Board of Trustees

MINUTES

Wednesday 4th March 2026, 9am.
Blackfriars Campus

Members present:	Jesse Norman (JNo) Chair of the Board James Newby (JNe) President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Yasmin Ali (YA) Trustee Julian Drinkall (JD) Trustee Jon Emmet (JE) Trustee David Hughes (DH) Trustee Bill Jackson (BJ) Trustee Marc Leppard (ML) Trustee Natasha Rothbucher-Thomas (NRT) Trustee Peter Metcalfe (PM) Elected Staff Trustee Levi Caymen (LC) Elected Student Trustee
In attendance:	Robert Jenkins (RJ) Finance Director Samantha Lewis (SL), Director of People and Operations Anthea Parker (AP) Director of Infrastructure & Projects Gary C Wood (GCW) Academic Director Chib Alexander (CoSec) Company Secretary
Apologies:	Aimee Clark (AC) Trustee

1. Welcome

Noted:

I. JNo welcomed all members to the meeting.
Introduction of Neil Casey – Short intro of the review.

2. Declarations of Interest

I. There were no declarations of interest.

II. There were no related party transactions declared.

3. Minutes and Action Log I Lead **CoSec**

I. The minutes from 12th December 2025 meeting were deemed to be a true record and approved.

II. Action log: noted a number of key items on the agenda.

4. Chair's Business I Lead **Jesse Norman**

A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
B. JD raised the relationship between the Marketing Committee, Finance Committee and Board in relation to student recruitment reporting, noting the need to ensure appropriate coverage while avoiding duplication and unnecessary governance burden. JNo confirmed that student recruitment remained a key strategic priority. JE reflected on discussions at FRC, noting that responsibility may have shifted too far towards MFS and that FRC must retain sufficient oversight against budget assumptions. ML added that ARC had also considered student recruitment as a key risk, with a more targeted focus. JD concluded that reporting should be sufficiently granular, with clear differentiation of focus across committees. JNo suggested that both ARC and FRC receive updated student recruitment figures at meetings to support informed discussion.
C. JNo noted that marketing activity and wider engagement appeared strong, and that the fundraising pipeline was showing positive signs.
D. Redacted [Not for Publication]
E.

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

BD.26.02.02 NMITE Risk Register

A. AP reported that there were no significant changes to the high-level risks, although continued monitoring and mitigation remained necessary. Student recruitment remained high risk however, applicant numbers were reported to be up compared to 2024/25.
B. AP noted key items were reflected in the agenda items, with focus on Student recruitment in Finance and targets item, as well as Commercial income.
C. AP confirmed that the risk relating to Eigngate under occupancy had materialised and would need to be offset. It was noted that in previous years NMITE had taken a cautious approach by holding rooms back, and that this trend would inform revised planning for 2026.
D. ML reported that ARC would be reviewing areas for deeper analysis and invited input from Board members to avoid duplication with other committees. ML noted that one area of focus would be the Drones programme, including associated sensitivities and reputational considerations.
E. JD noted that NSS-related reputational risk had been identified previously as a rolling risk. JNe confirmed this was referenced within the Executive report. JNo noted that 2025 results had been lower, although significant work had been undertaken in response.

Actions: | Responsible | Deadline

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
Risk of reputational impacts related to NSS to be reviewed by ARC		Mar 26

6. Finance Reporting I Lead Robert Jenkins

BD.26.02.04 Finance Board paper
BD.26.02.04a FRC Summary report Nov 25

A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
B. JNe observed that this would enable NMITE to meet its fundraising target; however, there remains an internal target and further activity is ongoing. JNo emphasised that unbudgeted windfalls should not be counted towards core fundraising targets and should instead be treated as additional upside.
C. Redacted [Not for Publication]
D. Redacted [Not for Publication]
E. Redacted [Not for Publication]
F. ML noted that NMITE is governed by Charity Commission requirements in relation to fundraising, raising concerns regarding the reporting of anonymous donations, including any associated conditions and due diligence. JNe advised that the anonymous donation had only been received within the last 48 hours and that initial discussions with the donor were required.
G. JD requested an update on engagement with the OfS in late February, JNe confirmed this was covered within the Executive report. RJ added that quarterly financial reviews had taken place and were positive. RJ noted the need to balance forward-looking EBITDA projections with cashflow considerations, highlighting that overperformance could trigger loan repayments.
H. Redacted [Not for Publication]
I. RJ referred to the appendix outlining the Treasury Policy, noting that it had been reviewed by FRC, which recommended alignment with CIPFA guidance.
J. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Commercial income/CPD:

K. Redacted [Not for Publication]
L. JNo noted that NMITE operates with a relatively fixed academic staffing resource and cautioned against assuming that CPD delivery would be cost-neutral. It was highlighted that CPD provision would require academic and supporting staff capacity to ensure quality and standards are maintained.

M. ML queried whether there was further opportunity in this area, citing examples such as line management training. SL noted that similar provision had previously been delivered through UKSPF funding. JNo expressed the view that more granular reporting on CPD activity would be beneficial for oversight. Members agreed a breakdown including customer type (public vs private sector), uptake by course, and routes to engagement (e.g. direct referral vs marketing campaigns) should be brought to the next Board.
N. YA raised the need for longer-term planning, particularly in light of current capacity constraints within staffing. SL confirmed that this was under review and could be brought back to the Committee.

Finance and Resources Committee Update

A. The report from the recent Finance and Resources committee meeting held on 17th February was taken as read.
B. Redacted [Not for Publication]
C. JNo expressed the view that a longer-term plan for the Eigngate ground floor property and managing under-occupancy at Eigngate would be beneficial for future financial planning.
D. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
Report on long term capacity planning related to CPD staffing	SL	May 26

7. **Student Recruitment** I Lead **Lauren Fosterjohn**

BD.26.02.05 XXX

A. JNe introduced the report noting that NMITE was making reasonable year-on-year progress, but that further work was required to improve the applicant figures, it was noted that demand remained strong on the courses with more limited capacity for growth, while courses with greater capacity were experiencing lower demand.
B. LF reported positive momentum across applications, offers and acceptances. Members discussed the recent open day attended by 40 prospective students. LF confirmed that applicant quality was improving, resulting in higher application-to-offer conversion rates. JNo raised a point, reflecting YA's earlier comments, that projections may not be sufficiently sensitive to attrition rates and that a higher internal Board target should be considered.
C. Members noted that increased communication with offer holders was being used to support conversion, and the foundation year timeline had been extended into November to capture late applicants and maximise Clearing opportunities.

D. Redacted [Not for Publication]
E. It was reported that the outreach strategy was being utilised with oversight from the MFS committee.
F. JNo noted lower levels of local student recruitment. Members discussed this may have partly been impacted by the reduction in targeted local bursary offers. JNo also highlighted continued lower recruitment of female students, noting performance remained below sector benchmarks. Members discussed the potential to build a stronger narrative around graduate employment outcomes and transformative student success which could help attract both local and female applicants, who are often more risk-aware in decision-making. LF noted a continued focus on employment outcomes, with efforts to profile graduate employment rates to prospective students and offer holders, supported by the upcoming graduation.
G. Redacted [Not for Publication]
H. ML queried whether NMITE was fully promoting the cost savings to students arising from the accelerated degree model within its marketing. LF noted that marketing investment was focused on key priorities, acknowledging that while progress had been made, further activity would require additional resourcing. It was highlighted that building brand awareness, regionally and nationally remained a key challenge. LF noted that current efforts were prioritised towards meeting overall targets, which had limited focus on more targeted campaigns.
I. Members discussed student bursaries in the context of wider sector discussions from current and prospective students regarding financial challenges. LF referenced the "Home Grown Engineers" campaign, noting potential alignment with targeted local fundraising and the inclusion of local employer stories. JNo supported the use of employer testimonials, particularly highlighting positive experiences of recruiting NMITE graduates and interest in future recruitment.
J. DH noted feedback from the leafleting campaign indicating low local awareness of NMITE. Members discussed the regulatory constraints related to the use of the title "University".
K. JD noted the distinction between marketing and selling, emphasising that while discussion on marketing messaging is valuable, NMITE should also consider the effectiveness of conversion ("selling"). LF agreed, noting that the most effective conversion occurs through direct engagement with prospective students, including outreach, open days and one-to-one contact. Members noted that marketing activity was intended to generate interest and bring prospective students into these conversations. It was noted that student ambassador training had been expanded and was proving effective, with further development of staff ambassador training required to strengthen engagement and conversion at events such as UCAS fairs.
L. YA raised the role of social media and influencer engagement. LF confirmed that a student survey had been conducted to understand platform preferences and that a two-stage

plan was being developed, including potential paid collaborations with higher-profile content creators.

M. NRT suggested incorporating voices from well-known engineers, particularly female engineers, to support engagement and aspiration. ACTION review and identify high profile female engineers for potential engagement.

International Student recruitment:

A. GCW provided a summary, noting that NMITE holds some UKVI licences and currently has two international students. GCW highlighted the need for Trustees to consider their appetite for international recruitment and to define appropriate guardrails.
B. Redacted [Not for Publication]
C. ML stated their opinion that a balanced approach should be taken, with NMITE remaining open to some international students but aligned with tightening UK Government restrictions. YA expressed the view that universities should remain international spaces that support learning and cultural exchange.
D. Redacted [Not for Publication]
E. JNe advised caution in building a large international student cohort, particularly where driven by financial considerations. RJ confirmed that international student income was not currently built into the budget. Members discussed NMITE remaining open to international participation in CPD and short courses, while taking a more cautious approach to core academic programmes. JNo noted that the UK's domestic population was a growing multi-cultural society which would provide a degree of diversity without reliance on international recruitment.
F. GCW raised concern that NMITE's predominantly local recruitment limits diversity and does not fully align with its aim of developing global graduates. GCW clarified that this did not imply use of recruitment agents but suggested a more targeted approach through articulation agreements and selected partnerships, with appropriate guardrails and focus on "low risk" countries.
G. SL confirmed that NMITE currently holds a limited number of UKVI licences, which were not fully utilised and are not expected to increase. It was also noted that certain countries are excluded under UKVI restrictions.
H. LF highlighted a structural consideration, noting that Integrated Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and proposed Drones Technology programme would share a common first year, allowing student transfer between programmes. Members agreed this would need to be considered if restrictions were applied to specific pathways.
I. Members agreed that decisions should not be driven solely by defence and security considerations. It was agreed that more detailed proposals would be required to inform future direction.
J. Redacted [Not for Publication]

Marketing, Fundraising and Student Recruitment Committee Summary:

A. The summary report from the MFS committee meeting held on 26th January was taken as read.

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
Circulate list of high-profile female engineers.	LF	Apr 26
Further reporting on international students – specific suggestions	JNe	May 26
Report on Work partnership, scope and potential impact. Request for Board approval re international students	GCW	Mar 26

8. Student Liaison Update I Lead **Levi Caymen**

Verbal Update

A. LC highlighted the importance of promoting student successes, including for current students to support retention between the BEng and MEng, to ensure they are aware of graduate opportunities and outcomes. LC agreed to prepare a one-page summary outlining potential approaches to raise student awareness of graduate prospects.
B. JNo noted that students who only experience NMITE may lack awareness of how NMITE differs from other institutions and traditional Universities and therefore not be fully aware of the associated benefits in employment outcomes.

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
Summary report on suggestions to raise student awareness of graduate prospects for NMITE students	LC	May 26

9. Executives Report I Lead **James Newby**

BD.26.02.05 CEO report December 2025

A. Redacted [Not for Publication]
B. JNe noted that the NSS was open and had received strong initial response rates. Members discussed the overall results received in 2025 and the work that had taken place to support improved feedback.

C. JNe confirmed that the Access and Participation Plan had been formally approved, with acceptance of the whole-provider approach.
D. JNe provided an update on HR matters, noting that NMITE was in an active recruitment phase to support additional academic staffing for September 2026. Staff turnover was reported as stable, though it was expected to increase slightly as the organisation continues to evolve.
E. JNe reported that Staff survey showed overall improvement in staff satisfaction, with lower results related to internal communication.
F. Redacted [Not for Publication]
G. Redacted [Not for Publication]
H. Redacted [Not for Publication]
I. Redacted [Not for Publication]

10. Academic Update I Lead **Gary C Wood**

BD.26.02.07 Academic Update

A. Members reviewed the report and YA raised a question related to capacity. JNe aim of the item to raise the Boards awareness relating to the Capacity constraints. JNe noted the actions proposed within the report. JNo start of a conversation not the end point.
B. Members reviewed the report, YA raised a question regarding the capacity constraints reporting. JNe clarified that the purpose of the paper was to raise Board awareness of current capacity constraints and outlined the proposed actions. JNo noted that this represented the start of a wider discussion rather than a final position.
C. PM requested that the assumptions relating to studio size and capacity be reviewed. It was noted that the paper referenced an average of 30 students per studio, although studio sizes vary. GCW confirmed that this figure was an average, informed in part by health and safety limits.

Academic Council Update

D. The report from the recent Academic Council committee meeting held on February was taken as read.

11. NMITE Governance I Lead **CoSec**

BD.26.02.08a Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy

Register of Interests 2026-27:

A. CoSec presented the updated schedule, noting the inclusion of new staff and student trustees. Members were asked to provide updates as required throughout the year.

B. JNo reminded new members of the confidentiality requirements relating to Board discussions. It was also noted that staff and student trustees act as individual trustees, rather than as representatives of staff or the student body.

Governance Schedule:

A. CoSec provided overview of proposed change to the meeting schedule noting the proposal to move the meeting on the 24th April to the 8th May to align with the graduation.

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12. AOB I Lead **Jesse Norman**

A. PM raised discussions with staff related to the scope and remit of the Board.
B. PM noted that BCU have taken a step into modular approach has marketing which relates to NMITEs and has reflective USPs. PM noted the concerns of staff that this will cut into NMITE student recruitment and marketing. JNe, we have to keep innovating and developing new programmes.

The next meeting to be held in person on 8th May 2026 9am

Actions:	Responsible	Deadline
In depth presentation on NMITE Strategic plan	JNe	Mar 26