Academic Council

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 28th May, 14.00 Blackfriars Building

Present	Professor David Oloke (DO), Chief Academic Officer (Chair), 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 Will Gough (WG), Elected Student Member Emma Lewis (EL), Head of Quality Assurance Professor Gary C Wood (GCW), Academic Director Jen Newton (JRN), Elected Professional Services member Leanne DeMain (LDM) External member
In attendance	Chib Alexander (CoSec) Company Secretary Lucy Stonehouse (LS), Quality Assurance Manager
Apologies	

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.25.01.01a Draft Minutes July 2024

I. The minutes from 5th March 2025 were deemed to be a true record and therefore approved.
II. Action log updates:

3 Chair's Report I Lead Professor David Oloke

Received: AC.25.01.02

Noted:

I. DO presented an update report on the Degree Outcomes Statement, which was being developed to summarise and reflect the context of NMITE under the NDAPs plan. The finalised document was reported as due to be presented at the July Academic Council meeting.

II. DO highlighted the upcoming IET accreditation visit, scheduled for 23rd–24th September. The visit is being coordinated by LS from Quality, with PP acting as the academic lead.

III. DO noted that AP had been able to refocus on the KPI development following the graduation. JNe asked for an overview of KPIs that are expected to be on the dashboard, DO explained that they will be pulled from NMITE's Core Strategy particularly under the theme of academic distinctiveness, and would include areas such as student outcomes and performance. EL added that these could be aligned with Access and Participation Plan (APP) targets where appropriate.

---

4 Committee Reports I Lead **David Oloke**

Received: AC.25.02.03

Noted:

Academic Affairs Committee (AAC):

I. The AAC report was taken as read. DO queried the Stage One approval process for the CertHE. GCW noted that the CertHE paperwork was being prepared by PP, and there had been discussion at AAC regarding the point at which NMITE should approve this. There was also discussion regarding module capacity, given existing demand within the BEng and MechEng programmes, and questions were raised regarding marketing plans. EL noted that updated feedback would be presented to the July AAC in response to those questions.

Quality Assurance Committee (QuAC)

II. The QuAC report was taken as read. NK requested more information on the annual enhancement project, including the objectives and timeline. EL noted that this had been circulated to Academic Council ahead of the previous meeting and confirmed that the first topic had been agreed as Student team working.

III. JNe queried item 2.6, asking whether this was a repeat of the study previously carried out on maths. EL explained that the results had differed between the first and second iterations, and small data sets posed challenges. This work would continue to be monitored and reviewed. Members discussed that NMITE was continuing to develop the ASK and embed maths throughout the modules. NK raised a concern that the results at Level 5 may have been masked at Level 4 due to additional support. EL provided context to the review for LdM, noting that NMITE did not require maths at Level 3 for entry and was therefore continuing to monitor the impact of this throughout the course.

Widening Participation Committee (WPSG):

IV. JNe provided a verbal update, noting the ongoing work on the APP. They had undertaken a call with the APP team at the OfS to test the outline of the plan and its aim of regional upskilling and uplift. Drafts of the plan were expected in mid-June.

5 Academic Governance I Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.25.02.04

Noted:

Committee Membership

I. It was noted that the elected AC representatives are due for renewal in December 2025.

II. EL introduced the review of committee memberships, undertaken following the restructuring of the Academic team. EL noted that individual committees had reviewed and accepted their own membership and terms, but that the Academic Council is required to review and approve all terms. A proposal was made to add a professorial representative to the AC to strengthen academic representation.

III. MKJ raised the idea of having an alternate or background representative for members. Members discussed this and noted that, due to a transitional period within the Student Services department, this could be reviewed in 6 to 12 months' time.

APPROVED

Biennial Policy review

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

V. **Policies with no changes or Minor Changes – APPROVED (See notes below)**

   a. Offensive Weapons Policy - pre-approved by AC to go to Board.
   b. Admissions Policy – noted that the item regarding Admissions with advance standing has not been included in the policy at this time and will be amended following additional resourcing work.
   c. Academic Misconduct Policy - Deferred to July to allow for any amendments identified during the current academic misconduct cases.

VI. Policies with Moderate to significant changes:

   a. External examiner- **APPROVED** minor change, Section 5 to state 50% for quoracy not simple majority.
   b. Programme Monitoring Process, Programme Monitoring Process, Programme Monitoring template. **APPROVED**
   c. Student Academic Appeals Policy. **APPROVED**

VII. EL noted that the Academic Freedom of Speech policy includes reference to a report on freedom of speech being included annually in the Annual Report on Academic Governance. EL highlighted that this does not align with the core content of that report. Members discussed an amendment to section 2.2 to note that a separate report will go to the AC and Board in the Quarter 2 meeting cycle. LdM added that this is more of an ongoing issue than an annual report allows for, requiring an iterative process to ensure the Board and AC have reflective oversight. Members agreed to defer to July to allow for the release of the OfS guidance on Freedom of Speech expected in late June.

VIII. Extenuating Circumstances Policy: GCW noted some debate at the Assessment Board meeting regarding the circumstances for an exceptional retake. Members agreed for a deferral till June to allow for the policy to be aligned to amendments to the general regulations.

6 Assessment Board I Lead **David Oloke**

Received: AC.25.01.04 Widening Participation Steering Group update

Noted:

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Ratification of Awards

II. Redacted [Not for Publication]

External Examiners Overview/ Confirmation of Appointments:

III. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Reappointment of two external examiners and appointment of new external examiner APPROVED.

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

Received: AC.25.01.15i HE landscapes paper

Received: AC.25.01.15ii OfS Conditions of Reg Tracker

Noted:

HE Landscape

I. EL noted that the DfE has announced no additional funding for accelerated programmes. JNe confirmed that there is no additional government funding for HEI's expected.

II. NK asked whether, in light of the wider challenges across the sector, NMITE should consider reviewing its strategy. JNe stated their belief that NMITE should continue with the current strategy, focusing on core STEM subjects, which they noted remain well aligned with government priorities. JNe added that NMITE already demonstrates strong graduate employability and that its partnerships are well aligned with strategic aims.

OfS Tracker

I. NK noted that, according to the tracker, several items are currently assigned to the CAO. They asked who would take ownership of these going forward. JNe responded that NMITE will need to appoint a Principal Academic, but this has yet to be confirmed. They added that the tracker will be reviewed by ARC, and responsibilities will ideally be clarified at that meeting

8 **NDAPs Update** | Lead **Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.25.01.04 Widening Participation Steering Group update

Noted:

IV. EL introduced the item, noting that NMITE was progressing towards the annual monitoring visit and continuing to communicate with the OfS regarding the potential extension to NMITE's probationary period. It was noted that the OfS had automatically extended the NDAPs period to four years for all new applications, meaning that the FDAPs assessment would take place at the end of the third year rather than during it. EL confirmed that the Board and Chair of the Board are involved in ongoing discussions with the OfS. They have emphasised that NMITE has consistently met the target deadlines within its three-year plan and continues to operate in alignment with that timeline.

V. NK asked what the risks would be if an extension were granted. JNe noted that there are inherent risks, including a possible slowing of momentum, a less robust institutional profile due to probationary status, and unknown impacts on student recruitment and potential donors. He also highlighted that partnerships are often contingent on the holding of full degree awarding powers, which are considered a valuable asset and underpin NMITE's five-year strategy. EL added that the current NDAPs order "limits" NMITE to awarding degrees in only two subjects, thereby constraining portfolio growth and expansion into other disciplines.

VI. EL noted that on a day-to-day basis the impact for current students will be minimal and that NMITE will still be able to award degrees to students. The feedback regarding academic quality and standards is positive and NMITE had met targets.

9 **Strategic Alignment Check** | Lead **David Oloke/Emma Lewis**

Received: AC.25.01.05 Report from Assessment Board held on 2nd October 2024

Noted:

Admission with Advanced Standing:

I. DO introduced the Strategic Alignment Check and noted that this had been presented to the AAC. EL highlighted the key points outlined under section 2.3 regarding staffing and resourcing for development and quality assurance.

II. Redacted [Not for Publication]

III.

APPROVED subject to final commercial agreement.

10 **Admissions Review** | Lead **Patricia Xavier**

Received: AC.25.01.06a Annual report of Academic Governance

Noted:

I. PX provided a verbal update, noting that the flow chart for the admissions process had been updated. It was noted that "Step one" now includes a capacity check on resourcing of the Student Services and Academic teams to ensure they are able to manage inductions for students entering with advanced standing. MJK noted that there had been some initial interest in this entry route from a potential applicant.

11 Knowledge Transfer Partnerships Update I Lead **David Oloke**

Received: AC.25.01.07a Revision of IELTS criteria

AC.25.01.07b Admission with Advance standing

Noted:

I. DO noted that the report provided an overview of the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.

II. NK highlighted that each KTP project typically generates between £100k–£200k in income. However, JNe cautioned that the profit margins are expected to be limited due to the staffing and resourcing demands associated with delivering these projects.

III. DO added that participating companies are expected to cross-subsidise the projects and are responsible for employing the KTP associate.

IV. EL asked whether the associate roles need to be publicly advertised. JNe confirmed that the roles must be advertised openly, which could result in the appointment of a non-NMITE graduate. However, given the regional skills gap in Herefordshire, it is likely that early appointments will come from the local or NMITE talent pool.

V. PX raised a concern about the limited capacity of the academic team in the upcoming academic year and questioned whether KTP projects and their coordination are being considered in academic timetabling. DO responded that TB is actively seeking prospective companies and confirmed that NMITE intends to begin with one KTP project before scaling up as resourcing allows.

VI. LdM noted that KTPs often require greater internal awareness to ensure that staff understand what they involve and how they align with NMITE's strategic objectives. They emphasised that there are opportunities for organic engagement through academics who maintain strong links with industry.

12 Student Lifecycle Reporting I Lead **Mary Kenyon-James**

Received: AC.25.01.08 Student life Cycle Annual report 2023-24

Noted:

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]

II. Redacted [Not for Publication]

III. Redacted [Not for Publication]

IV. An update was provided on the implementation of the Student Information System (CORE). MKJ confirmed that work was ongoing to develop the student services case management functionality, which would also integrate with the personal tutoring system. It was noted that the team was progressing towards enabling appropriate staff permissions within the system.

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline

Update on implementation of Student Records System to be provided in September 2025.	MKJ	Sept 25

13 Annual review of Research and Scholarly Activities | Lead **Patricia Xavier**

Received: AC.25.02.13

Noted:

I. PX introduced the report, noting that while the academic team is making efforts to increase research activity, current levels are not yet where they need to be. A key limitation remains the restricted staffing capacity available to dedicate to research initiatives. PX informed members that the internal Pedagogy Research Group is actively engaged in pursuing research opportunities and supporting the wider scholarly environment at NMITE.

II. Redacted [Not for Publication]

III. Members noted that NMITE's smaller institutional size brings increased visibility to external collaborations and projects, meaning that a higher standard of quality and output is often expected to maintain credibility and reputation.

IV. GCW extended thanks to PX on behalf of the team for her support and encouragement in developing the research culture. It was also noted that celebrating and highlighting key topics throughout the year at weekly stand-ups has been an effective way of keeping research achievements visible.

V. LdM spoke about the importance of leadership fostering a culture in which team members are encouraged to share their experiences and pedagogic innovations. It was noted that scholarly research is increasingly interdisciplinary, positioning NMITE well to capitalise on these trends and involve industry stakeholders in academic work.

VI. EL highlighted that while NMITE's pedagogy research group is inclusive in its approach, the time required for participation is not currently recognised within the contracted hours for professional services staff, which may limit broader engagement.

Visiting Professor renewals:

VII. GCW noted that several Visiting Professors were originally connected through initial lead contacts who have since moved on or were associated with earlier iterations of the Skills Hub vision. Members agreed that GCW should liaise with Programme Leads and the wider academic team to ensure that the current pool of visiting professors continue to be relevant and contribute meaningfully to NMITE's ongoing work. An update report, including a review of contributions and recommendations on whether to continue, renew, or terminate each engagement, will be provided at the July meeting. ACTION

VIII.

14 Review of Ethics Approvals | Lead **David Oloke**

Received: AC.25.02.15

Noted:

I. DO introduced the report noting that the process had been digitised and moved to a two-stage process.

II. EL questioned how NMITE was learning from the process and sharing learning from the process. Members agreed that more information was needed to show where additional staff development or support is needed, or to share examples of good practice

III. GCW noted it was not clear how many projects involve students, and it was agreed that overview of this needed to be maintained to ensure that students do not get overwhelmed or inundated. Noted that there was data privacy risk given the small data sets involved

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

Received:

I. Redacted [Not for Publication]

II. Members noted that this was DO last Academic Council meeting. Members thanked him for his time and commitment to NMITE

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 28th May 2025

*The Committee **agreed:***	Responsible	Deadline
	DO	May-25