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COLLEGE

Governance Effectiveness Review September 2026

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Executive summary

This report was produced by to Dr Steven Quigley, a Higher Education Consultant whose services were secured to conduct this College Governance Effectiveness review.

In Chapter 1, the Findings from the Integrated Governance, Board & Committee Effectiveness Review Forms are presented. Overall, in section 1: Governance and Board effectiveness, the scores and supporting comments from members indicate that College Governance and Board effectiveness is in good order. However, in a number of areas, ratings of needs improvement from one or two respondents have given rise to a number of recommendations. It should be noted that, as one respondent put it, a need for improvement rating should not be taken as "...a negative but rather identifying areas where there are still things that could be improved. Therefore, the recommendations made does not detract from the overall finding that the College is being effective in its Governance and its committees."

In section 2: Board/ Committee Overview, the evidence indicates that since the last review the Board and its committees were well attended and that membership of the committees had changed over time. A few recommendations were made to bolster representation at the committees.

In section 3: Board/ Committee Performance & Effectiveness, respondents were asked about their committee's alignment with OfS / QAA Expectations. The rating scaled used was: Good /Adequate /Needs Improvement; respondents were invited to give comments to support their ratings. Overall, the respondents indicated good alignment of the committees with OfS / QAA Expectations. Notably, for quality assurance processes, strong support that the processes are good was evidenced by both the Pearson Academic Management Review Report 2025-2026 and supportive comments from Buckinghamshire New University. In addition, when asked about the quality of papers/data and decision-making, there was strong support from the respondents that the papers and data were in good order. As one respondent put it, "The board's decision-making is inclusive, evidence-based, and grounded in a clear analysis of the data and information presented..." In terms of the section: 3.5 Chair's Summary, the responses clearly indicate that the Chairs are clear about their role and several respondents gave positive feedback regarding the committees. Notwithstanding the good responses, one recommendation was made to further support one of the Chairs in fulfilling their role.

In section 4: Risk, Data, and Student Engagement, respondents commented on Key Risks and Challenges, Student Voice and Engagement and Data and Evidence Used for each of their committees. A large number of risks and challenges were identified by the respondents. The BoG and AQAB respondents commented that students actively take part in the committees and that student feedback is being taken into account in decision-making and that student feedback is having an impact. It was also noted that the Audit Committee, appropriately, does not have student members. Regarding the data and evidence used, members cited a range of appropriate data and evidence received by their committees that could be used for

monitoring and evaluation purposes and consideration in institutional decision-making. A number of recommendations were made to further support work in these areas.

In section 5: Recommendations and Forward Planning, respondents made recommendations and proposed forward actions for their committees, although not all respondents completed their plans. Nevertheless, the recommendations and collected plans were all appropriate and it was recommended that the recommendations and collected plans should be looked at by their respective committees with a view to prioritising actions and to see whether collectively the committees agree with the proposed plans, deadlines, success measures and nominated owners of actions.

In section 6: Overall Board & Committee Reflection respondents were asked to comment on strengths, areas for improvement and future Priorities. Respondents were very clear about the strengths, areas for improvement and what their future priorities should be. Additional comments were positive regarding the committees but one respondent indicated that there is still much to be done. It was recommended that the collected comments should be considered by their respective committees to ensure that: a) where strengths have been identified that these remain strong; b) areas for improvement are effectively addressed; c) future priorities are collectively agreed and appropriate actions set to address those confirmed priorities, and d) the additional comments are taken into account when reflecting upon a, b and c.

Regarding Chapter 2: Review of the Minutes for the Board of Governors (BoG), the Audit Committee (AC) and the Academic/Quality Assurance Board (AQAB), the minutes from 2023 for the Board and its committees were reviewed and were found to be of a good written standard. The minutes demonstrated that the schedules of business were followed and appropriate discussions were held on agenda items. A full pack of committee materials was received for each of the most recent meetings of the committees. Each piece of paperwork provided for the committees had a reference number and each paper was of a good standard. Recommendations for fine tuning the minutes were made

Chapter 3 mapped the findings from Chapters 1 and 2 against the recently updated CUC Code of Higher Education Governance 2026 (**the Code**). This chapter was a late addition for the review as the Code had just been recently published. The review therefore checked institutional practice, using the evidence and responses provided, against the Code. As the evidence and responses were not specifically collected for measuring against the Code some parts of the Code could not be covered. Regardless of that fact, some recommendations have been made to bring the College up to date with the new Code, and some recommendations request that the College conducts further checking against some parts of the Code.

Overall, the Governance Effectiveness Review has shown that the College is effective in its Governance practices. To further support and improve that effectiveness, a comprehensive list of recommendations has been made throughout this report. In writing this summary, upon reflection, there are two key themes that the College should prioritise. The first theme relates to student representatives; the evidence suggests that student representatives should

receive further training to better fulfil their role. Additionally, to ensure consistency of input from student representatives, turnover of student representatives needs to be addressed. The second theme is that of paperwork/data, while there is evidence that good paperwork/data is provided, some members of the committees suggest that it would be helpful to have additional supporting papers or explanations to help them to better understand the paperwork/data; providing such support should lead to better criticality and better-informed discussions and decision-making. Finally, and of particular note, where no recommendations have been made this implies good practice. These areas of good practice include: Chair's promoting open and constructive discussion; information being clear; concise and timely; minutes are accurate and reliable; meetings encourage participation and challenge; academic standards oversight; quality assurance processes; risk management and governance; the Boards and committees aligning with OfS/QAA expectations; clarity and purpose of the Board and its committees, and effectiveness of meetings.

Summary of the recommendations and action plans

For ease of reference, all of the recommendations and plans have been copied from this report and pasted into a summary report that accompanies this main report. In section 1 of the summary report, recommendations that are repeated across responses in this report have been grouped together under a single action.

Report

Introduction

This Governance effectiveness review consisted of a review of a set of completed questionnaire forms, a review of the minutes from 2023 onwards for the Board of Governors (BoG), the Audit Committee (AC) and the Academic/Quality Assurance Board (AQAB) and interviews with select Board/committee Chairs and members. The review also took into account the introduction of an updated version of the CUC Code of Higher Education Governance 2026 and makes some recommendations based on the findings from this College Governance Effectiveness review.

The review was informed by a number of documents which included:

- Checklist for the appointment of Governors Committee Handbook 2025-2027
- Committee Terms of Reference 2025-2027
- Risk Register
- Skills matrix – 2024-2026 (Board of Governors Skills Audit)
- Job description of Governors 2025-2027
- Recruitment and Due Diligence Processes for Governors (this College form needs to be updated in alignment with OfS condition of registration E9: Fit and Proper Persons)
- CUC Code of Higher Education Governance 2026

Method for the review of the Integrated Governance, Board & Committee Effectiveness Review Forms

In Spring 2026, the Principal distributed an Integrated Governance, Board & Committee Effectiveness Review Form (a questionnaire) to the members of the Board of Governors, the Audit Committee, and the Academic and Quality Board. These forms were completed by the members and returned to the Principal. The completed forms were then passed to Dr Steven Quigley. There were six sections in the forms covering the following topics:

Section 1: Governance & Board Effectiveness

Section 2: Board/ Committee Overview

Section 3: Board/ Committee Performance & Effectiveness

Section 4: Risk, Data, and Student Engagement

Section 5: Recommendations and Forward Planning

Section 6: Overall Board & Committee Reflection

Each of these sections had further sections within each section. These further sections are covered in the Findings sections of the Chapters that follow.

Limitations of analysis

Some parts of the forms were not completely filled out by respondents and some questions appear to have been misunderstood because the questions were not clear.

Number of respondents: 16. Of which: 10 were BoG members; 4 were Audit Committee members; and 10 were AQB members. 3 members served on all of the committees. Two members served on two committees.

In the Chapters that follow

The detailed findings from this review are presented in the three chapters that follow this introduction:

Chapter 1: Findings from the Integrated Governance, Board & Committee Effectiveness Review Forms

Chapter 2: Review of the Minutes for the Board of Governors (BoG), the Audit Committee (AC) and the Academic/Quality Assurance Board (AQAB)

Chapter 3: Findings regarding the CUC Code of Higher Education Governance 2026

Chapter 1: Findings from the Integrated Governance, Board & Committee Effectiveness Review Forms

Section 1: Governance & Board Effectiveness

In section 1, members were asked to score a set of statements using a rating scale as follows:

Rating Scale (for scored sections)

- 1 = Needs significant improvement
- 2 = Needs improvement
- 3 = Consistently good
- 4 = Outstanding (sector-leading practice)

Overall, scores were rounded up to two decimal places.

Section 1.1 Board Structure and Governance Processes contained the following statements:

- 1.1 New members receive a comprehensive induction
- 1.1 Terms of Reference (TORs) clearly define responsibilities and authority
- 1.1 TORs include quorum requirements
- 1.1 TORs are regularly reviewed and approved
- 1.1 Senior staff attend meetings where appropriate
- 1.1 Board reports are clear and effective

The average scores for each section were rounded up to one decimal place.

1.1 New members receive a comprehensive induction.

BoG: 2 scores of 4. 7 of 3. 1 of 1.

AC: 1 score of 4. 2 of 3. 1 of 1.

AQB: 4 scores of 4. 6 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score indicates that the members are mostly satisfied with the induction process. However, a score of 1 was given by one of the most recent Governors to receive an induction.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent responded that they had not received an induction but had worked for the College for several years so could

argue they did not need an induction. However, the respondent had not yet seen a standard induction process.

Recommendation: Review the induction process for Board and Committee members and ensure standardised inductions take place for new members.

1.1 Terms of Reference (TORs) clearly define responsibilities and authority

BoG: 6 scores of 4. 3 of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 3 scores of 4. 1 of 2.

AQB: 8 scores of 4. 2 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part that the members are satisfied the terms of reference clearly define responsibilities and authority. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicates that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent replied that: "Over the last 12 months, working with Sayeda, the ToRs are much better." The respondent also noted that it is one thing to put the ToRs on paper but actually fully addressing the ToRs needs cultural change.

Recommendation: Provide training for members of the Board and its committees to ensure that the members fully understand the responsibilities and authority of their board.

1.1 TORs include quorum requirements

BoG: 5 scores of 4. 3 scores of 3. 1 score of 2. 1 no score entered.

AC: 1 score of 4, 1 score of 3. 1 score of 2. 1 no score entered.

AQB: 7 scores of 4. 2 of 3. 1 no score entered.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part that the members are satisfied with the terms of reference including quorum requirements. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicates that improvement is required.

When questioned about their needs improvement score, the respondent indicated the same answer as the question above.

Recommendation: Same as the recommendation immediately above.

1.1 TORs are regularly reviewed and approved

BoG: 6 scores of 4. 3 scores of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 3 scores of 4. 1 of 2.

AQB: 8 scores of 4. 2 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part that the members are satisfied that the TORs are regularly reviewed and approved. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicates that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated that: "There is a need to make sure that the ToRs are actually taking place. Each committee has its own schedule of business. However, they were not aware that there is an overall schedule of business for the Board and its committees.

Recommendation: Ensure that there is an overall schedule of business for the Board and its committees so that all items of business can be monitored for both inclusion at an appropriate Board/committee meeting and also for sequencing purposes (e.g. approving a policy or strategy at a committee before recommending to the Board for final approval).

1.1 Senior staff attend meetings where appropriate

BoG: 5 scores of 4. 4 of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 1 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 8 scores of 4. 2 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part that the members are satisfied that senior staff attend meetings where appropriate. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicates that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated that: "They do attend but we need to make sure this continues, and make sure there is a clear rationale for their attendance."

Recommendation: The Chair and the Secretary for the Board and each of its committees should discuss whether there is a clear rationale for the attendance of senior staff at each meeting of the Board and its committees.

1.1 Board reports are clear and effective

BoG: 5 scores of 4. 5 of 3.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 2 of 3.

AQB: 9 scores of 4. 1 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part that the members are satisfied that Board reports are clear and effective. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicates that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated that: "Progress has been made but one cannot say it is consistent across the committee structure. The AC is there or there about...and it is getting there at the BoG."

Recommendation: Ensure that reports are consistently clear and effective across the Board and its committees.

Section 1.2 Chair of the Board Evaluation

- 1.2 Provides effective leadership, including during change
- 1.2 Constructively challenges executive leadership
- 1.2 Leads on risk appetite and governance oversight
- 1.2 Effectively manages leadership appraisal processes
- 1.2 Promotes open and constructive discussion
- 1.2 Identifies and addresses Board skills gaps
- 1.2 Ensures appropriate training and development

1.2 Provides effective leadership, including during change

BoG: 5 scores of 4. 3 scores of 3. 2 scores of 2.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 1 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 7 scores of 4. 3 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part members were satisfied that the Chairs of each Board were providing effective leadership, including during change. However, a score of 2 by 2 of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated that: "The current Chair could be more proactive in leading on and facilitating meaningful discussions of strategic issues."

Recommendation: Provide training to ensure that the Chairs of the committees are aware that they need to be proactive in leading on and facilitating meaningful discussions of strategic issues.

1.1 Constructively challenges executive leadership

BoG: 3 scores of 4. 6 of 3. 1 of 1.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 1 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 6 scores of 4. 4 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part members were satisfied that the Chair of their Board/Committee constructively challenges executive leadership. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicates that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent commented that: "This could be improved."

Recommendation: The Chairs of the Board and its committees to note that they need to continuously bring an appropriate level of challenge to the executive leadership.

1.2 Leads on risk appetite and governance oversight

BoG: 3 scores of 4. 5 of 3. 2 of 2.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 1 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 5 scores of 4. 5 scores of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part members were satisfied that the Chair of their respective Board/Committee leads on risk appetite and governance oversight. However, a score of 2 by 2 of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent commented that: "This could also be improved."

Recommendation: The Chairs of the Board and its committees to note that they need to continuously lead on risk appetite and governance oversight.

1.2 Effectively manages leadership appraisal processes

BoG: 3 scores of 4. 5 of 3. 2 of 2.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 1 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 7 scores of 4. 3 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part members were satisfied that the Chair of their respective Board/Committee effectively manages leadership appraisal processes. However, a score of 2 by 2 of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent commented that: "There is not one. "

Recommendation: Ensure that there is a clear leadership appraisal process in place, and that the process is actioned on an annual basis.

1.2 Promotes open and constructive discussion

BoG: 5 scores of 4. 5 of 3.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 2 of 3.

AQB: 6 scores of 4. 4 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were satisfied that the Chair of their respective Board/Committee promotes open and constructive discussion.

No recommendations.

1.2 Identifies and addresses Board skills gaps

BoG: 2 scores of 4. 6 of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 1 score of 4. 2 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 4 scores of 4. 5 of 4. 1 of 2.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part members were satisfied that the Chair of their respective Board/Committee identifies and addresses Board skills gaps. However, a score of 2 by 2 of the new Governors and an AQB member indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated: "...on our board, the students need further training and understanding. Sometimes they do not complete their tenure, and a new student representative replaces them. In such cases of rotation, the new members need more training and development in light of their skill audit."

Another respondent confirmed that a skills gap exercise is conducted but the Chair is not proactive. However, the respondent would not criticise the Chair because there is a process in place. Elsewhere, at other institutions, there is a collective approach to identifying and addressing Board skills gaps.

Recommendations:

Ensure that all new student representatives receive training for their role prior to attending the Board or its committees.

The Chairs of the Board or its committees should ensure that an annual skills gap exercise and analysis is included in their schedules of business so as to ensure a proactive approach to identifying any shortage of required skills, knowledge or expertise.

1.2 Ensures appropriate training and development

BoG: 9 scores of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 3 scores of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 2 scores of 4. 7 of 3. 1 of 2.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that for the most part members were satisfied that the Chair of their respective Board/Committee ensures appropriate training and development. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicates that improvement is required.

When questioned about their needs improvement score, the responded answered they had not received training for their role.

Recommendation: Establish a set training programme for Board and committee members that includes mandatory training managed by the HR function so as to ensure that all members receive relevant training to enable them to fully fulfil their roles.

Section 1.3 Board Information and Meetings

- 1.3 Information is clear, concise, and timely
- 1.3 Board papers support effective decision-making
- 1.3 Minutes are accurate and reliable
- 1.3 Financial reporting provides meaningful insight
- 1.3 Meetings encourage participation and challenge

1.3 Information is clear, concise, and timely

BoG: 4 scores of 4. 6 of 3.

AC: 1 score of 4. 3 of 3.

AQB: 4 scores of 4. 6 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that the information that they received for their respective Boards/Committees was clear, concise and timely.

No recommendations.

1.3 Board papers support effective decision-making

BoG: 5 scores of 4. 4 of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 2 of 3.

AQB: 5 scores of 4. 4 of 3. 1 of 2.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that the Board papers that they received for the respective Boards/Committees support effective decision-making. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors and an AQB member indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated: "I rated this 2 as there is an opportunity to further enhance the quality and accessibility of Board papers. With slightly clearer summaries, recommendations and key points, papers could support members of the board to effectively prepare for meetings and contribute confidently to positive, focused and strategic decision-making."

Recommendation: Ensure paperwork provided to the Board and its committees offer clear summaries that include key points along with recommendations for decision-making purposes.

1.3 Minutes are accurate and reliable

BoG: 6 scores of 4. 4 of 3.

AC: 3 scores of 4. 1 of 3.

AQB: 7 scores of 4. 3 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that the minutes they receive for their respective Boards/Committees are accurate and reliable.

No recommendations.

1.3 Financial reporting provides meaningful insight

BoG: 3 scores of 4. 6 of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 1 score of 4. 2 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 2 scores of 4. 8 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that financial reporting provides meaningful insight. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated: "My comment applies to the BoG but it is pertinent to other committees. The quality of reporting has improved significantly and is better than it was...the improvement would be in the criticality of the members and the debate."

Recommendation: Run a training session for all members regarding how to critically engage with the Board and its committees' materials so as to improve the level of criticality and debate.

1.3 Meetings encourage participation and challenge

BoG: 6 scores of 4. 4 of 3.

AC: 1 score of 4. 3 of 3.

AQB: 4 scores of 4. 6 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that meetings encourage participation and challenge.

No recommendation.

Section 1.4: Board Composition and Capability

1.4 Board has appropriate skills, experience, and diversity

1.4 Members contribute effectively using their expertise

1.4 Board has appropriate skills, experience, and diversity

BoG: 3 scores of 4. 6 of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 1 score of 4. 2 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 5 scores of 4. 5 scores of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that their Board has appropriate skills, experience, and diversity. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated: "I would refer to my earlier answer regarding skills gap identification."

Recommendation: Same recommendation as the previous recommendation that the Chairs of the Board or its committees should ensure that a skills gap exercise and analysis is included in their schedules of business so as to ensure a proactive approach to identifying any shortage of requested skills, knowledge or expertise.

1.4 Members contribute effectively using their expertise

BoG: 6 scores of 4. 3 of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 1 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 7 scores of 4. 3 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that their members contribute effectively using their expertise. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated:

"I would refer to my earlier answer regarding the improvement would be in the criticality of the members and the debate."

Recommendation: Same recommendation as the earlier recommendation to run a training session for all members regarding how to critically engage with the Board and its committees' materials so as to improve the level of criticality and debate.

Section 1.5: Board Accountability and Oversight

- 1.5 Board understands mission, values, and strategy
- 1.5 The board monitors financial performance effectively
- 1.5 The board oversees organisational performance and risk
- 1.5 The board evaluates the CEO/Principal's performance effectively
- 1.5 Board promotes effective engagement with senior management

1.5 Board understands mission, values, and strategy

BoG: 5 scores of 4. 4 of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 1 score of 4. 2 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 6 scores of 4. 4 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that their Board understands the College's mission, values, and strategy. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about the need for improvement score, one respondent commented that: "This has improved but it needs to be clear what the BoG is there for and its members. For example, the roles of the members...there is not a job descriptions or person specification for the members. There is a need to be clear about the difference between the executive and governance oversight.

Recommendation: Introduce job descriptions and person specifications for members of the Board and its committees.

1.5 The board monitors financial performance effectively

BoG: 4 scores of 4. 5 of 3. 1 of 2.

AC: 1 score of 4. 2 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 5 scores of 4. 5 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that their board monitors financial performance effectively. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated that: "It is better than it was but could still be better...there is much less to worry about regarding the reporting, it is more about the debate and decision-making."

Recommendation: This recommendation is the same as the one mentioned under 1.3 (Financial reporting provides meaningful insight) run a training session for all members regarding how to critically engage with the Board and its committees' materials so as to improve the level of criticality and debate.

1.5 The board oversees organisational performance and risk

BoG:5 scores of 4. 4 scores of 3.1 of 2.

AC: 2 scores of 4. 1 of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB:8 scores of 4. 2 of 3.

The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that their board oversees organisational performance and risk. However, a score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated that: "It is the same as the above response (i.e. "It is better than it was but could still be better...there is much less to worry about regarding the reporting, it is more about the debate and decision-making.")" Also, "Risk management has been delegated to the Audit Committee but the Board needs to ensure that it does not lose oversight".

Recommendations: This recommendation is the same as the one mentioned under 1.3 (Financial reporting provides meaningful insight) and 1.5 (The board monitors financial performance effectively). run a training session for all members regarding how to critically engage with the Board and its committees' materials so as to improve the level of criticality and debate.

The Chair of the Board should review the annual schedule of business so as to ensure that there is appropriate oversight of organisational performance and risk.

1.5 The board evaluates the CEO/Principal's performance effectively

For this statement, I have disregarded the AQB's and AC's responses as AQB and the AC are not responsible for evaluating the CEO/Principal's performance.

BoG: 3 scores of 4. 4 scores of 3. 2 scores of 2.

The average score was 3.2. This score shows that members of BoG were mostly satisfied that their board evaluates the CEO/Principal's performance effectively. However, a score of 2 by 2 of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent stated that this does not happen.

Recommendation: In line with the expectation in the new CUC Code of Higher Education Governance, the College should consider appointing a Senior Independent Governor. Part of the Senior Independent Governor's role would be to ensure that an independent review of the CEO/Principal's performance takes place. A role descriptor for a Senior Independent Governor is available in Appendix A of the Code.

1.5 Board promotes effective engagement with senior management

BoG: 4 scores of 4. 5 of 3. 1 of 2. A score of 2 by one of the new Governors indicated that improvement is required.

AC: 3 scores of 3. 1 of 2.

AQB: 4 scores of 4. 6 of 3.

Overall, 7 members gave scores of 4 and 8 gave scores of 3. The average score was 3.4. This score shows that members were mostly satisfied that their board promotes effective engagement with senior management.

When questioned about their need for improvement score, one respondent simply stated that this could be better.

Recommendation: Provide training for the Board and its members regarding their roles and responsibilities.

General comments

One respondent, when questioned about their need for improvement scores, responded in general rather than specifically to the scores, and stated:

"Thank you for the opportunity to provide more detailed feedback on areas that I rated as "Needs Improvement".

I should start by noting that the difference between 2 and 3 is defined as "Needs Improvement" and "Consistently Good" and so a 2 should not be taken as a negative but rather identifying areas where there are still things that could be improved.

Secondly, it should be noted that in the three years that I have been on the board there has been a significant improvement in the quality of governance which has been supported by the appointment of a number of strong new governors as well as the improvement in the quality of board papers and presentations from the Executive.

Effective governance is a journey and Mont Rose has taken significant steps along this journey in the last couple of years. In particular this has been supported by a

strong Vice Chair, who as a former university Vice Chancellor has been able to provide a level of rigor and robustness to governance appropriate to an OfS regulated provider. The Vice Chair's driving of effective governance oversight, monitoring risk and supporting change has been both appropriately supportive and suitably challenging. This profile of the Vice Chair has perhaps meant that the long-serving Chair has maybe not been quite as active in these topics as he was previously as he heads towards the end of his term of office. It will be important that the new Chair provides visible leadership for the Board to continue the progress of recent years.

The board papers are more timely and focused but this is a constant issue for most boards. The clearer the paper the better the discussion and use of the Board's time. For example, a clear Executive Summary outlining what is required of the board - whether to Note, Consider, Approve - is always helpful, especially where this identifies key discussion areas where it would be helpful to get a steer from the Board. For longer papers a brief cover paper drawing out these points is also helpful.

As I am not a member of Principal's remuneration committee I can't comment of the effectiveness performance reviews and whether there are clear annual objectives that are measurable with regular check-ins to assess ongoing performance."

Recommendation:

As previously noted under 1.3 (Board papers support effective decision-making), ensure paperwork provided to the Board and its committees offer clear summaries that include key points along with recommendations for decision-making purposes (e.g. to note, consider or approve). For longer papers, a brief cover paper should be provided.

Section 2: Board/ Committee Overview

For this section, the information provided from the forms was at times confusing because the respondents were not consistent in their responses to the requested information. What could be established from the responses was the following:

BoG:

- 1 The Chair during the period was Asim Aslam. His attendance was 88% with only one meeting missed due to travelling.
- 2 8 meetings took place from September 2023 to January 2026. The quorum was always met. There were 3 external members during the period. The number increased from May 2024 to 6 external members.
- 3 In terms of attendance, for the externals, it was noted that 2 externals, Rana Shahbaz and Prof David Baker, have 100% attendance. Dr Alex Bols attendance 83.3%, Mr Adam's attendance 67%, and Mr Nouman's attendance 50%. Three college staff were present at all meetings.
- 4 The total number of members increased from 8 to 11 from May 2024.
- 5 During the period, 2 student representatives took part in the meetings. It was noted that: "Out of all meetings, only on January 25 and September 2025, there was no student present." It was also noted that: "The students are taken for the duration of a year as representatives from the class or sometimes from the student union. They are elected by the student body. But sometimes they do not complete the tenure if they are busy attending the meetings." When questioned about this last sentence, the respondent confirmed that this meant that sometimes students could not attend College meetings due to family/work commitments.

Recommendation: The College to work with the student body to ensure that representatives are always available for attending the BoG and the Academic/Quality Assurance Board. Where student representatives cannot attend College meetings then alternate student representatives should be nominated and attend on behalf of the absentee.

Audit Committee:

- 1 Since March 2025, an external, Professor David Baker has been the Chair. His attendance has been 100%.
- 2 8 meetings took place during the period. Attendance was 100%. Quorum was met.
- 3 It was noted that "Asim A was the (external) member from October 23 to May 24 Prof Baker became a member on March 25 till date."
- 4 It was noted that: " There were 5 members in Oct 23, 6 members from Feb 24 to March 25, and from June 25 till now, there are 5 members."
- 5 This committee does not have student members.

Academic/Quality Assurance Board

- 1 The Principal Sayeda Zain is the Chair. Her attendance has been 100%.
- 2 There are no external members.

- 3 It was noted that: "The total members were 10 in Sep 23, Feb 24, May 24 There were 9 members in Feb 25, June 25 (because 2 staff members left the company) There are 10 members from Feb 26 because one more staff member joined.
- 4 7 meetings took place during the period. It was noted that the attendance rate for the members during the period was: "Bilal S 71.4%, Renata 100%. Pratika 100%, Fabrice 100%, Kwaku 100%, Dr Irfan 71.4%, Elizabeth 50%, Desh 100%, Umaire 100%." Quorum was met.
- 5 It was noted that: "There was no student present in Sep 23 and May 24. One student present in Feb 24 2 students were present from February 25 till February 26."

Recommendation:

- The College should consider adding one or more external members to the AQAB (e.g. non-executive or partnership managers from a validating institution) for the benefit of bringing in an external perspective to the board's activities and deliberations.
- The same recommendation made for the Bog, in that the College should work with the Student Union to ensure that student representatives attend all College Boards and Committees where students are required. Where student representatives cannot attend College meetings then alternate student representatives should be nominated and attend on behalf of the absentee.

Section 3: Board/ Committee Performance & Effectiveness

This section of the form focussed on the following:

3.1 Alignment with OfS / QAA Expectations (BOG)

Respondents were asked to place a rating on how the following items align with OfS/QAA expectations:

- 3.1 Academic Standards Oversight
- 3.1 Quality Assurance Processes
- 3.1 Student Outcomes
- 3.1 Student Voice Engagement
- 3.1 Risk Management & Governance
- 3.1 Data-Informed Decision Making

The rating scaled used was: Rating (Good /Adequate /Needs Improvement)

3.1 Academic Standards Oversight (BoG)

7 of 8 respondents rated academic standards oversight as good; 1 gave a rating of adequate. Several comments were made to support the ratings. Of particular note was:

"Academic oversight is robust; all audit reports of Pearson and AMRs are discussed."

Another statement:

"The Board demonstrates awareness of its responsibility for academic standards, with regular reporting in place. Academic metrics and external benchmarks (OfS) are reviewed to ensure compliance. Academic Standards Oversight is primarily overseen by the Academic/Quality Assurance Board, which assures the BOG that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure academic standards are met. Also, the Internal Control Evaluation is reviewed by the BOG annually, including an assessment of academic departments."

Another stated:

"For the purpose of academic oversight, the following documents are discussed and presented in the meeting: Research conference, EV reports, DAP trainings, and OfS compliance are discussed."

Taking the ratings and comments together, the majority of BoG respondents indicated that academic oversight alignment with OfS/QAA expectations is good.

3.1 Quality Assurance Processes

5 of 8 respondents rated quality assurance processes as good; 3 of 8 gave a rating of adequate. Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"Internal Controls are discussed in detail, and their evaluation is done by the audit committee."

"Well-structured processes aligned with regulatory expectations."

"Quality assurance frameworks are established and broadly aligned with regulatory expectations. Quality Assurance Processes are primarily overseen by the Academic/Quality Assurance Board, which assures the BOG that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure robust quality assurance. Also, the Internal Control Evaluation is reviewed by the BOG annually, including assessments of academic departments and quality assurance."

"The board receive and discusses the University Quality Assurance Reports, due diligence of agents and annual reports discussed, EV reports of Pearson also discussed."

Overall, the majority of BoG respondents indicated that quality assurance processes in place for alignment with OfS/QAA expectations is good. This view is supported by the outcome of the Pearson Academic Management Review Report 2025-2026 where it confirms that all quality measures are met and with which are fully complied. Furthermore, an email response

from Shabana Hussain, Buckinghamshire New University, confirmed that the annual monitoring reports from the College had been received and, notwithstanding two areas that needed development, that: "The panel noted a marked improvement in the overall standard of reports this year, with submissions demonstrating better quality and alignment with expectations. This progress reflects your commitment to maintaining high standards, and we commend you for this achievement."

3.1 Student Outcomes

6 of 8 respondents rated student outcomes as good; 1 gave a rating of adequate and 1 gave a rating of needs improvement. Several comments were made to support the good ratings, as follows:

"Students' data is also discussed."

"Monitoring is in place, with scope to strengthen tracking further."

"The Board receives information on continuation, completion, and progression. Student outcomes are mainly scrutinised in the Academic/Quality Assurance Board, which provides assurance to the BOG of adequate arrangements in place and brings to the BOG's attention issues (if any) that require BOG attention. Also, the Internal Control Evaluation is reviewed by the BOG annually, including assessments of academic departments and quality assurance."

"Annual monitoring reports are discussed for student outcome discussion."

Overall, the majority of BoG respondents indicated that the alignment of student outcomes with OfS/QAA expectations is good. However, no comments were received to explain the adequate and needs improvements ratings. When questioned about their needs improvement rating, one respondent stated: "I gave that rating because in my opinion the student reps that have been present in the meetings seemed to require a bit more training to help them understand their roles. I feel like then they'd be able to contribute to the discussions more confidently."

Recommendation: Ensure student representatives are fully trained so that they can fully deliver their roles.

3.1 Student Voice Engagement

4 of 8 respondents rated student voice engagement as good; 4 of 8 gave a rating of adequate. Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"Students are members of the board, and their opinions are taken into account as part of the decision-making process. "

"Student participation exists but consistency can improve."

"Student representation at the Board level is effective, with evidence that student perspectives are heard and considered in decision-making."

"Education and student experience reports are also discussed."

The majority of BoG respondents indicated that the alignment of the student voice with the expectations of the OfS/QAA is good. Notwithstanding that view, one respondent gave an example of where the student voice had been addressed, as follows: "...in the minutes of the AQAB meeting dated 10th November 2025, while discussing the topic of Student Retention, Completion and Progression of a few cohorts which were below the benchmark the student representatives present at that time explained in detail the student's challenges like family and job responsibilities etc which helped a lot to understand the student point of view as these issues were never highlighted in any of our internal surveys. After this discussion, it was decided that student retention and achievement should be discussed in every Teaching and Learning Committee meeting so that strategies can be developed to improve them."

3.1 Risk Management & Governance

7 of 8 respondents rated risk management and governance as good; 1 gave a rating of adequate. Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"The risk register is discussed in detail."

"Strong awareness with continuous improvements."

"A structured approach to risk management is in place, with clear reporting lines and regular review of key risks. The Board shows appropriate oversight and challenge, particularly in relation to academic and regulatory risks."

"Risk register, Internal Controls and information regarding risk management are discussed in the board meetings."

The majority of the BoG respondents indicated the alignment of College Risk Management and Governance with OfS/QAA is good.

3.1 Data-Informed Decision Making

7 of 8 respondents rated risk management and governance as good; 1 gave a rating of adequate. Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"Decisions are made on the basis of data provided. "

"Data is used, though deeper insights would add value."

"The Board makes good use of data dashboards and reports to inform strategic decisions. Information is generally clear and accessible, supporting effective oversight, although continued development of predictive and comparative data would further enhance decision-making. "

"Admission report, financial sustainability, financial returns, financial statements and forecasts are discussed with the data provided. HESES return, OfS finance return are also discussed."

The majority of BoG respondents indicated that the alignment of College data-informed decision-making with OfS/QAA expectations is good. Although, one respondent indicated that 'deeper insights would add value'.

3.2 Alignment with OfS / QAA Expectations (AQAB)

Respondents were asked to place a rating on how the following items align with OfS/QAA expectations:

- 3.2 Academic Standards Oversight
- 3.2 Quality Assurance Processes
- 3.2 Student Outcomes
- 3.2 Student Voice Engagement
- 3.2 Risk Management & Governance
- 3.2 Data-Informed Decision Making

3.2 Academic Standards Oversight

6 of 6 respondents rated academic standards oversight as good.

Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"All B conditions are reviewed. "

"Academic oversight is conducted based on internal controls, EV reports, and the Annual Monitoring Report. Annual Management Review of Pearson, etc. "

"The Board demonstrates robust oversight of academic standards, with detailed scrutiny of assessment, external examiner reports, and regulatory requirements. There is clear evidence of effective challenge and assurance that standards are aligned with sector expectations. "

"The board also discussed various academic-related strategies, such as Level 4/5 academic enhancement strategies, Condition B of the OfS, research conferences, and various digital tools to be used in teaching. "

All of the AQAB respondents indicated that the alignment of College Academic Standards Oversight with OfS/QAA expectations is good.

3.2 Quality Assurance Processes

6 of 6 respondents rated quality assurance processes as good.

Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"Discussed and reviewed."

"Maintained by the quality assurance department, which reports it in the AQAB, Teaching & Learning Committee, and Senior Staff Committee "

"Quality assurance processes are comprehensive, consistently applied, and well understood. The Board actively monitors review cycles, policy implementation, and enhancement activity, ensuring continuous improvement across programmes."

"AMR of New Buckinghamshire University and Pearson's, EV reports (Pearson), OfS quality assurance reports of other institutions, reviewing and approval of various quality-related policies, Student Retention, Completion and Progression."

All of the AQAB respondents indicated that quality assurance processes in place for alignment with OfS/QAA expectations is good. As mentioned under 3.1, this view is supported by the outcome of the Pearson Academic Management Review Report 2025-2026 where it confirms that all quality measures are met and with which are fully complied. Furthermore, an email response from Shabana Hussain, Buckinghamshire New University, confirmed that the annual monitoring reports from the College had been received and, notwithstanding two areas that needed development, that: "The panel noted a marked improvement in the overall standard of reports this year, with submissions demonstrating better quality and alignment with expectations. This progress reflects your commitment to maintaining high standards, and we commend you for this achievement."

3.2 Student Outcomes

6 of 6 respondents rated quality assurance processes as good.

Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"Oversight and issues raised."

"The data department and student services share the data for decision-making. Student continuation, completion and progression are discussed."

"The Board engages proactively with student outcomes data, including continuation, completion, and progression. Trends are regularly analysed, and targeted actions are implemented and monitored for impact."

"Student coursework submission and referral rates are also discussed."

All of the AQAB respondents indicated that the alignment of student outcomes with OfS/QAA expectations is good.

3.2 Student Voice Engagement

4 of 6 respondents rated student voice engagement as good; 2 gave an adequate rating.

Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"Need to make sure students are present."

"Students provide their views on agenda items."

"Student engagement is embedded within the Board's work, with meaningful student representation and clear evidence that feedback informs enhancements. The Board ensures student perspectives are systematically considered in decision-making."

"The board receive the information regarding student engagement activities."

The majority of AQAB respondents indicated that the alignment of the student voice with the expectations of the OfS/QAA is good. Although, one respondent noted a "Need to make sure students are present."

3.2 Risk Management & Governance

6 of 6 respondents rated risk management and governance as good.

Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"All decisions are made in light of potential risks and changes to regulations."

"Risks are clearly identified in the risk register."

"Academic risks are clearly identified, assessed, and monitored through structured processes. The Board maintains strong alignment with institutional governance frameworks and provides effective assurance to senior committees. "

"Governance evaluation plan and action points, OfS data audit is also discussed."

All of the AQAB respondents indicated the alignment of College Risk Management and Governance with OfS/QAA is good.

3.2 Data-Informed Decision Making

6 of 6 respondents rated data-informed decision-making as good.

Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"Need training to understand data more clearly, sometimes it is presented in a complex way, and it takes time to understand for accurate decision making."

"Well-presented data helps in decision-making."

"Accessible and well-presented data strongly support decision-making. The Board uses both quantitative and qualitative evidence to inform actions, with an increasing reliance on trend analysis and benchmarking to support strategic oversight."

"The admissions report for each intake is discussed in detail."

While the majority of AQAB respondents indicated that the alignment of College data-informed decision-making with OfS/QAA expectations is good, one comment indicates that some improvement is needed in the way that complex data is provided.

Recommendation:

Provide training for members regarding the understanding of complex data sets

3.3 Alignment with OfS / QAA Expectations (Audit Committee)

Respondents were asked to place a rating on how the following items align with OfS/QAA expectations:

- 3.3 Academic Standards Oversight
- 3.3 Quality Assurance Processes
- 3.3 Student Outcomes
- 3.3 Student Voice Engagement
- 3.3 Risk Management & Governance
- 3.3 Data-Informed Decision Making

3.3 Academic Standards Oversight

4 of 5 respondents rated academic standards oversight as good; 1 gave a rating of consistently good.

Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"The Audit Committee supports academic standards through oversight of institutional controls, risk management, and follow-up of actions arising from internal review. While it does not oversee academic delivery directly, it provides assurance that governance, compliance, and control arrangements are in place to identify and address issues that may affect academic standards."

"Through Internal Controls."

"The Committee receives assurance on academic standards primarily through internal reports and the annual Internal Control Evaluation. The Audit Committee owns the Risk Register, where all risks, including academic risks, are reviewed, providing a high level of confidence."

"Academic standards are assessed through internal controls and a risk register, which also covers the academic-related risks."

The majority of Audit Committee respondents indicated that the alignment of College Academic Standards Oversight with OfS/QAA expectations is good.

3.3 Quality Assurance Processes

4 of 5 respondents rated quality assurance processes as good; 1 gave a rating of consistently good.

Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"The committee contributes to quality assurance through review of internal controls, monitoring of action plans, and oversight of institutional risk and compliance processes. Matters raised through review activity are assigned to named owners and remain under committee scrutiny until sufficient progress has been demonstrated."

"Ensure that all the OfS conditions are complied with through various documentations, like the Internal Control Evaluation, Risk Register, and the use of an Excel sheet for compliance with each condition."

"The Committee receives assurance on Quality assurance processes primarily through internal reports and the annual Internal Control Evaluation. The Audit Committee owns the Risk Register, where all risks, including quality assurance risks, are reviewed, providing a high level of confidence. "

"The overall quality is assessed through the Internal Controls evaluations for all departments. "

The majority of Audit Committee respondents indicated that quality assurance processes in place for alignment with OfS/QAA expectations is good. The comments support the ratings. Furthermore, the Pearson Academic Management Review Report 2025-2026 and an email response from Buckinghamshire New University indicated that quality assurance processes in place for alignment with OfS/QAA expectations is good.

3.3 Student Outcomes

4 of 5 respondents rated student outcomes as good; 1 gave a rating of needs improvement.

Three comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"The committee considers institutional risks and control issues that may affect student continuation, completion, and progression. It receives assurance through reporting, internal review activity, and follow-up actions, thereby supporting institutional improvement in areas linked to student outcomes."

"Student outcomes are considered within broader institutional performance and risk reporting. The Committee relies on high-level data and assurance mechanisms, with scope to enhance focus on how control effectiveness impacts student success metrics. The Audit Committee owns the Risk Register, which reviews all risks, including the student outcome thresholds, providing a high level of confidence."

"It is discussed through the risk register, which includes student outcomes."

The majority of the Audit Committee respondents indicated that the alignment of student outcomes with OfS/QAA expectations is good.. However, 1 respondent gave a rating of needs improvement but did not give any explanation for the rating.

When questioned about their needs improvement rating, the respondent replied: "The board needs to be better critical friends and look more closely to the key data. E.g. continuation, completion and progression, and survey results to engender full debate."

Recommendation: Provide training for members of the Board and its committees to ensure that they are fully able to engage with the data in debate.

3.3 Student Voice Engagement

1 respondent gave a good rating to student voice engagement, 1 gave an adequate rating, 1 gave a needs improvement rating and 2 said not applicable due to students not being part of the committee.

The respondent who gave a good rating made the following comment:

"It is channeled (sic) through various mediums like surveys, class rep meeting minutes, the student union, etc."

The respondent who gave an adequate rating made the following comment:

"Student feedback is not a primary focus of the Committee, but is reflected indirectly through institutional reporting and audit reviews. There is limited direct engagement, though assurance is gained via governance and control frameworks."

The respondent who gave a needs improvement ratings stated that:

"There are no student reps on the Audit Committee. However, student reps will be involved in internal audit work."

The Audit Committee respondents seemed to be confused by this question in relation to the alignment of student voice engagement with OfS / QAA Expectations from the Audit Committee's perspective.

Recommendation: As respondents appeared to be confused by this question, the question should be clarified for the respondents in the next survey.

3.3 Risk Management & Governance

4 of 5 Audit Committee respondents rated risk management and governance as good; 1 gave a rating of consistently good. Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

"This is the committee's strongest area of contribution. The committee reviews the institutional risk register, considers findings from the internal control evaluation process, assigns actions to named owners, and monitors progress until matters are resolved or appropriately closed."

"All institutional risks are in the risk register, which is discussed."

"The Committee demonstrates strong oversight of risk management, supported by a comprehensive annual Internal Control Evaluation covering all departments and

compliance areas. Risks are clearly articulated, regularly reviewed, and aligned with the institutional risk management strategy.”

“Internal control evaluation, risk register discussed, and discussion of the use of OfS Capital grant.”

The majority of Audit Committee respondents indicated the alignment of College Risk Management and Governance with OfS/QAA is good.

3.3 Data-Informed Decision Making

4 of 5 Audit Committee respondents rated data-informed decision-making as good; 1 gave a rating of consistently good. Several comments were made to support the ratings, as follows:

“The committee’s discussions are supported by institutional data, internal review findings, risk information, and progress updates from responsible owners. This enables challenge, monitoring, and evidence-based follow-up of governance, compliance, and control matters.”

“Through well-presented data.”

“The Committee effectively uses audit findings, control assessments, and risk data to inform its decisions. Reporting is structured and evidence-based, enabling appropriate challenge and follow-up of identified issues.”

“HESA data annual financial report.”

The majority of Audit Committee respondents indicated that the alignment of College data-informed decision-making with OfS/QAA expectations is good.

3.4 Effectiveness Evaluation (narrative)

In this section of the survey, members of all of the committees were invited to comment on the following:

Evaluate:

- Clarity of purpose
- Effectiveness of meetings
- Quality of papers/data
- Decision-making

Some of the respondents gave general comments covering more than one committee, whereas some gave specific feedback on particular committees. Therefore, the analysis below presents both general and specific feedback

Clarity of purpose:

Generally and specifically, respondents all indicated that their committees had a clear purpose. One respondent for example commented:

"The purpose of the meeting is always clear, and the agenda is known. "

Another commented:

"The AQAB has a well-defined, clearly understood purpose, aligned with institutional policies and external regulatory expectations. Its role in overseeing academic standards, quality assurance, enhancement activities, and student outcomes is consistently recognised by members."

Another commented:

"An agreed annual agenda ensures that all key responsibilities are addressed, including programme review, assessment outcomes, student achievement, and regulatory compliance. The Board maintains a strong focus on safeguarding academic integrity while supporting innovation and enhancement across teaching, learning, and assessment."

Overall, no concerns were raised by any of the respondents regarding the clarity of purpose of the committees.

Effectiveness of meetings

Generally and specifically, respondents all indicated that committees were effective. One respondent made several points as follows:

"Meetings are well-chaired and focused on strategic oversight rather than operational management."

"The Board demonstrates appropriate oversight of institutional strategy, financial sustainability, regulatory compliance, and academic quality."

"Particular attention has been given during the review period to student recruitment dependency, student continuation and progression risks, workforce capability, and growth planning."

"Meetings encourage constructive discussion and challenge from governors."

"Student representatives are invited to contribute, although strengthening consistency of student representation is an area for development."

Another stated:

"The meetings are constructive, and senior staff are challenged regarding their views and decision-making."

Another important point was the input of the membership to discussions. One said:

"Each member has the freedom to put their point of view."

Another confirmed that:

"...people are challenged to achieve better outcomes."

Although one comment, while positive, suggested there might be some scope for improvement:

“Governors receive plenty of information to provide appropriate scrutiny, although they identified scope to further improve data visualisation and trend analysis to help interpret key risks and performance indicators.”

A number of comments confirmed that the agenda and paperwork are circulated before the meeting and that meetings were conducted in accordance with the agenda. One respondent stated:

“An agreed annual agenda ensures that all key responsibilities are addressed, including programme review, assessment outcomes, student achievement, and regulatory compliance.”

Another confirmed:

“AQAB meetings are well-structured, effectively chaired, and aligned with academic priorities. Agendas are designed to ensure comprehensive coverage of key quality-assurance areas, including student performance, progression, retention, achievement gaps, and external examiner feedback. OfS papers on quality and compliance are reviewed and discussed at the Board.”

However, one member of the BoG commented on effectiveness between meetings:

“The Board meets relatively infrequently and so it can be several months between meetings and so some thought be given to how governors could be better engaged between meetings. ”

In addition, the Chair of the Audit Committee commented:

“I think the Audit Committee has improved significantly over the last 12 months across all respects, especially in documentation. We need to make sure that we have all the requisite skills on the committee and provide sufficient effective challenge to the officers. We need to look at longer-term external membership to allow for greater objective input. ”

Recommendations:

For the benefit of the Board, present improved data visualisation and trend analysis to help interpret key risks and performance indicators.

To keep members engaged between meetings it is recommended that a brief ‘finger on the pulse’ report should be circulated to Board members once per month – this could be in the form of a dashboard covering core KPIs (e.g. B3 metrics, student and staff numbers) and any updates on emerging trends, institutional priorities, headline risks and sector news that may impact upon the institution.

Run a skills audit for the committees so as to ensure that all committees have the necessary required skills and expertise to collegiately but meaningfully test and challenge College Officers.

For the Audit Committee, to look at longer-term external membership of the committee to allow for greater objective input.

Quality of papers/data

There was an almost complete respondent consensus from all committees agreeing that the paperwork was of good standard, that data was of good quality and paperwork was delivered in advance of the meetings. There were many supporting comments, including:

"The quality of papers presented to the Committee is strong, supporting effective scrutiny and informed discussion. The internal control evaluation documents presented by all departments are clear and detailed, highlighting key findings and risks, enabling a qualitative assessment and issuing relevant recommendations.

Papers are circulated in advance, allowing members adequate time for review. Documentation is concise yet sufficiently detailed. Risk registers, audit reports, and financial information are presented in a structured and accessible format, enabling the Committee to monitor trends, identify emerging risks, and assess the effectiveness of controls. There is a clear emphasis on evidence-based reporting, with follow-up actions tracked to ensure accountability and continuous improvement."

"The paperwork provided to the members before the start of the meeting, based on the agenda items to be discussed, is clear, concise, and relevant. It helps in the decision-making process. The board members also get the minutes of the Academic/ Quality Assurance Board, Audit Committee, Finance and General Committee and Senior Staff Committee. All the action points are clearly mentioned in the minutes to be discussed in the next meeting."

An Audit Committee member stated:

"The paperwork is relevant and detailed, so members can get all the required information to make sound decisions. The documents circulated include financial data, risk register, and internal control evaluation."

Another commented that paperwork was improving:

"I think the Audit Committee has improved significantly over the last 12 months across all respects, especially in documentation."

However, one commented that

"Board meetings are improving with improved papers enabling better discussion. There are still improvements that could be made by ensuring that papers are always circulated a week in advance and that there is a cover paper highlighting the key things that you want from the BOG – whether that is a decision, comments or if it is for regulatory assurance."

Recommendation:

Ensure that paperwork is always circulated at least a week in advance. The institution may wish to consider a requirement to be added to the Committee Handbook regarding paperwork for the Boards. For example, the inclusion of the following statement: All board paperwork should be circulated at least five working days in advance of meetings. If paperwork is delivered past the deadline for distribution then the Chair should consider holding the paper over to the next meeting or consider whether the paper is urgent and should be considered for circulation to members for feedback with a view to taking Chair's action.

Decision-making

There is much evidence from members across the committees to show that informed decision-making is taking place following discussion at the committees. For example, members commented:

"The meetings are constructive, and senior staff are challenged regarding their views and decision-making."

"While arriving at decisions, the Board's primary aim is to ensure high quality learning experience of our students, delivery of quality teaching, timely assessments, ensuring that Diplomas awarded by us are robust. Board ensures this by meeting the overall standards as well as meeting the requirements of the Regulators and awarding bodies."

"The board makes decisions collectively, with the involvement of student representatives."

"Decision-making within the AQAB is rigorous, transparent, and firmly grounded in evidence. The Board demonstrates a strong commitment to maintaining academic standards, with decisions consistently aligned with institutional strategy and regulatory requirements."

Members actively engage in critical evaluation of data and proposals, applying appropriate challenge to ensure decisions are well-informed and balanced. Risks to academic quality and student outcomes are carefully considered throughout the decision-making process.

Decisions and their rationale are clearly documented in meeting minutes, providing a robust audit trail. The Board also ensures that agreed actions are monitored and reviewed, enabling evaluation of impact and supporting a cycle of continuous improvement."

"The board's decision-making is inclusive, evidence-based, and grounded in a clear analysis of the data and information presented."

The agenda is developed according to the requirements of TORs, and all the items are discussed critically, and the data provided is analyzed to make the right decision. The action points are mentioned in all the meeting minutes to be discussed later in the next meeting or, if required, before that time to ensure their implementation, monitoring and review. "

For the BoG, further supporting comments were received. For example:

"The BoG's terms of reference are clearly defined and developed in accordance with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Code. The meetings are attended by all participants regularly. The participants participate in discussions based on the paperwork provided to make effective decisions. The paperwork is concise and easy to understand, and it is circulated amongst all participants well in advance of the meetings, so everyone has had an opportunity to review it prior to the meetings. This, along with the discussions within the meeting, assists effective decision-making."

"The board makes decisions after detailed discussion on the provided data and paperwork."

"The Board has clear TROs and a scheduled meeting cycle. The meetings are focused on strategic oversight, and informed decisions are made."

Decision-making processes within the Board are robust, transparent, and aligned with Mont Rose College's strategic direction. Decisions are consistently evidence-based, drawing on qualitative data, analysis, and informed discussion.

Board minutes provide a clear summary of discussions, including the rationale underpinning decisions, ensuring a strong audit trail. Risk considerations are integral to the decision-making process, with governors actively exploring potential challenges and opportunities before reaching conclusions.

Decision-making is timely and forward-looking, avoiding unnecessary delays while maintaining appropriate levels of scrutiny. All governors are expected to contribute, with constructive challenge encouraged to test assumptions and strengthen outcomes.

Importantly, decisions are not treated as end points; they are routinely revisited through standard follow-up actions to assess implementation, impact, and effectiveness."

"The board's decision-making depends on detailed discussion of agenda items, review of paperwork, and thorough deliberation. The decisions are based on facts and figures provided. They are robust and clear with certain expected outcomes and follow-up actions. "

However, one of the governors noted that:

"Governors receive plenty of information to provide appropriate scrutiny, although they identified scope to further improve data visualisation and trend analysis to help interpret key risks and performance indicators. "

Further support for effective decision-making was also received from Audit Committee members, as follows:

"Decision-making is structured and action-led, with clear ownership across senior roles, including the CEO, Vice Principal, and departmental leads AQAB makes clear decisions after detailed discussions on all agenda items. Paperwork is distributed in advance for members to be prepared before the meeting."

"Decision-making is effective and evidence-based. "

"The Committee demonstrates effective, informed decision-making, grounded in evidence and aligned with its assurance role. Recommendations to the Board are well-considered, clearly articulated, and underpinned by audit findings and risk analysis.

Discussions demonstrate a high level of scrutiny, with members actively challenging assumptions and seeking clarification where necessary. Risk implications are consistently considered throughout the decision-making process.

Decisions and recommendations are clearly recorded in the meeting minutes, ensuring transparency and a robust audit trail. The Committee also monitors the implementation of agreed actions, ensuring that audit recommendations and control improvements are effectively embedded."

Recommendation:

To further improve data visualisation and trend analysis so as to help interpret key risks and performance indicators.

3.5 Chair's Summary

In this section of the survey, the three Chairs of the Committees commented as follows:

Chair of the BoG:

"During the meeting, we review the college's strategies, discuss them, and then approve them. The risk register is also discussed in detail, comprising various risks and issues. The Audit committee forwards the risk register to the board. There are student representatives on the BoG who attend meetings regularly. Their contribution and opinion are highly valued in the decision-making process."

Chair of the Audit Committee:

"See above (meaning the Chair's answers to 3.3) – I am not sure that we need to worry about student engagement on an Audit Committee. Otherwise things are going well, except we need to be much clearer about strategic direction and the Audit Committee's role."

The Chair was referring to the fact that the Chair's Summary section in the survey had a heading regarding student engagement but without an explanation as to what was being asked. An appropriate action has been set under 3.3 above.

Chair of the Academic/Quality Assurance Board

"Strategic Contribution:

As the chair of the Academic/Quality Assurance Board, my role carries significant strategic responsibilities for shaping the college's academic direction and standards to ensure long-term success. The board serves as a critical link between academic quality and institutional ambition. So, my role is guiding and helping in the development and alignment of academic policies with the college's mission, ensuring that teaching, learning, assessment, and outcomes consistently reflect high standards and sector expectations and fulfil the requirements of condition B of OfS.

I play an important role in strengthening the stakeholders' confidence (like Pearson and Buckinghamshire New University). I ensure that the board not only maintains compliance but also drives enhancement.

Key Risks/ Issues addressed:

As the chair of the board, I have to identify, monitor and mitigate a range of strategic, academic, regulatory, and operational risks. A few of them are:

a. Academic Quality Risk:

There can be a risk of inconsistent academic standards, grade inflation, and poor Internal verification. To mitigate these risks, I have developed internal controls to monitor them consistently and prevent them. These are discussed in the Audit Committee and the internal departmental meetings.

b. Regulatory Risk (Condition B)

This risk involves breaching the OfS condition and awarding bodies' (Pearson and Buckinghamshire New University) requirements. To avoid this risk, I have developed an Excel sheet to ensure the college meets all the sub-conditions of condition B. The sheet is populated by the relevant academic managers.

c. Student Outcomes risk

This risk involves poor continuation, completion and progression rates. Each academic department has its own dashboard to monitor these, and the Quality Assurance department keeps a check on each department and briefs everyone at

Teaching and Learning Committee meetings to ensure the results are in line with targets."

In addition to the Chair's comments on their Chair's Summaries, several comments were received from respondents as follows:

Regarding student engagement, the respondent noted:

"We are encouraged to participate in the discussion and give our opinion."

Regarding student engagement, another respondent noted:

"We provide our views when required."

"The strategic contribution is clearly discussed, and issues are addressed in a timely manner."

"The Board continues to make a strong strategic contribution through effective governance and oversight of institutional performance. Key risks around academic quality, student outcomes, and operational sustainability have been actively monitored and addressed. Student engagement is embedded through representation, although improving consistency of attendance will further strengthen impact."

Notwithstanding the positive comments from the members, overall, regarding the Chair's Summaries, the Chairs are clear upon the role of their committees. However, the Chair of the Audit Committee indicated that further strategic direction was needed.

Recommendations:

In the next survey, clarify for respondents what is meant by student engagement within the context of the Chair's Summary within each committee.

To provide for the Audit Committee further information on the College's strategic direction and the Audit Committee's role. For the latter, review the Terms of Reference and ensure alignment with the College's scheme of delegated authority (and articles of association, if applicable).

Section 4: Risk, Data, and Student Engagement

This section of the form focussed on the following:

4.1 Key Risks and Challenges

4.2 Student Voice and Engagement

4.3 Data and Evidence Used

4.1 Key Risks and Challenges

BoG

Respondents identified and cited the following risks and challenges for the BoG:

"The Board continued to monitor student recruitment sustainability as a key strategic risk, particularly the institution's continued reliance on agent-led recruitment and the need to further diversify direct recruitment channels. "

"Governors also discussed the operational and governance risks associated with planned student and staffing growth, including pressures relating to estate capacity, staffing capability, student support services, and maintaining academic quality and student experience during expansion."

"The Board received assurance reports relating to data governance, compliance, and internal controls. Discussions identified the need for continued improvement in staff training, data accuracy, and consistency of operational processes. "

"Governors continued to monitor retention risks, student engagement data, and intervention strategies through committee reporting and management information."

"The Board also recognised the need to strengthen succession planning and management capacity to support sustainable institutional growth and reduce operational dependency on key individuals."

"Integration between finance and academics, skill set of the board and boardroom culture, training of the student representatives to understand their role, navigating regulatory requirements, ensuring compliance with strategies, risk analysis and compliance."

"The biggest challenge both boards (SQ note: meaning BoG and AQAB) face is the ongoing turnover of student representatives. The second challenge is that in a few areas, both boards lack subject-matter expertise, for instance, in digital marketing, data protection, etc."

"The Board is still developing its approach to risk, it would be helpful to have a one-page overview of the key strategic risks, supported by a risk appetite statement for the college."

"•Student attendance and engagement consistency

•Maintaining strong student outcomes and progression rates

•Regulatory compliance and reporting requirements

•Financial sustainability and resource allocation"

"The board requires more members with other skills for college governance, such as a person with a marketing background. The board also needs succession planning."

"While robust oversight is in place, there remains an ongoing need to prioritise forward-looking strategy and long-term sustainability, ensuring the Board has the appropriate balance of skills, experience, and independence. Sustaining high levels of engagement and contribution from all governors is another challenge.

There is still a challenge in engaging students in qualitative participation in decision-making. Although the students engage, the high turnover of student representatives on the Board means there is always a transition process.

Finally, the Board must remain responsive to evolving regulatory expectations and external scrutiny, ensuring that governance arrangements continue to meet best practice standards and support continuous improvement, which is a growing challenge and a risk. "

AQAB

Respondents identified and cited the following risks and challenges for the AQAB:

"The data presented during the meetings are, at times, highly technical and not readily accessible to all participants. While the depth and rigour of such information are important, its complexity can limit broader understanding, particularly for those without a technical background. This, in turn, may reduce the overall effectiveness of the meetings, as some participants may find it challenging to fully engage with the material or contribute meaningfully to the discussion.

To address this, it would be beneficial to present data in a more user-friendly and accessible format. This could include the use of clear summaries, visual aids, simplified language, and concise explanations that highlight key insights and implications. By making information more inclusive and easier to interpret, all participants can engage more confidently and contribute effectively, ultimately supporting more informed, timely, and actionable decisions. "

"To miscalculate data and therefore present the wrong picture of the state of affairs. "

"To miss an update in specifications, delivering the wrong information to students. "

"The capacity to change the minds and practices of stakeholders to follow the changing nature of the education sector. "

"The data was distributed to all attendees, including many documents, and sometimes help is needed to understand it easily."

"The biggest challenge both boards (SQ note: meaning both BoG and AQAB) face is the ongoing turnover of student representatives. The second challenge is that in a few areas, both boards lack subject-matter expertise, for instance, in digital marketing, data protection, etc."

"A primary risk and challenge is to ensure that the board maintains a clear strategic focus on academic standards and quality improvement, without becoming overly absorbed in operational or routine programme issues. This requires consistent clarity about responsibility and priorities.

Another challenge concerns the quality, consistency, and timeliness of academic performance data. If reports are not sufficiently robust, standardised, or easy to

interpret, the board's ability to challenge performance effectively and identify trends may be limited.

There is also a risk to the effectiveness of follow-up actions. While issues may be identified through monitoring and review processes, the board must ensure that agreed actions are consistently implemented, tracked, and evaluated for impact. "

Audit Committee

Respondents identified and cited the following risks and challenges for the Audit Committee:

"Key risks and challenges discussed include the adequacy of internal controls, legal and policy readiness for OfS-related activity, maintenance and review of the institutional risk register, governance of modular delivery in line with LLE reforms, data governance and error reduction, procurement and contract management oversight, and departmental accountability for controls and compliance. "

"Ensuring growth is properly managed and fully sustainable. Ensuring sufficient capacity and skills amongst the staff,/ Making sure that staff are performing to the best effect. "

"The key risks and challenges include ensuring that the committee maintains sufficient expertise among its members to provide robust oversight and challenge. There remains an ongoing risk that limited training or experience may reduce the effectiveness of scrutiny in some important areas of the institution. The Audit Committee oversees internal controls and risk management across academics, finance, admissions, student support, data, and IT, covering a broad range of business operations that require specialised skills.

Also, emerging areas such as cybersecurity, data protection, and evolving regulatory requirements present ongoing challenges, requiring the committee to remain proactive and well-informed.

To mitigate these risks, it is important to review the required skills and to put in place strong follow-up mechanisms to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.
"

Overall, respondents from the committees presented a large number of risks and challenges for their committees. The collected key risks and challenges identified above should be looked at by their respective committees with a view to prioritising actions for those identified risks and challenges. Notwithstanding that review by the respective committees, there were some comments from across the respondents that implied a more immediate need for action, as outlined in the recommendations below:

Recommendations

Due to the complexity of data presented at committees, consideration needs to be given to how to improve member's understanding of that data. This could include training,

supporting explanatory documents regarding the meaning of the data presented, or, to present data in a more user-friendly format.

Training the student representatives to fully understand their role, and for fully engaging in their qualitative participation in College decision-making.

As a priority, work with the students to address the ongoing turnover of student representatives.

On the committees, ensure there is sufficient staff capacity and address a lack of subject-matter expertise, for instance, in digital marketing, data protection, etc. Consider bringing in external expertise to support the committees in these areas.

Address succession planning for the BoG. The Chair should be provided with a list of members along with a list of their tenure start and expiration dates. To establish the level of expertise, skills and knowledge on the Board, a skills audit should be conducted. It is particularly recommended that attention should be given to the requirements of the OfS under condition E9: Individuals, where 'key individuals' must have sufficient knowledge and expertise to ensure compliance with ongoing registration conditions and manage the provider's business plan and fraud arrangements.

4.2 How were students involved? What impact did their input have?

Respondents for the most part did not separate their answers to the two questions. Nevertheless, here are the responses:

BoG

"The Board receives assurance regarding student voice and engagement through student representatives, committee reporting, NSS outcomes, internal surveys, VLE engagement data, and other feedback mechanisms."

"Student representatives are invited to attend Board and committee meetings where possible and contribute perspectives. But often they are unable to attend."

"Wider student feedback has informed discussions relating to induction improvements, employability initiatives, and digital learning environments. "

"The Board monitors student engagement and satisfaction trends as part of its oversight and often requests evidence of how student feedback is translated into measurable improvements."

"Input has directly led to improvements in student services, inductions, digital access. New employability initiatives. Curriculum improvements."

"How were students involved?"

BOG Comprises 2 student representatives we (sic. I believe the word should be 'who') participate in the decision making process they are nominated by the student union and the class representatives committee. They are then provided training so they fully understand their role in the board meetings.

What impact did their input have?

Students have first hand experience of education in the college and can therefore provide more ground level input on students welfare, education quality, facilities, extracurricular activities, teaching standards, etcetera. They ensure that the board remains focused on students needs and thereby enhance the board's vision.

Considering their input, The IT lab and health and social care lab had been revamped, teaching standards improved, the furniture of the classes changed, and smart boards replaced."

"How were students involved?

Both BOG and AQAB have student representation who are encouraged and motivated throughout meetings to participate and share their opinions.

What impact did their input have?

Various strategies are developed, reviewed, and approved with student participation in the meetings."

"How were students involved?

It is good that students are now attending board meetings. It would be worth considering if there are helpful training events that they could attend or whether it would be worth providing them with a mentor or buddy from the current board.

What impact did their input have?

This is an evolving picture and will improve as they attend more meetings. "

"Students are involved through representation at Board meetings, typically selected through election or nomination processes.

Their input contributes to discussions on academic experience and quality improvements, although attendance has varied across meetings."

Students are part of the decision-making process.

"How were students involved? (BOG)

Student representatives attended the meeting and actively contributed to discussions on key agenda items. During the meeting, they shared student perspectives, raised concerns, and put forward suggestions for improvement based on their experiences and feedback gathered from peers.

What impact did their input have? (BOG)

Student representatives provided valuable insight into how students perceive key issues and proposed decisions. Their contributions helped governors better understand the potential impact of decisions on the student body and the wider

college community. This ensured that decision-making was more informed, student-focused, and reflective of the learner experience."

AQAB

"Students are involved and take part in decision-making, but if more training is provided to them to boost their confidence, it will be better. "

"How were students involved?

They were asked to participate in discussions and provide their point of view on a variety of topics so that we could have a more in-depth understanding.

What impact did their input have?

They helped to clarify the topics discussed, and decisions were made based on their feedback."

"The meetings are engaging." (This was a student response)

"How were students involved?

Students were involved in the meetings, but sometimes the board pushed them to contribute.

What impact did their input have ?

They came up with some ideas and information that helped them understand the problem and find a solution. "

"How were students involved?

Both BOG and AQAB have student representation who are encouraged and motivated throughout meetings to participate and share their opinions.

What impact did their input have?

Various strategies are developed, reviewed, and approved with student participation in the meetings."

"How were students involved? (Academic/ Quality Assurance Board)

Student representatives attended the meeting and contributed to discussions on key agenda items for academic quality and performance. They shared students' perspectives on teaching, learning, assessment, and support, and raised concerns based on their peers' feedback.

Students also offered suggestions to improve the quality of academic provision and the overall learning experience.

What impact did their input have? (Academic/ Quality Assurance Board)

Student representatives provided valuable insight into how learners experience academic standards and teaching practices. Their contributions helped the board better understand the strengths and areas for improvement in curriculum delivery, assessment, and support services.

This ensured that quality assurance processes were more responsive, student-centred, and directly informed by the learner experience, thereby supporting continuous improvement in academic provision. "

Audit Committee

There are no students on the Audit Committee.

Overall, respondents provided assurance that students are actively taking part in the committees and that student feedback is being taken into account in decision-making and that student feedback is having an impact, with several examples of the impact cited, for example: induction improvements, employability initiatives, digital access and learning environments, curriculum improvements, the revamp of the IT lab and health and social care lab, the improvement of teaching standards, renewed classroom furniture and smartboards. One suggestion from a member gave rise to the recommendation below.

Recommendations

Identify any helpful training events that the students could attend. While this is a helpful recommendation from the respondent, training for student representatives is usually delivered in-house by nominated members of staff. If such resource does not exist then it is recommended that a nominated College member should take on the responsibility for training student representatives. In addition, a number of resources are available to assist student engagement such as:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/sector-resources/student-engagement>

Independent Higher Education also run training for student representatives from time to time. The last event can be seen here: <https://ihe.ac.uk/events/student-representative-training-including-all-voices>

Provide the students with a mentor or buddy from the current board.

4.3 Data and Evidence Used

Respondents from the committees identified a number of different data and evidence used at their committee meetings. Data and evidence used were identified as follows:

BoG

"The Board of Governors used a range of strategic and operational data to support decision-making. This included college performance reports, student achievement and retention data, financial statements, risk registers, NSS, size-and-shape student data reports, and financial and student number forecasts. In addition, key committee MOMs were shared to support decision-making."

Other data and evidence cited by respondents included:

"NSS and internal student surveys used to track satisfaction, engagement, and accessibility improvements."

"Progression, continuation, and completion data monitored to meet OfS thresholds and used to identify at-risk students."

"CRM and marketing data for enquiry volumes, conversion rates, and channel performance."

"Internal control data for compliance reporting. "

"VLE analytics for engagement and learning behaviours."

"Data shared included NSS data, financial data, admissions data, students end of session survey, risk register and internal controls."

"There are various ways to obtain data, such as NSS, End-of-session surveys, class representative committee minutes, and the student union."

"•Student performance and progression data

•Internal quality assurance reports

•Student feedback surveys

•Attendance and engagement reports

•Financial and risk reports"

"NSS and internal student surveys are used to track satisfaction, engagement, and accessibility improvements."

On respondent commented: "There is good use of student data in Board papers. "

AQAB

"NSS data, the end-of-session survey, and reports are shared with the board to understand the student issues."

"Progression data, result data Student survey, OFS publication, Pearson publication "

"Survey, end-of-session survey, NSS."

"There are various ways to obtain data, such as NSS, End-of-session surveys, class representative committee minutes, and the student union."

"Data and Evidence Used (Academic/Quality Assurance Board) (e.g., NSS, progression data, surveys). The Academic Quality Assurance Board used academic-focused data and evidence, including student achievement and progression data, attendance and retention statistics, programme review reports, lesson observation outcomes, assessment and moderation results, and quality improvement plans. Student feedback, employer feedback (where applicable), and departmental performance

reports were also key sources of evidence used to monitor and improve academic standards. "

Audit Committee

"Evidence used includes internal control evaluation outputs, the institutional risk register, committee action tracking, OfS student outcomes information discussed institutionally, NSS and end-of-term survey feedback, and committee reporting on data issues and improvement actions. "

"There are various ways to obtain data, such as NSS, End-of-session surveys, class representative committee minutes, and the student union."

"Mainly, but not solely, financial data, which is well presented and increasingly well used, though we need to make sure that the new NED is fully integrated into the AuCo's work."

"The Audit Committee relied on assurance-based evidence sources, including internal and external reports, financial and risk management reports, compliance updates, and internal control reviews. It also considered the strategic risk register, regulatory updates, and follow-up reports on previous audit recommendations to assess the effectiveness of governance, controls, and risk mitigation processes."

Overall, a range of appropriate data and evidence was cited by the respondents which could be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes and consideration in institutional decision-making. One positive comment to note was that financial data was well presented and increasingly well used. One comment implied an action for follow-up, as follows:

Recommendation:

The Chair to ensure that the new NED is fully integrated into the Audit Committee's work.

Section 5: Recommendations and Forward Planning

This section of the form requested the following from members:

5.1 Recommendations

5.2 Forward Action Plan

5.1 Recommendations

In response to this section of the survey, respondents made the following recommendations:

BoG

"Continue strengthening Board oversight of recruitment strategy to achieve diversification and reduce institutional dependence on agent-led recruitment channels."

"Enhance governance reporting to support clearer interpretation of trends, risks, and performance indicators."

"Ensure the Board receives regular assurance regarding staff capability."

"Continue strengthening oversight of data governance arrangements, including accountability, data accuracy, and quality assurance processes."

"Maintain close Board scrutiny of growth assumptions to ensure that operational capacity, staffing, student support etc remain sustainable."

"Continue monitoring student continuation, completion, progression, and engagement risks through regular committee reporting and early intervention reviews."

"Strengthen consistency of student representation and student voice engagement within meetings."

"Expansion - requires more members with diverse experience; the board currently lacks experienced members with cybersecurity and marketing/sales backgrounds.

Certain risk items should be discussed in every BoG meeting, such as admissions, student feedback, finance, etc."

"The student representatives should receive regular training to participate in meetings effectively."

"In other Boards that I am on all Board members have to be a member of at least one sub-committee of the Board, this helps to ensure engagement in between Board Meetings. I would also consider how often it would be helpful for the Board to meet. In many boards this is now up to five a year with two each in the first and second terms and one in the third term.

"•Improve consistency of student representation

•Enhance data-driven decision-making

•Strengthen board training and development

•Increase focus on measurable student outcomes"

"Increase the number of governors

Succession planning "

"To strengthen governance and align with the expectations of the Office for Students and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, the Board of Governors should ensure continuity of the student voice by assigning mentors to student governors, enabling them to contribute more effectively despite turnover. In addition, the Board should review its skills matrix annually, using a gap analysis to ensure it has the right expertise. Together, these steps will support more proactive, informed, and effective governance."

"• Schedule dedicated strategy-focused sessions to ensure that the college strategy is implemented as mentioned in the strategic plan and KPIs are achieved

- Require regular reporting on student feedback and actions taken. That means tracking the impact of actions on students' responses to student voice in policy decisions.

- Conduct regular board effectiveness reviews and ensure a diverse set of skills, including sustainability, community and industry insight, digital awareness, etc.

- The board should also develop a mini risk register to be reviewed at every board meeting, focusing on factors like student recruitment, regulatory compliance, financial pressures, etc., to have early warning indicators. "

AQAB

"In light of the observations outlined above (SQ note: meaning responses that this respondent gave to previous sections), a number of targeted and forward-looking recommendations are proposed to enhance the overall effectiveness, inclusivity, and regulatory alignment of AQAB and related committee structures.

Improving Quality and Accessibility of Papers and Data

All the required documents are accessible to the board members, so they will be well prepared before the meetings.

Embedding a Stronger Student Voice. Students are part of the board and do participate in the discussions. Apart from that, student feedback and NSS results are also discussed, but with more training, they can be more effective. "

"To monitor further the application of decisions taken during the meetings and ensure a complete resolution of issues. To provide more in-depth/accurate data to the members of the committee in advance so that they can understand properly. To involve students appropriately in the committee work. "

"Required paperwork should be presented in a simple manner for everyone to understand it properly."

"The student representatives should receive regular training to participate in meetings effectively."

"To further strengthen its effectiveness, the Academic/Quality Assurance Board should prioritise improving data consistency and clarity across all departments by introducing standardised reporting formats. This will enhance report quality, provide a clearer, more comparable overview of performance, and reduce the time spent interpreting data. In addition, the Board should implement a central action tracker to strengthen oversight of agreed actions, ensuring clear ownership, timely completion, and greater assurance that actions deliver their intended impact. Together, these improvements will support more efficient processes, stronger monitoring, and more informed decision-making. "

"• Develop an annual enhancement plan with clear priorities. There should be an academic risk register to be reviewed in each meeting. Although the curriculum is not designed by MRC (it's Pearson's or Buckinghamshire New University's [sic]), a curriculum innovation framework should still be developed to ensure the current curriculum remains aligned with industry and employability needs. This framework should be annually discussed and reviewed. "

Audit Committee

"Continue to strengthen institutional risk governance by maintaining robust action follow-up, completing the legal review of policies, embedding the revised risk register and archive arrangements, progressing data governance and error reduction activity, and ensuring that committee membership and external challenge capacity remain sufficient."

"To enhance its effectiveness, the Audit Committee could strengthen its oversight of emerging and student-related risks. This includes building expertise in key areas such as cybersecurity, AI, and data protection through targeted annual training, and, where necessary, engaging external specialists to ensure informed scrutiny. In parallel, the Committee should introduce a student risk indicators dashboard to enable systematic monitoring of complaints, appeals, and safeguarding issues. By reviewing these trends annually and linking them to risk and control effectiveness, the Committee will be better placed to identify underlying issues, take timely action, and ultimately reduce risk exposure while supporting improved student outcomes. "

"• Define and review the risk appetite statement at every meeting.

- Ensure that members are experts in finance, data protection, risk, audit and higher education regulations, etc.

- In every meeting, there should be concise and impactful reporting on risks and control weaknesses, progress on internal and external audit recommendations. The audit committee should be challenging, forward-looking, and outcome-driven."

Recommendation

Under this section (5.1 recommendations), the collected recommendations identified above should be looked at by their respective committees with a view to prioritising actions for those identified recommendations.

5.2 Forward Action Plan

In this part of the survey, respondents were asked to fill-in a forward action plan. Not all members completed their plans - of those who did, the plans were combined by committee as shown overleaf.

BoG

Action	Responsible	Deadline	Success Measure	Comments
Expansion	BoG Members	Dec-26	Regular skill audit of the BoG to ensure all skills are present in the board members	To report at the next BoG meeting
Risk	BoG Members	Sep-26	To identify and deal with the risk at an advanced stage	To report in the next BoG meeting
Training of student representatives	Principal	Sep-26	Better Participation	Will be proposed in next BOG meeting
Improve student engagement	Board / Management	Ongoing	Consistent student attendance	
Enhance data reporting	Management	Next cycle	Improved insight quality	
Board training	Chair	Annual	Skills gap reduction	
Strengthen risk reporting	Audit / Board	Next cycle	Clear risk visibility	
Increase the number of governors	Chair of BOG	Dec-26	Better discussion and decision-making	
Succession planning	Chair of BOG	Dec-26		
Strengthen Student Voice Continuity	Board mentor to each student governor	Sep-26	Assigning and mentoring the students entering BOG. Success Measure: increased student participation in the Board meetings.	Will be proposed in the next BOG meeting

Board skills matrix reviewed annually	BoG Members	May-27	Scrutinised BOG skills with gap analysis	Will be proposed in the next BOG meeting
dedicated strategy-focused sessions	BoG Members	Dec-26	Achievement of KPIs as mentioned in the strategic plan	To report at the next meeting
regular reporting on student feedback	BoG Members	Sep-26	Positive student	To report at the next meeting
regular board effectiveness reviews	BoG Members	Jul-27	Required skill set present in the board	To report at the next meeting
develop a mini risk register	BoG Members	Sep-26	To mitigate the risks through early warning indicators	To report at the next meeting

AQAB

Action	Responsible	Deadline	Success Measure	Comments
For student engagement, more training is required	AQAB	Within 2–3 months	Active student participation recorded in minutes; improved student satisfaction	Align with OfS Condition B requirements
Provide brief training or guidance for members on interpreting key data	Data/Quality Team	Within 3 months	Improved confidence in data interpretation; more informed discussions	Focus on non-technical stakeholders
provide more in-depth/accurate data	Renata Kaireine	Jul-26	The amount of data presented to the committee	

Monitor further the application of decisions	Sayed Zain	Jul-26	Every decision taken is implemented within 3 months	
involve students	Imran Bilal	Jul-26	Students present at the committee meeting	
Sharing documents	AQAB Secretary	For next meeting	To receive the required paperwork in a simple, concise and clear way	
Training of student representatives	Principal	Sep-26	Better Participation	Will be proposed in next BOG meeting
Improve Data Consistency & Clarity. Ensure consistency across departments.	AQAB	May-27	Improved report quality and recommendations	Reduce time analysing, provide a consistent overview of data
Strengthen Action Monitoring. Create a central action tracker.	AQAB	May-27	Improved action oversight and assurance that all actions met the intended deadlines	Improve smooth actions.
annual enhancement plan with clear priorities	Quality Assurance Manager	Sep-26	Better student achievement	Focus on academic staff CPD
academic risk register	Quality Assurance Manager	Sep-26	Better student outcomes and feedback	Increase oversight of the risk factors
curriculum innovation framework	All Programme leaders	Sep-26	Good progression rate	Better employers connections

Audit Committee

Action	Responsible	Deadline	Success Measure	Comments
Annual review schedule for the risk registers to be implemented	Vice Principal		Completed	
Create archive section for risks remaining at blue status for more than 12 months				
Commission higher education-experienced legal review of policies prior to OfS submission	Vice Principal		Completed	
Advertise non-executive Audit Committee member position by July 2026	CEO		In progress	
Strengthen procurement and contract management oversight and improving value-for-money reporting	Vice Principal		In progress	
Strengthen data governance, reduce tolerance-threshold errors, and improve institutional data culture	Data Department		In progress	

Strengthen Expertise in Emerging Risk Areas like: Cybersecurity, AI and Data protection	Audit Committee	May-27	Annual targeted training programme attended, or external specialists' advice used where needed	Increase oversight of emerging risks
Develop a student risk indicators dashboard. Annual review of: Complaints; Appeals; Safeguarding issues	Audit Committee	May-27	Reduced overall complaints, appeals and issues, after enhanced scrutiny on areas of risk.	Increase oversight of emerging risks
Define and review the risk appetite statement	Audit committee members	Sep-26	Better scenario planning	Mitigation of risk
Ensure that members are experts	Audit committee members	Dec-26	Better decision-making	Improve performance

Recommendation

Under this section (5.2 Forward Action Plan), the collected plans identified above should be looked at by their respective committees with a view to prioritising actions and to see whether collectively the committees agree with the proposed plans, deadlines, success measures and nominated owners of actions.

Section 6: Overall Board & Committee Reflection

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked about:

- Strengths
- Areas for improvement
- Future Priorities

Strengths

"Clear governance and committee structures with defined Terms of Reference and reporting lines."

"Strong awareness of regulatory requirements and continued alignment with OfS expectations and compliance obligations."

"Good oversight of financial sustainability, risk management, academic quality, and student outcomes."

"Governors receive detailed information and engage in constructive discussion and challenge during meetings."

"Integrated approach to oversight across strategy, data, student engagement, compliance, and operational risk."

"Established internal control, audit, and monitoring processes across departments and committees."

"AQAB demonstrates a clear commitment to maintaining regular meetings and ensuring that core governance processes are in place. The Chair provides structured and effective leadership, helping to keep discussions broadly aligned with the agenda and ensuring that key issues are addressed in an organised manner."

"There is also evidence of a willingness to engage with complex academic and operational data, reflecting a strong foundation for evidence-based governance. In addition, formal decision-making processes are consistently followed, which supports procedural compliance and institutional accountability."

"Despite the challenges identified, the existence of established AQAB structures provides a solid platform for further enhancing quality assurance and oversight of academic standards. "

"Cooperation, synergy of competence and ideas....."

Meets regularly and take action whenever required.

Great brainstorming of ideas for quality improvement, and actionable decisions were made. "

"The committee is very efficient in reflecting on operational results, tracking, and dealing with issues in the College. As every member of the academic departments is involved, it is far-reaching and has a true impact on the success of MRC. "

"The committee demonstrates structured risk oversight, strong action ownership, and a consistent practice of retaining issues on the agenda until resolution. It provides a useful institutional challenge through internal control review and supports continuous improvement across multiple departments. "

"Experienced board members with relevant educational, legal, and business backgrounds, supported by student representatives, is a diverse mix which combines financial and educational expertise to manage the complexity of the college. Timely data/ reports distribution provides board members with certainty and assists in informed decision making."

"All the TORs are developed according to the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) code and are well-defined, well-structured, and well-organised. "

"RE Both AuCo and BoG – Good membership, well serviced by the officers. Key strategic items well logged and identified"

"The Board had strong board members with good experience but I wonder whether we could make more use of them. "

"•Strong governance framework

•Effective leadership and chairing

•Clear strategic alignment"

"Strong leadership Good strategic oversight "

"The governance framework across the Board of Governors, the Academic/Quality Assurance Board (AQAB), and the Audit Committee closely aligns with the Office for Students' expectations. There is a clear purpose, with well-defined Terms of Reference, structured agendas, and consistent adherence to governance responsibilities. Meetings are well organised, effectively chaired, and supported by high-quality papers and data, enabling informed, evidence-based decision-making. Risk management and internal control processes are robust, particularly within the Audit Committee, while the AQAB demonstrates strong oversight of academic standards and student outcomes. Student voice is positively embedded at Board and AQAB levels, and overall, there is a culture of constructive challenge, accountability, and continuous improvement. "

"The overall performance of all boards and committees has improved significantly with each passing year. The members join the meetings well prepared and challenge the college officials present during discussions. All boards and members have clear TORs developed in line with the CUC code. The chairs of the boards conduct the meetings in a well-structured manner, and the discussions and topics are mainly aligned with the OfS regulatory requirements. Apart from the regulatory requirements, some other areas are also discussed to improve the overall performance. Like the development of the research Centre, publishing articles in the college journal, and conducting research conferences every year. These are not the regulatory requirements for the college, but as the college's future plan is to apply for DAPs, it has started developing and enhancing the research culture within the organisation. The students' voices are present on both boards, even with a high turnover rate, and board members encourage them to take part in relevant discussions. The data is presented in such a way that the members will be able to make an informed decision. "

Areas for Improvement

"Further strengthening of data governance – data visualisation and consistency of reporting to make it easier for governors to digest."

"Greater consistency of student engagement and student representative participation within governance meetings."

"Continued development of staff capability, compliance understanding, and training in key operational areas."

"Closer monitoring of recruitment to achieve objectives of reduced reliance on agent recruitment and greater diversification of recruitment channels."

"Stronger succession planning and workforce planning to support sustainable growth."

"Continued monitoring of growth plans to ensure operational capacity, student experience, and quality standards are maintained."

"Better student engagement, supported by more training, is required to ensure meaningful student participation and representation in decision-making processes. In addition, the complexity of data presented in meetings can limit accessibility and engagement for non-technical members, reducing the overall effectiveness of discussion and informed decision-making. "

Improve the quality of data provided before the meeting for good decision-making."

"To plan further ahead, the meetings should allow enough time to prepare and research ideas."

"The main improvement needed is the completion and closure of the substantial action set already identified. Further strengthening would also come from continued improvement in data governance, legal/policy review assurance, and evidence of measurable impact from committee-driven actions. "

"The skill set of the board is to be expanded to achieve diversification and perspectives that will enhance constructive criticism. This will help reduce risks by filling skills gaps.

Risks to be identified at an advanced stage and dealt with in every meeting."

"More members should join the board in accordance with the MRC's skill requirements. Specially Member's with Digital Skills. "

"Need to be better at prioritization and focusing on the things that only the BoG/AuCo can talk about and determine. Making sure meetings are properly channeled and chaired"

"•Consistency in student participation

•Deeper use of data for decision-making"

"While governance arrangements are effective, there are areas for further development. Academic oversight at the Board level could be strengthened by increasing direct scrutiny of academic standards and student outcomes, rather than relying primarily on committee assurance. Student voice continuity remains a challenge due to turnover in student representatives, which can affect engagement consistency. Data consistency across departments also requires improvement to

ensure clearer, more comparable reporting and to reduce time spent analysing information. Additionally, the Audit Committee would benefit from greater visibility into how risks and controls directly impact student outcomes, as well as from strengthening expertise in emerging areas such as cybersecurity, AI, and data protection. "

"Although the overall governance is effective, there are still some areas that need improvement. Like the students required more training to be more productive, to participate and give their opinion when required. The meeting documentation should improve further. The induction process for new members should also be improved. "

Future Priorities

"Maintain effective governance oversight of sustainable institutional growth and financial resilience."

"Continue strengthening Board assurance processes relating to student outcomes, retention, progression, and student experience."

"Enhance governance visibility of recruitment diversification."

"Continue improving data governance and management reporting."

"Ensure governance and committee structures continue evolving in line with institutional growth and regulatory expectations."

"Strengthen long-term governance resilience through succession planning, governor development, and ongoing review of Board effectiveness."

"Improving the accessibility and presentation of data should also be prioritised, with greater use of summaries, visual dashboards, and simplified reporting to support inclusive understanding."

Enhancing student voice and engagement remains a critical priority "

"To carry on providing a constant oversight of quality assurance management and propose improvements to further improve practices and set the highest standards "

"To find students who could engage and participate in the committee. "

"Future priorities should include completion of current internal control actions, risk register maturity, improved value-for-money and contract oversight, and continued strengthening of data quality and institutional control culture. "

"Achieve degree awarding powers (DAP)."

"Digital Skills and having a background in the future industry requirements."

"Strategic Plan formulation and implementation"

Decision on DAPs/NDAPs

Brand identity and positioning

Portfolio development

Partnerships"

"•Strengthening student outcomes

•Enhancing governance through better data use"

"Key priorities moving forward include strengthening continuity of student voice through structured mentoring and enhancing Board capability through annual skills matrix reviews and targeted recruitment or training. Introducing a "red flag" escalation process will support more timely identification and management of critical risks. For the Audit Committee, developing expertise in emerging risk areas and implementing a student risk indicators dashboard will improve oversight and responsiveness. The AQAB should focus on standardising data reporting and implementing a central action tracker to ensure effective monitoring of improvement actions. Across all committees, there should be a continued shift towards more forward-looking, data-driven, and impact-focused governance. "

"Applying for DAPs is one of the college's strategic aims; therefore, more stringent quality assurance processes and strict governance will be required. The data needs to be more accurate, concise, and to the point for clarity in decision-making. All departments should develop their own dashboard to have updated information ready whenever required. New staff should receive training on data use. There should also be a process of succession planning for the board and committee members."

Additional Comments (including low ratings)

"MRC has improved significantly in recent years, and the organization is well set for future development, but much remains to be done, not least in terms of governance. But there are some good people about, and with the right leadership and support at senior levels, the College can really go places!"

"I have only been a Non-Executive Director for a short period and have joined just one Board meeting. However, I was impressed by the induction arrangements and the quality of the papers provided for the meeting. Staff have also impressed me with their professionalism, understanding of the educational and governance environment and their focus on the student interest.

My responses in Section 1 are based on my perceptions, given my very restricted experience of Board meetings (just one meeting to date), and consequently, I do not feel able to comment in detail on the issues raised in this review. However, I am confident that my experience as a NED with MRC will be positive. "

"The Board is functioning effectively with a strong governance culture. Continued focus on data, student engagement, and governance maturity will further enhance its impact."

"Overall, the governance structure is mature, effective, and well-aligned with regulatory expectations, with strong foundations across all committees. Attendance and engagement are generally high, particularly among senior leaders and committee chairs, which supports effective oversight and decision-making. Sustaining this effectiveness will require ongoing attention to succession planning, skills development, and evolving regulatory requirements. Strengthening integration between committees, enhancing the use of predictive data, and ensuring actions are consistently tracked and evaluated for impact will further support long-term sustainability and continuous improvement. "

"Although at the moment the governance is very effective and well managed. But there needs to be more interaction between various committees and boards to have clarity about various topics discussed. The students require more training concerning their roles and responsibilities. There should be a robust tracking system of the action points of each committee and board."

Recommendations: Under this section (6: Overall Board & Committee Reflection, covering strengths, areas for improvement and future priorities), the collected comments should be considered by their respective committees to ensure that: a) where strengths have been identified that these remain strong; b) areas for improvement are effectively addressed; c) future priorities are collectively agreed and appropriate actions set to address those confirmed priorities, and d) the additional comments are taken into account when reflecting upon a, b and c.

Chapter 2: Review of the Minutes for the Board of Governors (BoG), the Audit Committee (AC) and the Academic/Quality Assurance Board (AQAB)

Minutes

Board of governors

Minutes were received for the following years:

2023: 20th January, 18th May, 18th October

An action noted in the minutes of the 20th January 2023 is: "Dean of Studies To provide feedback on AMR by 28th February 2023." This is not reported on in the minutes of the 18th May 2023.

Recommendation:

Ensure that actions from minutes are properly tracked and followed up from meeting to meeting, or provide an explanation in the minutes regarding the current status of an action.

2024: 7th February 2024, 3rd May, 24th September

Date of meeting: May 3 2024

2025: 16th January, 16th May, 26th September

2026: 16th January

Date of meeting: May 8 2026

Overall

The BoG minutes were of a good written standard. Schedules of business were followed and appropriate discussions were held on appropriate agenda items. However, in the meeting of 3rd May 2024, there is a contraction used (it's), there are no page numbers, and academic convention is not being followed regarding acronyms. It would also be helpful to have a list of acronyms for the benefit of naïve readers. Also, the way that the minutes are written it is hard to see how the agenda (at the beginning of the minutes) is being followed; this could be improved by simply adding the reference numbers of the paperwork from the schedule of business to the appropriate item in the minutes. Furthermore, according to the minutes of 7th February 2024, it states: "The Strategic Plan is a work in progress for 2023-2028; it will be completed by November 2025." It was not produced for the meeting but several strategies were. A note on the agenda said "Strategic Plan (expected approval August 2026)".

Recommendations

Ensure that minutes presented follow formal convention. To facilitate expectations for the writing of minutes, add a section to the Committees Handbook which covers: house style, format of papers and reports, and expected standards for distribution and turnaround times of paperwork.

Papers referenced in the schedule of business should be clearly referenced in the minutes so that readers can clearly see the agenda was followed and discussions were appropriately informed by the referenced papers.

Where an action, plan or a paper has not met the noted deadline for a committee then an explanatory note should be added to the minutes of the following meeting and a new action/deadline should be set.

Audit committee

Minutes were received for the following years:

2023: 27th July and 11th October

2024: 21st February, 23rd May, 27th November

2025: 26th March, 25th June, 7th Oct, Audit Committee Working Group Minutes of the Meeting dated 12th November 2025 (SQ: not a committee meeting)

2026: 28th Jan, 18th June 2026

The AC minutes were of a good written standard. Schedules of business were followed and appropriate discussions were held on appropriate agenda items. In 2024, the composition of the committee was appropriately reset when Profession David Baker, an independent member, took over the Chair on 25 June 2024. At the meeting of the committee on 23rd May 2024, the actions reported on do not directly correspond with the actions from the previous meeting...they have been addressed but it is hard to follow.

Recommendation:

For easy referencing and monitoring of actions, add an action grid that summarises the actions from a meeting to the end of minutes so that the actions can be easily identified and checked. For the following meeting, add those committee actions to an action report grid for presentation alongside the previous minutes. This action report grid should show: the action and its number, the owner, whether an action has been closed, completed, open and ongoing or reassigned, and finally an updates/notes column.

Academic/quality assurance board

Minutes were received for the following years:

2023: 16th Jan, 16th May, 21st September

2024: 15th February, 30th May,

2025: 3rd February, 25th June, 10th November

2026: 19th February

The AQAB minutes were of a good written standard. Schedules of business were followed and appropriate discussions were held on appropriate agenda items. At the meeting held on 3rd February 2025, the minutes are informal under item 5 and there is an unclear statement under item 8, as follows: "The Principal distributed **another** batch of policies to be reviewed and approved by the board members." It would be helpful to the reader of the minutes to include full information regarding which policies were being reviewed, and also a note on whether the additional papers were approved or not.

At the meeting held on 10th November 2025, there is mention of the Teaching and Learning Committees. However, there is no mention of the Teaching and Learning minutes being received by any of the AQAB minutes across the years reviewed from 2023-2026. For good practice, the AQAB should be receiving, and discussing minutes and actions from the Teaching and Learning Committees and any other of its reporting committees. In addition, under item 7. the AMR of Bucks New University notes: "The Principal reported that the AMR of the university has been approved by the university board." While it is right and proper for the Principal to make such a note, it would be helpful to the AQAB to note whether there are any recommendations, commendations or key actions arising from the report.

Recommendations:

Ensure that formal language is used for the reporting of agenda items.

In the minutes, rather than using broad language such as a 'batch of policies was received', ensure that specific references are made to documents received and specific outcomes are noted for each document. For example, the following policies were received and approved: (then list the policies).

Ensure that AQAB reporting committees provide minutes to the AQAB for noting, discussion or analysis.

Ensure that when key documents are presented to the AQAB that any commendations, actions or recommendations are duly noted.

Overall comments regarding the committees and the paperwork received for the review.

For this review, minutes for the Board of Governors, the Academic/Quality Board and the Audit Committee were reviewed. The reviewer also received full packs of paperwork for each of the most recent meetings of the Board each of its committees. As mentioned under the sections above, all of the minutes were of a good written standard. Schedules of business were followed and appropriate discussions were held on appropriate agenda items.

Notwithstanding that comment, some recommendations for enhancement of the minutes have been suggested above for each of the committees. Regarding the paperwork for the Board and its committees, the paperwork was of good standard and each paper had a reference number. Notwithstanding that comment, recommendations have been made elsewhere in this report requesting that some papers should require supporting papers to help explain the data presented.

Chapter 3: Findings regarding the CUC Code of Higher Education Governance 2026

This chapter did not feature as part of the scope of review, however, as an updated version of the CUC Code of Higher Education Governance 2026 had just been recently published, it was used as an additional lens for the review to provide further reflection for the College. As the Code was not the focus for the review, only limited evidence was available from the documents and survey responses provided so recommendations have been set accordingly.

Based on the findings from the previous chapters, this section of the report provides an opinion as to whether the College meets the expectations of the updated CUC Code of Higher Education Governance 2026 (**the Code**). Simply put, the Code is:

“Code is split into principles and provisions. Principles set out the overarching goals of the Code, whilst Provisions set out the individual actions institutions take to deliver these goals. Provisions expressed as **must** set out minimum expectations, required to claim compliance with the Code. Provisions expressed as **should** require the Board to exercise judgement, having regard to the Institution’s context and circumstances. As a result of the diversity of the sector, there will be cases where the Board chooses to take a different approach to **should** provisions – such as where an institution is particularly small, less complex or specialist. This does not necessary imply any failing of governance and should not be treated as a lower standard. In this case, institutions must publish a compelling rationale for their approach so that their stakeholders can understand how their approach complies with the intent of the relevant Principle of the Code. Explanations should be clear, specific, concise and informative, enabling stakeholders to understand how governance arrangements operate. (pg.6)

There are 6 provisions which the College needs to meet. These are:

1. Institutional Leadership and Purpose
2. Culture and behaviours
3. Strategy, Sustainability, Risk and Assurance
4. Board Structure and Composition
5. Academic Governance
6. Board Development and Performance

The evidence provided including the minutes, board paperwork, the survey responses, checklist for the appointment of Governors, the Committee Handbook, the Committee Terms of Reference, the Governor Skills Matrix and the Risk Register have all been considered with regard to each of the provisions that are addressed below.

1. Institutional Leadership and Purpose

Purpose and values

The evidence provided, nor the College website, did not show how the Board articulates and publishes the Institution’s purpose and values in accordance with its governing documents.

It could not be established from the evidence how the Board ensures that major decisions are aligned with the Institution's purpose and values and support the delivery of the institution's strategy on a sustainable basis.

Recommendation: The Board needs to publish the Institution's purpose and values in accordance with its governing documents.

Leadership

From the documents provided, it would appear that there is an appropriate leadership team in place and that the institution understands its stakeholders, and students, so as to ensure decision-making is underpinned by those stakeholder perspectives. However, it is not clear whether there is robust succession planning in place for the Head of Institution and key executive roles.

Recommendation: Ensure that there is robust succession planning in place for the Head of Institution and key executive roles.

2. Culture and behaviours

Conduct

The evidence did not show that the College has a Board Code of Conduct.

Recommendation: Ensure that the College has a Board Code of Conduct.

Culture

Evidence from the minutes and the respondents to the survey show that all members are encouraged to take part in respectful and collective discussion and decision-making and that there is a good 'tone' set by the Chairs of the Board and its committees. The Chairs appear to be role modelling and fostering a culture of integrity, openness and accountability. The evidence does not show whether a register of the interests of members and executives is maintained, checked or published. It is not clear that there is an appointed senior independent Board member – this has already been covered in an earlier action.

Recommendations: Ensure that there is a register of the interests of members and executives that is maintained, checked and published.

Ensure that the Key Roles and Responsibilities set out in Appendix A of the Code are understood and applied.

3. Strategy, Sustainability, Risk and Assurance

The documents required for meeting this part of the Code were not provided as they were outwith the remit of the review. However, the Risk Register was seen and it is fit for purpose.

Recommendation: The Board should consider section (3. Strategy, Sustainability, Risk and Assurance) of the Code in its entirety to ensure that the requirements are being met.

4. Board Structure and Composition

The documents required for meeting this part of the Code were not provided as they were outwith the remit of the review. However, there is a requirement that there is an independent Chair and it is clear that is not the case.

Recommendation: The Board should consider section (4. Board Structure and Composition) of the Code in its entirety to ensure that the requirements are being met. Additionally, to meet the requirements of the Code the Board **must** appoint an independent Chair.

5. Academic Governance and Academic Risk Management

Academic Governance and Assurance Framework, and Academic Risk Management

The documents required for meeting this part of the Code were not provided as they were outwith the remit of the review. However, the Board's Risk Register does contain academic related risks such as Student Focussed Risks.

Recommendation: The Board should consider section (5. Academic Governance and Academic Risk Management) of the Code in its entirety to ensure that the requirements are being met.

6. Board Development and Performance

Development

There is an induction process for Board members but the review showed that there is some inconsistency in that experience for all members but a recommendation has already been made to cover that inconsistency. A recommendation has also been made regarding training for members of the Board and its committees.

Performance

The evidence for the review did not cover: a) the Chair undertaking an annual review of each Board members performance and engagement, informed by feedback and including a consideration of their compliance with the Code of Conduct; b) the Chair's performance and compliance with the Code of Conduct being reviewed annually by the Senior Independent Board Member where one is in place, or another independent board member, nor c) the Board undertaking an annual self-assessment of its performance. A recommendation has been made for b) the appointment of a senior independent member.

Recommendations: Ensure that the Chair undertakes an annual review of each Board members performance and engagement.

Ensure that the Board undertakes an annual self-assessment of its performance.

End