modules

1.24   Programme and Module management forms were appropriately completed and signed ensuring that records could be appropriately updated. Periodic review and annual

monitoring reports seen were fully completed, involved the University and were signed by
the Navitas UK Director of Student Experience and Quality.

1.25　　On the basis of the evidence, the review team considers that the programme
specifications and definitive module documents provide a definitive record of ICP's provision.
They are approved and modified through due process undertaken with the partner University
and Navitas UK Quality and Academic Standards Office. Therefore the review team
concludes that Expectation A2.2 is met and 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

1.26   All new programmes and any major modifications to existing ICP programmes require approval by the University and Navitas UK. These formal approval processes secure academic standards. Navitas UK has a central process for the approval and periodic review of ICP stages of programme pathways. Navitas UK gives strategic approval and approval in principle after consideration of the market and resources. The proposed programme pathway is then subject to the University's approval procedure. The University has validation responsibility for ensuring compliance with the FHEQ and professional benchmarks, and for approving module content, associated learning outcomes and assessment strategies for the programmes. All programmes are subject to annual monitoring and to a Periodic Programme and Partnership Collaborative Review (PPPCR) by the University. The previous PPR took place in 2014.

1.27   These formal approval processes enable the expectation of securing academic standards to be met and demonstrate an outcomes-based approach to academic awards. The Expectation would be met.

1.28   The implementation and effectiveness of the approval processes undertaken at College level was tested by scrutinising the Navitas Quality Manual, new Programme Specifications, and definitive module documents. Discussions with University and ICP senior staff and teaching staff also contributed to the assessment of this Expectation.

1.29   A recent example of programme approval demonstrates that the processes described above operate effectively and that the University regulations are followed. The policies and processes in place for programme approval show the alignment of content and assessment with the UK threshold standards contained within the FHEQ. The University awards represent the achievement of the outcomes set out in the FHEQ qualification descriptors and there has been mapping against the learning outcomes detailed in the programme specifications, and requiring achievement of these outcomes through the assessment process. The University and ICP use credit as a measure of study and assessment in line with the Higher Education Credit Framework for England. Threshold standards are defined by a minimum profile of achievement, measured in terms of grades and credit volume. The programme specification refers to the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and is informed by these in their design. The external examiners' report and the University assurance demonstrates that ICP adheres to both Navitas UK's and the University's programme approval, monitoring and review procedures,

1.30   The approval procedures of Navitas UK and the University are followed thoroughly by ICP, which allows academic standards to be set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualifications and are in accordance with the University's and Navitas UKs academic frameworks and regulations. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk 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

1.31   ICP operates within Navitas UK's academic infrastructure and as an Associate College of the University of Portsmouth, with whom it has a Recognition and Articulation Agreement. The standards, purpose and principles of assessment are set out in the localised College Policies and Regulations on Assessment. The governance arrangements and details of processes to be followed are described in the ICP Operations Manual. Guidance on assessment practice, threshold standards and the design of modules is provided by the Navitas UK Academic Quality and Standards Office. These documents, together with the course approval process, provide coverage of credit definition and levels. ICP does not make awards.

1.32   The requirements and processes documented in the Assessment Regulations and Operations Manual address the awarding University's academic standards, UK threshold standards and the level and definition of credit. These processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.33   The review team tested the systems in place by reviewing documentation and supporting guidance in the Academic Regulations and the Quality Handbook. The review team looked at annual monitoring reports, external examiner reports, programme reviews, programme specifications, definitive module documents and guides. The review discussed assessment processes in a range of meetings with staff from ICP, staff from the partner University and students.

1.34   The review team found that ICP convened Module Assessment Panels and College Progression Boards of Examiners in accordance with the regulatory framework. The panel is responsible for considering the academic performance of students on each module, and for confirming the integrity and fairness of the assessment process, including marking/grading and moderation. While at ICP the Boards are amalgamated, feedback from external examiners and link tutors confirms that these boards are properly constituted and operating fairly and in accordance with their terms of reference. Additionally, module assessment boxes are available prior to the examination boards, which provide external colleagues with the opportunity to scrutinise all aspects of the assessment process. Minutes of committees and review reports confirm that appropriate oversight of assessment processes is exercised.

1.35   ICP Assessment Regulations detail the requirements in relation to the assessment of students, stipulating that each student must be assessed in accordance with the approved programme specification. The DMD seen by the review team clearly sets out the learning outcomes to be assessed at module level, summative assessment methods and weightings of assessments. Prior to releasing details of any assignment academic staff are required to complete an internal verification form, which must be signed by the manager of Academic Services, ensuring the clear identification of the learning outcomes that are being assessed.

1.36   The DMDs are available in hard copy and in ICP's virtual learning environment. Students whom the review team met know where to find information about their assessments, understand what was expected of them and find the feedback useful. However, the student submission to this review indicates that this was not the case for all students.

1.37   The Assessment Regulations and the accompanying documentation on marking, moderation and best practice in assessment and feedback provide detailed guidance on the process of assessment, marking, grading, internal and external moderation.

1.38   From the documentation seen and the staff and students whom the team met, there was evidence of effective practice in the design and the implementation of assessment. The requirements and processes documented in the Regulations and Quality Manual address ICP's and the partner University's academic standards, UK threshold standards and the level and definition of credit. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met, with a low level of risk.

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

1.39   Navitas UK Policies and Regulations and the Operations Manual provide the framework within which monitoring and review of programmes is undertaken to ensure that appropriate academic standards are achieved. ICP prepares an annual review report for each Programme. The annual review report includes evaluation reports of each module, staff evaluation, student and faculty link tutors' feedback and an action plan for the following year. The data includes programme performance and rates of student progression The University provides student progression and performance via the annual tracer study process. Annual programme review reports are considered by ICP through its College Learning and Teaching board and are submitted to the Academic Advisory Committee. Navitas UK and the University have oversight through the Academic Advisory Committee. The University Periodic Collaborative Programme and Partnership Review with external membership assures the University that the academic standards are being appropriately maintained.

1.40   The policies and procedures of Navitas UK, the University and ICP would allow this Expectation to be met.

1.41   The review team scrutinised a range of evidence to test the success of the framework and its associated processes. This included documentation such as manuals, committee minutes and review reports. Discussions with all categories of staff further contributed evidence that programme monitoring and review processes address the achievement of academic standards.

1.42   ICP underwent a University Periodic Collaborative Programme and Partnership Review in 2014 ; the outcome of this review was that the continuation of the partnership and the continued validity and relevance of the curriculum for all programmes was confirmed, and there are effective annual monitoring and review processes. This University review is augmented by annual module, programme and College monitoring. University tracer data feeds directly into an annual ICP Curriculum Review.

1.43   Annual Monitoring of Programme Reports and the report to the AAC demonstrate that ICP maintains regular, clear and extensive communications with the University. This is both operationally through link tutors and programme leaders and strategically and more formally through ICP and University reporting structures.

1.44   The documentary evidence and discussion with staff confirm that ICP has in place sound and effective processes of programme monitoring and periodic review that address the achievement of threshold academic standards and those required by the University

1.45   Navitas UK's and University's monitoring and review processes are scrupulously followed. The Expectation is met and 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

1.46   In accordance with the Recognition and Articulation Agreement with the University, the University acts as the external for ICP and is responsible for assuring academic standards by way of operational mechanisms, including programme approval, moderation and assessment boards. ICP uses the term 'external' to describe any party external to ICP, such as members of staff from the partner University.

1.47   In accordance with the regulations of the University and Navitas UK, ICP regulations require that external advisers are appointed for all new programme approvals. The development must be undertaken jointly with the University and the scrutiny panels are chaired by the University, operating in accordance with their arrangements for collaborative provision. Guidance on the design of programmes makes reference to the need for consistency with external reference points. External representatives are also required as part of the periodic review process, which takes place every three years in accordance with the University regulations. Annual monitoring includes consideration of feedback and reports from external examiners, link tutors and moderators.

1.48   The University applies its own regulations and appoints external examiners to provide oversight of academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities for Stage 2 undergraduate level (FHEQ Level 4) and Stage 1 postgraduate level (FHEQ Level 6) programmes. For Stage 1 undergraduate level modules external scrutiny is provided by subject specialists from the University staff and University faculty link tutors, who are appointed by the relevant Dean of Faculty. Guidance within the Operations manual sets out the expectations of the role of the link tutor in relation to maintaining threshold standards. Additionally, Navitas UK appoints an independent cross-college external moderator for the Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC) module (Level 3 and Level 6/7), which affords an external perspective on standards within colleges, as well across of the provision overall. The partnership with the University and the regulatory and policy framework of Navitas UK and ICP would allow Expectation A3.4 to be met.

1.49   The review team tested Expectation A3.4 by reviewing documentation and guidance in the Navitas UK Quality Manual and ICP and Navitas UK policies and regulations relating to approval, monitoring, review and the role of external examiners. The team also reviewed documentation from ICP in relation to reports of periodic reviews and annual monitoring, curriculum reviews, minutes of meetings including examination boards, external examiner reports and the responses to them. Additionally the review team discussed arrangements for the involvement of external and independent expertise in a range of meetings.

1.50   The external examiner and link tutor comments and reports seen by the review team confirm that standards meet the threshold requirements, that courses remain current and course learning outcomes are in line with the relevant qualification descriptors and Subject Benchmark Statements. Link tutors and external examiners, where appointed,

attend College Module Panels and Progression Boards, where they are able to review module boxes and provide immediate comment in relation to the maintenance and achievement of threshold academic standards. Evidence from these Panels and Boards provides confirmation of standards and adherence to internal and external requirements.

1.51   Evidence of the effective use made of external advice was also evident in the review and monitoring reports seen by the review team. Meetings with staff from the University and ICP also demonstrated a robust approach to the maintenance of quality and externality at both strategic and operational levels.

1.52   The evidence provided demonstrated that the regulations of ICP are implemented effectively. These ensure that independent external perspectives are used to set and maintain academic standards for all provision. As ICP has very clear robust procedures for ensuring externality that are implemented effectively, the review team therefore concludes that Expectation A3.4 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies: Summary of findings

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

1.54   Processes are in place to ensure that qualifications are positioned at the appropriate level of the FHEQ and that learning outcomes align with the qualification descriptors and take account of subject benchmarks. There are appropriate and transparent frameworks and regulations in place and these are adhered to in practice. Definitive programme records are maintained and following approval and any subsequent changes agreed in accordance with due processes. Design and approval process involving Navitas UK and the awarding body are robust. Credit is achieved only when learning outcomes are met by students, as attested by moderators and external examiners, and programme reviews also confirm this alignment. External and independent expertise is employed at key stages to ensure the appropriate setting and maintenance of academic standards.

1.55   All seven Expectations are met, with low risk. There are no recommendations, affirmations or features of good practice in this area. ICP is meeting its obligations in relation to the requirements of Navitas and the University to safeguard standards. The review team therefore concludes that the maintenance of academic standards **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   Responsibility for the development, design and approval of programmes is shared between Navitas UK, ICP and the University. When developing a new programme/pathway, the head of ICP and a University proposer submit a strategic proposal to the Navitas UK QaSO. When a new pathway has been granted Strategic Approval by Navitas UK then a draft programme specification, Definitive Module Documents, and associated marketing material are prepared by ICP. The Navitas Quality and Standards Office (QaSO) and the University will give initial approval in principle after considering resources. Once given initial approval, the documents are presented and discussed at the University scrutiny panel, including external representation. The Scrutiny Panel undertakes a detailed review of the proposal and makes recommendations.

2.2   The review team found that ICP has appropriate policies and processes in place for the design and approval of programmes, and that the Expectation would be met.

2.3   The implementation and effectiveness of the approval processes undertaken at College level was tested by scrutinising the Navitas Quality Manual, programme specifications and definitive module documents, committee minutes, external examiners' reports and new pathway approval documents. Discussions with University and College senior staff and teaching staff also contributed to the assessment of this Expectation.

2.4   ICP works closely with the University faculties and uses student achievement data and industry requirements to develop new programmes and modules. For example, the use of tracer data to inform programme design at initial stages is shown by a study of the disparity in the performance of ICP students in subjects where there is a greater emphasis on academic discourse and English writing skills. Also, a recent approval of the Pharmacy Stage 1 programme articulating to the University MPharm (Pharmacy) course clearly demonstrates this joint approach to programme design and development and approval. The highly responsive and collaborative approach to new programme development, which recognises disciplinary needs and student potential to succeed, is **good practice**.

2.5   ICP has appropriate policies and practices in place for the design, development and approval of programmes to enhance the quality of learning opportunities. Expectation B1 is therefore met and the associated level of risk in this area 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   ICP Admissions policy is based on the standard Provider's Policies and Regulations which is designed to align with the Quality Code Expectation B2. The University Internationalisation strategy informs the approach to admissions, which is overseen by the Joint Strategic Management Partnership Board (JPSMB). The Marketing Planning Advisory Committee (MPAC) exercises operational oversight.

2.7   Appendices to the policy governing the particular requirements for admission are agreed jointly with the University of Portsmouth. They are reviewed annually and must be approved by Navitas UK Quality and Standards Office and Navitas UK compliance team. Applicants not meeting the standard entry criteria may be considered within the process for non-standard entry.

2.8   The admissions policy emphasises the importance of operating within an ethical framework, and therefore seeks to ensure that the associated procedures only select and admit students who have the ability and desire to study on their chosen course. The admissions policy, associated documentation and website information would allow Expectation B2 to be met.

2.9   Navitas has introduced a comprehensive application verification process across the ICP network, which may include online or telephone interviews with individual applicants. All applicants' qualifications are checked before an offer is made and checks of English language qualifications on verification websites may be undertaken, ensuring that Tier 4 sponsored applicants meet the necessary English language requirements.

2.10   The admissions policy, associated documentation and website information would allow Expectation B2 to be met.

2.11   In order to test this expectation the review team examined the admissions policy, documentation and information on the website relating to admissions, training for those involved with recruitment, the role of recruitment agents and minutes of committees. The review team met with staff involved with recruitment and admission as well as asking students about their admission experience.

2.12   All admissions staff have received National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) training and receive ongoing training and updates from the Navitas UK compliance team to ensure they are up to date with Home Office guidance on Tier 4 requirements. The Admissions Policy provides a clear guide to the principles, policies and procedures for admissions. A risk-based approach is adopted in relation to ensuring a genuine intent to study.

2.13   Agents play a central role in the recruitment process. Accordingly, Navitas UK conducts robust checks prior to contracting with and training an agent. The contract requires a commitment to ethical behaviour in accordance with the admissions policy. Agents are trained by Navitas UK and College marketing and admission staff and are required to use the Agent Manual, which is supplemented by guidance and online tools.

2.14   Students whom the review team spoke to considered that they had been well supported and advised through the process of making an informed decision, by admissions staff and by agents. They understood how the admission process worked and were clear about what they needed to do. They also referred to the clarity of information on the website. They considered that they were appropriately prepared for the transition to College and aspects of their learning experience exceeded their expectations.

2.15   The ICP website is accessible and has a comprehensive range of resources, which provide clear information to applicants in relation to courses, links to Key Information Sets (KIS) data, admission requirements, language and academic qualification equivalents, ICP and its location and the process of applying.

2.16   The review team saw evidence of transparent, inclusive and effective recruitment policies and carefully detailed procedures. The responsibility for making decisions in respect of applications that do not meet the standard entry requirements rests with ICP Academic Board, chaired by the College Director/Principal. In some cases, ICP then refers cases to the University.

2.17   There is a clear and transparent procedure specifying the grounds for making an appeal against a decision to reject a student. Appeals are made to the Admissions Office, who report its deliberations and decision to the CLTB. If necessary, the CLTB may refer the appeal to the Quality and Standards Office.

2.18   Monitoring and review of the operation of recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures is carried out on a regular basis, but is formally reviewed in conjunction with the University at the MPAC committee, which shows a considered approach to its deliberations. The terms of reference of the MPAC Committee are set out in the Operations manual and require that it meets at least three times a year. Any changes or additions to published information must, however, be signed off by the University.

2.19   ICP has clear and comprehensive policies and procedures for the recruitment, selection and admission of students. Practices are transparent and supportive, adhering to the principles of the Quality Code, *Chapter B2*. On this basis the review team concludes that Expectation B2 is met and the associated level of 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

2.20   The strategic approach to learning and teaching at ICP is based on action plans within a strategic planning framework. The ICP Learning and Teaching Quality Action Plan focuses on pedagogic issues and is aligned with the Navitas UK Learning and Teaching Plan. This identifies six strategic indicators: the student experience, academic KPIs, staff development, quality and standards, Navitas UK policy and regulations, and programme development. The Action Plans are reviewed and monitored by the CLTB and reported at the Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting. ICP Enhancement Plan is concerned with general enhancement of the student experience inside and outside of the classroom.

2.21   The policies of Navitas UK and ICP and the subsequent action plans would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.22   The review team tested the expectation and the effectiveness of teaching and learning by scrutinising ICP and Navitas UK strategy documents, student surveys, and external examiner reports, and by meeting teaching staff, students and professional support staff.

2.23   The varied learning and teaching opportunities include classroom lectures, tutorials, seminars and an emphasis on group working. These are enriched by subject-related field trips and industry visits for hospitality, law and science programmes. The teaching is in blocks of time. The classroom-based activities are also supplemented by two virtual learning environments (VLE), which the students say they use daily. Tutors upload presentations before each class. Students send and receive emails through the VLE and sometimes can see generic assessment feedback. They say that this helps them to achieve the learning outcomes. Resources are reviewed by the programme monitoring processes and by resource audits, and regularly in the Academic Advisory Committee. The Students in Jeopardy programme is a resource to which students who are failing, have absences or are under 18 are referred for monitoring and additional support. Additionally, student support services arrange weekly tutorials for underperforming students, for example remedial maths. More able students are stretched by receiving material in advance of lectures.

2.24   The many opportunities for staff development include access to University staff development, and regular Continuous Professional Development days, which have included the enhancement themes of digital technologies and the development of English writing skills. ICP operates an annual peer observations scheme, which enables sharing of good practice. There is management observation of new staff. The University approves staff teaching on the Stage 2 undergraduate and Stage 1 postgraduate modules.

2.25   ICP monitors and reviews the effectiveness of learning opportunities by student feedback covering modules, programmes and arrival arrangements, through the Student Council and College Enhancement Team; teaching staff feedback in module evaluations; external examiners and link tutors reports, module panels and progression board meetings; and external surveys such as I-graduate and Navitas-based questionnaires. The feedback

from questionnaires, Student Council and CET minutes are summarised, analysed and posted onto the VLE.

2.26　　ICP is very responsive to students' learning needs. For example, in response to feedback, students have access to past examination papers and extra materials on the VLE. Students say that they are very well supported by both teaching and support staff and are well prepared for University study.

2.27　　Learning resources and student support are in place to enable student learning and achievement and prepare students for their progress to the University. There are systematic and effective assurance and review processes in place to ensure that the quality of provision is enhanced. The Expectation is met and 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

2.28   ICP's Strategic Plan and Independent Student Charter articulate how ICP develops the students' academic, personal and professional potential. ICP aims to provide an exceptional student experience through a wide range of activities, which provide a challenging learning environment and enable students to fulfil their potential. ICP has appropriate policies and processes in place to enable students to develop their academic personal and professional potential. There are also suitable quality procedures to enable ICP to evaluate the achievements. The process would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.29   The team tested the Expectation by examining a range of documentary evidence including policies, reports, handbooks, the VLE and committee minutes. They had meetings with teaching staff, professional student support staff and students.

2.30   ICP has a dedicated Student Services Team, and a close relationship with the support services of the University. The student services and academic team support students in developing English writing skills, instructing on the use of the VLE and specialised software, giving feed-forward on draft assignments and organising extracurricular activities. There are varied social and cultural activities, including film nights and volunteering opportunities. Students say that they have access to all the information about student support that is in their handbooks and posted on the VLE and that there are posters advertising all activities.

2.31   There is a thorough student induction programme over three weeks, which the students say they appreciated and was helpful as an introduction to the UK, the city, ICP and the University. There is a regular Welfare Week programme. ICP encourages students to fulfil their potential with an annual awards evening where a range of prizes and certificates are presented, including recognition for academic performance, student engagement, module ambassadors, and the winning football team. Students who are having difficulties are referred by tutors to the Students in Jeopardy Programme, where they are given additional support.

2.32   The students' vocational, professional and transferable skills are developed in the ILSC modules. In addition, in response to student feedback ICP arranged a comprehensive Career Week. This included a wide and varied range of relevant activities including professional networking workshops and visits from practitioners in sectors relevant to students' programmes. The range of activities provided through Careers Week, which supports students' employability, is **good practice**. The annual monitoring process evaluates these activities.

2.33   Students affirmed in meetings with the review team, and reported in their submission, that their introduction to ICP, the UK and transition to the University had been well supported, and the University confirmed that there are high standards of pastoral and academic student support mechanisms. This support contributes to students' development and achievement. Hence 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

2.34   ICP expectations for student engagement are based on Navitas UK's Enhancement Strategy and detailed in the Operations Manual. Key issues arising from student surveys are identified in the College Learning and Teaching Boards and at the CET, and an action plan prepared. This is then shared with students through ICP Student Council. Progress with the action plan is included in academic reports to AAC, and in annual ICP reports to the Navitas Quality and Standards Office. ICP publishes the outcomes of surveys and actions taken to address issues through the VLE and through posters. Students are members of the ICP Student Council and ICP Enhancement Team. These committees report to ICP College, Learning and Teaching Board. Each module class has a Module Ambassador who also reports to the Student Council. Students elect their representatives each semester. All student representatives are given training by the University's Students' Union.

2.35   ICP has appropriate strategies and policies for this Expectation to be met.

2.36   The review team tested the Expectation and the effectiveness of student engagement at ICP by reading strategy documents, handbooks, review reports, student surveys and the student submission, and by meeting senior staff, tutors, students and professional support staff.

2.37   ICP continues to take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The student voice is central to the quality framework at ICP, as is demonstrated in the committee minutes, and there are a range of opportunities for students to engage in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. In 2014, an ICP student representative, along with students from other Navitas UK Colleges, made a presentation on engagement at the annual Navitas UK Conference in London.

2.38   At College level the arrangements for the collective representation of the student voice is through the Module Ambassadors programme, the Student Council and ICP College Enhancement Team. Student issues are discussed in detail against an action plan at the monthly College Senior Management Team, meeting after the Student Council meeting, to address student concerns immediately. The students whom the team met confirm their involvement in committees and say that they are always given feedback on any changes they have initiated. Information is relayed back to them through the Student Council minutes, the VLE and the 'You said, we did' notifications.

2.39   Information to students on the range of opportunities available for student engagement is made available through the VLE, verbal briefings, meetings with the staff and the handbooks. Students whom the review team met said that the opportunities available to them are well advertised. They also gave examples of how they had influenced their experience, such as the introduction of the Careers Week to enhance their future job opportunities.

2.40   Students feed back their opinion through module surveys, internal satisfaction surveys and external surveys. Module survey outcomes inform ICP annual monitoring reports. The Navitas Learning and Teaching Committee reviews the results from all student

surveys and considers areas for improvement as well as implementing enhancement activities. ICP, with Navitas UK, reviews the effectiveness of student engagement regularly.

2.41   ICP takes deliberate steps to engage all students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience, and consequently the Expectation is met and the 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

2.42   ICP Assessment Regulations are based on the Navitas UK framework but are localised in order to align with the regulations of the partner university. The regulations govern all aspects of assessment practice. The implementation of the regulations is the responsibility of College Learning and Teaching Board and is monitored by the Academic Advisory Committee and the Quality and Standards Office. The regulations are accompanied by pro formas and a guidance document which supports their implementation.

2.43   Procedures for the recognition of prior learning are detailed as part of non-standard entry in the admissions policy. This provides for the accreditation of prior learning or admission with exception and is then referred to ICP Academic Board as a non-standard application. The Academic Regulations, Policies and procedures of ICP would allow Expectation B6 to be met.

2.44   The review team scrutinised relevant regulations, policy and strategy documents, minutes of meetings, minutes of annual monitoring, assessment panels and boards, staff development resources and workshops relating to assessment, and a range of link tutor and external examiner comments and reports. The team met with a range of staff and students and viewed an example of assessment-related information for students on Navitas UK virtual learning environment.

2.45   The regulations and guidance support academic staff in designing assessment strategies and tasks. Templates are included for programme specifications, definitive module documents, module guides and assessment feedback. Effective use of the framework provided by Navitas UK policies and guidance was revealed in the programme specifications, definitive module documents and module guides seen by the team. These reveal an inclusive approach to assessment, designed to accommodate the diverse student needs and prepare them for summative assessments.

2.46   The FHEQ Level 3 Stage One assessments are moderated by University link tutors, whereas FHEQ Level 4 and 7 assessments are moderated externally by the University-appointed external examiners, in accordance with the Academic Regulations of the University. The arrangements for moderation of the ILSC module across Navitas UK colleges provides an additional mechanism for ensuring parity of standards in assessment. The evidence confirms that there are thorough, comprehensive processes for marking and moderating assessments, which are clearly articulated, understood and implemented by those involved in the assessment process.

2.47   ICP amalgamates the two-tier system of formal processes to agree assessment outcomes through ICP Module Panels and Progression Boards. The composition, terms of reference and process to ensure the secure recording of results are set out in the assessment regulations and College operations manuals. Their effective operation is confirmed by the link tutors and external examiners.

2.48   There is evidence that ICP is continuing to build on good practice, with a commitment to building a 'feedforward' culture, whereby students seek to develop a better understanding of what is required prior to submitting their work. Additionally, online feedback is now provided for most assignments, which has been enthusiastically received by students. This also enables Student Services to monitor the timeliness and quality of feedback. Meetings with staff revealed a very thoughtful understanding of the role of assessment in learning, combined with a proactive approach to developing their practice. Students whom the review team met reported high levels of satisfaction with assessment and feedback.

2.49   The meetings with students and staff confirmed that the good practice first highlighted in the 2012 Navitas UK ECREO report regarding the provision of high quality individualised feedback on assessment, delivered in a timely manner, is firmly embedded in practice, in accordance with the guidance and Assessment Regulations. The review team found that the feedback on assessed work, which is prompt, adapted to student needs and systematically monitored for quality, is **good practice**.

2.50   The development of an understanding of good academic practice begins at the initial orientation and is further developed in the Interactive Learning Skills and Communication module. Within the assessment regulations there are appropriate mechanisms for defining, explaining and addressing academic misconduct. ICP also makes use of electronic plagiarism-detection methods as a developmental tool as well as for detection, for text-based submissions. Students whom the team met feel that they had received very helpful instruction in this. Staff were attuned to the particular needs of international students and the cultural differences in academic practice.

2.51   Students have an adequate understanding of the existence of appropriate mechanisms for making reasonable adjustments and reporting mitigating circumstances. They are confident about how to access help if needed and see the student services staff as key in signposting them to whatever help they require. They do not have experience of needing to be reassessed, but are confident that, if needed, they would have an opportunity to be reassessed and that the information would be available to them.

2.52   Rigorous oversight of the academic progress of students is ensured through carefully monitoring internally within ICP, as well externally by the partner University and Navitas UK. Tracer data produced by the University has revealed a persistent disparity in the performance of ICP students in subjects where there is a greater emphasis on academic discourse and English writing skills. Accordingly, following a curriculum review, ICP is planning changes to the curriculum in order to address the particular challenges that have been identified. Monitoring also takes place through JSPMB, AAC, periodic partnership review, annual monitoring, and ICP College Learning and Teaching Board, as well as at programme and module level and by Navitas UK through the Senior Management Team and the Quality and Standards office.

2.53   ICP has in place comprehensive and thorough assessment regulations, policies and processes that support all students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes as required by Expectation B6. The approach to the assessment feedback outlined above is good practice. The review team concludes that Expectation B6 is met and the associated level of 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

2.54   ICP Regulations, which are defined by Navitas UK and approved by the partner University, stipulate that partner universities have responsibility for assuring academic standards. As part of this responsibility the University acts as the external examiner for ICP. The University regulations require the appointment of external examiners at FHEQ Level 4 and above. It has therefore appointed two external examiners to oversee the Stage 2 undergraduate and Stage 1 postgraduate provision at ICP. Where the University regulations do not require the appointment of an external examiner, external scrutiny of ICP provision is afforded by the link tutor or a subject specialist within the University. The role of the link tutor is clearly specified in the ICP Operations Manual. In the case of the Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC) module, where there is no equivalent provision within the Universities, externality is provided by a Navitas UK-appointed external moderator.

2.55   External examiners are appointed using the University regulations governing external examining, but the detailed arrangements are specified in ICP regulations and Navitas UK guidance, which clarifies the responsibilities of ICPs in relation to the appointment and induction of external examiners. Operational responsibility for the appointment and removal of External Examiners lies with the University. Monitoring and oversight is provided by ICP governance structure, the University and Navitas UK Quality and Standards Office. This regulatory and policy framework would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.56   The review team tested the application of the policy and procedures by scrutinising the relevant regulations and guidance, link tutor and external examiner reports, College responses to link tutors and external examiner reports, minutes of programme boards and annual monitoring. The review team also discussed the use made of external examiner reports with staff from the University, staff from ICP and with students.

2.57   Examination practice and policy is clearly set out, as is the schedule for marking and moderating assessments. The evidence provided confirmed the effectiveness of the moderation, marking and examination processes. The close involvement of the externals in moderation provides them with a clear remit in terms of independent quality assurance. There is clear evidence of the use made of their contributions.

2.58   External examiners (where appointed) and link tutors are present at College module panels and Progression Boards, where module boxes are available for them to scrutinise. External examiners and link tutors are asked for immediate verbal comments at the end of each meeting.

2.59   The external examiner and link tutor reports seen by the review team were fit for purpose and confirmed that they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibility in maintaining standards and affording independent external perspectives. They confirm that standards meet the threshold requirements, that courses remain current and that course learning outcomes are in line with the relevant qualification descriptors and Subject Benchmark Statements.

2.60   A formal response to external examiner reports is made by the ICP Director/ Principal. The reports and responses to them inform ICP curriculum review and annual monitoring. The minutes of ICP's College Learning and Teaching Board and annual

monitoring reports also confirm the role of external examiners and link tutors in the maintenance of standards.

2.61   External examiners' annual reports are placed on the ICP Portal, so that all students can view them. Students are then able to discuss any items with ICP through the ICP Enhancement Team (CET) via a representative on the student council. However, the effectiveness of this approach may need further consideration as there is little awareness of the availability of external examiner reports by students to whom the team spoke.

2.62   After evaluating the evidence the review team is confident that ICP makes appropriate use of external perspectives provided through moderation and scrutiny by colleagues from outside ICP, as well as by external examiners appointed by the University. The review team therefore concludes that the current policy and regulatory framework of Navitas UK enables proper use of external examiners and concludes that Expectation B7 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

2.63   International College Portsmouth (ICP) is responsible for the annual monitoring of its programmes. Navitas UK Policies and Regulations provide the framework within the University of Portsmouth's processes.

2.64   The Programme Leaders draft the Annual Monitoring of Programme (AMP) report using module evaluations, student evaluations, link tutor reports and consider student achievement, facilities and resources. This is considered by ICP College Learning and Teaching Board. The AMP is then presented to the Academic Advisory Committee. It is also forwarded to Navitas UK's Quality and Standards Office, where any trends and common issues will be identified for action, as well as features of good practice for dissemination across the Navitas UK Colleges via the Learning and Teaching Committee.

2.65   The policies and procedures of ICP would allow this Expectation to be met.

2.66   The review team tested the framework and its associated processes by scrutinising a range of evidence. This included documentation such as annual monitoring reports and action plans. Discussions with all categories of staff further contributed evidence that programme monitoring and review processes assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities.

2.67   Annual Monitoring of Programme and associated reports show thorough consideration of module and programme performance with clear actions, targets and goals identified. The completed actions from the 2014 report are a student induction programme restructure, the student survey questionnaire redesign and delivering staff development in module evaluation. As well as programme reviews the curriculum is reviewed annually following the report on student tracer data. This tracer data tracks students' performance as they progress through the University and compares ICP international students with those directly recruited to the University. The tracking identified that underdeveloped writing skills were disadvantaging ICP students in discursive subjects. Therefore, at the 2015 Curriculum Review ICP reviewed the curriculum and introduced extra support. The effective use of tracer data in reviewing existing curricula, which enhances student learning opportunities, is **good practice**.

2.68   ICP has appropriate and effective policies and procedures in place for the annual monitoring of its academic provision. Programme monitoring takes place against clear criteria and Programme Leaders have been trained to review their programmes. Students are involved in the monitoring and review processes through student surveys, and membership of ICP Enhancement Team, the Student Council, ICP College Learning and Teaching Board. Reports are available on the VLE.

2.69   The monitoring and review processes are scrupulously followed. Therefore, the review team finds that the Expectation is met and 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

2.70   ICP has a Student Appeals and Grievances policy that is based on a standard Navitas UK policy, adapted to the requirements of ICP. Students at ICP are required to use ICP's complaints procedure for all issues relating to their experience at ICP. However, as ICP is a Collaborative Partner of the University, students at ICP who have exhausted ICP's procedures and remain dissatisfied with the outcome can access the University's appeals procedures. Additionally, for students studying on integrated delivery modules, for those matters directly within the control or responsibility of the University, students are directed to use the University appeals and complaints procedures.

2.71   ICP College Learning and Teaching Board has responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the ICP Appeals and Grievance Policy. This policy includes a procedure for appeals on informal grounds against the decision of Module Boards or Progression Boards and a procedure for complaints by students who hold grievances about aspects of their learning experience. The Appeals and Grievances procedure identifies four possible grounds on which an academic appeal can be made. With respect to complaints, there is an informal stage followed by a formal two-stage procedure.

2.72   The complaints and appeals procedures are appropriately detailed and timescales are included. They are signposted in ICP Operations Manual and on the student portal. ICP has satisfactory policies and procedures in place, which would enable Expectation B9 to be met.

2.73   The review team tested the effectiveness of the procedures by examining documentation, including the policy for Appeals and Grievances, the Operations Manual, examples of complaints and the online information. The review team also held meetings with staff and students.

2.74   ICP policy is comprehensive, without being overly lengthy. The procedure and grounds for making an appeal against the outcome or conduct of an examination or coursework is very clear and straightforward. It is accompanied by a simple form enabling a student query to be dealt with swiftly.

2.75   The procedure for complaints includes consideration of complaints made by students under the age of 18 years and of complaints brought by groups of students. It gives due regard to confidentiality for staff and students and seeks to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by bringing a complaint. There is encouragement within the policy to try to resolve complaints locally at the informal stage. If a complaint has not been resolved to the student's satisfaction under the informal procedure, the student submits a Complaint form to the Director of Student Experience and Quality. Attempts to facilitate conciliation are encouraged where appropriate but if there is no resolution an appeal can be heard by a panel chaired by the Executive General Manager of Navitas UK, thus providing further separation from those in direct contact with the student and the issues raised.

2.76   ICP provided evidence of a prompt response to a request for a review of grades, as well as a proactive response to an issue raised about accommodation.

2.77   The Operations Manual provides guidance and direction for students regarding the appropriate University or College procedure to follow. It also explains that where it is appropriate for the student to use the University procedure, they may complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if they remain dissatisfied, having exhausted the University's complaints procedure. However, it does not also explain that students on standard delivery pathways who have exhausted ICP procedures may then use the University procedure, but this is explained in the Appeals and Grievance Policy and on the University website. The lack of clarity between the documents was reflected in the meeting with staff, who knew that students could use the University policy, but were unsure when this was appropriate.

2.78   The students whom the review team met were clear that information regarding Appeals and Grievances was on the Student Portal and that they could obtain help and information from student ambassadors and from staff should they need it. They were clear about the distinction between an academic appeal and a complaint about a grievance. Students involved in writing the student submission to this review expressed confidence that any issues that they had would be resolved promptly, which was reflected in the meeting with students.

2.79   The evidence from the documentation and the meetings held with staff and students demonstrates that they are sufficiently clear about the policies and procedures in place and how to access this information, if needed, despite some ambiguities in the documentation. There is a culture, supported by the policy framework, that seeks to ensure that complaints are resolved informally wherever possible. The review team concludes therefore that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.80   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.

2.81   Of the nine applicable expectations in this area, all are met, with low risk and no recommendations or affirmations. There are four features of good practice across four different Expectations relating to the area.

2.82   There is also evidence of ICP's commitment to the continuous enhancement of student learning opportunities, together with a clear focus on managing student needs and a widespread engagement of students, which is supported.

2.83   The review team therefore concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities is **commended**.

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 ICP adopts a multi-faceted approach for information delivery to stakeholders, using printed material, comprehensive online information, recruitment fairs, virtual presentations and social media. Navitas UK has a centralised design department that assists with the design of communication and marketing materials and ensures oversight, including compliance with Navitas brand guidelines. All College published content is managed under the remit of the ICP Director of Marketing and Admission and is subject to close scrutiny and approval by the University.

3.2 ICPs Policies and Regulations are included in the Operations Manual, which is reviewed annually by the College. They are available to staff and students on the Portal and in hard copy in ICP.

3.3 A comprehensive range of information about ICP, the location, admissions requirement, along with the process for application to ICP is provided on ICP website, with links to the University website and other useful sites. Course outlines and course progression opportunities are published on the web pages, as well as information about teaching staff and the approach to learning and teaching. More detailed information is on the student portal. Information is also reinforced by email and personal contact. There is a student independent learning charter, clearly setting out the responsibilities of ICP and the responsibilities of students.

3.4 ICP does not make any awards; on completion of their studies with ICP, students receive a Confirmation of Attainment certificate, detailing their achievement at ICP.

3.5 This approach to the quality of the information about learning opportunities is consistent with the Quality Code, Part C and would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.6 The review team examined the effectiveness of the policies and procedures in place for information by examining relevant documentation, including minutes of meetings demonstrating oversight and by exploring the extensive information available on web pages. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching staff and professional staff.

3.7 The information on the web pages seen by the review team was current and accurately reflected ICP and the provision available to students. It was accessible and comprehensive, with links to other resources that students might need to refer to in order to make choices and to apply. Minutes of meetings and email correspondence confirmed the close involvement of the University in ensuring that information is current and accurate. Policies and procedures scrutinised by the team were all current and showed evidence of being reviewed in accordance with the Operations Manual requirements.

3.8 The students whom the review team met were very satisfied with the information that they had received through the process of application and arrival as students. As enrolled students they confirmed that detailed course information is provided, including information about assessment in hard copy and through the student Portal. Attention is given by the staff

to ensuring that the provision of information is timely and responsive to student needs. Students were confident in their knowledge of College policies and procedures, and if unsure about anything, were confident that they knew how to find the information. Students involved in compiling the student submission to this review consider that there is possibly too much information on the student portal so that it can be difficult to find. The Student Council had already raised the issue and this had resulted in improvements.

3.9 ICP makes available clear and accurate information to prospective and current students, enabling them to make informed choices about programmes of study. ICP has appropriate mechanisms in place to check that information is accurate and, although the team found some ambiguity in one of the policies on complaints and appeals, this does not pose a threat to the quality of learning. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

3.11   The Expectation is met, with low risk, and there are no recommendations or affirmations. The information provided by ICP for all its intended audiences, including prospective students, current students and alumni and for quality assurance purposes is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.12   The review team therefore concludes that the quality of information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

4   Commentary: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1   ICP's strategic approach to enhancement of the student experience is based on Navitas UK's policy and procedure. ICP's Enhancement Team (CET) is the formal quality enhancement mechanism, which includes students and staff. Its purpose is to engage students and enhance areas that most directly affect their experience. The CET at ICP reviews strategic enhancement priorities annually and identifies specific themes. For 2015-16 the themes are technology-enhanced learning, the student learning charter and English writing skills.

4.2   These themes contribute to achieving ICP's strategic plan and are informed by the monitoring and review processes, student surveys, staff feedback, the CLTB and Navitas tracer data analysis. The impact of enhancement initiatives is measured through the annual monitoring processes and student feedback. The CET reports to ICP's Learning and Teaching Board (CLTB).

4.3   The Navitas UK Director of Student Experience and Academic Quality reports on the activities of ICP CETs to the Learning and Teaching Committee Navitas UK.

4.4   The focused CET identifies deliberate steps to improve the quality of the students' learning experience, with clear commitment from senior staff. There is evidence of systematic enhancement embedded across ICP in the minutes of the CET and demonstration of the students' engagement with the themes. Enhancement and continuous improvement is a standard agenda item at the all-staff meetings. The Student in Jeopardy programme continues to support underperforming students. There are supportive writing sessions both at ICP and jointly at the University's Academic Skills Unit. Two Technology Enhanced Learning champions have been appointed to further the technology enhanced learning agenda. The University states there is a positive development of a culture of enhancement and continuous improvement within ICP.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Digital Literacies

Findings

5.1 Navitas UK has an overarching Virtual Learning Strategy that aims to promote the development of digital literacy. ICP has developed a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) policy document to underpin its commitment to implementing the strategy in ICP, which staff referred to as shaping their practice.

5.2 ICP has identified two TEL champions; one is a member of the Senior Management Team who is responsible for ensuring that TEL is a current aim of ICP, that adequate resources are provided to support enhancements and for liaising with the University of Portsmouth TEL team; the other is a lecturer who is responsible for staying abreast of software, tools and systems.

5.3 There are a range of resources in place to support the development of TEL. All College computers have access to the University network, which enables staff and students to access a wide range of learning and teaching resources. The number of computers in ICP's suite of computers has recently been increased in accordance with a projected increase in student numbers. There has also been a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) campaign, which a number of students have chosen to make use of. The BYOD policy is determined by the lecturer.

5.4 Students and staff were able to describe a range of ways in which the development of digital literacy is embedded in the curriculum, from support for the development of basic skills within the Interactive Learning and Communication Skills module, to the use of discipline-specific software within particular pathways.

5.5 The Portal is used extensively to support and enhance assessment. Where appropriate to the nature of the assignment submission, electronic plagiarism-detection software is used as a developmental tool, enabling students to identify clearly any potential academic misconduct. Support is provided on a one-to-one basis. Additionally, marking and feedback are administered electronically, a process which has been well received by staff and students. Navitas UK's student Portal currently uses an older version of the VLE platform than the University, but this will be updated later this year, which will provide an opportunity to increase the activities within the VLE. Currently social media, chat rooms, forums and quizzes are used by some, while others use academic software applications.

5.6 ICP academic and student services staff are supported in the development of their digital literacy by the TEL champions who, in addition to providing training, encourage the use of social media to share good practice. Staff also receive training from the University of Portsmouth TEL team.

5.7 There is clear leadership and a firm commitment to the ongoing development of digital literacy within ICP, supported by enthusiasm and a willingness to experiment within the staff team. Students take the need for digital literacy as a given and value the resources and opportunities provided to use technology to enhance their learning.

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

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

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.