

Joint Board of Directors and Board of Governance

Date: 23/07/2025
Time: 14:00 – 16:00
Location: Online (MS teams)

Attendees:

Present:	Name	Position	Initials
	Aaron Porter	Chair of the Board of Governance	AP
	Nazim Uddin	Chair of the Board of Directors/ Director/ Head of Quality Assurance	NU
	Athiqul Islam	Director/ Head of HR and Finance	AI
	Shiraj Islam	Director/ Head of Marketing and Work-Based Learning	SI
	Roger Bradburn	Principal / Chair of Academic Board	RB
	Kemo Ceesay	Student Member	KC
	Sarah-Jo Loveday	Director/ Non-Executive member	SJL
	Helen Pickering	Non-Executive member/ Chair of Audit, Risk Management and Remuneration Committee (ARMRC)	HP
	Elizabeth Williams	Non-Executive member	EW
	Carl Stychin	Non-Executive member	CS
	Sarah Ryan	Non-Executive member	SR
	Dr Shorful Islam	Non-Executive member	SHI
	Linda Felton	Non-Executive member	LF
In Attendance:	David Douglas	Head of Programme Delivery (Observer)	DD
	Aamir Mehmood	Head of Data Management and Compliance (Observer)	AM
	Alina Stoian	Student Engagement & Alumni Manager	AS
	Kate Stoneman	Academic Project Manager (DAPs)	KS
	Dawn Turpin	Governance Advisor (External)	DT
	Sumaiyah Mehnaz	Quality and Governance Administrator	SM
Apologies:	Andreea-Alexandra Burlan	Student Member	AaB
	Fateh Hussein	Student Member	FH
	Ashur Banipal	Student Member	AB

Note Taker: Sumaiyah Mehnaz (31/07/25)

Reviewed by: Dawn Turpin (11/08/25) / Nazim Uddin (01/09/2025)

Part A Board of Governance (BoG)

Introductory Items

0. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair of the BoG welcomed all members of the Board, particularly the Student Engagement & Alumni Manager, Alina Stoian, who was attending to contribute to discussions regarding the NCL Student Association (Item 10). The meeting was being recorded for the purpose of the minutes.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Andreea-Alexandra Burlan, Fateh Hussein, and Ashur Banipal were noted.

2. Declaration of Interests

None noted.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

a. Review all actions points (AP) from the last meeting

AP1: Complete

AP2: Complete

AP3: Complete

AP4: Work in progress

AP5: Complete

AP6: Work in progress

AP7: Complete

AP8: Complete

AP9: Complete

AP10: Complete

AP11: Complete

AP12: Complete

4. Matter arising not elsewhere on the agenda

None noted.

5. Report from Principal

The Principal provided an overview of the report and highlighted the following key points:

New Degree Awarding Powers (NDAPs) Application Timeline

The College had made good progress on the NDAPs application. The application was scheduled for submission on 15 September 2025 (see item 8a), following the reopening of the Office for Students (OfS) submission window at the end of August. This timeline had been shared at a recent all-staff Town Hall meeting for awareness.

Course Validation

A course validation event had taken place earlier in the week, attended by several external subject experts, employers, student representatives, and staff representing both the proposed courses and staff from other courses and other departments. The validation panel approved both new degree courses, subject to one condition and some recommendations. The Principal noted that this outcome reflected the significant efforts of course developers and teaching staff. Two degree courses with two pathway variations were confirmed as ready for delivery.

Supporting Documentation

Progress was also noted on the Self-Assessment Document (SAD) and other NDAPs-related documentation.

Academic Partnerships

The partnership with the University of West London (UWL) had continued to strengthen, with positive developments reported at the Broadstairs campus. External evaluations from Pearson for the HND programmes in Business and Hospitality Management were also highly positive.

Risk Register

A non-executive member welcomed the Principal's report and noted that some of the risks identified – particularly regarding staffing and student engagement – should be reflected in the Corporate Risk Register. The Principal confirmed that several risks raised during the recent Away Day had been incorporated into the Risk Register, with further consideration to be given by Audit, Risk Management and Remuneration Committee (ARMRC). The Chair of the ARMRC confirmed these risks would be discussed at the next ARMRC meeting and offered to liaise with the Principal as required.

The Chair of the Board of Governance also noted that future risk oversight should align with the College's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, operational delivery, and the wider regulatory environment.

Strategic Items

6. Strategic Plan 2025-2030

The Head of Quality Assurance/Director presented the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 for approval. It was reported that staff workshops had reviewed the outcomes of the previous plan and had identified key areas for improvement. Departmental leads had subsequently developed detailed sub-strategies, which were then consolidated into a single, institution-wide document. A draft version of the plan had been shared with members at the Away Day, providing an opportunity for initial feedback and refinement. The finalised Strategic Plan was therefore presented to the Board for consideration and approval.

Monitoring and Principal's Report

Members were informed that implementation of the Strategic Plan would be monitored annually. This would include a reformatted Principal's Report, designed to provide analytical updates aligned with the strategic pillars and related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Principal confirmed this change would allow for better oversight of the College's performance and risk. (AP1)

Members suggested the inclusion of KPIs in the sub-strategies. The Head of Quality Assurance/Director confirmed that each area included performance measures, although not all would be published. However, as mentioned, KPIs would be referenced in the report, to support regular updates to the Board.

Staff Engagement

The Chair emphasised the importance of organisational familiarity with the Strategic Plan, to ensure meaningful alignment with staff priorities. The Head of Quality Assurance/Director noted that over 30 staff had contributed to the sub strategies and drafting process, but acknowledged the need for re-engagement as the Strategic Plan had been finalised. A formal communication and engagement plan would be developed to embed the strategy across departments. (AP2)

Diversity and Retention

A member queried how the College's commitment to recruiting diverse and talented students under Pillar 3 of the Strategic Plan was being embedded into marketing, admissions, and student support practices. The Head of Quality Assurance/Director confirmed that efforts were guided by the College's Recruitment and Admissions Policy and its OfS-approved Access and Participation Plan. Weekly outreach events were held across a range of communities, led by a diverse marketing team. Disability-related targets remained a challenge, but were being monitored by the Student Access and Success Steering Group.

Additionally, a member queried whether care leavers were actively targeted and whether the Strategic Plan sufficiently addressed student retention. The Head of Quality Assurance/Director and Head of Marketing and Work-Based Learning/Director confirmed that outreach extended to various underrepresented groups including care leavers, refugees, and travellers. The College had also recently seen an increase in applications from Iraqi refugees. The Head of Data Management and Compliance added that the College had a formal commitment to care leaver recruitment and offered a bursary scheme. However, following OfS guidance, the College was advised against setting fixed care leaver targets due to sector-wide challenges.

On retention, the Head of Marketing and Work-Based Learning/Director noted that while recruitment targets were being met, student withdrawal remained a concern. Reasons varied widely, making solutions complex. The College was actively seeking improved retention strategies and welcomed further suggestions. The Chair emphasised the importance of balancing recruitment, retention, and positive outcomes, noting that funding was distributed across three stages of the student lifecycle, making student continuation crucial to financial sustainability.

Student Access and Success Group

The Chair confirmed that oversight of these issues continued through the Student Access and Success Steering Group. Elizabeth Williams (Non-Executive Member) expressed interest in joining the group and was invited to join the next meeting. (AP3)

Members had recommended that the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 for approval and agreed that the plan should be published onto the College website. (AP4)

7. Away Day Minutes

A minor correction was noted to the attendee list of the Away Day. Sarah Ryan had been listed in error, as she did not attend. The record would be amended accordingly. (AP5)

8. New Degree Awarding Powers (New DAPs)

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

Application Status and Timeline

The Academic Project Manager reported that the OfS had lifted its pause on NDAPs applications, with priority given to paused submissions. Therefore, as a new applicant, it was expected there would be limited immediate progress following submission on 15 September 2025. Preparations remained on track.

Self-Assessment Document (SAD) and Evidence List

The SAD was nearing completion following weekly meetings involving the Principal, Head of

Quality Assurance/Director, and Head of Programme Delivery. The evidence list was being updated to include clear commitments for the probationary period, in line with OfS requirements.

Staff Training

Formal staff training had not yet commenced. A cascaded approach via line managers, supported by briefing materials, was suggested. Gaps in Higher Education experience were being reviewed with consideration for targeted senior or mid-level appointments.

Student and Stakeholder Engagement

Student engagement was identified as an area for improvement. The Student Engagement & Alumni Manager reported significant improvements in student representation and awareness. The Principal noted positive contributions from students and external stakeholders in the recent programme validation event.

Partnership Oversight

The Head of Programme Delivery reported that engagement with the University of West London had raised internal quality expectations through structured partnership board meetings.

The revised NDAPs application submission date of 15 September 2025 was formally approved by the Board.

b. Minutes of NDAP Steering Group Meeting (22.05.2025)

Noted.

c. Minutes of NDAP Steering Group Meeting (26.06.2025)

Noted.

9. Risk Management Items

a. Corporate Risk Register

The Head of Quality Assurance/Director reported that the risk registers had been migrated into a dedicated risk management system (Risk Manager).

It was noted that the risk register would be reassessed to align with the new strategic plan. It was agreed that anything that could significantly impact the achievement of strategic objectives should be reflected in the register. A proposal was made for the senior management team to meet and develop a migration and reassessment plan. (AP6)

The Chair of the ARMRC supported this review and emphasised the need for any outputs from the Risk Manager system to remain accessible and easily presentable to non-executive members. The Head of HR and Finance/Director confirmed that risk reports can be downloaded and shared to members in document format. (AP7)

A member queried the absence of high-level risks in any of the registers and the metrics that were used to determine the level of risk. The Head of Quality Assurance/Director highlighted that the College uses the Risk Management Framework to assess and mitigate risks. At present, no major risks had been identified. It was noted that the Principal's Executive Group already monitors areas such as recruitment and attendance and the Principal highlighted that the College's cautious, risk-averse approach had contributed to its low overall risk profile.

b. Prevent Risk Register

Prevent-related risks were acknowledged as part of the wider review included under item 9a, and would also be reassessed to ensure appropriate coverage within the Risk Register, aligned with the Strategic Plan.

c. Academic Risk Register

Academic risks were also included in the discussion under item 9a, with a note that following the Away Day, new academic risks would need to be included into the academic risk register. These would be incorporated into the overall risk reassessment process. Specific areas such as student progression and engagement, while not currently flagged as high risk, were being monitored.

d. Prevent Steering Group Minutes (27.02.2025)

Noted.

e. Risk Management Framework

Noted and approved by the Board.

Academic and Student Items

10. Report or feedback from NCL Student Association / Student Experience

The Chair noted that this standing agenda item had been introduced to provide regular updates on student matters. Although the student representatives had been unable to attend due to the end-of-semester break, the Student Vice President for Broadstairs Campus was present and invited to contribute, alongside the Student Engagement & Alumni Manager. The Chair suggested the scheduling of the July meeting be reviewed to ensure student members were available to attend (AP8).

The Student Engagement & Alumni Manager reported positive developments in student feedback metrics. The National Student Survey (NSS) response rate was 83% and the satisfaction rate was 97%. Internal surveys were also conducted post-events and at the end of semesters to monitor and improve student satisfaction.

The Student Vice President for Broadstairs Campus reported significant improvements in student welfare, engagement, and attendance. He commended the support provided by student services staff and noted ongoing efforts to strengthen student representation on campus.

The Chair welcomed the update and requested a brief written report summarising the NSS and graduate outcomes data (AP9). It was acknowledged that while the results were not yet public, they reflect a strong performance by the College.

The Head of Programme Delivery also shared positive feedback from a recent partnership meeting with UWL, where Nelson College's NSS performance was highlighted and well received.

11. Student Recruitment

The Chair reflected on the broader recruitment landscape, noting sector-wide challenges and increased competition. Despite these pressures, the College continued to maintain a measured and resilient approach. The Chair highlighted that the College had deliberately avoided aggressive growth targets in favour of incremental increases, with an emphasis on sustainable recruitment.

The Head of Programme Delivery reported that the College had received approval to recruit for UWL programmes at the Broadstairs campus from September 2025. Marketing had confirmed capacity to support the projected numbers for the FdA Business and BA (Top-Up) Business programmes.

The Chair further noted the College's distinctive recruitment pattern, with many students applying later in the cycle. Despite this, a rigorous admissions process remained in place, including face-to-face interviews, to ensure applicants were well-suited to succeed at the College. Emphasis was placed on the importance of maintaining quality and retention alongside recruitment efforts, particularly in the final months leading up to September enrolment.

12. The OfS/APP/NCL Graduate Outcome Strategy

The Chair invited an update on graduate outcomes. The Head of Quality Assurance/Director reported that based on the 2021-22 cohort, 23% of students had progressed to graduate-level employment or full-time study. This remained a challenging area due to the College's student profile. The data was subject to revision following the formal release of the documentation. The Chair emphasised the importance of continued focus on improving graduate outcomes despite challenges.

13. Academic Board Meeting Minutes (17.07.2025)

Meeting was postponed to 17th July. Minutes to be circulated to members once available.

14. Governance Review Response

The Head of Quality Assurance/Director confirmed that the College had reviewed and endorsed the Governance Review and held two meetings to respond to the recommendations. The Governance Advisor noted strong progress, with some steps beyond initial recommendations, and would update the Governance Framework to reflect the agreed changes (AP10). A revised agenda structure had been introduced to ensure discussion was strategic.

Members supported the recruitment of a Governance Secretary who can appropriately advise the College long-term.

The Chair of the ARMRC highlighted that any actions for the ARMRC from the Governance Review would be addressed at the next committee meeting.

15. Any Other Business

None noted.

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

26/11/2025: 11-1pm (in-person)

Noted.

New Actions

Date created	Action no.	Action	Action owner	Due date	Update	Date closed
23/07/2025	1	To reformat the Principal's Report to provide analytical updates aligned with the Strategic Plan's pillars and associated KPIs.	RB	17.11.25	Complete	26/11/25
23/07/2025	2	To develop and implement a College-wide communication and engagement plan to ensure staff are informed of the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 and supported to align departmental priorities with its objectives.	RB/NU	17.11.25	Complete – On the agenda for next meeting	26/11/25
23/07/2025	3	To invite EW to join the next meeting of the Student Access and Success Steering Group.	SP	17.11.25	WIP	
23/07/2025	4	To publish the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 onto the College website.	SM	17.11.25	Complete	26/11/25
23/07/2025	5	To amend the Away Day attendee list to remove Sarah Ryan – who was listed in error.	SM	17.11.25	Complete	26/11/25
23/07/2025	6	Senior managers to meet and develop a migration and reassessment plan for all risk registers (Corporate, Academic, and Prevent), aligned with the new strategic plan.	AM/NU	17.11.25	Complete	26/11/25

Date created	Action no.	Action	Action owner	Due date	Update	Date closed
23/07/2025	7	To download and share risk register reports to members in document format.	AM/AI	17.11.25	Complete – risk register reports shared as an excel spreadsheet	26/11/25
23/07/2025	8	To review the scheduling of future July meetings for the Joint BoG/BoD to ensure student members are available to attend.	SM	17.11.25	Complete	26/11/25
23/07/2025	9	To produce and share the NSS results and the Graduate Outcomes Survey in a 1-page report.	AS	17.11.25	WIP	
23/07/2025	10	To update the Governance Framework to incorporate agreed changes from the governance review.	DT	17.11.25	Complete	26/11/25

Ongoing Actions

Date created	Action no.	Action	Action owner	Due date	Update	Date closed
28/11/2024	3	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.	DT	15.03.25	Complete – On the agenda for next meeting	26/11/25

16/04/2025	4	To review the agenda of the Academic Board and make it more streamlined.	RB	15.07.25	WIP	
16/04/2025	6	To redraft the Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy to incorporate the feedback and recommendations provided by ARMRC and send to the ARMRC Chair for review before re-submitting for BoD approval.	TR	15.07.25	Complete	26/11/25

Closed Actions

Date created	Action no.	Action	Action owner	Due date	Update	Date closed
16/04/2025	1	To amend the academic register to correct two minor errors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reclassify Risk 7 as 'minor' (green) instead of 'moderate' (yellow). Risk 9 to be colour-coded yellow in line with its 'moderate' assessment. 	AM	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025
16/04/2025	2	To circulate the Risk Management Framework to all members.	SM	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025
16/04/2025	3	To review the format for the presentation of corporate risk management information to	AM	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025

Date created	Action no.	Action	Action owner	Due date	Update	Date closed
		the ARMRC and the BoG to enable it to meet its oversight responsibilities				
16/04/2025	5	To provide reports on the upcoming September intake regarding student recruitment.	SI	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025
16/04/2025	7	ARMRC to endorse the Terms of Reference and submit to the BoD for approval.	SM	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025
16/04/2025	8	To publish the Value for Money Report onto the College website.	SM	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025
16/04/2025	9	To produce an abbreviated, public version of the Strategic Plan 2025-30	RB	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025
16/04/2025	10	To arrange a meeting of the Governance Review Steering group to discuss how recommendations from the Governance Review were to be implemented.	SM	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025
16/04/2025	11	The Governance Advisor and the Chair of ARMRC to review the latest version of the Governance Framework and Governance Review recommendations.	DT/HP	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025

Date created	Action no.	Action	Action owner	Due date	Update	Date closed
16/04/2025	12	Principal to present the proposed college-wide departmental budgeting process for review and approval.	RB	15.07.25	Complete	23/07/2025