Academic Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 16th July 14.00 Blackfriars Building

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

1 Welcome

I. The Chair opened the meeting and confirmed it was quorate.
II. Chair welcomed Leanne De Main joining as an external Member.

2 **Minutes and Actions Log** I Lead **Co-Sec**

Received: AC.25.04.01a Draft Minutes July 2024

I. The minutes from 28th May 2025 were deemed to be a true record and therefore approved.

II. Action log updates: Members noted a review of practice at other institutions regarding the potential to provide some form of remuneration to elected student representatives. The CoSec outlined the governance implications and limitations, particularly concerning the student trustee, who would be unable to receive payment in accordance with Charity Commission regulations, and given that no other Board members are remunerated.

III. GCW highlighted feedback from students raising concerns around parity and equity, noting that External Council Members were paid, which may create a perceived imbalance. PX raised the risk of reduced student engagement, particularly from those who are less financially supported, if remuneration is not considered. LdM noted their experience from other institutions, some of which have adopted both paid and unpaid models, and suggested NMITE could explore a balanced approach.

3 **Chair's Report** I Lead **James Newby**

Received: Verbal Update

Noted:

I. JNe provided an update on the Degree Outcome Statement, which was at the final development stages and would be presented for review at November AC.

4 **Committee Reports** I Lead **James Newby**

Received: AC.25.04.03

Noted:

Quality Assurance Committee (QuAC)

I. The QuAC report was discussed, and members noted the update on the IET Accreditation process. EL noted that this represented the fruition of significant work led by LS and highlighted the importance of the Periodic Review Policy in maintaining ongoing academic quality and standards, following initial accreditation. PX provided QuAC with an update on the timeline for the BSc accreditation.

II. Redacted [Not for Publication]

III. NK echoed PX's concerns, noting that in their opinion that not all academic staff had full training to ensure confidence in single marking. EL confirmed that double marking remains a requirement. NK suggested additional support and development sessions for academics to strengthen consistency and understanding of rubrics.

IV. LDM queried whether NMITE's Assessment and Marking Policy already covers these areas. EL confirmed that it does, including expectations for double marking, external review, and adherence to a set marking timeline, though some delays can occur in practice.

V. PX proposed that NMITE release provisional marks to students ahead of external examiner review, using the external process as a post-review mechanism. NK expressed support for this approach in principle but did not feel NMITE was yet ready to remove second internal marking. GCW noted that the move to 8-week modules had introduced additional challenges to marking timelines and verification processes.

VI. JNe asked about the risk associated with the initial September modules. PX noted that internal checks were in place and that programme leads are ensuring the marking processes are followed rigorously. GCW commented on opportunities for open feedback from students, while PX observed that students do not always recognise certain forms of feedback as such.

Academic Affairs Committee (AAC):

VII. The AAC report was discussed. GCW noted that work on AI integration and policy remained slightly behind schedule, though a working group had been established to bring together colleagues from across departments. He confirmed the group was reviewing how NMITE can support students in using AI as a tool while ensuring that its use does not compromise academic integrity or interfere with assessments.

VIII. MKJ referred to a recent report from the OIA concerning AI usage in higher education. LdM highlighted that the OIA has strongly advised against the use of AI-detection software to identify potential AI-generated work, noting concerns about reliability and fairness.

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
QuAC to provide AC with follow up reporting on Assessment verification work	EL	Nov-25
An update from AAC on AI Policy by November AC	GCW	Nov-25

5 **Academic Governance** I Lead **Mary /Emma**

Received: AC.25.04.04 Biennial Policy review
AC.25.04.05 Periodic Review Policy

Noted:

Biennial Policy review

I. CoSec noted that the policies presented has been reviewed by a team including LS, CoSec, MKJ and NK to ensure policies had been given review an input from multiple departments.

II. CoSec highlighted that the Academic freedom of speech policy had been noted as requiring approval but that it was still in development. They stated the intention to complete the review and circulate to AC members for comment ahead of approval at the Board meeting on 25th July.

III. **Policies with no changes or Minor Changes: APPROVED**

IV. **Policies with Moderate to significant changes: APPROVED**

a. EL noted the requirement for NMITE to have an identified single source of information as per the OfS E6 condition. MKJ confirmed that this will be the Student Sexual misconduct policy and that links will be included to the relevant policies.

b. Assessment Policy, GCW confirmed that there would be marks from each marker, by rubric rows available for External examiners should it be requested. and LdM Moderating or double marking. EL noted that this is part of the discussion.

V. **New Policy - Periodic review Policy: APPROVED in Principle**

VI. EL noted that the policy had been developed by LS following discussions with both external institutions and internal stakeholders. EL explained that, while such processes are often implemented at departmental level elsewhere, this is not feasible at NMITE given its current size.

VII. NK queried the stated review frequency of 4–5 years, asking how this aligns with other institutional review processes. EL clarified that the term "normally" has been used deliberately to allow for flexibility in scheduling where appropriate.

VIII. A question was raised regarding whether the Head of Learning and Teaching would be involved under the reference to the CAO or CEO designate. EL confirmed that the "CEO designate" terminology has been applied consistently throughout policy reviews to reflect forthcoming structural changes, avoiding the need for future policy revisions.

IX. LDM recommended that the use of data be explicitly linked to Condition B3, and highlighted the opportunity to connect the policy to institutional KPIs, providing clear evidence of alignment with regulatory requirements.

X. LDM commented that the policy appeared somewhat inward looking. EL confirmed that external stakeholders are engaged throughout the process and that Away Days can include students, staff, and external participants. LS agreed to review the policy to make this element clearer

XI. LDM queried whether the process was sufficiently responsive to allow for expedited review where required. EL explained that while annual monitoring exists, the revalidation timeline is partly constrained by CMA compliance requirements. EL also noted the intention to develop a Programme Lifecycle Policy, which will integrate and streamline the processes for programme development and review.

XII.

The Committee ***agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Periodic review policy (Agreed in principle) Final version to be circulated to reflect comments regarding enhancing the policy to strengthen links to strategic alignment, Condition B3, and KPIs, and ensure that externality is made explicit	LS	Nov-25

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

Received: AC.25.04.06 Assessment Board Overview
AC.25.04.06a Ratification of Awards

Noted:

I. GCW introduced the report, taken as read.

Ratification of Awards

Award of two BEng (Hons) Integrated Engineering, Class two, Division two Honors – APPROVED

Award of one Diploma of Higher Education in Integrated Engineering – APPROVED

Award of one Certificate of Higher Education in Integrated Engineering – APPROVED

II. MKJ asked for confirmation that the students can be notified of the option to request Conferral in absencia as it was further than 3 months till the next Graduation.
III. PX Exit awards, do these have a negative connotation. MKJ noted that students can transfer to the BEng which removes it being an Exit award. But EL noted that even a CertHE is considered a successful outcome.

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

Received: AC.25.04.07i HE landscapes paper
Received: AC.25.04.07ii OfS Conditions of Registration Tracker

Noted:

HE Landscape

I. EL provided an update on the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), noting that it is now being further defined, with implementation scheduled to commence in 2027. The LLE will be subject to an application route that has not yet been specified.
II. MKJ reported on the OfS review of suicide prevention and student mental health, noting that NMITE's Suicide Safer Strategy is pending the release of local reporting data and further student input. MKJ confirmed that staff have undertaken Orange Button training as part of the ongoing wellbeing and safeguarding initiatives.
III. MKJ also provided an update on Freedom of Speech requirements, confirming that NMITE will be required to prepare and deliver training for both staff and students. MKJ noted that this may be incorporated into the STEPs programme.

OfS Tracker

I. Members noted the introduction of a new OfS condition E6 Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. MKJ confirmed that NMITE is developing internal training, for both students and staff. New reporting mechanisms are being implemented to support compliance.
II. EL highlighted the need to review the responsibilities of the CAO and AD under the new academic structure to ensure alignment with regulatory expectations.
III. PX raised a concern regarding Condition B3, noting that there remains a risk in meeting this condition. It was agreed that this risk should be added to the OfS Tracker.

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
B3 condition to added to the OfS tracker risk review.	EL	Nov-25

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8 **NDAPs Update** I Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.25.04.08 NDAPs Update

Noted:

I. Members took the report as read.
II. JNe provided an update on the potential NDAPs probationary period extension and

confirmed that the OfS had been asked for a response but that nothing had been received at the time of meeting.

9 Access and Participation Plan | Lead **James Newby and Anthea Parker**

Received: AC.25.04.09 Access and Participation Plan

Noted:

I. JNe introduced the report and acknowledged the significant work undertaken by Sarah Peers and Anthea Parker in preparing the submission and associated initiatives.

II. PX raised the topic of contextual admissions and the importance of ensuring that NMITE's branding and communications clearly explain the concept to prospective students. MKJ confirmed that an action has been added to the SRAM to address this. It was noted that contextual admissions have been applied through NMITE's personalised admissions approach, though not formally advertised. MKJ noted that a more formal launch is scheduled for September 2025 to avoid disruption to the ongoing clearing campaign.

III. NK expressed concern regarding whether the APP demonstrates sufficient ambition. JNe clarified that the social mobility strategy is not intended as a cap but as an accountable and achievable framework, leaving scope for overachievement. JNe also noted that NMITE's whole-institution approach provides wider benefits to the local community and region. NK reiterated the importance of ensuring that STEPs and Outreach teams are fully aware of and aligned with their objectives and targets.

IV. MKJ noted that the Care-Experienced Bursary wording required a final review to ensure consistency with the APP commitments.

10 NMITE KPIs | Lead **Anthea Parker**

Received: AC.25.04.10 NMITE Benchmarking KPIs

Noted:

I. AP noted that the initial work had been completed, but that further development of the KPI framework was underway to ensure alignment with institutional priorities and regulatory requirements.

II. LdM queried the use of the NSS as a primary metric, noting that it only applied to undergraduate programmes and questioned how postgraduate elements were being captured. MKJ clarified that the MEng is an undergraduate programme with postgraduate-level components, typically undertaken at Level 7 in the final year, and therefore still falls under the NSS framework.

III. Members discussed the appropriate approval authority for the Academic KPIs. It was agreed that while the Council should review and approve the KPIs for academic oversight, the document was operational in nature and therefore the Executive Team will retain ownership and control of the document.

11 Curriculum Amendments | Lead Emma Lewis

Received: AC.25.04.11 Curriculum Changes

Noted:

I. EL introduced the report, noting that the amendments had been raised at AAC and reviewed by AAC and external examiners. Members discussed the amendments and approved:

Minor change to Cert HE Exit qualification title for MEng/BEng (Hons) Integrated Engineering - APPROVED

Minor change to Module F0003 on the Foundation Year – APPROVED

12 Student Lifecycle Reporting | Lead Mary Kenyon-James

Received: AC.25.04.12 Student life Cycle Quarterly Dashboard
AC.25.04.12b Interim Review of the student Engagement Strategy

Noted:

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]
II. MKJ reported that reviews of students returning from Leave of Absence had been completed and the outlook was more positive than previously reported.
III. Redacted [Not for Publication]
IV. MKJ provided an overview of the NSS results, noting that the overall picture was negative. MKJ confirmed that as fewer than ten students provided text comments these would not be released to NMITE which limited insight into the responses. MKJ worked to separate the data for the cohorts and noted that the results were mixed but that 8 of 27 questions showed improvement compared to 2024, with 5 questions scoring 100%, including in areas of mental health support. However, it was noted the BEng responses were lower and relate to the same cohort that will complete the NSS in 2026.
V. PX asked about continuation data, querying whether rates would decrease as students transfer to the BEng. MKJ confirmed that continuation data is captured one year and fifteen days after the start date and therefore has already been reported.
VI. JNe raised graduate and alumni engagement. JRN noted that new alumni webpages are being launched. MKJ added that current students are supporting with an upcoming module and there was the potential for an alumnus to be employed on a short-term internship to help embed alumni engagement. JNe noted that NMITE is not currently reporting on employment outcomes. MKJ confirmed that data collection and analysis are ongoing to address this.
VII. Discussion took place regarding the STEPs framework, with JNe highlighting the need for greater visibility and measurable KPIs. MKJ confirmed that the soft launch had taken place and that the full STEPS framework would be implemented from September 2025, with catch-up sessions in place for the 2023 cohort. MKJ reported that further work was needed to strengthen the personal tutor element of the programme. Members discussed holding a careers fair to support employability.

VIII. GCW noted increased attention on mock interviews, querying whether evidence supported their link to employment outcomes. PX felt that mock interviews provided valuable engagement opportunities with potential employers. JNe agreed, noting that focused approach was partly reactive due to earlier cohorts not receiving this opportunity and that NMITE must ensure equity of experience across cohorts. MKJ reported that additional out-of-learning activities had been offered but were poorly attended, highlighting the need to embed STEPs within the curriculum. LdM agreed that curricular integration is key to driving student engagement.

Update on Student Records Systems:

IX. MKJ reported that the Project group had met and confirmed that CORE remains on target, with the system expected to be fully functional ahead of the next Assessment Board and in place for September 2025.

X. MKJ noted that the academic team had received an initial introduction to the system, with further structured training planned prior to full implementation.

Student Engagement Strategy:

XI. MKJ introduced the Student Engagement Strategy, noting that the paper provided a high-level overview of current activity and future priorities. EL acknowledged the significant progress made in this area by the Student Support Team, highlighting the increased collaboration with Student Representatives and the range of new engagement opportunities

XII. Members noted feedback received from a Programme Representative regarding the lack of programme management meetings, it was agreed that this will be reviewed to ensure regular student-staff engagement mechanisms are maintained.

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13 Review of Visiting Academics I Lead **Gary C Wood**

Received: Verbal Update

Noted:

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]

II. JRN raised concerns that, while some individuals have not been actively involved, they may still benefit reputationally from holding the title of Visiting Professor and might not be fully able to represent NMITE's mission and vision if approached externally.

III. Following discussion, Members agreed for renewals to be approved for a period of 12 months, with an expectation of increased engagement and clearer reporting on contributions during the renewal period.

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14 Any Other Business I Lead **David Oloke**

Received:

l. An amendment to the Offensive Weapons Policy was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The amendment proposed the introduction of a boundaries allowance to support BEP and MEP project activities. Members discussed the proposal and approved the amendment.

Amendment to Offensive Weapons Policy - APPROVED

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 12th November 2025