Academic Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 12th November 12.30 Blackfriars Building

Present	James Newby (JNe), President and CEO (Chair), Dr Patricia Xavier (PX), Elected Academic Member Mary Kenyon-James (MKJ), Director of Student Lifecycle Mike Smith (MS) Associate Professor Emma Lewis (EL), Head of Quality Assurance Professor Gary C Wood (GCW), Academic Director Professor Leanne DeMain (LDM) External member Professor Robert Hairstans (RH) CATT Director
In attendance	Chib Alexander (CoSec) Company Secretary Lucy Stonehouse (LS) Quality Assurance Manager
Apologies	Will Gough (WG), Elected Student Member Dr Nadia Kourra (NK), Elected Academic Member Jen Newton (JRN), Elected Professional Services member

1 Welcome

I. The Chair opened the meeting and confirmed it was quorate.

2 Minutes and Actions Log I Lead Co-Sec

Received: AC.26.01.01a Draft Minutes July 2025

I. The minutes from 16th July 2025 were deemed to be a true record and therefore approved.

I. Action log updates: MKJ noted that the Action related to student lifecycle was complete within the reporting. JNe confirmed the closure of an action related to remuneration of students.

3 Chair's Report I Lead James Newby

Received: Verbal Update

Noted:

II. JNe raised that this was the last meeting for current staff and students elected members. Council thanked the elected representatives for their contributions.

4 **Committee Reports** | Lead **James Newby**

Received: AC.26.01.03i QuAC Report
AC.26.01.03ii AAC Report

Noted:

Quality Assurance Committee (QuAC)

I. The QuAC report was discussed; members noted that discussion at QuAC regarding assessment and marking would be covered under the relevant agenda item.

II. MS asked about the team working guidance, noting awareness of situations arising during module delivery that fell outside the clear processes set out in the policy and guidance. JNe emphasised that the guidance allowed for greater discretion for academics to apply individual judgement to students. GCW noted that a review of the student team working guidance was underway. EL highlighted the need to use existing processes to capture this feedback to inform the review. GCW confirmed that there is a mechanism for the process to be invoked without requiring students to raise the issue themselves.

Academic Affairs Committee (AAC):

III. The AAC report was taken as read.

IV. MS queried NMITEs current process on peer observation. GCW confirmed that the team are currently formalising something that has happened informally to enable more systematic feedback and sharing between colleagues and identifying areas of good practice.

Widening Participation Steering Group (WPSG):

V. JNe provided a verbal update, informing Council that WPSG were waiting on confirmation and acceptance of the Access and Participation Plan from the Office for Students.

5 **Academic Governance** | Lead **Lucy Stonehouse**

Received: AC.26.01.04 Annual report on Academic Governance
AC.26.01.05i Committee Terms of reference
AC.26.01.05ii Policy Review

Noted:

Annual Report on Academic Governance:

I. LS introduced the report, noting that this was the fifth annual review and provided a summary of Academic Committee and Academic Committee subcommittee actions and activities. Members noted that the report had been condensed but remained sufficiently detailed to capture key actions and recommendations for 2025/26, with a focus on the progress with New Degree Awarding Powers probationary period, National Student Survey results, and the governance effectiveness review. Members thanked LS for compiling the report

II. GCW proposed an amendment ensuring the term learner voice in the document, which had been discussed at AAC. It was agreed that the amendment would be included prior to submission to ARC.

III. JNe queried section 5.2, asking whether NMITE needed governance to be open to becoming more agile or more deliberative. CoSec noted that this could be explored or identified as part of the governance review. EL noted that this partly depended on the interpretation of agility. EL observed that NMITE governance committees currently meet more frequently than larger institutions, but this was balanced against the need for appropriate governance oversight of the business. Members agreed that improvements to governance processes could be raised during the review process and will be scoped for implementation.

IV. JNe questioned if the report covered the implications for resourcing given the forward-looking agenda as this report would be surfaced at the Board. It was noted that ambitious portfolio planning could place additional strain on resources, and this may need to be highlighted either within the report or a covering paper

V. LDM raised the OfS review relating to degree algorithms and B3 conditions and queried whether this was being fully surfaced to the Board. EL confirmed that this was covered within the HE landscape paper. It was noted that, as the Academic Governance report was largely retrospective, it was not the appropriate place to include this, but that updates on degree algorithms were also being reported through to ARC

The Council approved the recommendation of the report to the Board of Trustees

Terms of Reference:

VI. EL updates to membership to reflect change to CAO and new Head of Learning and Teaching post. Members noted the need for role titles to be consistent. LDM to be added to AC membership

Policy Reviews and Approvals:

VII. MKJ provided an update on the changes to the policies and procedures.

VIII. Amendments to the Admissions Policy relating to admissions with advanced standing were reviewed and approved. MKJ informed Council that a discussion had taken place at Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee (SRAM) regarding IELTS requirements. Council reviewed the recommendation from SRAM and agreed in principle that wording be added to state that the IELTS qualifications should normally have been completed within the last two years. An updated policy to be circulated for final approval.

IX. Noted that the General Regulations for First Degrees had the relevant section concerning conferral of Degree added, which was approved by AC in March 2025.

General Regulation for First Degree: APPROVED

X. Members discussed proposed amendments to the Extenuating Circumstances process, including provision for situations that did not strictly fall within the previous policy definition, for example attendance at a job interview. MKJ proposed that, in such cases, the student would approach the Head of Teaching and Learning to seek discretionary approval to submit an extenuating circumstances request. Members discussed the need for appropriate documentation of approvals, monitoring, and reporting to the Extenuating Circumstances process. Council discussed the overlap between attendance monitoring and Extenuating Circumstances applications and the potential to add a requirement to check attendance records under EC review. LDM recommended that those responsible for implementing the policy remain mindful of what evidence is required and requested. Council reviewed the proposal and approved in principle, subject to further clarification on operational arrangements.

Policies with Moderate to significant changes: APPROVED

Update on Governance review:

XI. PX asked whether the Governance consultant undertaking the review be speaking to staff outside of the AC, Exec or Board members. CoSec noted that they are still in the information gathering stage and further interviews will be requested down the line if required. PX noted that some academics have concerns regarding ease of access to information about the governance process.

The Committee ***agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
An updated Admission policy with agreed IELTS amendment to be circulated for approval.	MKJ	Dec-25

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6 **Assessment Board** I Lead **Gary C Wood**

Received: AC.26.01.06 Assessment Board report
AC.26.01.06i Ratification of Awards

Noted:

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]

II. GCW informed Council that Assessment Board had agreed to re-run analysis to review whether students were being advantaged or disadvantaged by teamworking, using additional data and incorporating new cohorts. JNe asked what analysis had been undertaken previously. GCW confirmed that the earlier review had involved a comparison of all module results, assessing outcomes from teamworking assessments against individual assessments.

Ratification of Awards:

Award of 15 MEng (Hons) Integrated Engineering Degrees– APPROVED
Award of one Certificate of Higher Education in Integrated Engineering – APPROVED

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7 **Marketing and Assessment Verification** I Lead **Gary C Wood**

Received: AC.26.01.07 Proposal to amend Assessment & Marking Procedures

Noted:

I. GCW provided a summary of the report and proposal for change to current Assessment

Policy to reduce the level of double marking, remove the requirement for external examiners to review marks prior to their release as provisional marks to students and that all marks and feedback are released to students at the start of the third week of the following module. Release of marks to start of fourth week. This approach had been supported by both QuAC and AAC. Council noted that at present students were not receiving marks until up to four weeks after the end of a module, and that for assessments undertaken at weeks two to three within an eight-week module this represented a significant delay. Council noted that faster turnaround would enable feedback to inform later assessments within the same module.

II. EL noted that turnaround time was not the only driver for proposals for change, but that there was also a need to reduce the burden on external examiners and to take greater institutional ownership of quality and standards. EL supported a move towards sampling, noting that this was often more effective in monitoring standards than the current open double-marking approach.

III. PX observed that while NMITE's current position was clear, delays to students receiving assessment feedback after assignment submission was not ideal. PX suggested a two-tier approach, allowing for quicker completion of some marks, particularly where feedback and marking for Bachelor-level assessments were needed to inform subsequent project work. GCW noted that a valid and consistent rationale would be required to support any early release of marks, to maintain consistency of marking practices and the student experience.

IV. Redacted [Not for Publication]

V. JNe expressed concern with accepting delays and asked what the next steps should be. GCW noted that the response could be taken back to the academic team, with clarity that the proposal represented only an interim measure pending a further review in summer 2026. Alternatively, GCW confirmed that the Council could indicate that it required faster turnaround times and therefore reject the proposed changes.

VI. Redacted [Not for Publication]

VII. LS noted that section 6.2.1 of the paper stated that modules running for the first time would be subject to 25% sampling, whereas QuAC papers had indicated that these would be blind double marked. GCW explained the proposed change and reduction.

VIII. GCW confirmed the standard operating procedures would be updated and reviewed by QuAC following any approved changes to Assessment Policy.

III. Redacted [Not for Publication]

IV. Redacted [Not for Publication]

V. Redacted [Not for Publication]

VI. Redacted [Not for Publication]

IX. MKJ stated that the agreed position would need to be clearly communicated to students. Council agreed that academic staff would require support to enact any changes and that a culture change would be needed to reset expectations around staff availability for students. JNe confirmed that interventions would be required to support embedding of any changes to the process including clearer planning of marking deadlines within working hours. EL proposed that messaging to students should make clear that any changes to process and shorter marking deadlines would be accompanied by additional protected academic staff time.

X. JNe summarised the discussion and outlined two options available to Council. Members agreed to undertake an open vote:
   a. Option 1 – 3 weeks marking turn around deadline (set according to individual assessment deadlines within modules) with delay by exceptions: (Four Votes)
   b. Option 2 – Paper as stands with working towards quicker turn around by summer 2026: (Two votes)
   c. Abstains: (Two votes)

Council members rejected the proposal as presented and agreed that they would like to see Option 1 enacted.

The Committee ***agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Paper outlining AC decision to be circulated to AC members to then be communicated to Academic team by Chair of AC.	JNe	Feb-26

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8 HE Landscape and Compliance Tracker I Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.26.01.08i HE landscapes paper

Received: AC.26.01.08ii OfS Conditions of Registration Tracker

Noted:

HE Landscape

I. EL provided an update. Noted the inclusion of OfS work around degree algorithms. A further more in-depth paper on this will come to the next AC.

II. Noted that a report on changes in HE and quality landscape will also go to ARC.

OfS Tracker

I. Noted that the Principal Academic is part of GCW role and that this would return to CAO should the post be reimplemented.

II. CoSec clarified the position regarding B3 condition which had been previously discussed, continue to monitor as part of the tracker but no higher risk.

The Committee ***agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Degree Algorithms to be included on Feb AC agenda	EL	Feb-26

9 NDAPs Update I Lead Emma Lewis

Received: AC.25.04.08 NDAPs Update

Noted:

I. Members took the report as read. EL highlighted the year 2 monitoring report had been received and this confirmed that NMITE was setting and maintaining academic standards securely; and that NMITE was making sufficient progress in implementing its NDAPs plan against the DAPs criteria.
II. Redacted [Not for Publication]
III. Redacted [Not for Publication]

10 Student Lifecycle Reporting I Lead Mary Kenyon-James

Received: AC.26.01.10 Student life Annual report
AC.26.01.10 Student Lifecycle quarterly dashboard

Noted:

Student Lifecycle Annual report:

I. The student lifecycle annual report was taken as read. MKJ noted that following additional training Jess Hall had taken on the delivery of safeguarding training for the institution. Council noted that feedback on the internal training had been positive.

Student Lifecycle Dashboard:

II. Redacted [Not for Publication]
III. Council noted the addition of a monitoring log for active completion of procedures. MKJ confirmed that from the date of the closure of proceedings letter students have 12 months to raise concerns or escalate to the OIA. MKJ informed Council that these figures were being reported to ARC as a rolling tracker.

11 Graduate Updates I Lead Mary Kenyon James/Gary C Wood

Received: AC.26.01.11 Graduate Outcomes report
AC.26.01.11 Plan for review of Graduate Attributes

Noted:

Annual report on Graduate outcomes:

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]
II. Council was therefore satisfied that the report demonstrated NMITE had met the numerical threshold for a positive outcome against the B3 Completion condition of registration.
III. GCW suggested graduate destinations include the proportions of students entering graduate-level employment and the range of industries into which graduates were progressing.

Plan for review of Graduate attributes:

IV. GCW reported that work was ongoing with NMITE Founder Karen Usher to interview NMITE graduates alongside graduates from other institutions employed by the same organisations. He recommended that the outcomes of this work be used to inform the review of NMITE's Graduate Attributes. Council agreed to allow this work to be completed to support the review but agreed to monitor the progress.

The Committee ***agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Progress update on Graduate Attributes review	GCW	Feb-26

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12 Programme Portfolio | Lead **GCW**

Received: AC.26.01.12 Programme Portfolio

Noted:

I. GCW noted that the programme portfolio had been reviewed by the Board earlier in 2025 and that, following subsequent discussions and emerging opportunities, there was a need to review and revise the portfolio. Council discussed the proposed areas for programme development, noting that development of the Drones Technologies programme was already underway and had attracted additional external funding to support an expedited development timeline.

II. PX highlighted the requirement for appropriate market scoping. GCW confirmed that the titles listed in the report represented areas of interest and development, rather than confirmed degree titles.

The Council approved the recommendation of the Portfolio to the Board of Trustees

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13 Periodic Review | Lead **LS/EL**

Received: AC.26.01.13 Initial Schedule for Periodic programme reviews

Noted:

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]

II. GCW noted that a longer timeline would allow staff to engage fully with the process alongside teaching commitments and enabled more focused activity during the summer period when the teaching burden is reduced. JNe supported the approach, noting that space was needed to allow more fundamental changes to be properly considered. PX added that this approach allowed approximately six months for staff to log and collate concerns and issues.

III. MKJ queried the timeline for the foundation year and why this could not be completed sooner given the smaller size of the programme. EL noted that the timeline did not prevent changes from being identified and raised through the module change process.

GCW highlighted that as the foundation year was common across programmes, a standalone review allowed changes to be made that would benefit all courses, rather than just the MEng.

APPROVED

14 Annual Enhancement project | Lead **Gary C Wood**

Received: AC.26.01.13 Annual Enhancement Project

Noted:

I. GCW introduced the report, noting that the first project focus had been agreed and would focus on a review of student teamworking. He noted that Council was being asked to review and approve the proposed timeline which aimed to conclude by May 2026.

II. MKJ emphasised that the work could not be allowed to slip, noting that student feedback clearly indicated issues in this area. Council agreed and requested monitoring updates. JNe highlighted the need for colleagues to contribute to the process and for staff to be fully engaged in both gathering feedback but also in the implementation of any recommended changes.

The Council Approved the proposed project timeline

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Progress update at next AC – ACTION.	GCW	Feb-26

15 Degree Outcomes Statement | Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.26.01.15 Degree Outcomes Paper

Noted:

III. EL introduced the report, noted that this will be a publicly published document.

IV. Redacted [Not for Publication]

The Council Approved the Degree Outcomes report with the inclusion of the amended chart.

16 Any Other Business | Lead **James Newby**

Received:

I. None raised.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 18th February 2026