



CASPIAN SCHOOL OF ACADEMICS (CSA)

Meeting of the Board of Governors

held on 18 June 2026 between 10.45am – 1.30pm on the CEME Campus

Attendees:

Mr. Wilayat Malik(WM) – Chair
Mr. Muhammad Iftikhar(MI) - CEO
Ms. Mandy Hobart(MH) – Principal
Ms. Tahira Yasmin(TY) - Head of HR
Ms Fozia Uddin(FU) - External member
Ms Andrea Ward(AW) – External member
Mr Bob Harris(BH) – External member
Dr Phil Ingamels(PI) - External member
Mr. Jey Surresh(JS)- Student member
Ms Ana Maria(AM)- 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 Divya Rajendran(DR) -Head of Student Services

Apologies

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

GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE		Lead
1.	Welcome, Apologies & Introductions - The Chair welcomed all attendees, noting this was the first face-to-face Board meeting in approximately one year, with members travelling from across the UK. - Apologies were received from Dr Anjum Naz; Dom Conroy was confirmed as providing cover. Introductions: Student representatives introduced themselves as Jay Suresh and Anna Maria	Chair WM
1.1	Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2026 were reviewed. No amendments or corrections were raised. Minutes approved unanimously.	All
1.2	Review of Action Log & Matters Arising - The action log from the previous meeting was reviewed on an exception basis, focusing on outstanding or incomplete items. Key Agreements: - All actions must be assigned to named individuals and include their role/function for clear accountability. - Updates to be provided on recruitment activity, agent diversification, and partnership developments. Matters Arising: University of West London (UWL): Formal approval received; final contract terms and business course approvals still pending. Declaration of Interests: No new or updated declarations. Prevent Duty: No incidents reported; refresher training to be arranged.	All
1.3	Student Governor Update Positive Feedback: Jey and Anna shared their positive experience and personal development since joining. Staff support, learning environment, and general student experience were rated highly. Areas for Improvement:	Student Governors JS & AM

	○ Consistency in teaching quality and explanation of topics. ○ More practical activities, industry visits, and site visits. ○ Clearer communication and guidance on Prevent Duty responsibilities. ● Actions: ○ Senior management to review teaching quality and provide additional support/training where required based on teaching observations and student feedback. ○ Student representative meeting minutes and external examiner reports to be shared with students on Moodle.	
2.	Management Information System (MIS) Implementation ● Update: Work is underway to select and implement a new MIS to replace current systems. Three options are under evaluation. ○ Must support tracking of attendance, progression, equality data, and compliance with GDPR/data security. ○ Ease of data export and migration is essential. ○ Supplier stability, insurance coverage, and risk assessment must be verified. ○ A trial period is recommended before full implementation. ○ Final selection by end of June / early July 2026, with full implementation by September 2026.	CEO MI
3.	Updates on partnerships University of Derby ● Performance Overview: ○ Attendance: ~60% (target 87%) ○ Submission rate for DLM module: 97% (target 95%) ○ Pass rate: 95.5% (target 80%) ○ Submission rate for IE module: 90% (target 95%) ○ Pass rate: 64% (target 80%) ● Actions Taken to address below target outcomes: ○ Automated reminders via AI tools sent to non-attending students. ○ Earlier internal deadlines were introduced to improve submission rates.	HoD Bus. CT

	○ Learning materials enhanced with video and interactive content. ○ Academic support workshops available to students. ● Challenges: Variations in module performance; gaps in academic skills among top-up students joining from other providers; need to align internal processes with partner policies and OfS requirements. ● Next Steps: Continue monitoring progress, review policies, and work towards achieving the 80% pass rate target via resubmissions and additional support. University of West London (UWL) ● Status: Approved in principle; awaiting final contract terms and guidance on operational requirements. ● Recruitment: Staff recruitment for new programmes is ongoing via advertising, networking, and referrals. ● Risk & Planning: ○ CSA is not solely reliant on UWL; existing NCFE programmes remain strong. ○ Detailed financial and operational costing to be completed to assess long-term viability. ○ Separate budgets to be prepared for each partnership/programme. ● Suggestions: Review contract terms carefully before signing; negotiate any clauses that do not align with CSA's interests or regulations.	HoD IT TA
4.	Principal's update Governance, Structure & Assurance ● Organisational Structure: Updated structure shared, separating academic/student support functions from administrative/finance/HR roles. Heads of Department appointed in early 2026 to improve accountability. ● Governance Framework: ○ Terms of reference for all committees are published on the CSA website.	Principal MH

	○ Review underway to align with OfS conditions, QAA Code, and CUC Governance Code. ○ A Board Skills Matrix will be developed to identify gaps and support recruitment and training. Employer Engagement Strategy Project update ● CSA Employer Engagement Strategy Phase 2 (Mar–Sep 2026) ● Link employers, staff, students and providers to improve work readiness and local talent pipelines ● 80% of employers say graduates lack work-ready skills, while 96% of educators feel they prepare students well Workstreams currently being taken forward: ● WS1: Staff framework & diagnostic tool complete (deployment paused) ● WS2: Curriculum alignment mapped; new courses in progress ● WS4: Employer engagement reworked; segmented lists ready Next Steps 1. Confirm governance structure 2. Conduct on-site work (19 June) 3. Finalize employer partnership tiers 4. Hold strategy Away Day (17 July) Actions: ○ MH to share the CUC Governance Code with all Board members. ○ Review and update Board role descriptions, code of conduct, and effectiveness review process.	External member AW
5.	Strategic Plan & Digital Strategy ● Strategic Vision: CSA aims to align provision with market demand, strengthen employer engagement, and build long-term sustainability. ● Digital & AI Strategy: ○ Digital tools and AI are already in use for administration, attendance tracking, and communications. ○ A formal, integrated Digital & AI Strategy will be developed,	Principal MH

	○ Risks identified: Accuracy of AI outputs, student fairness, data privacy, and over-reliance on technology. ● 5-Year Outlook: The Board requested clarity on long-term plans, including potential degree awarding powers and diversification of provision.	
6.	Risk Register and Risk Assessments for Caspian School ● The Risk Register was reviewed and discussed. Key areas of focus include: ○ Contractual and compliance risks with partner universities. ○ Data security and new technology risks. ○ Staffing and recruitment risks for specialist programmes. ● Action: Review and update the Risk Register regularly including alignment with OfS requirements, with a summary presented at each Board meeting.	Principal MH
7.	Student Recruitment Targets ● September 2026 intake: 570 students ● January 2027 intake: 450 students ● Total recruitment target: 1,020 students Current Progress ● 85 students recruited to the date, representing 15% of the September 2026 target. ● 485 additional students are required to achieve the September 2026 recruitment target. Recruitment Focus ● Business programmes – largest recruitment target across both intakes. ● IT programmes – a key growth area with significant recruitment targets for September 2026 and January 2027.	Head of Admin NH

	Actions Underway • Expanding and strengthening the agent recruitment network. • Increasing targeted marketing campaigns and open day activities. • Monitoring enquiry-to-enrolment conversion rates on a weekly basis. • Streamlining admissions and enrolment processes to improve applicant conversion. Risks and Mitigation • Recruitment performance remains below target, requiring a significant increase in applications and enrolments over the coming months. • To mitigate recruitment risk, efforts are focused on reducing reliance on individual agents and diversifying recruitment channels through enhanced marketing and partnership development. Action: Future reports will provide detailed target-versus-actual recruitment data, enabling improved monitoring, transparency, and accountability.	
8.	Quality Assurance Update • Update: The Quality Improvement Plan is being implemented, with regular monitoring of attendance, retention, and achievement data. • Processes: Course Committees, student feedback mechanisms, and termly reviews are embedded. • Next Steps: Consolidate reporting and link quality data directly to the institutional risk register and improvement actions.	Quality Manager DC
9.	Financial Update & Audit • Overview: Financial statements and cash flow projections were presented. CSA maintains sufficient liquidity to meet regulatory requirements, with reserves covering at least 6 months of operating costs. • Outlook: A meeting scheduled in June 2026 will review full financial projections and sustainability. • Guidance: Continue to maintain a conservative financial buffer and review costs per programme / partnership costs and requirements, with reserves covering at least 6 months of operating costs.	CEO MI

10.	Agree items for the next meeting ○ 5-year Business strategic plan review ○ Update on CUC governance implementation ○ UWL contract and programme update ○ Full review of the Risk Register Next Meeting & Arrangements ● Date: 12 November 2026, 11:00 AM (online) ● Alternate meetings to be held face-to-face to enable site visits and deeper engagement.	All
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