



Board of Trustees

MINUTES

Friday 25th July 2025, 9am.

Blackfriars Campus

Members present: Jesse Norman (JNo) Chair of the Board
James Newby (JNe) President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Aimee Clark (AC) Trustee
Bill Jackson (BJ) Trustee
David Hughes (DH) Trustee
Jon Emmet (JE) Trustee
Julian Drinkall (JD) Trustee
Natasha Rothbucher-Thomas (NRT) Trustee
Yasmin Ali (YA) 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
Chib Alexander (CoSec) Company Secretary

Apologies: Chris Courtney (CC) Trustee

1. Welcome

Noted:

- I. JNo warmly welcomed Bill Jackson, Julian Drinkall and Natasha Rothbucher-Thomas to their first Board meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

- I. There were no declarations of interest. JNo noted the variations to the register which reflected the addition of the new Board members.
- II. There were no related party transactions declared.

3. Minutes and Action Log | Lead CoSec

- I. The minutes from 4th June meeting were deemed to be a true record and approved.
Minor amendments Add Bob Clickguard to AAB members
JNo Suggested not recommended publication of student recruitment projections
- II. Action log to note when items passed to committees will be reported to the Board.



CoSec to circulate action log following the meeting to ensure all actions have been captured.

APPROVED – Minutes from Meeting held 4th June 2025

4. Chair's Business | Lead Jesse Norman

- A. JNo noted that this meeting was CC's final attendance as a Board member and thanked him for his support and service as a trustee. AC also confirmed her decision to step back from the Board, following four years as a Trustee. AC expressed their intention to remain engaged with NMITE in a supportive capacity
- B. JNo stated the need for NMITE to remain focused on continued student recruitment and the wider financial outlook.
- C. JNo emphasised the need to recruit new Trustees and asked members to consider potential candidates. YA referred to the recruitment exercise undertaken in 2024, which had been paused due to financial pressures. JNo confirmed his intention to revisit the pool of candidates from that process and re-engage with individuals to assess their continued interest.
- D. The Board discussed committee membership and the identification of skills gaps within the current structure. JNo highlighted the importance of strengthening commercial and marketing expertise. JD queried whether marketing fell within the remit of the Finance and Resources Committee and raised the question of how academic focus was being addressed. JD further suggested consideration of a dedicated subcommittee to review Fundraising and Marketing. JNe noted that marketing currently sat under the Finance and Resources Committee but agreed that further empowerment could be given through establishing a separate committee.
- E. JNo provided an overview of NMITE's academic governance structure and the role of the Academic Council, which reported into the Board. He highlighted that the Academic Council held a defined place within the regulatory framework, including powers to award degrees, but noted that there remained an important role for the Board in programme development. JNe noted that an initial review on programme development had been presented to the May Board meeting. JNo suggested that programme leads support and that further reporting is brought to the Board in October. Action: Programme leads to support and JNe to present an update on programme development at the October Board.

Actions:

	Responsible	Deadline
Update report on Programme development	JNe	Oct-25
Review and Develop terms for a marketing, fundraising Committee	JNe/CoSec	Oct-25



5. Risk Register | Lead **Anthea Parker**

BD.25.06.07 NMITE Risk Register

- A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- B. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- C. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- D. AP provided an overview of sector-level risks across the UK HEI environment, noting parallels with NMITE's own risk profile.
- E. DH raised questions on the valuation of risk around the capital building projects and limited budgets available. AP confirmed that NMITE cannot spend beyond the pre-agreed limit, which had reduced funds available for fit-out. AP reported that unexpected issues including internal manholes and the condition of internal walls had arisen but were being closely managed by the project management team. JNe emphasised that lessons learned from the Skylon building project, which had been delivered on budget and on time under AP's oversight, provided confidence for the successful delivery of the CIFS build
- F. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- G. BJ raised student accommodation risks, noting Herefordshire Council's cancellation of the Edgar Street project and referencing AP's report on a small 22-bed HMO. He queried whether additional HMOs or properties were in the pipeline. AP confirmed that no other developments are currently being progressed. JNo reiterated that NMITE would not underwrite commercial student accommodation developments, which remain the responsibility of the Council, though he noted that this had been deprioritised locally. AP agreed to liaise further with BJ on potential opportunities. JNo further noted the risk that the Renters Reform Bill could negatively impact the HMO market, particularly if Government policy shifted towards housing asylum seekers in HMOs rather than hotels, further restricting availability for students.

6. Finance Report | Lead **Robert Jenkins**

BD.25.06.03 NMITE Finance June 25 paper

BD.25.06.03a Cashflow Forecast V2

- A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- B. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- C. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- D. Have presented the budget paper but with the caveat that this will be consolidated against student recruitment figures in September and reported to the October Board meeting.
- E. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- F. Redacted [Not for Publication]



- G. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- H. JNe noted that NMITE would eventually reach studio capacity as student numbers increased, at which point infrastructure requirements would need to be reviewed. JE asked if NMITE had capacity for a January intake; JNe confirmed this would need to be mapped and would depend on the timing of development projects. TB asked about benefits of a January intake to NMITE and current students. JNe noted alignment with international undergraduate programmes.
- I. YA asked about application volumes required to achieve 80 students. JNe provided an update, confirming that as of 24 July there were 76 firm offer holders. YA asked about conversion rates and JNe explained that each application had been assessed using an individual RAG rating system.
- J. BJ asked whether NMITE was still targeting the local farming community. JNe reported that while campaigns were running in Herefordshire, none were targeted specifically at farmers. JNo noted that he had undertaken outreach with the Young Farmers community but acknowledged that a more structured approach could be challenging. JNo further noted that the number of local students was increasing, due both to NMITE's growing reputation and to the financial benefits of the accelerated degree model and studying locally.
- K. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- L. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- M. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- N. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Actions:

Paper on Investment of Funds to be submitted to FRC

Responsible

RJ

Deadline

Oct-25

CPD Student numbers (Overall figures for training provided)

SL

Oct-25

Pay Award

- O. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- P. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Finance and Resources Committee Update

- A. The report from the recent Finance and Resources committee meeting held on 15th July 2025 was taken as read.
- B. Redacted [Not for Publication]



- C. JE outlined discussions on a potential staff recognition and reward policy, they noted the policy had not been approved, but that FRC members had agreed to review it alongside budget consolidation.
- D. Redacted [Not for Publication]

7. Student Liaison Update | Lead Timothy Bell

Verbal Update

BD.25.04.04a Plan 1.0 v2.3 Jan 25 Variance Analysis

- A. TB emphasised the housing concerns for the Cohort for students joining in September 25. And posed the suggestion that the new students are supported to look for accommodation for 2026 prior to Christmas. Provide students with an overview of the housing situation in Hereford, options between HMOs, Single rooms, group home options. How to go about renting accommodation.
- B. Members discussed Trustees auditing sessions to get a better understanding of the modules and. JNe can provide the timetable to trustees to support members joining sessions of interest.

8. Executives Report | Lead James Newby

BD.25.06.05 CEO report to the Board of Trustees

- A. JNe introduced the report noting that some items had already been addressed during the finance and risk reporting. Sector developments were discussed and members noted that the higher education sector remained under pressure, with ongoing regulatory complexity and financial challenges. JNe confirmed that new OfS guidance had been issued on academic freedom of speech, requiring updates to policies and that a new Condition of Registration E6 on sexual harassment and misconduct would also require updated staff training and which will be extended to trustees when appropriate. JNe noted that a national review was underway on student suicide prevention.
- B. JNe provided an overview of NMITE's student recruitment process, and members noted that students are not contractually obliged to take up a firm offer, whereas NMITE is contractually obliged to honour any offer made. JNe outlined the offer-holder activities designed to support conversion and retention. TB noted that the messaging from NMITE was "we will teach you what you need to know" and to take the summer off and that this was supportive and felt good. Members discussed the Embargo period noting that NMITE would receive results before students. Students who underperform may be released into Clearing, while those who overperform may be able to secure offers elsewhere. Members agreed that competition had intensified due to reduced international student numbers across the sector, leading larger institutions to lower entry requirements.



- C. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- D. DH asked whether NMITE had been approached by the OfS to support students if other institutions fail. JNo confirmed NMITE was internally considering how it might respond should opportunities arise to recruit students from failing providers, but that it had not been approach by any institutions.
- E. JNe introduced the NSS survey and noted that NMITE performed well in 2024 overall. However, the second cohort of students had given NMITE lower scores, particularly around academic teaching, assessment, feedback, and access to academic support. JNe reported that this appeared to reflect poor communication about course intensity and the pace of feedback, as well as changes made to the module lengths that were not well explained to students.
- F. JNe confirmed that action planning is already underway to address concerns raised. Some issues had also been identified through other feedback mechanisms and are being corrected. Members noted that the initial cohort had negative experiences during programme development but felt involved in shaping the course. JNo asked whether adjustments would be implemented for the September intake.
- G. YA suggested holding a session with all students to acknowledge their feedback and explain how NMITE is responding. JNo supported this, noting it could build student understanding of survey scope and institutional responses.
- H. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- I. NRT asked whether end-of-module feedback is collected. JNe confirmed that this is undertaken, alongside student liaison groups, but acknowledged that communication of outcomes must improve. Members agreed that even where changes cannot be made, students still need to be given clear rationale and feedback.
- J. NRT asked whether results could be separated. JNe confirmed that NSS results can be split by MEng and BEng, but commentary from fewer than ten students is not released to NMITE due to confidentiality.

Actions:

Redacted [Not for Publication]

Responsible

JNe

Deadline

Oct-25

9. Access and Participation Report | Lead James Newby and Anthea Parker

BD.25.06.07 Access and Participation Report

- A. JNe informed members that the report required Board approval, and he noted that it was a regulatory requirement and was focused on social mobility. The draft plan had been written by Sarah Peers and Anthea Parker.



- B. JNe summarised the plan's aims including increasing participation from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly measuring against the metric of applicants who were eligible for free school meals, recognising that Herefordshire has one of the lowest higher education participation rates within this group. It also seeks to increase the proportion of female students which was noted as particularly challenging across the sector in Engineering, and to support applications from neurodiverse students.
- C. JNo observed that the document was substantial and required Board approval, he requested that in future the Board be given additional notice when such documents are brought forward. JNe noted that the matter had previously been discussed and had already progressed through the academic governance process.
- D. JD asked why NMITE had chosen free school meals as a primary measure rather than alternative metrics. JNe explained that this measure provided both topicality and relevance given the particularly low participation rates in Herefordshire, and that objectives must be measurable and achievable.
- E. JNo queried the implications should NMITE fall short of the targets. JNe responded that this would necessitate further discussion with the regulator. JD highlighted that the targets span five years, with a review point at year three. JNe also noted that NMITE had already achieved 15%
- F. JNo asked whether the APP differed from what the OfS typically expected. JNe confirmed that it did, noting that he had been in ongoing dialogue with the OfS during its development, making the case for a whole-provider approach to APP. The OfS had agreed to accept this approach.

10. Academic Update | Lead James Newby

BD.25.06.06 Chief Academic Officer Report

BD.25.06.06a AC Summary report March 2025

CAO Report

- A. JNe provided an update on changes to the academic structure. He noted that recruitment was ongoing for the new Academic Lead post, who would in future take responsibility for Board reporting. He stressed the need to increase the operational effectiveness of the academic team and to build capacity for programme creation and development. He also noted the importance of slowing the growth of the academic team to ensure NMITE achieved the target staff-to-student ratio of 12:1.
- B. In response to NRT's question on research capacity, JNe confirmed that NMITE was not prioritising research activity as an institution but was encouraging academics to . However, he informed members that NMITE had been accredited as a Knowledge Base and would begin undertaking Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.
- C.
- D. Redacted [Not for Publication]



- E. NRT asked about NMITE's process for engaging with industry to ensure that changes to modules reflected industry needs. JNe explained that the Programme Advisory Group (PAG), operating within the academic governance structure, supported industry input into curriculum development. He also noted that partnerships were embedded within modules, with delivery supported by Partner Associates from industry.
- F. Members discussed the risks associated with increasing the number of partnerships within the Defence and Security sector. JNo emphasised that NMITE's teaching would need to remain neutral and noted that drones carrying payloads had multiple applications across both military and civilian fields. He stated that any academic professorship should remain an NMITE post rather than being associated with a specific corporate sponsor such as BAE, to maintain that neutrality.
- G. GF raised concerns about potential cybersecurity risks associated with targeting the military sector. JNo noted that this would also increase reputational risk. GF noted that additional cyber sec protections would need to be factored for in additional costs.
- H. The Board discussed the need to review the wider implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Academic Council Update

- A. The report from the recent Academic Council meeting held on 16th July 2025 was taken as read. Agreements and approval of awards taken by Academic Council were noted.

11. NMITE Governance | Lead CoSec

BD.25.06.07 Policy Review

Policies

- A. CoSec noted that the Academic freedom and Freedom of speech policy review had been delayed to allow for the publication of the OfS guidance.
- B. It was agreed that due to some technical difficulties the CoSec would recirculate the policies, and for Members to provide comment regarding approval or amendments via email.
- C. CoSec highlighted the changes to the policies in line with the OfS condition of Registration E6. Members discussed the ongoing regulatory burden.
- D. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Strategies

- A. DH noted that the finance committee had scrutinised these policies and strategies and that needs to be better highlighted to the Board that the due diligence had happened.
- B. JNo queried whether these were a primarily a regulatory requirement. SL explained that the strategies aim to provide assurance to the Board that internal targets were in place and appropriately monitored. SL noted that progress against the Health and Wellbeing and HR Strategy would be reported in the 2025 HR Annual Report, while the Employer



Branding Strategy is new and will be reported in the 2026 review. The Prevent Strategy was noted as a regulatory requirement.

- C. YA commented on the brand marketing strategy, noting it was very focused on student recruitment. JNe confirmed that work was underway on a broader set of strategies and development activities.
- D. AC raised the importance of timeframes and metrics for reviewing fundraising income, noting that this represented 60% of NMITE's income. AC emphasised the need for clear targets and visibility of how trustees could support delivery. JNo agreed and proposed a quarterly fundraising report to the Board, including year-to-date performance, targets, and details of organisations being approached. This would allow trustees to engage more directly. JNo noted that FRC had oversight of internal reporting and accounting, but that the Board should have visibility of the process and documents.

Committee Terms of Reference

- E. ARC – Approved the Quorum changes.
- F. FRC- Pending review of reporting to the Board and Sub coms
- G. Discussion to be had regarding the wider membership

12. AOB | Lead **Jesse Norman**

- A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
- B. JNo expressed thanks to CC for their contributions during their time on the Board. JNo highlighted CC's commitment, support across a range of discussions and decisions and extended best wishes for the future.

The next meeting to be held online, 1st October 2025 9am