

CASPIAN SCHOOL OF ACADEMICS (CSA)
Meeting of the Board of Governors
held on 11 December 2025 between 10.00 - 11.45 online

GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE		Lead
1.	<p>Welcome & introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed all attendees, and noted the presence of several new board members. Each participant introduced themselves, summarising their professional backgrounds <p>Apologies: Phil Ingamells was unable to attend</p>	Chair WM
1.1	<p>Declaration of Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone confirmed no conflicts of interest. Andrea declared no conflict of interest; however, she noted her involvement in the employee engagement strategy <p>Prevent Duty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Prevent-related incidents reported in the past 12 months. Systems in place for vetting guest speakers and external visits. <p>Risk Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated risk register to be presented at next board meeting. Action: Add Risk Register review to next agenda. 	All
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes approved subject to minor formatting corrections. Suggestion: Future minutes should list the names and roles of presenters 	All
2.	<p>Changes to the Organisation Structure and new staff roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New roles appointed/in process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Manager (Dom) Partnerships Manager (Rehnuma) Two new Programme Managers (IT/Analytics and Business/Management) English Language specialist (recruitment ongoing) Increased academic management required due to upcoming university partnerships. The board noted the importance of clarity and visibility for students regarding module leaders and programme contacts. 	Principal MH



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FU emphasised updating the risk register to reflect structural changes 	
3.	<p>Recent Developments at CSA</p> <p>6.2 University of West London (UWL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Academic Partnership approval was held on 20th October. Three conditions issued relating to compliance, agent management, and premises clarification. All evidence submitted by the end of November. Programmes taken forward for approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BSc Cybersecurity Progression for NCFE Level 4 Cybersecurity BSc IT Management for Business Progression for NCFE Level 4 Data Analyst UWL slow to respond; delays likely to push intake from January to post-Easter or September. Conditions linked to the Approval to Deliver have been actioned and evidence submitted. Awaiting confirmation on use of Blackboard and English proficiency arrangements. Expected student numbers: 100–150. Challenges with Claude Littner Business School which may lead to the possible withdrawal from business-related proposals. These will be followed up as a matter of urgency. <p>Key Discussion Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSA is currently targeting home students only; no Tier 4 international recruitment planned. Market analysis for student numbers has been completed and submitted as part of partnership approval. Derby expects 85% pass rate; CSA expects 90% retention. The Board emphasised financial sensitivity to student recruitment and partner timelines. FU requested clarity on contractual consequences of missing minimum student numbers. Update Risk Register to include staffing changes, new partnerships, and recruitment risks. <p>Update on OFS Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OFS audit (conducted in May) still pending final report. OFS lead auditor apologised for delays. 	Principal MH



	<p>Post-16 Skills & Education White Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overview of upcoming sector reforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employer-led curriculum ○ Growth in short courses and apprenticeships ○ Emphasis on digital delivery and employability pathways ○ New Skills England body ○ Renewed focus on regional skills partnerships ● CSA implications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen employer partnerships ○ Increase digital resources and blended learning ○ Prepare for B3 metric scrutiny ○ Explore lifelong learning pathways for adult learners ● Noted similarities between 2021 and 2025 government policy cycles. 	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Student Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Three returns submitted (Annual Monitoring, Prevent, and Finance); HESA recruitment return pending. ● Recruitment targets and numbers submitted to OfS. ● Recruitment policy and agent contracts revised. ● Recruitment target for 2025/26: 609 students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 465 new entrants, remainder continuing. ● Recruitment distribution across departments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Computing & Analytics: 230 ○ Hospitality & Tourism: 164 ○ Business & Leadership: 215 including Derby top-up (40) ● Internal data verification completed monthly. <p>FU emphasised the need for data integrity and accuracy.</p>	<p>CEO MI</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Student Experience and Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall institutional retention: 91.6% ● Programme-specific highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pearson HNDs: 93%+ retention; strong satisfaction ○ Cybersecurity Level 4 (NCFE): 96% retention; 80% achievement; highly engaged cohort 	<p>Head of Teaching & Learning AN</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Construction (NOCN): 90% retention; withdrawal causes addressed; attendance improving ● Areas requiring attention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HND Leadership (Sept 24 cohort) – retention at 70% ○ Initial support including on IT skills to be increased for some cybersecurity learners ● Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diagnostic review for HND Leadership withdrawals ○ Strengthening employer links (particularly for cybersecurity placements) ○ Continue data-driven interventions ● Board requests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A unified Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) with KPIs ○ Performance tracking against B3 metrics (continuation, completion, progression) To be presented at the next Board meeting. 	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Employer Engagement and Development of CSA brand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategy focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Graduate employability ○ Regional skills alignment ○ Embedding employer engagement into curriculum ○ Building institutional credibility and student networks ● Supports government priorities and OFS value-for-money expectations. ● Full strategy to be circulated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employer partnerships ○ Innovation ecosystem ○ Curriculum integration ○ Staff development ○ Storytelling and communication 	<p>External member AW</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governors emphasised the importance of annual monitoring of agent performance.• AW asked about the current agent management policy and how agents are being monitored. MH explained that performance review forms exist and that additional monitoring measures are being considered.• BH suggested implementing a formal annual agent review process.• FU recommended centralising all agent reviews in one place for better tracking and consistency.	
7.	<p>Audit, Internal Control and Risk Management Committee Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A brief update was provided on the risk assessment activities. A detailed report will be presented at the next Board meeting.	External Member - FU
8.	<p>Agree items for the next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agent Performance Review• Matrix Plan / B3 metric tracking• Risk Assessment/ Risk Register to be amended• Action plan / action log to be implemented. <p>Next Meeting Schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12th March (Thursday) at 10:00 AM – Online• Following session (June/July) – On campus (exact date TBD)	All

Attendees:

Wilayat Malik (WM) – Chair

Muhammad Iftikhar (MI) - CEO

Mandy Hobart (MH) – Principal

Dr Phil Ingamels (PI)- External member

Ms Fozia Uddin (FU) - External member

Ms Andrea Ward (AW)– External member

Dr Anjum Naz (AN) - Staff Member & Head of Teaching and Learning

Mr Bob Hariss (BH) – External member

TBC - Student member

CSA staff in attendance:

Head of HR, Head of Student Services, Head of Administration, Registry & Compliance Manager, Quality Manager and Partnerships Manager shall be in attendance but not full Board Members.

Raman Sidhu - Secretary to the Board