Academic Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 24th July, 14.00 Blackfriars Building

Present	Professor David Oloke (DO), Chief Academic Officer (Chair), James Newby Chair (JN), President and CEO Professor Gary C Wood (GCW), Academic Director Dr Patricia Xavier (PX), Elected Academic Member (items 1-11 incl) Mary Kenyon-James (MKJ), Director of Student Lifecycle (Items 1-9 incl) Emma Lewis (EL), Senior Quality Assurance Manager Dr Nadia Kourra (NK), Elected Academic Member Tierney McCann (TM) Student Union President
In attendance	Lucy Stonehouse (LS), Quality Assurance Manager Chib Alexander (CoSec) Company Secretary
Apologies	Jen Newton (JRN), Elected Professional Services member,

1 Welcome

I. The Chair opened the meeting and confirmed it was quorate. The Chair welcomed the observers from the OfS. Apologies were received from Jen Newton.

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

Received: AC.24.03.01a AC minutes Feb 24

I. The minutes from 15th May 2024 were deemed to be a true record and therefore approved.

II. Action log updates:

a) None to note.

3 Chair's Report I Lead **Professor David Oloke**

Received: Verbal Update.

Noted:

I. Chair provided a summary of developments around academic delivery within NMITE and noted that this meeting also contains a number of updates around academic governance and HEI landscape.

II. GCW provided an update on the issuing of a new academic timetable, eliminating where possible any back-to-back teaching for academic staff and supporting the marking turn around deadline of September.

4 Academic Affairs Committee Report (AAC) I Lead **Gary C Wood**

Received: AC.24.03.03 Report from AAC held on 29th and 3rd July 2024.

Noted:

I. It was noted that AAC held an extraordinary meeting to consider stage one approval in Principle for the BSc Construction management and MEng Mechanical Engineering programmes. Both programmes were approved and supported to continue to stage two.

II. PX asked for confirmation on the lead staff member on the new NMITE Support Transition, Education, Progression, Success (STEPS) framework. MKJ clarified that this remains Bertie as an Academic lead, but that MKJ is the lead from Student services.

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Induction plan for new Academic staff to be circulated to AC members for information.	GCW	TBC

5 Quality Assurance Committee (QuAC) I Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.24.03.04 Report from QuAC held on 18th June 24

Noted:

I. QuAC discussed the current process for the verification of assessment briefs and marks by the External Examiner. QuAC heard that the plan is to work towards a position where we could amend our assessment processes for External Examiner scrutiny, in line with other HEIs, in that examiners wouldn't be required to review and approve marks for all assessments prior to provisional release to students.

II. Council discussed increasing the deadline for the Action plan for assessment marking. GCW confirmed that measures outlined the action plan had been implemented and they are confident that this will support the deadline being met. Council asked for the action plan to be reported on by QUAC at the Q1 meeting in October and for this to be reviewed and extended only if required.

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Update on the Action plan for Assessment Marking	EL	Nov-24

6 Widening Participation Steering Group I Lead **James Newby**

Received: Verbal Update

Noted:

I. JN provided a verbal update, noting the last meeting had been delayed due to schedule clashes and was now expected to take place on 1st August. Reorganisation of the committee and reassignment of the Chair role had been confirmed by JN to allow administrative workload to be removed from SP. JN informed the Council that JW had joined the membership of WPG. AC members requested an updated membership of the committee.

II. The committee are focusing on a new Widening participation strategy, concentrating on the fact that NMITE is a new HEI in an area that has difficulty with access to HEI's. NMITE provides opportunities to students that otherwise would be limited in their access to Higher education and a setting that allows local students to remain living at home and removing additional costs i.e. rent.

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7 Student Lifecycle Reporting I Lead Mary Kenyon-James

Received: AC.24.04.05 Student Lifecycle Quarterly Report Dashboard

Noted:

I. MKJ clarified that the Admissions data included in the report was week 35 not week 44 and provided a verbal update on the firm acceptance figures noting the increase and move towards Sept 2024 targets.

II. MKJ reported the addition of the National student survey outcomes, noting that further analysis will take place with actions required to be reported through QuAC.

III. DO noted the increase in student services promotions and activities as well as engagement activities End of year lunch and awards, EL noted that this was a fantastic event for staff and students and celebrated

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8 Assessment Board I Lead David Oloke

Received: AC.24.04.06 Report from Assessment Board held on 24th April 2024

Received: AC.24.04.06a Confirmation of Awards

Noted:

I. LS introduced the Assessment Board report noting that the meeting was held in person, as an annual event. Summary of comments from External Examiners provided noted that they welcomed being able to see recordings of ephemeral assessments undertaken.

II. Constructive comments around Teamworking., LS noted that while NMITE has a team working strategy that this process and strategy might need to be highlighted to students to ensure they are able to engage.

III. MKJ noted that they are working on the FHEQ level sessions and what will be included but that feedback around teamwork is coming through in module feedback from cohort 2209 and that a response is being reviewed.

IV. Timing of assessment feedback, within the 8-week modules. DO opportunities for formative feedback to students, GCW agreed that these need to be undertaken and to ensure that this is highlighted to students as feedback for record.

V. Two out of five external examiner reports had been received and LS confirmed they were expecting to receive the rest by the end of July. MJK highlighted that confirmation of progression emails have been circulated by registry.

VI. Redacted [Not for Publication]

VII. Ratification of Awards: Based on the recommendation of the Assessment Board, Academic Council formally approved the award of one Cert HE.
Confirmation of Certificate of Higher Education – APPROVED (Appendix 1 refers)

9 External Examiners I Lead **Lucy Stonehouse**

Received: AC.24.04.07 NMITE External Examiners

Noted:

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]

II. LS confirmed that following the end of this tenure, it is not intended for NMITE to replace this post and that they are confident the remaining four examiners are sufficiently able to cover NMITEs current programme portfolio. However, LS highlighted in the report that new external examiners will be sought to cover NMITEs new programmes commencing in September 2025, and that the Council will be asked to consider and approve appointments in the Spring/Summer.

III. EL asked if an external examiner had been outlined for the next cohorts master projects. LS confirmed plans to review the module allocation with GCW and to ensure an external examiner is inducted where required.

10 Partnership working and Strategic Alignment Check I Lead **David Oloke**

Received: AC.24.04.08 Partnership working Strategic Checks

Noted:

I. DO provided an overview of new NMITE partnership structure, implemented with the aim of consolidating all Key NMITE partnership types. Working with PAG Partnership advisory group. Council clarified that this does not include module partnerships and challenge partners.

II. GCW agreed that the documents would be helpful in separating out the different types of partnerships. However, that the detail required to fill out the form would require the partnership to have progressed to quite far and therefore have required a high level of staff resourcing. GCW recommended a point of earlier oversight/awareness of partnerships being explored and sought, The Council discussed the potential value of oversight in relation to noticing any trends in partnership development. EL suggested partnerships update report to AAC to include proposed partnerships alongside progress of current partnerships.

III. MKJ suggested around companies forms re modern slavery and health and safety etc. DO provided some clarification regarding the use of the companies form for short term partnerships. GCW provided some clarity regarding the discussions taking place at the weekly partnership group and that this form relates to the strategic partnerships

IV. PX recommended the implementation of a background database and moving the forms to a digital format i.e. Microsoft forms, noting this would reduce the requirement for additional data entry. The Council agreed that this could support record keeping and allow for reference by future staff of previously undertaken partnership reviews to prevent duplication of work.

V. JN suggested an accompanying guidance flowchart/ business process map to support staff understanding of the required approval processes for differing partnership types. The Council discussed this notion agreeing that it could support staff in avoiding work that is not required or missing due diligence where it would be key.

VI. MKJ raise some minor editing issues including removing staff names ensuring the documents refer to staffing roles where possible.

VII. The Council did not approve the Partnerships paperwork and asked for this documentation to be reviewed and resubmitted to the quarter one meeting.

The Committee ***agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
AC requested that AAC undertake a standing report with updates on Exploratory Partnerships and progress of current partnerships	GCW	Nov-24
Review of Partnership paperwork not approved additional edits (to include partnerships process map and required approval process) requested. Item to be included on Q1 meeting agenda	DO	Nov-24

11 Stage 2 Programme Approval I Lead **Gary C Wood**

Received: Verbal Update and recommendation from AAC

AC.24.04.09 New Programme Approval

Noted:

I. GCW provided a summary of the recommendations following the Academic Affairs Committee, BSc Construction Management and MEng Mechanical Engineering, being developed by NMITE. GCW clarified that Fast track versions of both the MEng and BSc are being validated alongside standard. AAC recommends to AC that that both programmes be approved

II. Redacted [Not for Publication]

III. Redacted [Not for Publication]

MEng/BEng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering and the BSc(Hons) Construction Management with the changes as recommended by AAC – APPROVED.

12 Programme Approval and Module Change Policy I Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.24.04.10 Programme Approval and Module Change Policy

Noted:

I. EL introduced the report informing members that the review had been initiated by learning taken from the first implementation of the Policy in 2022/23 programme approvals. PX noted their thanks for work undertaken by EL in this area and in producing the report, LS seconded and highlighted the work that has gone into the programme approval and module change process. EL noted thanks to Student elected representatives and the SU member for their feedback during the process.

II. MJK highlighted that the NMITE policy formatting needs to be implemented to ensure the policy can be monitored and appropriately utilised. They asked for the policy to be clear on timescales citing phrasing of number of working days not within a week.

III. Final validation event, student services resourcing to be included in an earlier stage to ensure that any additional resourcing is noted. EL noted that this is a fair point and that discussions regarding wider resourcing need to be taking place earlier within the programme approval process. GCW recommended that an overview of additional resourcing is outlined during stage 2. DO does this take place at validation stages.

IV. DO noted that the amended process had been implemented to support the programme approval process for the two new programmes approved earlier in the meeting. The council agreed the process had supported the input of wider staff and student feedback during stage one. It was confirmed as a robust process that allows for input from a variety of potential stakeholders including employers and prospective employers.

V. DO asked what the timeline was expected to be for periodic reviews of the process, EL confirmed that subsequent reviews were included in the NDAPs plan and that any further updates will be reported to AC. EL summarised suggestions made by the council including the formatting changes and Stage 2 approval resourcing.

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Agreed amendments to be made and circulated for review via email. To move for approval via Chairs actions.	CoSec	July 2024

13 NDAPs Progress update I Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.24.04.11 NDAPs report

Noted:

I. EL updated members on NDAPS recent monitoring visits and the expected feedback timeline.

II. PX thanked to LS and EL for their work on the NDAPs monitoring and raised concerns regarding limited resourcing within the Quality assurance team from 2025 when the new programmes come online. DO and JN confirmed that this is being monitored and additional resources will be sought as required.

14 HE Landscape and Compliance Tracker | Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.24.04.12i HE landscapes paper

Received: AC.24.04.12ii OfS Conditions of Reg Tracker

Noted:

HE Landscape

I. EL informed the council that following the election of a new government, the HE sector are expecting the current apprenticeship levy to be reviewed and potentially, broadened out to allow employers to use this funding to be used for additional CPD or further skills provision for staff. The Council agreed if implemented this could be a good opportunity for NMITE to take advantage of adaptability to short course provision and additional income. DO raised that NMITE must ensure it takes opportunities to provide feedback as a smaller HEI and to continue to engage with local employers, support partnered employers to engage as well.

II. Functions of work of IFATE is expected to be subsumed by the Skills England, HTQ's to validate by October to continue to progress. PX queried what opportunities are within Wales for NMITE.

OfS Tracker

III. Mitigation plan regarding CMA compliance; EL worked with colleagues to map the CMA considerations against the programme approval process. EL highlighted they are seeking Council approval that this monitoring has now been achieved and can now be marked as complete.

15 External Member of Academic Council | Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.24.04.13 External Member of Academic Council

Noted:

I. EL introduced the paper noting the rationale, CoSec and EL independently suggested. Clarification re chair of AC, president as outlined in NMITE's articles of association, noted that work to review any potential amendments to the Articles of association is underway. The Council asked that there is a robust induction for these members. DO more in-depth person specifications and role requirements to support review and appointment process

II. Redacted [Not for Publication]

III. PX highlighted that the remuneration could support in attracting a member from a wider diverse background. The Council noted that an in person meeting the Co-opted member would be expected to also attend in person and so an allowance of general expenses is expected for this role.

IV. GCW highlighted that this could pose an equity issue with regards to governance student representation not being remunerated. TM noted opinion around review of renumeration for student representatives, stating that they felt the post should remain non renumerated to ensure impartiality and independence of the representative. The

Council agreed to review the risk of an equity issue.

External Member of Academic Council – APPROVED
(Approved with remuneration as stated and condition of additional person specifications to be circulated to AC members)

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Review of equity issue around remuneration of Student representatives on governance committees	MKJ	

16 Regulations and Policy Approval I Lead Mary Kenyon James

Received: AC.24.4.14 Policies Cover Paper July 2024

Noted:

I. MKJ introduced the summary report of changes made to policies following their initial implementation and approval.

II. MKJ informed the council they had received agreement from executive team for the development of an attendance policy, noted that this process has been started but due to the level of input and stakeholders' consultation that this will be presented at the Q1 Council meeting. PX asked given the delay on approving a finalised attendance policy, what is the agreed strategy ahead of new students/ Foundation year. GCW confirmed that NMITE does have policies that cover actions for attendance which will require operationalising in the absence of an amended policy.

III. General Regulations for First Degrees 001 and Assessment Policy 002 were agreed to be recirculated to members following a file permissions error. General regs, clarification requested on definition of academic debt, MKJ noted that this related to student tuition debts.

IV. Student Academic Appeals Policy 005 clarification that there remains a staged approach as supported by OIA just that the terminology has been changed. Suggestion of the inclusion under 5.6 of further clarifying wording. Council discussed if this would be suitable for NMITE due to the smaller size of the institution. DO noted that the AD and Director of lifecycles. LS to ensure that members implemented into the appeals process are inducted/trained as required. DO suggested that this is done once a session. PX clarity on when Programme leads, and module leads are inducted into the process during the investigation/ information gathering stages.

V. Student Disciplinary Policy 007 Clarity of durations suspensions following an incident or suspected behaviour. Additional clarity of separation from requiring an outcome of a police investigation. Suspensions only undertaken following a risk assessment completed by Director of student lifecycles. 2.10 damages to be charged following. JN noted clarity required regarding where the burden of proof lies and what the standard of burden of proof required by NMITE.

VI. Changes discussed to be circulated to all members for. Additional clarification was requested on three policies and procedures; Council agreed for the discussed amendments to be made and the policies to be reviewed at an additional meeting in late August. (Academic Misconduct Policy, Student Academic Appeals and Student Disciplinary Policy.)

General Regulations for First Degrees- APPROVED
Assessment Policy – APPROVED
Leave of Absence Policy – APPROVED
Student Disability Support and Reasonable Adjustments policy – APPROVED
Student Engagement Policy- APPROVED

To be circulated and agreed via Additional meeting (Academic Misconduct Policy, Student Academic Appeals and Student Disciplinary Policy.)

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Additional meeting to be scheduled prior to the 1st September to allow policy changes to be reviewed and approved.	CoSec/ EL	Aug-24

17 Any Other Business | Lead David Oloke

Received:

I. Visiting role proposal. NK questioned if the content of the proposed seminars and contributions had been reviewed. GCW expressed that they do not feel there is enough detail on the contributions expected from the proposed visiting member that goes above and beyond a general curriculum partner. Noted that the form for review requires an outline of the proposed contributions to provide a base for review which is not outlined within the proposal.

II. Council agreed that the proposal requires some additional detail on the contributions expected to support the Council's governance and approval.

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
Visiting role proposal form to be returned to PP, with a request for further information on the nominees proposed contribution. CoSec to add to extra AC agenda for review and approval. .	DO/CoSec	Aug-24

Date of next meeting: 6th November 2024

Appendix 1 – Item 8 – Confirmation of Awards – Redacted [Not for Publication]