Annex 3: Glasgow International College

Introduction and background

Glasgow International College (GIC) was established in 2007. It is an embedded college within the KIC pathways framework, in a partnership with the University of Glasgow. Students achieving the agreed grades proceed directly to a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the University. In 2010-11, around 700 students were enrolled at GIC, with the majority following pre-master's programmes.

GIC offers the following pathway programmes and awards:

Programme	NQF Level
Diploma in Business	NQF 4
Foundation Certificate in Business	NQF 3
Foundation Certificate in Social Science	NQF 3
Foundation Certificate in Science	NQF 3
Foundation Certificate in Engineering	NQF 3
Pre-Master's for Business, Social Sciences and Law	NQF 6
Pre-Master's for Science and Engineering	NQF 6

Key findings

Academic standards

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

Quality of learning opportunities

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

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 GIC:

- the effective use by GIC of university-appointed subject moderators, including their scrutiny in advance of components of student assessment (paragraph 7)
- GIC's careful management of the student learning experience (paragraphs 12, 13, 20)
- the quality of support for GIC staff at all levels (paragraphs 16-17)

- the positive arrangements for student access to the University of Glasgow's learning facilities (paragraphs 20-22)
- the effective use of the KIC's virtual learning environment in enhancing the student learning experience (paragraph 22-23).

Recommendations

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

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

- review the design and content of the transcripts issued by KIC, so as to ensure that there is no confusion regarding the ultimate responsibility for the KIC award (paragraph 4).

The team considers that it is **desirable** for GIC to:

- encourage engagement by GIC with the enhancement work of the KIC Centre for Learning Innovation and Quality (CLIQ) (paragraph 18).

Detailed findings

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

Written agreement

1   The written agreement between partners is fit for purpose and is subject to regular review at joint University/College committee level. Processes exist for the review and updating of programme articulation lists.

Arrangements for approval, monitoring and periodic review

2   The KIC quality assurance framework allows flexibility at college level, which in the case of GIC has resulted in joint University/College structures that give confidence in the security of academic standards and the development, approval and monitoring of the embedded College's provision. The role of the Joint Strategic Management Board is significant here. Similarly, learning opportunities for students are well supported by College processes and through service level agreements (including access to libraries and laboratories) and other arrangements to facilities within the host University.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

Assessment of students

3   Using the flexibility allowed by KIC, GIC applies the former's framework for assessment in an effective manner. Staff work closely with colleagues at the University in the verification of assessments and to assure standards.

Certificates and transcripts

4   The award certificates are not issued by KIC. Transcripts are issued by GIC but there is a lack of clarity over the transcript's reference to an 'awarding body' and 'awarding institution' (GIC). The inclusion in the document's title heading of University of Glasgow adds

to the potential confusion. The review team considered it advisable the design and content of the transcripts issued by GIC is reviewed, so as to ensure that there is no confusion regarding the ultimate responsibility for the KIC award.

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

5   The Scottish Qualifications and Credit Framework (SCQF) is taken into account by subject teams when developing new programmes/modules, with national subject benchmark statements reflected in the articulation of GIC provision against University of Glasgow programmes. These arrangements are strengthened by the close involvement of university-based subject moderators in developing the content of the College's programmes.

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

6   External examiners are appointed and must attend at least one assessment board per year and submit an annual report. KIC's procedures require the setting of assessments at programme level, double marking of a sample of scripts (with guidance on selection of scripts) and the use of external examiners to comment on the quality of the assessment process and on the standards achieved by students after the assessment process has been completed. However, the review team noted that external examiners do not have the opportunity to comment on assessment instruments prior to delivery.

7   The flexibility allowed in the KIC Quality Assurance Framework permits GIC to use its system of university subject moderators to act in this way as a level of scrutiny external to GIC. This was an example of good practice at this college.

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

8   The University of Glasgow has begun to provide statistical information relating to GIC alumni progression within the University to the Joint Strategic Management Board. Within KIC, CLIQ receives annual programme reports which contain data relating to the completion and achievement of students working towards the KIC award and on their progression to the host university. CLIQ in turn prepares a report (the Academic Standards and Quality of Programmes Report) for KIC's Academic Planning and Quality Committee.

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

9   GIC works effectively within the KIC Quality Assurance Framework to carry out monitoring and review of the programmes. The study experience of students is reviewed through a range of measures, including comprehensive student feedback reported through to GIC, University and central KIC bodies. Further evidence for student success in these programmes is provided by the successful transition into university programmes. Students reported high levels of satisfaction with the quality of learning provided by GIC.

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

10   SCQF is taken into account by subject teams when developing new programmes/modules, with national subject benchmark statements reflected in the articulation of GIC provision against University of Glasgow programmes.

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

11   The KIC framework 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.

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

12   In accordance with KIC quality assurance procedures, student feedback is collected at a number of points during a student's programme, including induction, module and programme completion, the last contributing to annual programme reports with potential for programme enhancement. There was good evidence that matters raised in student feedback were addressed, and that student representatives had the opportunity to raise issues relating to the quality of learning.

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

13   KIC's strong emphasis on effective student services and tutorial support for students is evident throughout GIC. Students were very positive in their comments on the accessibility and helpfulness of staff.

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

14   The recruitment and admission of students is managed centrally by KIC. GIC and the University of Glasgow also work closely together in this area, especially towards the diversification of student intake.

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

15   GIC follows KIC's expectations for appropriate processes in support of the recruitment, induction, development and appraisal of staff. The quality of teaching in programmes is regularly reviewed on the basis of student feedback.

16   GIC's activities in support of its staff benefit from KIC's encouragement of secondments to other colleges and to CLIQ, and the support for attendance at conferences, and funded study for further qualifications.

17   Staff have access to staff development events and library facilities at the University. The input of the university-appointed subject moderators provides more informal opportunities to benefit GIC teaching staff.

18   Staff at GIC saw CLIQ primarily as monitoring quality assurance procedures and administering KIC's Learning and Teaching Innovation Fund, rather than as a source of innovative practice.

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

19   GIC regularly reviews the quality and availability of learning resources through the use of student feedback, which is included in the broader evaluation carried out through the Annual Programme Report. This is produced by the Programme Leader, supported by the Programme Committee. The oversight of GIC's provision, including learning resources, is made by the Joint Strategic Management Board.

20   In using the facilities of the University, GIC benefits from the systems for ensuring good management of learning opportunities that have been established by the University.

21   KIC's expectations for the provision of learning resources are met through a comprehensive set of service level agreements with the University, allowing student access to a wide range of academic and other facilities. There is also good provision of classroom space and IT facilities within the GIC building.

22   The team noted good evidence from students and staff that the virtual learning environment provided centrally by KIC was increasingly being used and valued.

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

23   Provision of public information is managed centrally by KIC. Within the framework provided by KIC, information published at GIC level is appropriate and effective for student needs. The information relating to programme and study orientation is clearly presented and the website was considered by student users to be easily navigable. At GIC, students met by the QAA review team suggested that potential applicants would benefit from more detailed individual module descriptions to help inform programme choice in the course of the application process.

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

24   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 partner 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.