Board of Trustees

MINUTES

Friday 12th December 2025, 9am.
Blackfriars Campus

Members present:	Jesse Norman (JNo) Chair of the Board James Newby (JNe) President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Yasmin Ali (YA) Trustee Julian Drinkall (JD) Trustee Jon Emmet (JE) Trustee David Hughes (DH) Trustee Bill Jackson (BJ) Trustee Marc Leppard (ML) Trustee Natasha Rothbucher-Thomas (NRT) Trustee Timothy Bell (TB) Elected Student Trustee Graeme Ferguson (GF) Elected Staff Trustee
In attendance:	Robert Jenkins (RJ) Finance Director Samantha Lewis (SL), Director of People and Operations Anthea Parker (AP) Director of Infrastructure & Projects Gary C Wood (GCW) Academic Director Chib Alexander (CoSec) Company Secretary
Apologies:	Aimee Clark (AC) Trustee

1. Welcome

Noted:

I. JNo welcomed all members to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

I. There were no declarations of interest. CoSec informed members that the register would be circulated for annual review and update in January 2026.

II. There were no related party transactions declared.

3. Minutes and Action Log I Lead **CoSec**

I. The minutes from 1st October 2025 meeting were deemed to be a true record and approved.

II. Action log: It was noted that the items related to CPD and CPD numbers and income were to be discussed at Finance committee.

APPROVED – Minutes from Meeting held 1st October 2025

4. Chair's Business I Lead Jesse Norman

A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
B. JNo highlighted the importance of increasing the number of female academics and female students.
C. JNo noted that Levi Caymen and Peter Metcalfe had been elected as the Student and Staff Trustees for 2026-2027. He announced that additional trustee recruitment would be reviewed in early 2026.
D. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
Redacted [Not for Publication]	JNe	Mar 26

5. Risk Register I Lead Anthea Parker

BD.26.02.02 NMITE Risk Register

A. AP reported that there were no significant changes to the high-level risks, although continued monitoring and mitigation remained necessary. Student recruitment remained high risk however, applicant numbers were reported to be up compared to 2024/25.
B. AP noted that, following a review of academic risks, the Head of Quality Assurance had recommended retiring one risk on the basis that it was already included within another key risk.
C. Redacted [Not for Publication]
D. Members discussed the NSS survey as an area of risk. AP reported that work had been undertaken with the cohort due to complete the next NSS survey, with a focus on strengthening and embedding the student experience.
E. AP noted the recent audit related to Risk management, which had focused on fire safety and Data Protection. Overview report due to be finalised and presented at the next Audit and Risk committee meeting.
F. JD raised a query regarding NMITE's reputation with employers and prospective employers, noting that NMITE's strongest ambassadors were its graduates. JD suggested that NMITE should consider how it tracks its reputation once graduates enter the workforce. JNe noted that NMITE remained closely engaged with alumni, many

of whom were undertaking ambassadorial activity and maintaining active links with the institution. JD recommended that NMITE review relevant KPIs to track engagement and demonstrate that its reputation is sustained through alumni and graduate outcomes. JNo observed that many NMITE students have only experienced NMITE as a higher education institution and do not have experience of more traditional Universities to compare to. Members agreed that alumni may only fully appreciate the distinctiveness and value of their experience when they encounter graduates from other institutions in the workplace

G. Redacted [Not for Publication]
H. DH commented that AP had provided a well prepared risk register which had led into a range of topics. However, DH queried how emerging topics raised in meetings were being captured and considered for inclusion on the risk register. Members agreed for the relevant topics would be captured and brought forward for consideration at a future meeting.
I. Redacted [Not for Publication]
J. Redacted [Not for Publication]
K. JNe acknowledged that the concerns raised were valid but cautioned that not all such issues could be resolved through adjustments to governance processes. While incident reporting mechanisms were functioning, they were not necessarily suited to addressing rapidly changing operational matters, which would need to be managed by the Executive team through robust internal channels. JNo reflected that governance operated throughout the institution and that an inability for staff to raise concerns would represent a cultural failure. He stated that, in his view, the culture at NMITE remained open and effective, as evidenced by the fact that the issue had been surfaced and discussed.

Annual Report of the Audit and Risk committee

L. ML highlighted that ARC would be stepping down its additional scrutiny of financial matters. Members noted that increased review had been introduced during the financial challenges in 2024 and was therefore being reduced following the Financial Audit.
M. ML noted that ARC members had discussed the concerns raised by the external auditors in relation to NMITE's going concern status. ML noted that ARC members, in response, had requested the Executive prepare an additional going concern paper for the Board to provide further assurance and strengthen the audit trail.

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
Key topics raised for further discussion under risk register item to be included on March agenda	AP/RJ	Mar 26

6. **NMITE Accounts** I Lead **Robert Jenkins**

BD.26.02.03 Financial Statements and Report of the Trustees

A. RJ reported on the accounts and noted that NMITE had prepared an additional Going Concern assessment. RJ confirmed that the accounts had been reviewed by both FRC and ARC, and that all internal audits had expressed confidence in NMITE's internal controls.
B. DH queried whether there were any known issues that could undermine the forecast contained within the accounts. RJ confirmed that, within the 12 months from the date of the meeting, he had no concerns regarding any foreseen issues that would materially change the forecast budget figures.
C. Members requested a presentation of the strategic plan be brought to the February Board meeting.
D. Redacted [Not for Publication]
E. Members confirmed that they were satisfied that appropriate assurance had been provided and that, based on the information presented and the scrutiny undertaken, NMITE could be considered a going concern for the period covered by the assessment.

APPROVED Accounts

APPROVED Audit Letter of Representation

F. Redacted [Not for Publication]
G. JD emphasised the importance of ensuring that students had a pathway to pursue civilian drone applications. JNo confirmed that NMITE's commitment would be to provide to dual-use drones opportunities and challenges partners for students.
H. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
In depth presentation on NMITE Strategic plan	JNe	Mar 26

7. **Finance Reporting** I Lead **Robert Jenkins**

BD.26.02.04 Finance Board paper
F=BD.26.02.04a FRC Summary report Nov 25

A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
B. Redacted [Not for Publication]
C. Redacted [Not for Publication]
D. Redacted [Not for Publication]
E. Redacted [Not for Publication]
F. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Commercial income:

G. Redacted [Not for Publication]
H. Redacted [Not for Publication]
I. Redacted [Not for Publication]
J. Redacted [Not for Publication]
K. DH suggested further focus on CATT, given its income-generating potential. SL noted that local delivery of CATT courses had been less successful, and informed members that the model worked more effectively when delivered through targeted partnerships with industry. SL highlighted that CATT sustainability provision CPD is typically commissioned by industry rather than individuals. JNe observed that both CATT and other CPD activities are similarly supported through grant-funded programmes such as UKSPF and employer upskilling funding. JNo emphasised the need to prepare for implementation of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) which could support individuals seeking to upskill.

Finance and Resources Committee Update

A. The report from the recent Finance and Resources committee meeting held on 24th November was taken as read.

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
Sensitivity reporting on lower student recruitment figures.	RJ	Mar 26

8. **Student Liaison Update** I Lead **Timothy Bell**

Verbal Update

A. TB provided an overview of his modules noting that there had been challenges but that there would also be challenges in industry.
B. YA questioned if TB had any insight into the view of students related to work with the military. TB noted that the students didn't know much about the current proposed programme at this stage but noted that the students held diverse views. TB felt that while some might not want to undertake the course themselves but wouldn't object to NMITE having the course. Equally TB noted some students are interested in undertaking challenges related to military scenarios.
C. JNe noted that initial programme planning had proposed a common first year which could allow students to transfer courses at the end of the first year.

9. Executives Report I Lead **James Newby**

BD.26.02.05 CEO report December 2025

A. JNe introduced the report and provided a sector update, noting that there was significant activity across the higher education sector in response to the ongoing financial crisis and noted the growing pressure on the regulator to take a stronger role in managing financial sustainability across the sector. He reported that the Education Select Committee had been reviewing university insolvency arrangements.

B. Redacted [Not for Publication]

C. JNe noted the UCAS application deadline for 2026 had moved back to its pre-Covid timing, creating an earlier decision point in the recruitment cycle. He confirmed a marketing campaign had been scheduled to run over the Christmas period and up to the UCAS deadline to boost application numbers. Members noted that approximately one third of NMITE students applied through UCAS. Admissions report taken as read. Noted as ahead of target but still need additional recruitment to meet the target.

D. JNe reported that uptake from local students had been slower so far in the cycle and that activity was being targeted to boost this. JNo confirmed they would be taking part in the local leaflet distribution campaign in Hereford. BJ queried whether NMITE had been fully emphasising the comparative affordability for local students. JNe confirmed that this had been a focus of the new leaflet and the Christmas campaign, highlighting that NMITE remained less expensive than a traditional university, particularly for students undertaking accelerated programmes.

E. JD referred to discussion at the new Marketing and Fundraising Committee (MFS) regarding the year-round nature of the student recruitment cycle, noting the complexity created by multiple application and offer deadlines and key communications requirements. JD also highlighted discussion about developing a more targeted and sustained pipeline of prospective students through closer engagement with a defined network of schools.

F. JNe reported that NMITE had recruited a Drones Development Professor, Alexandru Stancu and that work was underway to define the final title and full scope of the programme. JNe confirmed that programme development would need to progress at pace to meet key deadlines to enable marketing and recruitment for a September 2026 start.

G. Redacted [Not for Publication]

H. Redacted [Not for Publication]

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]

J. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Marketing, Fundraising and Student Recruitment Committee Update

K. The report from the recent MFS committee meeting held on 21st November was taken as read.

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10. **Programme Portfolio** I Lead **Gary C Wood**

BD.26.02.06 Programme Portfolio

A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
B. YA welcomed the concept of a common first year but questioned whether the approach risked being overly reactive and sought clarity on how specialisms would be selected to avoid overextension. GCW acknowledged that this reflected ongoing internal discussions and dialogue with industry partners, who had expressed a need for graduates with both specialist expertise and a broad foundation in engineering. GCW noted that achieving this balance would require careful management.
C. JNo expressed the view that all proposed programmes should still be required to progress through the full programme development and approval process. JNo suggested that an update on the progress could be presented at the next board to ensure that targets outlined in the paper were being met

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
Update on Programme development progress	JNe	Mar 26

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11. **Academic Update** I Lead **Gary C Wood**

BD.26.02.07 Academic Update

A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
B. TB queried what impact the change might have on the quality of teaching in the latter half of a module. JNe responded that modules did not operate on a model of 100% contact time and that marking time would be built into module planning. GCW added that earlier marking would enable more targeted support once initial assessments had been completed, allowing students to incorporate feedback into assessments within the same module.
C. JNo expressed the view that feedback and marks should ideally be provided to students as quickly as possible. JNe noted that formative feedback was already provided regularly, but that there had to be an appropriate moderation process to ensure consistency and standards. YA noted that this needed to be a balance and ultimately achievable for academics who are also teaching on the module.
D. JNo asked whether the proposals had been shared with students for feedback. GCW confirmed that the process had been driven by student feedback, with students consistently requesting earlier return of marks and feedback. JNo asked whether

students had been consulted on the potential trade-off between faster marks and any reduction in academic contact time. GCW noted the need to support academics in carving out protected time for marking while continuing to teach on the module.

E. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Academic Council Update

F. The report from the recent Academic Council committee meeting held on 12th November was taken as read.

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12. NMITE Governance | Lead CoSec

BD.26.02.08a Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy
BD.26.02.08b Annual report of Academic Governance

Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy:

A. CoSec introduced the policy and outlined the definitions of freedom of speech and academic freedom. CoSec confirmed the policy outlined the rights of students, staff and external speakers to express lawful views and the routes available to raise complaints should they believe those rights had been infringed.

B. JE asked whether NMITE held a legal responsibility for the Students' Union. CoSec confirmed that NMITE was responsible for the SU. CoSec clarified that as NMITE's Students' Union was not separately constituted, it did not hold an independent legal duty in this area. However, the policy made clear that NMITE expected the SU to support and uphold freedom of speech and academic freedom in alignment with institutional responsibilities.

Members approved the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy.

Annual Report of Academic Governance:

Members reviewed and approved the Annual report of Academic Governance.

Prevent Submission:

A. Members reviewed the submission dated 14th November 2025 and confirmed it was a clean submission.

Governance Effectiveness review:

B. CoSec provided a verbal update on the progress of the Governance effectiveness review, noting that following submission of initial documentation, meetings had been held with Neil Casey for the Executive team and the Board and Committee Chairs. CoSec noted that Neil Casey would be attending and observing the February and March Governance meetings.

13. AOB | Lead **Jesse Norman**

A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
B. JNo highlighted that it was the last meeting for the elected staff and student trustee and extended thanks for their time and valuable contributions to the Board.

The next meeting to be held in person on 4th March 2026 9am