

## Joint Board of Directors and Board of Governance

Date: 28/11/2024  
Time: 16.00 – 18.00  
Location: Ilford Campus

Attendees:			
	Name	Position	Initials
<b>Present:</b>	Aaron Porter	Chair of the Board of Governance	AP
	Elissavet Paschalidou	Student Representative	EP
	Carl Stychin	Non-Executive member	CS
	Helen Pickering	Non-Executive member	HP
	Sarah Ryan	Non-Executive member	SR
	Sarah-Jo Loveday	Non-Executive member	SJL
	Dr Shorful Islam	Non-Executive member	SHI
	Roger Bradburn	Principal	RB
	Athiqul Islam	Director/ Head of HR and Finance	AI
	Nazim Uddin	Chair of the Board of Directors/ Director/ Head of Quality Assurance	NU
	Shiraj Islam	Director/ Head of Marketing and Work-Based Learning	SI
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Professor David Baker	NDAPs external advisor	DB
	Professor Mary Bishop	NDAPs external advisor	MB
	Aamir Mehmood	Head of Data Management and Compliance (Observer)	AM
	Aleksandra Osiniagova	Head of Academic Services and Vice Principal (Observer)	AO
	Kate Stoneman	Academic Project Manager (DAPs)	KS
	Sharmin Uddin	Quality and Governance Administrator	SU
<b>Apologies:</b>	David Douglas	Head of Programme Delivery (Observer) (HoPD)	DD
<b>Absent:</b>	Dr Mohammed Ishfaq	Quality Assurance Consultant (Observer)	MI
	Elizabeth Williams	Non-Executive member	EW

**Note Taker:** Sharmin Uddin (04/12/2024)

**Reviewed by:** Ola Ariyo (17/12/2024) / Nazim Uddin (06/01/2025)

Aaron Porter (09/01/2025) / Roger Bradburn (16/01/2025)

## **Part A**

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed all members of the Board including the external NDAPs advisors, Professor David Baker and Professor Mary Bishop, who attended specifically to contribute to discussions regarding the NDAPs application (Item 6).

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for David Douglas and Elizabeth Williams were noted.

### **3. Register of Interest**

Noted. (AP1)

### **4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Noted.

#### **a. Review all actions from the last meeting**

AP1: Complete

AP2: Complete

AP3: Complete

AP4: Complete

AP5: WIP – KS submitted a proposal to Board of Directors outlining a College-wide budgeting process.

### **5. Matter arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

None noted.

### **6. New Degree Awarding Powers**

#### **a. Progress Report for Joint BoG-BoD on the New DAPs Application**

This document is a part of agenda item 6e. NDAPs application pack, provided by DAPs Academic Project Manager. See item 6e below.

#### **b. Minutes of NDAP Steering Group Meeting (25.07.2024)**

Noted.

#### **c. Minutes of NDAP Steering Group Meeting (15.08.2024)**

Noted.

#### **d. Minutes of NDAP Steering Group Meeting (26.09.2024)**

Noted.

#### **e. NDAPs Application Pack**

KS provided a summary of the circulated application pack, which included the following:

- Cover Sheet: Outlined the application process and NCL's current status within it.
- Progress Report for AB (from NDAPs Application Meeting): Detailed completed steps and OfS requirements, highlighting priorities like board planning and commitments.
- NCL DAPs Application Form: Formal notification to OfS of NCL's intent to apply.

- Student Protection Plan (See item 10a): Agreed by OfS, with suggestions to withhold detailed NDAPs risk mitigations until the application stage. Minor updates related to UWL were made.
- Proposed Course Titles and Student Number Trends: Requires further revision, e.g., removing year zero, as it's not part of eligibility criteria. NCL has plans to increase L6 numbers significantly to meet requirements.
- NCL Course Validation Manual (Draft): Key document for developing new qualifications.
- APC Minutes (Draft): Recommendations from the Academic Planning Committee to the Academic Board were approved.

**f. Recommendation to the Academic Board (to take to the Joint BoD-BoG) from the NDAPs working group for NDAPs application to the OfS**

The Academic Project Manager (DAPs) confirmed that all recommendations were endorsed by the Academic Board, and the course validation manual was approved pending minor adjustments. This approval allows the college to proceed with course development based on the course proposals.

Comments from the NDAPs external advisors:

**DB's Perspective:**

DB emphasised the significance of the NDAPs application with both advisors commending recent progress and praising the exceptional efforts of the DAPs Project Manager. Both strongly recommended proceeding with the application emphasising its potential to be a transformative milestone for the college if the application is successful.

**Readiness and Submission:**

The external advisors stressed the need for complete readiness before submitting the Self-Assessment Document (SAD), as evaluation could start immediately. Whilst required changes are frequently documented, some should already be implemented at this stage.

**Key Considerations:**

The application process requires serious consideration of costs, benefits, risks, and compliance. Advisors urged integrating planning into the college's operations. MB cautioned against the college's premature submission.

**NCL Culture:**

The Principal acknowledged the need to strengthen the college's HE culture by employing more full-time and senior teaching staff to complement the current junior and support staff.

**Action plan:**

SHI proposed adopting KS's nine-point plan, which members agreed on closely monitoring as part of a comprehensive plan. The chair noted this would provide added contingency for the application process. Advisors concluded that degree delivery and standards must align with those of a university.

**7. Report from the Principal**

The principal highlighted the college's significant progress while addressing ongoing challenges:

Market pressure:

NCL faces increased competition in the shrinking Tier 4 market, with rivals targeting its prospective students. To address this, the college plans to expand its geographic marketing reach and introduce new subjects like Health & Social Care.

#### University Partnership:

While the partnership with LMU has been positive, maintaining the collaboration with UWL remains a priority for the College.

#### Student retention concerns:

Some students transfer from NCL to other institutions for financial benefits via gaining a "gift year." To address this, NCL prohibits retake years but is reconsidering revising this policy to improve completion rates. A six-month coursework extension was introduced to students with genuine circumstances to allow resubmissions and discourage misuse of student finance.

#### Cost:

The principal proposed fewer, more focused meetings to enhance efficiency.

#### Staff and recruitment challenges:

High staff turnover and recruitment remain key issues, with competitors like the Global Banking School offering better pay, support, staff benefits and working conditions. Addressing these challenges is critical to improving permanent staff retention and attracting quality lecturers and staff.

## 8. Academic and Prevent Risks

### a. Academic Risk Register

Noted. See comment Corporate Risk register.

### b. Prevent Risk Register

Noted. See comment under Corporate Risk register.

### c. Prevent Steering Group Meeting and Action Points

Not reviewed due to time constraints.

### d. Corporate Risk Register

Due to time constraints, risks were summarised rather than reviewed individually. Members suggested streamlining risks for the Joint Board to focus only on items requiring attention or approval. The revised academic risk register containing nine top-level risks was appreciated by the chair.

### e. Risk management software (Sypro)

The academic risk register will be migrated to a digital platform within the next two weeks to maintain consistency in formatting of the registers. (AP2)

## 9. Corporate & Academic Governance

### a. Academic Board Meeting Minutes

Noted.

### b. Governance Review Update (By the Principal) - QA responses to recommendations

The principal summarised Quality Assurance (QA) responses to the governance review recommendations. A key issue highlighted was the colleges private structure is ultimately operated and owned by the same people and can be considered as a potential conflict of interest.

The QA department confirmed all recommendations were reviewed, with responses documented and some changes implemented into the governance framework. The chair emphasised the importance of implementing changes rather than just documenting them.

Action Tracker:

An action tracker will be added to future BoD/BoG meeting's agenda to monitor governance improvements. (AP3)

Transparency in Board setup:

In relation to recommendation 1C, members suggested improving access to meeting schedules, minutes whilst handling commercially sensitive accordingly. This step will support the DAPs application, as governance is a critical area to be reviewed.

Clarification on recommendations:

The ARMRC Chair requested clarity on whether recommendations must be fully implemented before progressing with applications. In response to the suggestion for the Chair of the Board of Directors to stepdown from the ARMRC, the Chair has verbally confirmed his intention to stepdown and this was subsequently agreed by the Joint Board. The Board agreed that the Chair could attend as an 'Officer in Attendance' without voting rights ensuring it meets with governance requirements.

Composition of ARMRC:

The principal proposed two changes to the ARMRC:

- 1) Incorporating members with higher level of expertise in specifically in Higher Education.
- 2) The ARMRC membership to change to a smaller, more focused group rather than having so many members in attendance. These two recommendations were noted and agreed to be incorporated in the new NCL Governance framework. (AP8)

**c. NCL Governance Framework (Draft)**

Noted with discussions outlined above.

**10. The OfS/APP/NCL Graduate Outcome Strategy**

**a. Student Protection Plan (Draft)**

*This item has been moved to the reserved items section of the agenda*

**11. Strategic Development/Estate/Resources**

**a. KPI Report – November 2024**

The Principal and Vice Principal presented the KPI report, and members highlighted concerns about data inconsistencies. Members suggested proofreading and adding a RAG rating system to track progress and prioritise key areas. SHI recommended adding explanations to figures to enable meaningful discussions. The Principal proposed an executive summary, and the Chair emphasised maintaining five years of historical data for Strategic Plan 2025–2030 forecasting. (AP4)

**b. The new Strategic Plan 2025-2030 (Draft)**

The Principal reported progress on the new strategic plan but noted discrepancies between individual and top-level plans, with key data still missing and so the document remains a work in progress. The draft will be finalised with Vice Principal's support in the coming months, targeting completion for implementation of the plan by the next academic year. (AP5)

**12. Guild HE Membership**

The principal highlighted the increased annual subscription cost (previously 16k but now circa 20k). To reduce expenses, members agreed to adopt the pay-as-you-go approach for Guild HE services despite possibly losing access to its network.

### 13. Key Dates - Submissions and Subscriptions

Noted.

### 14. Any Other Business

#### a. Away Day – Date TBC

The chair proposed scheduling the Away Day in June 2025. Members will be contacted post-meeting to confirm availability. (AP6)

#### b. External Examiner reports

Noted. See comment below.

#### c. Reactive Enhancement report

Noted.

#### Academic Board Review:

The head of finance suggested that the Academic Board should have oversight of these reports, with only a summary of key concerns presented to the Board.

### 15. Date and time of the next meeting(s):

16/04/2025: 2-4pm

23/07/2025: 2-4pm

26/11/2025: 2-4pm

Noted.

## Part B – Matters Reserved for the Board of Directors

### 16. Proposal for College-wide Departmental Budgeting Process

In the previous meeting, KS's proposal was reviewed by NU and presented for consideration, to encourage managers and Heads of Departments(HoDs) accountability for budgetary expenditure. This proposal specifically pertained to operational activities and forward planning for key projects/activities. It was agreed that this action would be assigned to the Principal (AP10).

### 17. Draft Annual Accounts for YE July 2024

The board received the draft accounts for the year ending July 2024. The audit is being carried out and the board has delegated the authority to the executive directors to sign it subject to sharing the signed copy to all members.

### 18. Audit, Risk Management, and Remuneration Committee (ARMRC)

The Chair of the ARMRC was introduced to the board and HP, as the chair of the ARMRC provided an update. The minutes of the committee will be circulated later.

### 19. Adoption of the BoG recommendations by the Board of Directors

19.1 The board noted that further work is needed for the new Strategic Plan 2025-2030.

19.2 The board approved the response to the Governance Effectiveness Review 2024 subject to making further amendments (AP7).

19.3 The board approved the NCL Governance Framework subject to making further amendments(AP8).

- 19.4 The board agreed to delay the submission of the NDAPs Application until course validation of the new degrees are approved by the academic board. The board agreed to receive regular updates on the nine-point plan recommended by KS (AP9).
- 19.5 The chair noted that the draft **Student Protection Plan inclusive of NDAP courses**. It had been revised and approved with updates made to meet regulatory requirements. The board noted that the public version has already been published on the college's website while the private version that incorporates NDAP related provisions requires board approval before submission to the OfS. Members and the directors have agreed to approve the private NDAPs version.

## Action Plan

Action point	To Do	Person Responsible	Deadline	Status	Comments
AP1	Remaining members to provide updated information for Register of Interests	Remaining members	15.03.25	Complete	
AP2	To discuss and migrate risk registers onto Sypro (before the next meeting)	AM/AO	15.03.25	Complete	
AP3	To develop an action tracker to monitor updates and progress on the Governance Review and include this as an agenda item for future meetings for oversight and follow-up.	RB	15.03.25	WIP	
AP4	KPI reports to include a separate comment section to explain figures presented. Incorporate an executive summary at beginning with a clear and concise overview	AO/RB	15.03.25	Complete	
AP5	Finalise the new strategic plan, ensuring it is completed, or relevant progress updates are provided by the next scheduled meeting.	RB/AO	15.03.25	Complete	
AP6	Email all members requesting their availability in June 2025 and finalise a date for the proposed Away Day.	SU/OA	15.03.25	Complete	Away Day: 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
AP7	Make final changes to the response to the Governance Effectiveness Review 2024	OA/NU/RB	15.03.25	Complete	Report submitted to Dawn Turpin
AP8	Finalise the design of the NCL Governance Framework	OA/NU/RB	15.03.25	Complete	Amendments made to Governance Framework

<b>AP9</b>	To provide regular updates on the nine-point plan included in the NDAPs update report	<b>KS</b>	<b>15.03.25</b>	<b>Complete</b>	
<b>AP10</b>	To contribute to the College-wide budgeting process at departmental level for all Operational activities and forward planning for key projects/activities.	<b>RB</b>	<b>15.03.25</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	

## Previous Action Plan

<b>Action point</b>	<b>To Do</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>AP5</b>	The proposal for delegated budgets covering Non-structural expenditures to be decided by BoD/ BoG, possibly in the next meeting, after consulting with the new Principal.	<b>BoD/ BoG members</b>	<b>14.11.24</b>	<b>WIP - Refer to AP 10 above</b>	