

CASPIAN SCHOOL OF ACADEMICS (CSA)
Meeting of the Board of Governors
held on 12 March 2026 between 10.00 – 12.00 online

Attendees:

Mr. Wilayat Malik(WM) – Chair
Mr. Muhammad Iftikhar(MI) - CEO
Ms. Mandy Hobart(MH) – Principal
Ms Fozia Uddin(FU) - External member
Ms Andrea Ward(AW) – External member
Mr Bob Harris(BH) – External member
Dr Anjum Naz(AN) - Staff Member & Head of Teaching and Learning
Mr. Jey Surresh(JS)- Student member
Ms. Raman Sidhu(RS) - Secretary to the Board

CSA staff in attendance:

Mr. Chi Tan(CT) – Head of Business Department
Mr. Tanveer Ahmad(TA) – Head of IT and Data Analytics Department
Mr. Noman Hameed(NH) – Student Recruitment Manager
Ms. Tahira Yasmin(TY) - Head of HR

Apologies

Dr Phil Ingamels(PI) - External member



GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE		Lead
44	<p>Welcome and Introductions: The Chair welcomed members and new attendees were introduced as :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chi Tan – Head of Business Department • Tanveer Ahmad – Head of IT Department • Noman Hameed – Student Recruitment Manager <p>The absence of Dr Phil Ingamels was noted. The Principal will contact him to confirm his wellbeing and continued Board participation.</p>	All
2	<p>Declaration of Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Fozia Uddin declared involvement with Illuminare Education. • Ms Andrea Ward informed members of her appointment as an Assessor for the Office for Students (OfS). <p>No additional conflicts of interest were declared.</p> <p>Prevent Duty Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal confirmed to the Board that all board members of staff have completed Prevent training. • No Prevent-related incidents have been reported since the previous meeting. 	All
3	<p>Approval of Previous Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minutes from 11 December 2025 were approved as an accurate record. • Members agreed that future minutes should list attendance at the beginning of the document for clarity. <p>Matters Arising and Action Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal provided an update on actions arising from the previous meeting not covered under agenda items. • The Chair suggested introducing a structured action log as an Excel spreadsheet with colour-coded progress indicators to monitor completion of Board actions. • The board agreed that action points should be included as a standing agenda item in future meetings to monitor progress effectively. 	All All



	<p>Student Representative Update</p> <p>The Board discussed the importance of student representation and recruiting an additional Student Governor.</p> <p>Student Governor Jey Surresh later joined the meeting and reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students are generally satisfied with their courses● Engagement and progression remain positive.● Some queries regarding assignments have been raised and addressed with staff. <p>The Board emphasised maintaining strong communication between students and Governors.</p> <p>Action: An additional Student Governor will be sought.</p>	Student Rep - JS
	<p>Agent Performance Review</p> <p>The Principal presented a report on recruitment agents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Agents undergo due diligence checks before engagement and operate under formal agreements outlining responsibilities and compliance requirements.● Agents are required to use official institutional information only when recruiting students.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Recruitment figures reported: 1,400 students referred by agents○ 896 students accepted● Around 750 students currently enrolled A probation period is applied to confirm student engagement before final registration.● The Board discussed the importance of monitoring drop-out rates by recruitment agents.● Members agreed on the need to create a centralised record for agents due diligence and monitoring.● The cooling-off period for new students is Two weeks, with approximately 10–15% withdrawing during this time.● Agent performance is monitored through:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ ongoing monitoring of agent engagement○ review of recruitment patterns	Principal MH



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ verification of student eligibility and documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was noted that around one-third of students are recruited through a single agent, which presents a potential risk. <p>Action: The Board agreed that reliance on a single recruitment agent should be reviewed to reduce financial and operational risks.</p>	
	<p>Department Development Plans</p> <p>Business Department</p> <p>The Head of Department presented a detailed update covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delivery of modules with the University of Derby. ● Standardised learning materials via Blackboard. ● Use of digital tools and AI-supported teaching methods. <p>New integrated systems have been developed which will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance ● Engagement ● Submission and pass rates <p>The Board highlighted the need to ensure adequate resources as student numbers increase.</p> <p>Action: Review of resources to support increasing student numbers – report for next meeting.</p> <hr/> <p>IT and Data Analytics Department</p> <p>The Head of Department reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 226 students enrolled in IT and Data Analytics programmes since October 2024; 189 completed (approx. 84–85% completion rate). ● Plans to introduce Level 5 courses and potential Level 6 degree pathways with university partners. ● Planned investment in computer laboratories, cybersecurity software, and specialist teaching staff. ● Focus on strengthening Level 4 programmes with industry-aligned curriculum and practical labs. ● Measures to improve student success and governance through attendance monitoring, surveys, and review meetings. 	<p>Heads of Department</p> <p>CT</p> <p>TA</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board discussed industry certifications (e.g., Microsoft, AWS) to improve employability. • Concerns were raised about additional costs for students; certifications could be pursued independently through online providers. • Members stressed the importance of clear communication and compliance with CMA regulations when promoting programme outcomes or additional opportunities. 	
	<p>University Partnership Updates</p> <p>University of Derby</p> <p>The Principal presented an update on the University of Derby partnership. The BA (Hons) Business Management Top Up had started with 64 students, though two had withdrawn immediately after induction. In terms of recruitment and monitoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications have been approved in batches. • Attendance and engagement are being closely monitored. • Some early student withdrawals occurred, primarily due to student finance issues. <p>Members noted the successful launch and the continuous monitoring of programme delivery and student attendance and engagement.</p> <hr/> <p>University of West London</p> <p>An update was provided on the University of West London (UWL) partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional documentation and programme mapping between CSA programmes and UWL modules has been submitted. • Progress is ongoing, but delays remain due to internal processes within UWL. • The Board raised concerns about: delays in partnership approval and potential financial and operational risks <p>Members noted the need to consider alternative partnerships if delays continue.</p> <p>Action: Partnership updates to be reported at the next Board meeting along with an operational risk assessment.</p>	<p>Principal MH</p>
	<p>OfS Audit update and action plan</p>	<p>Principal MH</p>



	<p>The Board received an update on the 2025 audit findings.</p> <p>Key issues identified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorrect coding in some reporting processes• Lack of a fully implemented Management Information System (MIS) <p>Actions taken include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correcting coding errors• Strengthening verification procedures as part of admissions• Exploring improvements to data management systems. <p>Members emphasised the importance of developing a robust MIS system to support regulatory compliance and minimise data errors.</p> <p>Members welcomed the progress made and requested ongoing updates.</p> <p>Action: Update on MIS systems development for the next meeting.</p>	
	<p>Risk Register and Risk Assessment</p> <p>The Board reviewed key institutional risks including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student recruitment risk due to reliance on agents and market competition• Regulatory and partner compliance risks relating to student outcomes and contractual targets• Teaching and learning challenges such as facilities and staffing• Operational oversight requirements due to scrutiny from university partners• Facilities and marketing investment needed to support growth <p>Members agreed that risk monitoring should remain a priority as the Institution continues to grow.</p>	<p>Principal MH</p>
	<p>Student Recruitment Update</p> <p>Recent recruitment performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 162 students recruited in January 2026 across four programmes including HNC/D Hospitality Management (60), International Travel & Tourism Management (27), NCFE level 4 Cyber Security Engineering (37) and NCFE level 4 Data Analyst (38)• 64students enrolled in the BA Business Management Top-Up programme with the University of Derby	<p>Student Recruitment Manager NH</p>



	<p>April 2026 target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 240 students across Cyber Security, Data Analyst and Data Engineering programmes. • Key challenges: limited brand awareness, location visibility issues, strong competition from established institutions, and limited marketing and employer partnerships. • Strategic actions: strengthen local partnerships, increase employer collaboration, promote progression routes, expand targeted digital marketing, and increase community engagement events. <p>Members discussed recruitment trends and the importance of maintaining robust verification processes.</p>	
	<p>Student Performance and Quality Monitoring</p> <p>The Board received an update on student performance.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No breach of OfS B3 thresholds, although declining attendance in some programmes has triggered a risk alert. • CSA targets: 75% continuation and 85% completion <p>Quality priorities for 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve attendance monitoring and early intervention • Strengthen student retention • Improve data governance and performance tracking <p>The Board discussed monitoring arrangements and the importance of maintaining high academic standards.</p> <p>Governors were asked to support the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which was endorsed.</p> <p>Action: B3 data for next meeting across all programmes</p>	<p>Head of Teaching & Learning</p> <p>AN</p>
	<p>Budget and Audit Committee Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEO presented the committee report outlining the current financial position. 	<p>CEO</p> <p>MI</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Members emphasised the need to balance financial sustainability with institutional growth.	
	<p>Items for the Next Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Board membership update regarding Dr Phil IngamelsUpdate on additional student GovernorRecruitment strategy and agent monitoring risk & early withdrawalsUWL partnership progress update and risk assessmentMIS and data governance developmentQuality Improvement Plan progressRisk Register reviewStudent recruitment performance- B3 metricsFinancial and Budget & Audit update <p>The next meeting of the Board of Governors will take place on 18 June 2026 at 11:00 am on the CEME campus.</p> <p>Members agreed that workshops may also be organised on the same day.</p>	All