Kaplan International Colleges UK Ltd

Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

June 2015

Annex 6: Nottingham Trent International College

Introduction and background

Nottingham Trent International College (the College) was established in 2005. It is an embedded College within the Kaplan International College's (KIC) pathway network, in partnership with Nottingham Trent University (the University). Students achieving the required grades proceed directly to a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the University. In 2013-14, 35 per cent of the University's international students were graduates from the College. In 2014-15, the College had an increase of 26.9 per cent in student numbers.

A Joint Strategic Management Board (JSMB) is responsible for the strategic relationship between the University and the College. At KIC, there is a Senior Management Team (SMT) supported by the College Executive Management Board, which includes Directors of all Kaplan colleges. The Academic Planning and Quality Committee is responsible for the overall management of academic standards and quality.

Good practice

The review team noted the following features of **good practice**:

- the detailed procedures for setting and moderating assessments and the College-level overview of the processes (paragraph 14)
- the thorough embedding of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) across College activities (paragraphs 15 and 29)
- the extracurricular learning opportunities including the Knowledge Hub at Global Point and the Learning Outside the Classroom Programme (paragraph 38)
- the effective induction of students including the support for late arrivals and the monitoring and follow-up activities during the first six weeks (paragraph 41)
- the effective partnership with Nottingham Trent University at both strategic and operational levels (paragraph 42).

Recommendation

The review team makes the following recommendation in relation to this College.

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the College to:

- ensure externality in processes for programme approval and review (paragraph 5).

Detailed findings

How effectively does KIC and the College fulfil responsibilities for the management of academic standards at the College?

1 KIC operates a central Academic Planning and Quality Committee (APQC) as its senior body for academic affairs including standards. The Committee is chaired by the Director of Student Learning and has the role of establishing, monitoring and reviewing academic standards using procedures and policies outlined in a Quality Academic Framework (QAF) and detailed in the Academic Standards and Quality Manual (ASQM). In addition, at a more local level, a Joint Academic Advisory Board (JAAB) chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University and with membership drawn from both the College and the University, maintains joint University/College oversight in ensuring that the College's academic standards are appropriate for progression to the University. This Board gives academic approval to changes in curriculum, progression requirements, entry requirements and new programmes.

2 Responsibility for implementing the QAF rests at College level with the College's Academic Director. Programme committees are in place for each programme and report to the College's Senior Management Team (SMT). KIC's Centre for Learning Innovation and Quality (CLIQ) plays a key role across all the KIC embedded colleges including the College, and in terms of standards, acts as a hub to ensure a common identity and set of standards across the network.

3 Standards are set at the point of programme development. This follows a detailed process including both discussion of market viability and academic issues. Initial scrutiny is through the New Programme Development and Approval Group which looks at sales, marketing, financial and compliance issues prior to full development and approval from an academic perspective. The latter, for both new programmes and new modules, takes place through the APQC and approval is also sought from the prospective partner university via the JAAB. The current academic year has seen the introduction of a new programme leading to degree level study in petroleum engineering at either the University of Salford or

between the marks of first and second examiners. This had been investigated by the College and was explained as occurring because the examiners did not record the

26 Learning opportunities are continually reviewed and enhanced through the College action plan which captures action required in response to commentary from external reviews and feedback from staff and students.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

27 The College effectively uses a range of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities. The analysis of student performance once they have progressed to the University acts as an external reference for the College, confirming that it is effectively preparing students for transition to the University. Further analysis is being undertaken through a joint action research project to identify why some students perform more effectively on their degree programmes with the aim of addressing the needs of those who perform less well.

28 The common descriptors and guiding principles in the Kaplan UK Pathways Learning and Teaching Framework help to ensure consistency across all KIC provision. External examiners, appointed for each College programme, provide commentary on student learning opportunities and ensure parity with other providers.

29 The Expectations of the Quality Code are clearly identified in the College's policies and procedures and have been embedded in the development of an ongoing action plan which captures and records enhancement activities across the College. As outlined in paragraph 15, the review team considers that the thorough embedding of the Code across College activities is good practice.

30 The Higher Education Academy (HEA) UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education is effectively used as a further external reference point and several members of College staff are Fellows of the HEA.

How effectively do KIC and the College assure themselves that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

31 The College makes effective use of internal procedures and external commentary to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is maintained and enhanced. The Academic Director of Teaching and Learning is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the curriculum. Senior sessional tutors act as mentors to support new sessional tutors and module coordinators oversee the delivery of modules and the setting of assessment.

32 The outcomes of teaching observations inform the appraisal process and identify staff development needs. Peer review enables teaching and administrative staff to observe one another and gain a better understanding of how the different roles can contribute to enhancing the student learning experience.

33 Enhancements to teaching and assessment have been made in response to external examiner comments, and all assessments now identify clear marking criteria against which tutors provide feedback. Internal moderation, verification and standardisation meetings provide an opportunity for staff to share best practice in setting and marking assessment. The Best Practice Day introduced in 2013 enables College staff to discuss innovations in learning and teaching with staff from other Kaplan International Colleges.

How effectively is student feedback used to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

34 The College provides students with an extensive range of opportunities to give feedback, and rigorously uses their comments to enhance the quality of learning

opportunities. Student representatives are elected during induction week and are given training to help them effectively fulfil their role. They act as a first point of contact for students, meet weekly as a group and attend programme committee meetings. Students indicated that changes had been made to both the content and delivery of the curriculum in response to their feedback. The College provides details of action taken in response to student feedback via a regularly updated 'You said - we did' poster on the virtual learning environment. The University Students' Union supports the College student representatives with a programme of social events.

35 Students evaluate the learning and teaching of modules through questionnaires and complete end-of-programme surveys. The responses are analysed and the outcomes contribute to annual programme monitoring and are considered by programme c

Action plan[1]

Kaplan International Colleges UK Ltd: Action plan relating to Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight (Nottingham Trent International College), June 2015

		relevant conferences, staff training and other initiatives To continue the development of relationship with the Students' Union		Head of Administration and Business Support	CST	development events and other events attended
Desirable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date/s**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the College to:						
x ensure externality in processes for programme approval and review (paragraph 5).	To work towards externality for programme approval and review	To hold discussions with KIC and specifically CLIQ including the New Product Development and Approval Group Any agreed way forward to be taken to the University JSMB for agreement				