



This review method
is ESG-compliant

Educational Oversight Review

Navitas UK Holdings Ltd -
International College at Robert
Gordon University

February 2025

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About this review

This is a report of an Educational Oversight Review (EOR) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Navitas UK Holdings Ltd - International College at Robert Gordon University.

EOR consists of a number of components. The Core component is a review of a provider's arrangements for maintaining the academic standards and quality of the courses it offers against nine of the Sector-Agreed Principles contained within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024). This subset of Principles has been mapped to the core requirements that have been set out by the Home Office in relation to educational oversight. Further information about the Core component of EOR can be found in the [Educational Oversight Review Guidance for Providers](#).

The review took place on February 12, 2025, and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Brenda Eade (reviewer)
- Mr Michael Cottam (reviewer)
- Ms Nina Cupric (student reviewer)

The QAA Officer for this review was Dr Margaret Johnson.

In Educational Oversight Review (Core component), the QAA review team:

- determines an outcome against a subset of the Sector-Agreed Principles outlined in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- identifies features of good practice
- makes recommendations
- identifies areas of enhancement activity
- determines an overall judgement as to whether the provider meets the Home Office's quality assurance requirements for educational oversight.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission. A dedicated section explains the method for [Educational Oversight Review](#) and has links to other informative documents. QAA reviews are evidence-based processes. Review judgements result from the documents review teams see, the meetings they hold, and drawing upon their experience as peer reviewers and student reviewers.

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) provide the framework for internal and external quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. QAA's review methods are [compliant with these standards](#), as are the [reports we publish](#). More information is available on our [website](#).

This review was conducted in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Executive summary

The International College at Robert Gordon University is part of Navitas UK Holdings Ltd, which is part of University Partnerships Europe UPE, and is itself part of a larger group, University Partnerships, based in Australia. Navitas Limited operates globally with a focus on education. Its mission is to be “the best global education provider in the world for our students, partners and people”

The International College at Robert Gordon University (ICRGU - ‘the College’) is an affiliate college of Robert Gordon University (RGU – ‘the University’). The College is a partnership between the University and Navitas and is based on a model in which the College is embedded in the University campus and students study University-approved course elements at ICRGU.

There are 11 permanent staff and a total of 75 students studying at foundation entry level in pharmacy, nursing, life sciences and health sciences; and first year undergraduate programmes in management, art, architecture, accounting, computing, and engineering. Pre-master's programmes delivered at the College include management, public health and engineering.

A key challenge facing the College is the fluctuation in international student applications annually, which has decreased substantially since the QAA review of 2021. In turn, the lower student numbers on each programme, has posed a challenge in ensuring that students gain a fulfilling educational experience.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which the College meets the relevant Sector-Agreed Principles, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based review procedure as outlined in Educational Oversight Review: Guidance for Providers (July 2024). The College provided the review team with a self-evaluation and supporting evidence. During the review visit, which took place on February 12, 2025, the review team held a total of three meetings with the senior management team, academic and professional support staff, and students.

In summary, the team found one example of good practice and identified two recommendations for improvement.

Conclusions

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at Navitas UK Holdings Ltd – International College at Robert Gordon University.

The QAA review team determines that Navitas UK Holdings Ltd – International College at Robert Gordon University:

- **meets** the Home Office's Quality assurance requirements for educational oversight.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice**:

- The extensive individual support for students, and the close relationship between College and University staff which enables students to make a successful transition to Robert Gordon University (**Sector-Agreed Principle 10**).

Recommendations

For recommendations that relate to areas for development and enhancement that do not impact on the Sector-Agreed Principle being met the QAA review team makes the following recommendations:

By September 2025

- Clarify the information in the Admissions policy regarding the timescales for complaints to ensure the process is fair and transparent for all applicants (**Sector-Agreed Principle 9**).

By September 2026

- Continue to develop the knowledge and understanding of all staff of neurodiversity to further enhance student support to enable students to reach their full potential. (**Sector Agreed Principle 10**).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

The financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) check has been **satisfactorily** completed. The outcome of the FSMG check for the **institution** is that **no** material issues were identified.

Explanation of the findings – Sector-Agreed Principles

Principle 1: Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards

Providers demonstrate they have a strategic approach to securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality that is embedded across the organisation.

Findings

1 ICRGU is part of the Navitas Group which implements a strategic approach to managing quality and standards across all its pathway providers.

2 The Navitas University Partnerships Europe (UPE) Quality Manual sets out detailed procedures for academic governance and quality assurance and provides a tripartite model for linking Navitas, the University and the College in assuring standards and managing quality. It includes the general educational aims of the group which are incorporated into programme aims and describes pathway structures, teaching models and the programme design process.

3 The terms of reference and membership of the key committees which manage the oversight of quality and standards across all Navitas providers are clearly set out in the UPE Quality Manual. Minutes of these committee meetings confirm that senior members of staff and students from ICRGU participate fully in the decision-making process.

4 At the operational level, ICRGU has a robust committee structure which complies with the requirements of Navitas and enables the College to interact directly with the University. The Joint Strategic Partnership Management Board (JSPMB) has oversight of three key committees - the Academic Advisory Committee (AAC), the Operations Advisory Committee (OAC) and the Marketing Advisory Committee (MAC). The terms of reference of these committees are set out in the College Operations Manual. The committees oversee academic standards, student support and marketing issues at ICRGU, with membership drawn from College and University staff. Minutes of the JSPMB indicate that issues raised at the advisory committees, for example student recruitment, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) are considered by the JSPMB, and action is taken where necessary.

5 The College's Senior Management Team (SMT) meets fortnightly to discuss the day-to-day operation of the College. The Learning and Teaching Board (LTB) meets quarterly and oversees the assessment process. RGU faculty attend meetings of the Board to ensure standards comply with the expectations of the University. The College Operations Manual clearly sets out roles and responsibilities for the operation of the partnership between the College and the University.

6 The Navitas Policies and Regulations (NPRs), located on the Navitas hub, provide detailed procedures for maintaining specific areas of academic standards and quality assurance.

7 Staff confirmed that they are familiar with the relevant policies and procedures for assuring standards and monitoring quality, and the evidence provided in relation to student performance, programme development and teaching and learning demonstrates that these policies and procedures are used effectively by the College. Navitas Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) measure pass rates, retention rates, progression rates, student satisfaction and engagement, and degree outcomes across all Navitas pathway providers. These KPIs

are tailored to the requirements of the University and UKVI. ICRGU reports on these measures for each module and course every semester. The results are included in the Annual Report to the Navitas Group and form part of the Navitas Global Learning and Teaching Report. Data provided in the Annual Monitoring Report for December 2023, comparing student performance at ICRGU with that of students studying at other Navitas colleges is positive. ICRGU students achieved a 94% pass rate compared to 81% across all Navitas pathways.

8 ICRGU policies and procedures reflect the College's strategic approach to equity, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). EDI is a standing item on the College SMT agenda, and the College is represented on the University Equality and Diversity Sub Committee. The approach that the College has taken to EDI was endorsed by the General Pharmaceutical Council as part of the re-accreditation of the Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) course in 2024.

9 An Institute Led Periodic Review (ILPR) was undertaken in 2024 to evaluate the partnership between the University and Navitas and its operation at ICRGU. The review included input from externals (Catalyst) and provided assurance that the partnership is effective across multiple dimensions: governance; recruitment and admissions; student support; the academic environment and quality assurance. The report concludes that the partnership between the University and Navitas is working effectively and the commitment of both parties to the partnership remains strong.

10 Reports from QAA and the General Pharmaceutical Council provide further external endorsement that the principle is being met. The College has a track record of successful QAA reviews, and the General Pharmaceutical Council has recently reaccredited the MPharm with the preparatory year offered by the College. The outcome report is positive with two recommendations for the University which have been resolved. External panel members participate in College Periodic Reviews and members of the University sit on the AAC.

11 Navitas undertook a review of the role and effectiveness of its Academic Board, in 2024, and the report concludes: "The continued robust process of governance through the committee structure flowing into the board, will ensure that the emphasis in 2025 will be to continue to ensure priorities of the division, sector and students more broadly, are a key focus.

12 The review team concludes that the overarching governance by Navitas UPE, the College's committee and management structures, and the strong relationship with the University ensure the College effectively implements its strategic approach to securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality, and this is embedded across the organisation. The College, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle

Principle 3: Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience

Providers plan, secure and maintain resources relating to learning, technology, facilities and staffing to enable the delivery and enhancement of an accessible, innovative and high-quality learning experience for students that aligns with the provider's strategy and the composition of the student body.

Findings

13 The Recognition and Articulation Agreement and College Operations Manual clearly outlines the responsibilities of the University and College for resources relating to staffing, facilities, technology and learning. The College OAC has a specific remit to consider that College resources are suitable for purpose. These are also considered as part of the University estates programme. The College Strategic Plan sets out the key objectives of the College including marketing, enrolments, communication channels, feedback and technology.

14 The Operations Manual, and its associated policies sets out clear details of the College's operational arrangements for the resourcing and staffing of programme delivery to support a positive student experience and enable student achievement. For example, the Safeguarding Policy, clearly details the College approach to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

15 The College takes appropriate approaches to ensure that resources are suitable, sufficient, and responsive to fluctuations in student enrolments, including ongoing review of student numbers, the flexibility of part time staff, and the opportunity to use University teaching resources if necessary. The College SMT (November 2024) identified that the College Principal had assured the University estates team that the College estate remained fit for purpose given the projected student numbers. Additionally, the OAC held in May 2024, included outline discussions on the budget for estates, outcomes from student surveys, and delivery of the Compass programme, an initiative implemented by the College to support student well-being.

16 The College SMT also provides appropriate oversight of the College action plan, which includes the review and monitoring of staff numbers and their engagement with CPD, and improvements to student wellbeing and student support. Activities such as the Navitas annual monitoring review, and the ILPR, provide appropriate opportunities for the College to reflect on the effectiveness and impact of learning environments. Staff CVs are reviewed by the College Principal and the College Services Manager to ensure that their qualifications and industry relevance are appropriate.

17 The College, which is located in the middle of the University campus, provides dedicated resources for students, which are appropriate given the size of the College. This helps to facilitate a familiarity and sense of belonging with the University for students and eases the transition for students to the University.

18 Resources are appropriate and sufficient, including, small classroom spaces, social spaces, and a computer suite. The building includes suitable accessibility measures, and all staff have workplaces in an open office layout. Teaching resources are appropriate to enable face-to-face, hybrid and on-line teaching. The College also has a dedicated virtual learning environment (VLE), which provides effective support and guidance for students. Students have free membership of the University gym, and access to all University resources, including a variety of food outlets.

19 Students are complimentary of resources, highlighting examples, such as IT support, access to the VLE, all University resources, and software such as RefWorks. They appreciate the well-qualified staff, and sessions on academic skills, such as referencing, from university library staff. Students are also aware of the Compass programme and value it as a support mechanism.

20 The College effectively implements the Navitas framework for staff continued professional development (CPD). The College Services Manager line-manages lecturing staff members and discusses the arrangements and expectations for CPD as part of the annual performance and planning review process.

21 Staff training logs are systematically maintained to record the completion of mandatory training, and non-mandatory training by college staff. These indicate that staff have undertaken appropriate professional development courses relevant to their roles. Currently seven lecturers and three management and support staff have either completed or have applied for Advance HE Fellowship.

22 Academic staff across subject disciplines have undertaken and published a range of appropriate research projects, vocational and pedagogical training such as JISC Training on the impact of AI on assessment. Academic and professional services staff also outlined how the College had introduced Communities of Practice for groups of teaching staff to support their professional development.

23 The College rigorously measures environmental impact, through an emissions assessment and has taken actions to address environmental impact through reductions in paper, motion sensor lighting and energy saving IT. The College Principal is a member of the Navitas climate action group that is working towards environmental sustainability goals.

24 Staff and students contribute appropriately to discussions about the effectiveness and impact of the learning environment. Feedback is gathered through suitable mechanisms, and positive outcomes for questions relating to learning resources (89%) were recorded in the most recent College student survey. Senior staff and students gave examples of enhancements resulting from feedback including learning resources and environments, sharing of online teaching methods between teaching staff post-Covid, and improvements to catering facilities for students.

25 Overall, there is clear evidence of the College's approach to the planning, securing, and maintaining of its staffing, physical and digital resources. This enables the appropriate delivery and enhancement of a high-quality learning experience for students that aligns with the College's strategy, and the composition of the student body, leading to a high-quality learning experience for its students. The College, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 4: Using data to inform and evaluate quality

Providers collect, analyse and utilise qualitative and quantitative data at provider, departmental, programme and module levels. These analyses inform decision-making with the aim of enhancing practices and processes relating to teaching, learning and the wider student experience.

Findings

26 The College uses Navitas student management systems to systematically and consistently capture student data from application to progression. Studylink captures application data and stores documents associated with the application process. Data from Studylink is uploaded automatically to Navigate where on-programme data is collected and stored, including pass and achievement rates at module, programme and institutional level. The student timetable and the modules taken are stored in Navigate along with their assessment outcomes. Furthermore, the College makes use of software to draw student outcomes data from the student management systems to facilitate analysis of College data.

27 The College Data Protection Policy is available for staff and students on the College website. It comprehensively details the College's arrangements for its responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), including data transparency, and arrangements for the accuracy, storage, and confidentiality of data. It clearly outlines how the College uses data for continuous improvement using feedback from individuals to improve current practice, and the use of audits to allow the sharing of best practice across the organisation.

28 Data is received, analysed, and monitored by the appropriate committees such as the College SMT and the Navitas Academic Board and is included in College academic reports. Actions from these committees feed into the College Action Plan, which is overseen by the JSPMB.

29 The College's Privacy Centre webpage is clearly available for staff and students on the College website. It includes a global privacy notice, a marketing privacy notice, and a cookies policy. Together, these provide appropriate and comprehensive details of how College data is safely collected, used, and processed.

30 Staff contracts appropriately include a link to the privacy notice and outline the expectations for staff compliance with the Data Protection Policy. Students receive the same information in the offer letters that they receive from the College.

31 The College clearly follows ethical and data protection requirements related to gathering and submitting data sets for internal and external purposes, and audits to check this are conducted internally and by organisations such as the UKVI.

32 For GDPR purposes, the College is the data controller and is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. College staff undertake appropriate mandatory data protection training, and refresher training every two years, in the key principles, rights, and obligations for processing personal data.

33 The College global privacy notice includes comprehensive detail of arrangements for sharing data with trusted third parties that the College works with, for regulatory, educational, financial and travel/migration purposes. The privacy notice also identifies clear expectations that the College sets for third party organisations regarding the safety and protection of privacy and personal data. Senior staff also confirmed that data is secured from applications that use AI, by the data integrity team at Navitas.

34 There is a comprehensive and current (November 2024) data sharing agreement in place between Navitas and the University. It covers categories of data, data protection and processing, data security, and data retention and deletion.

35 Data is systematically collected and analysed by the College to help it understand the students' needs and take appropriate actions. For example, data reports are used to monitor student outcomes which feed into the College action plan. Additionally, the College rigorously collects, analyses, and submits data to the General Pharmaceutical Council annually as part of the accreditation process, and receives data from the University on the achievement for students who have progressed from the College.

36 Equality data from student enrolments, student outcomes, and annual staff appraisals, are effectively considered by the College Equality and Diversity sub-committee, which feed into an annual equality outcomes action plan, which is monitored by the committee.

37 The College effectively uses data, such as energy efficiency and emissions, to promote environmental sustainability, which has been added as a standard agenda item to College SMT meetings. The College also contributes to the Navitas Impact Survey, which includes analysis of the College's impact on climate action, community contribution, and data privacy and security.

38 Overall, there is clear evidence of the College's arrangements for the collection, and utilisation of qualitative and quantitative data. Analysis of the data informs decision-making with the aim of enhancing practices and processes relating to teaching, learning and the wider student experience. The College, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 5: Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision

Providers regularly monitor and review their provision to secure academic standards and enhance quality. Deliberate steps are taken to engage and involve students, staff and external expertise in monitoring and evaluation activity. The outcomes and impact of these activities are considered at provider level to drive reflection and enhancement across the provider.

Findings

39 The College follows, systematically and consistently, the Navitas requirements for annual monitoring and evaluation, and the College's completed annual monitoring form, is signed off by the College Principal and the Navitas Head of Education and Academic Enhancement. The quality manual outlines that strategic oversight of annual monitoring arrangements is provided by the College AAC and the College SMT.

40 The annual monitoring processes provide systematic and regular monitoring, evaluation, and review at institutional, programme, and module level, including appropriate opportunity for staff and student engagement in the process through completion of module reviews. College academic reports are produced for the University's annual monitoring process three times per academic year and provide appropriate and comprehensive analysis and commentary on a range of activities, including the work of the College Enhancement Team (CET).

41 The College Operations Manual includes systematic and comprehensive arrangements for monitoring and evaluation, that includes an annual monitoring report. The report is underpinned by module reviews completed by course teams, analysis of course performance data, outcomes from module surveys completed by students, moderation reports and reports from any quality events. All information feeds into the annual College action plan.

42 Key performance indicators (KPIs) for student recruitment are set by the College SMT. KPIs and thresholds for attendance, retention and pass rates are set by Navitas, and UKVI, with input from the University. The College also benchmarks performance against the University partner, for example the National Student Survey (NSS) participation and outcomes. Appropriate monitoring of key performance indicators is provided by the College SMT and the AAC, and feeds into annual monitoring and action planning.

43 Students are actively engaged in the College's monitoring and evaluation activities through module feedback surveys, student forum meetings, and as members of the CET. Student representatives are given appropriate training on their roles by the University Students' Union, supported by an introduction to the role from the College.

44 Staff have appropriate opportunities to provide feedback throughout the academic year through feedback to the LTB, completion of a comprehensive end of module review form with an analysis of student outcomes for the module, commentary on learning and teaching, any issues experienced during the module, and an opportunity to share good practice from the module. These feedback mechanisms for staff and students are effectively captured in the annual monitoring review.

45 The action plan from the College's annual monitoring and review is clearly published for staff, students, and external stakeholders on the College website, along with outcomes from other external monitoring and evaluation activities, such as QAA reviews. The action plan is effectively overseen by the College SMT, is monitored by the JSPMB and scrutinised

by the Navitas academic registry. Examples of improvements resulting from student feedback in annual monitoring and evaluation activities are captured and provided for students in a 'You Said...We Did' poster format and monitored through other mechanisms such as student feedback surveys.

46 The monitoring and evaluation of equality, diversity, and inclusion is a standing item at the College SMT meetings. The annual monitoring form includes a breakdown of student characteristics but little further evaluation or analysis of this. However, equality data from student enrolments and student outcomes are considered in more detail by the College Equality and Diversity sub-committee, which feeds into an annual equality outcomes action plan, which is monitored by the committee.

47 The College effectively promotes education for sustainable development through its monitoring and evaluation activities. Monitoring is carried out through a standard agenda item at College SMT meetings. The December 2024 meeting of the College LTB confirmed the addition of sustainability to module content. The College also contributes to the Navitas Impact Survey, which includes analysis of the College's impact on agendas such as climate action, and community contribution.

48 Outcomes from external processes such as periodic review by the University and reaccreditation by the General Pharmaceutical Council feed into the College action plan. The outcome letter from the General Pharmaceutical Council for the reaccreditation of the MPharm degree and MPharm degree with preparatory year identified that the Council has recently consulted on plans to introduce an annual monitoring process for all approved programmes and qualifications, which will also feed into the College's monitoring and evaluation activities.

49 The College is not required, by the University or Navitas, to have formal external examiners for its programmes. However, adequate external input to monitoring and evaluation activities is provided through a variety of external activities such as external moderation of examination papers and assessments by the University, external representation at periodic review and on the Navitas Academic Board, and the external review of the College's annual monitoring report. Comments from the latter are considered by the College SMT and actions included in the College action plan.

50 Overall, there is clear evidence of an appropriate and evidence-informed approach to regular monitoring and review activity at College level that secures academic standards and enhances quality. Deliberate steps are taken to engage and involve students, staff and external expertise in the monitoring and evaluation activity. The College, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle

Principle 7: Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes

Providers design, develop, approve and modify programmes and modules to ensure the quality of provision and the academic standards of awards are consistent with the relevant Qualifications Framework. Providers ensure their provision and level of qualifications are comparable to those offered across the UK and, where applicable, The Framework of Qualifications for The European Higher Education Area.

Findings

51 The procedures for the design, development, approval and modification of programmes are set out in the Navitas UPE Quality Manual and more specifically in the Navitas Programme Regulations (SO1) – Pathway Approval and Review. The College's approval policies and procedures are published on the College website and are informed by the Navitas diversity, equality and inclusion policies and the University's environmental sustainability goals. The Principal of the College sits on the Navitas UPE Climate Action group, and this informs practice at the College and across the Navitas UPE region.

52 The approval process is mapped to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, aligns with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), and takes account of professional body accreditation. The University is responsible for assuring academic standards of the College's provision including programme approval. Externals sit on the approval and re-approval panels, and professional bodies are involved where appropriate, for example, with the foundation programme for the MPharm.

53 All ICRGU programmes are recorded with clear programme specifications, indicating the award to be received, programme learning outcomes, teaching and learning and assessment methods. These documents are held securely on the College internet after being signed off by the University. They take account of the relevant QAA subject benchmarks and refer to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Examples of programme specifications confirm that the College follows the policies and procedures set out by Navitas. The Foundation Pharmacy & Health Sciences programme which provides a preparatory year for the MPharm is aligned with SCQF Level 6 and meets the requirements of the General Pharmaceutical Council. The programme specifications for Accounting and Finance, and Management, which provide the first year of the University degrees in Accounting and Finance and Management, are aligned with SQF Level 7.

54 Module guides support the programme specifications and indicate the level, number of credits, teaching and learning methods, topics for each week, suggested reading, details of the assessment and pass marks. Examples of module guides provide clear information for students. Students and staff confirm that module guides are available and accessible to them through the College VLE.

55 Information about the content of a programme, individual modules, and possible progression routes to the University is also available for prospective students and other stakeholders on the website in a more user-friendly format.

56 Changes to programmes and modules and ideas for the development of new pathways are initiated by staff in response to student feedback as part of the course review and annual monitoring processes. The design, development and approval process is used to identify new areas of the curriculum and possible markets. The College is currently discussing with the University the development of several new programme areas such as

Criminology. The CET has proposed the development of a module for students to better understand AI and the implications of using it for their academic assessments. This was discussed at the June meeting of the Learning and Teaching Board and has been added to the College action plan.

57 Overall, the review team concluded that College programmes and modules meet academic standards, are recorded on a definitive set of documents which are available to all stakeholders, and that the policies relating to the design, development, and approval of programmes align with the Colleges equity, equality diversity and inclusion and environmental sustainability practices. Student feedback provides a meaningful element to the design, development approval and modification process. The College, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 9: Recruiting, selecting and admitting students

Providers operate recruitment, selection and admissions processes that are transparent, fair and inclusive. Providers maintain and publish accurate, relevant and accessible information about their provision, enabling students to make informed choices about their studies and future aspirations.

Findings

58 All admissions processes are conducted with support from the Navitas Divisional Admission Team, using an appropriate admissions platform.

59 The Admission Policy is owned by Navitas, has clear version control and has adhered to its three-year review cycle. It is accessible on the website, is clear and transparent in detailing the College's approach to admissions and recruitment and includes a list of other relevant documents that staff, students and applicants can access. The policy includes a Code of Ethics that relates to all involved with admissions, including agents and Source Country Office staff. Rules and regulations regarding admission are also reiterated in the College Operations Manual. There are specific details to the approach for 'non-standard' applications that demonstrates the College's commitment to admit students based on their potential for success.

60 The Policy includes clear information on the procedure when a programme is unable to run. If a programme is unable to run due to low numbers, the College aims to provide an alternative to applicants, either in the College or at a different Navitas provider and ensures that students are notified at the earliest available date.

61 While the policy includes a section on students with disabilities, it does not include a description of the process following declaration. Applicants are supported on a one-to-one basis, by the College admission team and in cases of disclosure, referred to the University's inclusion centre.

62 The information on the website is maintained as part of the Website Management Agreement. The agreement clearly states that the role of the website is one of recruitment and marketing and that it has not been designed as a resource for current students. It includes detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of different teams. The review and maintenance of the website is the responsibility of Content Authors, who are typically college/campus or divisional marketing staff. Annual reviews are conducted by the Divisional Marketing team and the same team creates a report at the end of each quarter, determining the scores against content, quality assurance, accessibility and search engine optimisation. There is clear evidence of a robust process of review and maintenance of public facing admissions and marketing information.

63 The Recognition of Prior Learning process is briefly mentioned in the policy with limited information provided for applicants. This could usefully be expanded to include what qualifies as prior learning as there is no additional evidence publicly accessible on the website. However, the team recognises that due to the context of the College, it is unlikely that applicants would have any prior learning that would be admissible.

64 Both a complaints and an appeals process are detailed within the Admissions Policy, with clear differentiation between the two. While the appeals procedure includes clear and transparent timelines for review, escalation and decision making, there is no clear timeline for the complaint's procedure. The review team **recommend** that the College clarifies the information in the Admissions policy regarding the timescales for complaints to ensure the

process is fair and transparent for all applicants.

65 The Offer letter samples were clear and included information on next steps, conditions of enrolment, the programme of study and support mechanisms. Students confirmed that they received appropriate information and support at all key stages during the admissions process.

66 Overall, the review team concluded that the College operates a clear and formalised admissions process, with tailored support implemented at each step. While the review team has recommended that the College clarifies the information in the Admissions policy regarding the timescales for complaints, overall, the team consider that the College, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 10: Supporting students to achieve their potential

Providers facilitate a framework of support for students that enables them to have a high-quality learning experience and achieve their potential as they progress in their studies. The support structure scaffolds the academic, personal and professional learning journey, enabling students to recognise and articulate their progress and achievements.

Findings

67 The College VLE provides students with access to information on all relevant information. This includes the College Policies and Regulations, as well as information on Academic Conduct and Careers and Employability. Students also have access to the University's My RGU App which integrates the VLE, Ask RGU, their personal timetable, library account, and their email.

68 From this hub, students are also able to navigate to the Student Support page, which includes the Student Life Hub, International Student Advice, and urgent and routine student referrals system. There are also links to out-of-hours and emergency support. The Student Handbook also contains comprehensive information on how students can access different types of support through the Compass programme, a dedicated student support programme which includes details of the support available to students and an attendance tracker. Support includes personal tutor support, details on tutorials, constructive feedback, academic progress and preparation for examinations. The College acknowledges that further work is needed to raise awareness of the programme, but students confirmed knowledge and use during the visit. Additionally, students have one-to-one support meetings with the College Services Manager, which serve as touch points, as well as pastoral support, and support with employability, CV writing and navigating visa restrictions around work. If an additional support need has been identified or disclosed, students are referred to the University's Inclusion Centre for the creation of a support plan, which is implemented for their entire study period, including beyond their time at the College.

69 Students confirm that staff are available and helpful and hold regular meetings to discuss progress and any difficulties they may be experiencing. Specific academic skills support is provided through the skills module, Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC), which is delivered across the Navitas provision. Students and alumni confirmed that the academic skills support that they received at the College supported them during their study and beyond. Alumni credited their ongoing success at the University to the support received through the different College support systems.

70 The College holds specific transition events and has easily accessible transition material on the VLE. This includes specific information and advice on living in the area and a strong focus on onboarding international students. There is a particular focus on pre-departure preparation, which includes webinars and introductions to the College and its systems, as well as information on life in the city. This is continued through the welcome week, with specifically tailored events, including city tours and advice on what to expect when moving to Scotland, particularly from countries with warmer climates. Expectations of students are articulated clearly from the start and include a presentation on Academic & Disciplinary Conduct. The Student Submission highlighted, and students confirmed that they are supported in all aspects of settling in during their onboarding and are further supported with transitioning to study at the University. The College receives data from the University on the achievement of students who have progressed to RGU that helps to scaffold the academic, personal and professional learning journey of every student.

71 College students have access to the University's Students' Union events and activities, sports facilities that are located adjacent to the College, and there are also specific events held by the College such as bowling and afternoon teas. Current students and alumni confirmed that they felt part of the wider University community.

72 There is specific support available for students under the age of eighteen, which was reviewed recently, as part of the periodic review with the University. The admissions process was reviewed, and further safeguarding training has been provided for all support staff. The College arranges specific events and activities for its underage cohort, including regular touchpoints, and one-to-one meetings.

73 Student support and feedback is regularly reviewed through the College LTB. The review team identified the extensive individual support for students, and the close relationship between College and University staff which enables students to make a successful transition to Robert Gordon University as **good practice**. This is confirmed by the outcome of the recent tracking exercise undertaken jointly by the College and the University that indicates College students achieve high levels of attainment following transition to the University. This is further supported by the positive retention rates and self-evaluation document that indicates that the College's student outcomes outperform other Navitas colleges, between 4% and 13%.

74 Staff training is adequate, with a specific session on Dyslexia Awareness provided for staff in the spring term 2025. There are plans to extend this training further, and the College is working with the Navitas group to implement it for all its staff and other Navitas provision. The team **recommends** that the College continues to develop the knowledge and understanding of all staff of neurodiversity to further enhance student support to enable students to reach their full potential.

75 While the review team has recommended that staff knowledge and understanding of neurodiversity continues to develop, overall, the review team concluded that there was clear evidence of the College's commitment to student support from application to their transition to further study at the University. The College, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 11: Teaching, learning and assessment

Providers facilitate a collaborative and inclusive approach that enables students to have a high-quality learning experience and to progress through their studies. All students are supported to develop and demonstrate academic and professional skills and competencies. Assessment employs a variety of methods, embodying the values of academic integrity, producing outcomes that are comparable across the UK and recognised globally.

Findings

76 ICRGU faculty works effectively with subject specialists at the University in the design and delivery of the curriculum. The research inputs of University staff inform the content of College courses that map directly onto University programmes. Opportunities for joint research between the College and University faculty further inform the curriculum and enhance teaching and learning. Details of joint research projects relating to Tourism in China and the Oil and Gas Industry were made available to the review team.

77 Programme Specifications and Module guides clearly set out the learning, teaching and assessment for modules. This information is made available to students in lectures and on the College VLE.

78 Assessments are set by College faculty and then moderated by link tutors from the University to ensure they are fair, reliable, accessible, authentic and inclusive and that they contribute effectively to a student's learning journey. They test the learning outcomes for a specific module and ensure they align with the learning outcomes for the programme. Consistent with the Navitas policy for assessment, a range of assessment metrics is used to help promote accessibility and inclusion.

79 Students are given information about assessments during their lectures and are supported in one-to-one sessions with their tutors. Lecturers provide detailed feedback to students on their assessed work. Students confirm that the feedback they receive helps them to understand how they can improve their grades for future assessment (feedforward) and that the process effectively prepares them for progression to the next stage of their programme and ultimately to the University.

80 College staff are recruited based on their skills for teaching international students and the suitability of their academic qualifications. A person specification clearly sets out the qualifications and skills required for seasonal lecturers. All staff have a minimum of a master's degree, and many have industry experience or are actively involved in research which enhances the delivery of their subject area.

81 ICRGU staff are effectively supported for their continuing professional development. They are encouraged to become Fellows or Associate Fellows of Advanced HE. The Navitas Learning and Teaching Conference, which was attended by ten members of college staff provides opportunities for faculty to develop their teaching skills and better understand the needs of students entering the College pathways. Performance reviews are undertaken for all staff and CPD needs are identified and addressed. Lecturers provide feedback about their modules which includes achievement rates, learning and teaching methods and student feedback. This is an opportunity to identify good practice, and any changes required to a module. Data from lecturer and student feedback is summarised in Academic Reports which are submitted to the AAC. Peer review and the mentoring scheme provide further opportunities for staff to share good practice and reflect on their own teaching methods.

82 During the orientation and welcome session, students are introduced to what is expected of them including the Code of Conduct; attendance; academic policies and procedures, and their timetable. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning throughout their programme and have numerous opportunities to shape their own learning by providing feedback and suggesting changes to their course, through the Navitas Student Survey, module surveys, meetings of the CET, student representatives and one-to-one counselling meetings. Students indicated that their feedback has resulted in changes to teaching styles and one module has been modified to address their concerns about its complexity.

83 Academic integrity is discussed in detail as part of the orientation programme. The Student Handbook contains clear guidelines regarding academic integrity and the use of AI. Students are given a copy of the Navitas Assessment Policy and further guidance is available on the VLE. Students confirmed that good academic practice is discussed during lectures and that resources showing how to reference are available in the library. Students are aware of the penalties for poor academic practice and plagiarism and those who had progressed to the University felt they had been well prepared for the academic writing requirements of their programme.

84 Navitas has clearly defined policies in relation to technologies that impact teaching, learning and assessment and has amended its College policy and regulation in response to the ongoing challenges that AI presents. AI is an agenda item at meetings of the AAC and the College is represented on a University working group which discusses AI. At the June meeting of the LTB, it was agreed to develop a module to support both staff and students on the development of AI.

85 Students who successfully complete their courses progress to the University programme for which the College has prepared them. Programme specifications and module guides indicate which modules must be passed for students to progress. College students are familiar with University facilities, as they are on campus and some specialist laboratory teaching takes place at the University. Students are given practical information about their progression to the University and transition events are organised to enable ICRGU students to meet students and alumni at the University before the commencement of their University courses. Alumni students confirmed that they had been well prepared for entry into the University. A 'Careers and Employability' information page is provided on the College VLE and students have one-to-one support meetings with the College Services Manager, that provides information and support with employability, CV writing and navigating visa restrictions around work. Staff attend professional conferences to maintain industry relevance and provide talks to students about future careers and employment opportunities.

86 Overall, the review team concluded that teaching, learning and assessment at ICRGU are aligned, informed by research, and that students are provided with clear information about module and programme learning outcomes. All staff are appropriately qualified, encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and offer clear advice regarding academic integrity and the use of AI. Assessments effectively test the learning outcomes and are fair, reliable, accessible, authentic and inclusive. The close relationship between the College and the University enables students to effectively transition to the University on successful completion of their course. The College, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 12: Operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes

Providers operate processes for complaints and appeals that are robust, fair, transparent and accessible, and clearly articulated to staff and students. Policies and processes for concerns, complaints and appeals are regularly reviewed and the outcomes are used to support the enhancement of provision and the student experience.

Findings

87 The Student Complaints and Academic Appeals policies are clear and transparent. The policies are easily accessible on the website and the student portal and are also covered during the orientation period. The Operational Manual includes complaints, appeals and conduct information that is consistent with the policy. Students can be supported by friends, family or different representatives, including the University's Students' Union.

88 The Student Complaints Policy defines what constitutes a student complaint and sets out the different stages: a Concern (Informal) stage and a Compliant (Formal) stage. To make a Concern, a student can raise an issue with any member of staff at a Navitas UPE College or representative, orally or in writing. This presents the student with an opportunity to raise the matter informally with Navitas UPE. Once a Concern has been received, resolution should be sought from the area in which the Concern arose, by discussing the Concern with the most appropriate member of College staff (such as the academic tutor or their line manager) or the Student Services Officer. A written or verbal acknowledgement of the Concern and the process to be undertaken is given within ten working days and a full response within one calendar month from the acknowledgement. Navitas anticipates that most Concerns will be resolved through informal and local means. The team heard that most complaints are concluded as part of the informal stage or handled through the student representation structure.

89 Should a student be dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal stage they may invoke Stage 1 (Formal) of the formal procedure which would normally be completed, with a response in writing from the Navitas UPE Academic Registry, within one calendar month of the receipt date of a completed Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Form. Where the complainant remains unsatisfied with the Stage 1 response, Stage 2 (Review) of the formal procedure escalates the complaint for review by Navitas UPE Academic Registry for potential referral to a Complaint Hearing. The entire process from Concern to Complaint Hearing outcome should be completed within ninety days.

90 Students can complain directly to the University but this is limited to those cases where the complaint is related to a University service or staff member, for example complaints about the student's experience while in a University School or Service, in accessing University resources or services, or about an act or perceived omission on the part of a member of staff of a School or Service Department of the University.

91 The Academic Appeals procedure is detailed in the Appeals Policy. The policy clearly defines an academic appeal, and clearly gives examples of the grounds on which students are permitted to appeal. It also provides a clear distinction between a compliant and an academic appeal. The policy details the informal stage (Informal Query) where students have an opportunity to bring an assessment related result, they believe to be incorrect, to the attention of the College, and a formal Academic Appeal process which includes the same formal stages as the Student Complaint process.

92 For the formal stages of both the Student Complaints and Academic Appeals process students complete the Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Form. The form is well structured and helpful for students to clearly articulate the complaint or appeal. It also includes a reminder of key policy sections and timelines.

93 Both the Student Complaints and Academic Appeals policies include clear reference to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) and how students can escalate their complaint if they are dissatisfied with the outcome. The annual report from the OIAHE was considered at the Navitas Academic Board in May 2024, indicating that no concerns or upheld complaints were reported. Complaints are also considered during the Annual Monitoring Review. The January 2024 review reported that two appeals had been received, and that due process was followed with oversight provided by the Navitas Academic Registry.

94 The procedures are also informed by sector and local good practice guides (Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, The UK Quality Code for Higher Education,). These are referenced clearly through both policies. The College indicated that they would be reviewing their procedures in the near future to ensure continued alignment with best practice.

95 Complaints and appeals relating to the admissions process are described in the Admissions policy and are discussed as part of Sector-Agreed Principle 9.

96 Overall, the review team concluded that the processes and procedures for complaints and appeals are robust, fair and transparent, and are aligned to best practice. Outcomes and actions from complaints and appeals are effectively monitored and reviewed through a robust governance system, which is undertaken by both the college and Navitas. The College, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Enhancement initiatives

Commentary on institutional approach to enhancement

97 The NUPE (UPE) policy and procedure for enhancement requires each college within the group to have a formalised enhancement mechanism. ICRGU implemented a College Enhancement Team (CET) in 2023 with a clear purpose to enhance the educational experience for all students. The CET is a sub-committee of the College Learning and Teaching Board and meets twice a year. The College Principal acts as Chair, and student, academic and administration staff representatives constitute the Board.

98 The College enhancement policy is included in the Operations Manual and in Academic Reports. CET meetings have a clearly stated aim to discuss general improvement goals and ideas for the entire student experience. Meetings are designed to provide an opportunity to focus on the engagement of both students and staff in the development of a culture across the College of a learning environment that facilitates empowerment, engagement and independent learning potential and capability. Minutes of the meetings provide evidence of discussions of a range of enhancement topics considered in 2023 -24. These include student awards, transition events and Alumni talks, a Student Ambassador Programme, talks that led to College Services improvements, the use and misuse of AI and the development of a module specifically on AI, a new tracker for the Compass Programme to monitor student progress and a commitment to providing more activities for students.

99 Actions from each meeting are clearly identified, with timescales, and are reported to and discussed at LTB which then monitors the success and impact of any enhancement initiatives. Actions are reported in the College Action Plan and in Academic Reports and subsequently in the Annual Report to the Navitas Group. Senior staff and students, gave examples of enhancements including the improvement of learning resources and environments, sharing of online teaching methods between teaching staff post-Covid, and improvements to catering facilities for students. There are also plans to develop a module specifically on AI.

100 The College has a clear strategy for enhancement and has implemented a formal college enhancement team to discuss themes that can be used to further enhance the experience of its students. Evaluation and success of the initiatives is included in Academic Reports and in the overall College Action Plan and is monitored at the College LTB, the JSPMB, and subsequently in the Annual Report to the Navitas Group.

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