Minutes

| Joint Board of Directors and Board of Governance | Date: 26/11/2025<br>Time: 11:00 – 13:00<br>Location: Gants Hill Campus |
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| 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 |
| | Daniyal Mughal | Student Member | DM |
| | Denis Stelica | Student Member | DS |
| | Gheorghe Cotofana | Student Member | GC |
| | Sarah-Jo Loveday | Non-Executive Director | SJL |
| | Dr Tommie Anderson-Jaquest | Non-Executive Director | TAJ |
| | 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:** | Aamir Mehmood | Head of Data Management and Compliance (Observer) | AM |
| | Kate Stoneman | Academic Project Manager (DAPs) | KS |
| | Dawn Turpin | Governance Advisor (External) | DT |
| | Ola Ariyo | Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager (Observer) | OA |
| | Sumaiyah Mehnaz | Quality and Governance Administrator (Note Taker) | SM |
| **Apologies:** | David Douglas | Head of Programme Delivery (Observer) | DD |

**Note Taker:** Sumaiyah Mehnaz

**Reviewed by:** Ola Ariyo / Dawn Turpin / Nazim Uddin / Aaron Porter

Minutes

## 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 new Non-Executive Director, Dr Tommie Anderson-Jaquest, as well as the new recently elected student members: Daniyal Mughal, Denis Stelica, and Gheorghe Cotofana. The meeting was recorded for the purpose of the minutes.

**1. Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for David Douglas were noted.

**2. Declaration of Interests**
None noted.

**3. Minutes of the previous meeting**
The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

AP3: Work in Progress
AP9: Work in Progress

All other action points were completed.

**4. Matter arising not elsewhere on the agenda**
None noted.

### Strategic Items

**5. Strategy Workshop for the implementation of Strategic Plan 2025-30**

The Chair introduced the item, emphasising the importance of a clear College strategy to guide priorities, resource allocation and to meet external expectations, particularly in relation to the New Degree Awarding Powers (NDAPs) process. Members noted that the Strategic Plan is intended to be a high-level framework rather than a fully detailed implementation plan, allowing operational flexibility in how it is embedded and operationalised across the College.

Implementation and Monitoring
The Head of Quality Assurance/Director stated that implementation of the Plan would be monitored in a number of ways, including external consultancy input, progress reporting through the Principal's Annual Report, and annual updates against agreed actions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), enabling improved strategic oversight. It was suggested that future iterations of the Strategic Plan could include a concise summary section to better articulate the overall strategic narrative.

Strategic Pillars
The Principal outlined the four strategic pillars from the Strategic Plan, noting that these were intended to be embedded as part of the College's culture. Discussion highlighted the importance of strengthening staff capability and capacity to support delivery, particularly in relation to Higher Education (HE) experience and NDAPs, with emphasis on applied scholarship rather than research intensity.

Governance
Members discussed governance in the context of strategy implementation and noted the significant progress made in response to the 2024 external governance review. The External Governance Advisor highlighted the need to consider how governance expertise would be sustained beyond the end of her contract. It was agreed that this should be addressed proactively to ensure continued effective oversight and alignment with regulatory expectations. The Board agreed that the Principal, in consultation with the Directors and involvement of the Chair of the Board of Governance, would develop proposals for governance advisory capacity beyond March 2026 (AP1).

**6. New Degree Awarding Powers (NDAPs)**

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

Application Status and OfS Engagement
The Academic Project Manager provided a brief overview of Degree Awarding Powers (DAPs) for members, noting that the College's ambition was to award its own degrees. The Academic Project Manager confirmed that, following approval at the previous meeting, the NDAPs application was submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) on 15 September 2025 and was formally acknowledged. An initial engagement call took place in October with the OfS NDAPs team, which was described as positive and constructive.

Assessment Timeline and Readiness
Members were advised that the OfS indicated the formal desk-based assessment was unlikely to commence until around April 2026, providing time to further refine documentation. The Self-Assessment Document (SAD) was reported to be largely complete, with further polishing required, particularly in relation to the environment supporting students. The Board noted the positive reception of the College's proposed project-managed approach to the probationary period, including clear mapping against regulatory criteria.

Governance, Capability and Culture
It was reported that the NDAPs Steering Group had now been dissolved, having fulfilled its purpose, with external support available as required. Members discussed the importance of sustained staff capability, cultural change and internal capacity-building over what was expected to be a multi-year probationary period. The need to strengthen HE knowledge beyond senior leadership, reduce siloed working, and support middle management capability was emphasised as critical to long-term success.

Resources, Data and External Support
Discussion highlighted anticipated resource pressures over the extended NDAPs timeline and the risk of staff fatigue. Members were assured that a combination of training, selective recruitment and leadership development was being considered. The Principal highlighted the value of the College's relationship with the University of West London (UWL), noting that its partnership provided effective preparation for OfS scrutiny and access to HE expertise. Improvements to management information, particularly around student outcomes and graduate data, were identified as a longer-term enhancement priority.

The Chair reflected on the significant progress made over the past 12 months, noting that the College had moved from early readiness discussions to a submitted application with encouraging initial OfS engagement. While acknowledging that the assessment process would be demanding and subject to external factors, the Board expressed cautious confidence in the College's direction of travel and maturity.

**b. Minutes of NDAP Steering Group Meeting (07.10.2025)**
Noted.

**c. NDAPs Application Submission Records to the OfS**
Noted.

## 7. Risk Management Items

Members reviewed the risk management items, including the Corporate, Academic and Prevent Risk Registers, and noted that reporting had been refined to focus on the most significant risks requiring Board oversight.

The Chair of the Audit, Risk Management and Remuneration Committee (ARMRC) confirmed that the Committee had reviewed the registers and was generally satisfied with the details and improvements made. It was also noted that the risk reassessment plan, agreed as an action at the previous Board meeting, had been considered by the ARMRC. The reassessment had sought to assess whether the risks in the risk registers appropriately reflected those most likely to impact delivery of the Strategic Plan and proposed removing those that did not. ARMRC had not supported removal of significant legal and regulatory risks from the Committee's oversight particularly as many were areas that had occupied ARMRC and BoG business over recent meetings. The reassessment would be revisited and presented to a future meeting (AP2).

Discussion also highlighted emerging and cross-cutting risks, including capacity and resourcing pressures linked to NDAPs, systems integration, cultural change and the increasing importance of cyber and digital risks. Members discussed the potential role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital tools in improving efficiency and organisational capability, noting variable levels of use and confidence across the College. The Principal agreed that the Senior Management Team would consider how AI could be more effectively and consistently utilised, including through staff training and development, with an update to be provided to the Board (AP3).

**a. Corporate Risk Register**

The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed. Members noted the clearer presentation of key risks and welcomed the strengthened mitigations. A non-executive member queried the absence of NDAPs from the register. The Head of Data Management and Compliance confirmed that NDAPs risks had previously been removed during the sector-wide pause in applications but should now be reconsidered following submission of the College's application. It was agreed that NDAPs-related risks would be reassessed and, where appropriate, reintroduced into the Risk Register (AP4).

Members also queried the rationale for specific risk ratings, including IT infrastructure failure and corporate fraud. The Head of Data Management and Compliance provided assurance that robust mitigations were in place, including cloud-based IT systems, enhanced cybersecurity arrangements, segregation of duties, multi-level financial controls and bank verification processes. The Board noted that while these controls significantly reduced risk, ongoing monitoring remained essential given the wider sector context.

**b. Academic Risk Register**

Members noted that the Academic Risk Register had been substantially revised to focus on the most material academic risks. The Chair of the ARMRC confirmed that the Committee was content with the direction of travel, though further work would be required as the Strategic Plan and NDAPs implementation progressed. Risks relating to capacity, academic capability and cultural change were acknowledged as areas requiring continued oversight.

**c. Prevent Risk Register**

Prevent-related risks were acknowledged as part of the wider review and would also be reassessed to ensure appropriate coverage within the Risk Register.

**d. Prevent Steering Group Minutes (27.10.2025)**
Noted.

## Academic and Student Items

**8. Report or feedback from NCL Student Association / Student Experience**

Student members provided positive feedback on their overall experience, highlighting the College's strong open-door culture and the accessibility of academic and professional staff. The Student President highlighted that student engagement had increased significantly across campuses, evidenced by high attendance at student representative meetings and strong participation in student elections. A range of enrichment activities were highlighted by the Student Vice-President, including educational trips, workshops delivered by industry professionals, and cross-campus student events, which were seen as enhancing community, peer connection and applied learning.

Members noted evidence of strong student engagement and leadership, including the recent student president election, which attracted multiple candidates and was viewed as a positive indicator of a healthy and engaged student body. A Board member queried how the College supports student representatives to evidence these roles for employability purposes. It was confirmed that representative roles and work-based learning were formally recognised through certificates, references and support from the Student Engagement Team, enabling students to articulate these experiences effectively within CVs and future applications.

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

**a. Student Protection Plan**

The Board reviewed the Student Protection Plan submitted to the Office for Students. Members queried student consultation and document accessibility; the Head of Data Management and Compliance confirmed that students had been consulted at the time of drafting and noted the suggestion to improve accessibility.

Clarification was provided on refund and compensation arrangements, confirming that fees are only charged after enrolment and a cooling-off period, and are received in staged instalments, supporting both student protection and financial stability.

A member highlighted that the complaints section required clearer signposting and should direct students first to the College's internal complaints and appeals process, rather than the Principal, before any external escalation. It was agreed that the Plan would be updated accordingly and circulated to the Board for approval (AP5).

**b. National Student Survey (NSS) Results/Graduate Survey Report**

The Board noted that work on the NSS Results and Graduate Outcomes Survey Report was ongoing and therefore the paper was not presented at this meeting. It was confirmed that further development was required, particularly to strengthen KPI-based analysis, and that the report would be supplemented once staffing cover was in place within the Student Progression team (See AP9 – Ongoing Actions).

**10. Academic Board Meeting Minutes (20.11.2025)**
*Minutes would be circulated once available.*

**11. Principal's Annual Report**

The Chair introduced the item and, noting time constraints, invited questions as the content of the report had largely been covered earlier in the meeting.

The Governance Advisor highlighted that the paper had been incorrectly titled as the Academic Governance Assurance Annual Report, whereas it was in fact the Principal's Report. It was noted that these should be separate reports. Members agreed that an Academic Governance Assurance Annual Report would be required in future to meet regulatory expectations. (AP6)

The Principal's Report was noted.

## Governance and Compliance Items

**12. Governance Framework**

The Chair introduced the Governance Framework, noting that it had been revised as part of the work to implement recommendations from the external governance review. The Governance Advisor noted that content had been revised to reflect decisions taken by the governance review working group in June and July, remove duplication of content and ensure formatting was consistent throughout. Further work to review governance processes such as induction and appraisal was ongoing. Members welcomed the work that had been completed to date.

A Non-Executive Member raised the question of Board skills development. It was noted that while a Board skills matrix existed, there was no formal mechanism to capture individual views on strengths and development needs. The Chair proposed canvassing Board and members' views on their own skills and development areas, with responses used to inform future Board development activity, including the annual Away Day (AP7).

The Chair of ARMRC noted the link to Board appraisal referenced in the Governance Review. It was acknowledged that appraisal had been undertaken inconsistently in the past, and support was expressed for introducing a light-touch approach.

The Governance Framework was noted by the Board.

**a. NCL Governance Review Recommendations Tracker**
Noted.

**13. Appointment of a second Non-Executive Director (CV)**
Noted.

**14. P017 Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom within Nelson College London**

Members noted that the Code of Practice had been updated to reflect the new statutory freedom of speech requirements. The Governance Advisor suggested that the Code be reviewed after one year rather than two whilst the regulatory environment in this area evolved and College processes were implemented. (AP8)

The Chair proposed that the policy be reviewed annually for the next two years. Following this, the review cycle should be considered to take place biennially.

The policy was approved by the Board.

**15. NCL approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in relation to the College's governance practices**

The Principal advised that there were no specific updates to report at this time and noted that the College continued to perform well in this area, with no significant changes in the past six months.

The Governance Advisor noted that this item related to the recommendation from the external Governance Review that the College provide an annual review of performance against the EDI Policy to the Joint BoD/BoG.

It was noted that this item would be added to the next meeting's agenda. (AP9)

## Closing Items

**16. Any Other Business**

**a. Appointment of Dr Ron Cambridge to the Academic Board**

The Principal proposed the appointment of Dr Ron Cambridge to the Academic Board, noting that she had recently attended a meeting as an observer pending formal approval. Members were advised that Dr Cambridge had an excellent academic background and had already provided valuable input to discussions, including programme validation activity.

Members supported the appointment, and it was agreed that Dr Ron Cambridge be approved as a member of the Academic Board, subject to circulation of her CV to Board members (AP10).

**b. Away Day**
Members to confirm availability for the scheduling of the Away Day meeting (AP11).

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

- **15.04.2026**
- **22.07.2026**
- **25.11.2026**

**New Actions**

| Date created | Action no. | Action | Action owner | Due date | Update | Date closed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **26.11.25** | **1** | Principal, in consultation with the Directors (and Chair of the BoG), to develop proposals for governance advisory capacity beyond March 2026, ensuring appropriate expertise to support and guide the College's governance arrangements. | **RB/NU/AI/ SI/AP** | **25.02.26** | **Complete** | **15.04.26** |
| **26.11.25** | **2** | To revise the risk reassessment plan and risk registers, reflecting ARMRC feedback, and present the updated versions to the next Board meeting. | **OA** | **30.03.26** | **Complete** | **15.04.26** |
| **26.11.25** | **3** | Senior Management Team to consider how AI and digital tools can be more effectively and consistently utilised across the College, including identifying staff training and development needs, and to provide an update to the Board at a future meeting. | **RB** | **30.03.26** | **Complete –** RB to provide oral update | **15.04.26** |
| **26.11.25** | **4** | To reassess NDAPs-related risks and reintroduce them into the Risk Register. | **AM** | **23.03.26** | **WIP –** To be included at the July meeting | **22.07.26** |
| **26.11.25** | **5** | To update the Student Protection Plan to clarify complaints and appeals arrangements, including internal escalation routes, and improve accessibility, then | **AM** | **30.03.26** | **Complete –** On agenda | **15.04.26** |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | circulate the revised version to the Board for approval. | | | | |
| **26.11.25** | **6** | To prepare and present a standalone Academic Governance Assurance Annual Report for the Board meeting in November 2026. | **RB** | **25.11.26** | **Not yet due** | **15.04.26** |
| **26.11.25** | **7** | To issue a skills and development questionnaire to Board and Executive members to inform a Board training and development plan, including future appraisal arrangements. | **DT** | **30.03.26** | **Complete –** BoG Skills Matrix added onto agenda. | **15.04.26** |
| **26.11.25** | **8** | To amend the review cycle of the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom from biennial to annual. | **SM** | **30.03.26** | **Complete** | **15.04.26** |
| **26.11.25** | **9** | To add item 15 ‘NCL approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in relation to the College’s governance practices’ on the agenda for the next meeting. | **SM** | **30.03.26** | **Complete** | **15.04.26** |
| **26.11.25** | **10** | To circulate CV of Dr Ron Cambridge to BoG/BoD members for formal approval as a member of the Academic Board. | **SM** | **30.03.26** | **Complete** | **15.04.26** |

| Date created | Action no. | Action | Action owner | Due date | Update | Date closed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **26.11.25** | **11** | To confirm availability of members for the scheduling of the Away Day meeting. | **SM** | **30.03.26** | **Complete –** Calendar invite was sent out | **15.04.26** |

**Ongoing Actions**

| Date created | Action no. | Action | Action owner | Due date | Update | Date closed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **16/04/2025** | **4** | To review the agenda of the Academic Board and make it more streamlined. | **RB** | **15.07.25** | **Complete –** Feedback was provided; agenda was reviewed. Ongoing further changes. | **15.04.26** |
| **23/07/2025** | **3** | To invite EW to join the next meeting of the Student Access and Success Steering Group. | **SP** | **17.11.25** | **Complete** | **15.04.26** |
| **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** | **Complete** | **15.04.26** |

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## Closed 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** | **26.11.25** |
| **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** |
| **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** | **26.11.25** |
| **23/07/2025** | **4** | To publish the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 onto the College website. | **SM** | **17.11.25** | **Complete** | **26.11.25** |

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| Date created | Action no. | Action | Action owner | Due date | Update | Date closed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **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** |
| **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** | **10** | To update the Governance Framework to incorporate agreed changes from the governance review. | **DT** | **17.11.25** | **Complete** | **26.11.25** |
| **23/07/2025** | **11** | The Principal to share the departmental budgeting process report with the Principal's Executive Group and Academic Board for formal approval. | **RB** | **17.11.25** | **Complete** | **26.11.25** |