

Annex 6: Nottingham Trent International College

Introduction and background

Nottingham Trent International College (NTIC) was established in 2005. It is an embedded college within the Kaplan International Colleges (KIC) pathways framework, within a partnership with Nottingham Trent University. Students achieving the agreed grades proceed directly to a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the University. In 2010-11, around 935 students enrolled at the College.

The College offers the following pathway programmes and awards:

| Programme | Level |
|---|--------|
| Foundation Certificate in Art and Design | FHEQ 3 |
| Foundation Certificate in Media and Communications | FHEQ 3 |
| Foundation Certificate in Business, Law and Social Sciences | FHEQ 3 |
| Foundation Certificate in Computing | FHEQ 3 |
| Diploma in Business | FHEQ 4 |
| Diploma in Computing | FHEQ 4 |
| Graduate Diploma in Journalism, Media and Communications | FHEQ 6 |
| Graduate Diploma in Gallery, Museum and Heritage Management | FHEQ 6 |
| Graduate Diploma in Business | FHEQ 6 |
| Graduate Diploma in International Relations | FHEQ 6 |
| Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies | FHEQ 6 |
| Graduate Diploma in Computing | FHEQ 6 |
| Graduate Diploma for Psychology and Public Health | FHEQ 6 |

Key findings

Academic standards

There can be **confidence** that academic standards at Nottingham Trent International College are managed appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of KIC and Nottingham Trent University.

Quality of learning opportunities

There can be **confidence** that the quality of learning opportunities at Nottingham Trent International College is assured and enhanced appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of KIC and Nottingham Trent University.

Public information

Reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that KIC is responsible for publishing about itself, its embedded colleges, and the programmes which

they deliver.

Good practice

The review team noted the following features of good practice at NTIC:

- the work of the Scrutiny Panel operated in collaboration with the University (paragraph 3)
- the management of the student experience, tailoring support to student needs (paragraph 14)
- the quality of the support for College staff at all levels (paragraph 16)
- the positive arrangements for student access to the learning facilities at Nottingham Trent University (paragraph 18)
- the College's enrichment programme for students, particularly the way in which staff time is managed to foster student engagement (paragraph 18).

Recommendations

The review team makes the following recommendations in relation to this College:

The team considers that it is **advisable** for NTIC to:

- ensure that there is provision in all programmes for an external scrutiny of examination questions and summative assignments, before these are used in student assessment (paragraph 7).

Detailed findings

How effectively do KIC and NTIC fulfil responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this college?

Written agreement

1 The written agreement between KIC and Nottingham Trent University (NTU) was found to be fit for purpose and is subject to regular review at joint University/College committee level. University senior staff reported that they are seeking to extend the arrangements for a further 10 years from 2015.

Arrangements for approval, monitoring and periodic review

2 A clear description was received of pilot programme approval process involving the Joint Academic Advisory Board (JAAB) and the central Academic Planning and Quality Committee of KIC, while this does not involve external participants, the involvement of the JAAB ensures that new programmes articulate appropriately with those of the university, and thus are at the required academic standard.

3 Annual monitoring reports are approved by JAAB. A Scrutiny Panel (which is unique to NTIC) considers both major and minor programme amendments and acts as an iterative 'mini validation' process with involvement of both university and college staff. This is good practice at College level.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

4 Assessments are set by the module coordinator and approved by the programme leader, but no external input is evident. Students were aware of assessment requirements and received feedback on their assessed work in a timely fashion.

5 Certificates are not issued by KIC. Transcripts are issued by the College but there is a lack of clarity over the transcript's reference to an 'awarding body' (KIC) and 'awarding institution' (NTIC). The inclusion in the document's title of NTU adds to the potential confusion.

Where appropriate, how effectively are UK external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

6 The KIC Quality Assurance Framework and the supporting Academic Standards and Quality Manual provided by KIC centrally reflect appropriate sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). Subject benchmark statements or A level requirements are also used, as appropriate. Using these, KIC has established graduate outcomes and programme specifications for each pathway. However, not all of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education is appropriate to those programmes which provide entry to the first year of a first degree.

How effectively are external examining, moderation, or verification used to assure academic standards?

7 It was noted that there is no external verification of assignment descriptions or examination questions prior to these being given to students. The only external input is that provided by external examiners who see a sample of scripts, and may comment on academic standards at the assessment board. The review team considered it advisable that KIC ensures there is provision in all programmes for an external scrutiny of examination questions and summative assignments, before these are used in student assessment.

How effectively is statistical information used to monitor and assure academic standards?

8 Clear data on completion/progression is recorded in annual programme reports, with some further data made available from the University on students who have progressed. Both partners intend to undertake further work on comparative data relating to NTIC student progress within NTU. Learning support tutors do not have ready access to online student achievement records.

How effectively are responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities fulfilled?

9 The College regularly reviews the quality and availability of learning resources through the use of student feedback, in the evaluation by programme committees, their annual reports, and through the oversight of the College's provision made by the Joint Academic Board.

10 The agreement with the host university provides access to a comprehensive range of learning support facilities, such as excellent teaching accommodation, computers and libraries.

In addition, the Learning Outside the Classroom programme of enrichment activities is particularly well run at Nottingham with staff workload allocation, including time to engage with this.

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

11 External reference points are used as outlined above with regard to the management of academic standards. In using the facilities of the University, the College benefits from the systems for ensuring good management of learning opportunities that have been established by the University.

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

12 KIC has a range of processes for monitoring the quality of learning opportunities, including the annual review process which reports on progression and completion figures and the use of external examiners to comment on the quality as well as the standard of student work. These are effectively implemented at NTIC.

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

13 Evidence derived from students during the review suggests that NTIC takes appropriate action in response to student feedback.

How do KIC and NTIC assure themselves that students are supported effectively?

14 All students have a named personal learning support tutor; students were content with the level of academic and pastoral support they received. The student induction period has been recently reviewed and extended. Clear advice is available to students with disabilities. The annual college report, seen by senior managers at KIC as well as by the host university, includes considerable detail about student support issues, enabling KIC to maintain an overview. In general, the management of the student experience, tailoring support to student needs, showed good practice.

How effectively does NTIC manage the recruitment and admission of students?

15 Admissions are managed centrally by KIC, but NTIC and NTU work closely in the context of recruitment fairs. Students informed the team that they had received clear and useful advice prior to their enrolment whether from KIC itself or from its agents.

What are the arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

16 High-quality support is given to teaching staff (including sessional staff), with regular development events and access to, and contribution to NTU staff development sessions. Staff proactively supported in attending conferences and sharing good practice.

How effectively do KIC and NTIC ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

17 The College regularly reviews the quality and availability of learning resources through the use of student feedback, in the evaluation by programme committees, the annual programme reports, and through the oversight of the College's provision made by the JAAB.

18 The agreement with the host university provides access to a comprehensive range of learning support facilities, such as excellent teaching accommodation, computers and libraries. In addition, the Learning Outside the Classroom programme of enrichment activities is particularly well run at Nottingham with staff workload allocation, including time to engage with this.

19 Students were generally satisfied with access and informed the team that swift action was taken in response to concerns.

How effectively does KIC's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides at this college?

20 Students reported that they had sound advice from KIC and its agents about the opportunities available and that they understood what was required for progression to their chosen university course. Course-related information was of good quality.

How effective are KIC's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing at this college?

21 Public information in KIC is managed centrally by a professional team. There is a careful approach to web design and management and to the publication of hard copy of material. Because of the nature of the business and the partnership arrangements, all published material has to be seen and approved by the host university and by local college staff. Systems are in place to ensure that published material is formally signed off by the local College Director and by the Managing Director of KIC in the London office.

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