University Centre Peterborough

Minutes of an electronic meeting of the UCP Academic Board held at 13:00 on Friday 22nd May 2026.

Present

James Whybrow (JW)	Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Higher Education
Nick Reinis-Keightley (NRK)	HE Manager - Arts/Social Science and Student Support
Jemma Leggetter (JL)	Customer Service and Student Finance Manager
Dannie Abbott (DA)	Academic Office Manager
Kat Beeton (KB)	HE Student Support Co-ordinator and Officer
Claire Bowes (CB)	Curriculum Leader - Psychosocial Studies
Fiona Henry	Curriculum Leader – Computing
Raghav Kovvuri	Curriculum Leader Digital Technology
Sam Mackey	Curriculum Leader - Early Years and Education
Matt Shough (MS)	Assistant Principal- Quality
Jo Dawkins (JD)	Independent Member
Rob Brown (RB)	Independent Member
Sarah Williamson	Group Director of MIS
Kamila Agina (KA)	Minutes- Senior HE Business Administrator

Students

Cory Brook	Student Officer and student governor
Rosy Harris-Aebvtis	Level 5, Digital Art
Leanne saxon	HND Year 2, Animal management
Alexandra Palsu	Level 5, Computing
Barbra Poreba	Level 5, Business Management
Kenzi Howard-Jones	HND Year 1, Animal Management

Apologies

David O'Garr	Assistant Principal – Curriculum
Dr Aristeidis Dadoukis (AD)	Independent Member
Katie McAllister (KMc)	HE Manager Business & Education
Daniel Lee (DL)	HE Manager Teacher Training & Partnerships
James Wadsworth (JWa)	Independent Member
Helen Johns	Deputy Student Officer

Did not attend

Grace Theunissen	Curriculum Leader- Digital Arts

1 Standing Items

a. All were welcomed, and apologies were accepted. It was noted that this was James Whybrow (Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Higher Education) first meeting chairing the Academic Board.

b. No notice was received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office. The meeting was quorate, and there were no registered interests declared.

c. The minutes of the last meeting held on 27th February 2026 were confirmed for electronic signature (Action One).

d. Actions from the last meeting have been implemented as below:

See referenced minute for full details.	Action	Resp.	Date
Action One	The last minutes were confirmed for signature.	Chair (JW)	Complete
Action Two	Collate case studies that could be used as means to promote philanthropic bursaries	Student Support and HE Managers	24/4/26 Overdue pick up HE Manager
Action Three	Review the accountability and responsibility lines within existing policies and amend accordingly due to staff changes.	Academic Office	Completed
Action Four	Evidence of enhancements need to be sent to the Academic Office so that the next TEF submission is informed by specific examples of continual enhancement.	All – retained by the Academic Office	Complete
Action Five	NRK HE Manager and Student Officer to meet and discuss free text comments to improve the student voice and work of the Student Council.	Nick Reinis-Keightley (HE Manager) and Cory Brook (Student Officer).	Complete
Action Six	The Academic Office and Quality Nominee will contact Pearson to address concerns regarding Pearson processes.	Academic Office/ Quality Nominee	Complete
Action Seven	Good practice needs to be shared at the HE Conference, in SELT and PDR objectives will reflect areas for development.	HE Managers	Complete
Previous Academic Board actions			
Action Two	Provide IT training sessions and resources to students	HE Managers/ILT	22/5/26

2 Feedback from student representatives

Rosy Harris-Aebvtis - Level 5, Digital Art
The cohort is highly focused on ethical frameworks, fully satisfied overall, and progressing smoothly through their major module assessments.

Leanne Saxton – Level 5, Animal Management
Cohort happy with no issues raised.

Alexandra Palsu – Level 5, Computing
Alexander reported an excellent educational experience overall, highlighting great institutional engagement and career pathways.

Cohort want to thank Kat Beeton (HE Student Support Co-ordinator and Officer), Kyle Shaw (HE Student Advisor), Fiona Henry (Curriculum Leader – HE Computing).

Barbra Poreba - Level 5, Business Management
It was highlighted student stress due to extreme assessment bunching. The Level 5 cohort faced 4 assessment deadlines within the same calendar week, totalling nearly 9,000 words. A formal request was made to stagger deadlines across a minimum two-week window in future timetables.

ACTION REQUIRED (Two): Academic Office and Course Leaders to structurally review module specifications and assessment loads during the upcoming course revalidation processes to enhance scheduling flexibility.

Kenzi- Animal HND Year 1
The cohort is happy, settled, and finding the module transitions manageable.

3 Feedback from Student Council & Student Officers

Student Leadership Succession
The board officially recorded its sincere appreciation to Cory Brook (Student Officer), who is concluding his two-year tenure as Student Officer, and his continued championing the student voice. Following Student Council approval on 14th May 2026, Helen Johns (current Deputy Student Officer) will officially transition into the Student Officer role. Interviews for the vacant Deputy position were successfully conducted and the announcement expected imminently.

Student Council Activity & Ambassador Recruitment
The Student Council successfully convened six times across both semesters during the 2025/26 academic year. To address attendance volatility, a comprehensive Student Representative Training Programme is scheduled for summer rollout. To replenish graduating student ambassador positions, a recruitment campaign yielded seven new applicants whose interviews are scheduled shortly. A mandatory Ambassador Training Day will take place Monday, 15 June 2026.

Strategic Wellbeing and Campus Projects
Two major environment-enhancing wellbeing initiatives are scheduled for completion prior to the September intake to foster student connection and reduce isolation:

- Project 1 (Dedicated Quiet Space): A repurposed facility on UCP Level 2, developed in collaboration with the Estates team, to provide a structured sanctuary for student reflection, mindfulness, and sensory decompression.

- Project 2 (Calmer Café): A designated drop-in zone in the main atrium to mitigate student isolation, managed rotationally by Student Officers and Ambassadors during peak lunch periods to encourage informal peer support.

4 Student numbers

Data compiled on 13 May 2026 highlights critical strategic shifts in the institutional recruitment landscape:

Recruitment Volumes: Year-to-date applications experienced a slight increase to 364 (up from 354 in 2025). Applicants selecting UCP as their Firm Acceptance grew by 23.5%, rising from 81 to 100. Active 'live' applications dropped from 181 to 153 due to an earlier Deadline Booking Date (DBD) accelerating firm decisions.

Demographics & Pipelines: Application volume dropped by 20.8% in mature student categories (aged 35+) but achieved strong growth in the 20-year-old (+21.7%) and 21–24-year-old (+13.6%) brackets. Peterborough College has an expanding pipeline +21.4% to 51 applications, while Stamford College pipeline entries fell by 30.4%.

Continuing Enrolment: Returning student registration is underway, with 101 out of an expected 196 continuing students having fully finalised their re-enrolment protocols to date.

Mitigation Plan for Sector Risks: Sector trends indicate a 4% projected national increase in Clearing usage and an expanding 'wobble window' (applicants changing minds post-Level 3 results due to financial/location anxieties). To mitigate this risk, a newly hired Higher Education Recruitment Officer commenced on 11 May 2026 to execute an intensive summer conversion strategy including course-specific communication campaigns, transition webinars, and coffee mornings.

5 Student Support update

In-House 'Live Brief' Initiative

During Semester 2, an innovative 'Live Brief' authored by the ILT Advisor was introduced for the Computing course students. Acting as a real-world assessment environment, it successfully blended practical pedagogy with institutional development. The brief achieved significant logistical efficiency, saving operational resources by transferring digital development from the over-strained Student Support team directly to students. Following exceptional performance, two students were awarded summer work experience placements.

In response to student feedback, major system changes were implemented to eliminate administrative delays:

Extension Process Consolidation: Following the October 2025 policy merger, multiple application pipelines were consolidated into a unified form, significantly simplifying the user journey. Targeted advisory interventions enabled students who withdrew extension

claims to achieve exceptional academic success (82% achieving a 2:1 or higher in Semester 1).
Course Transfer System: In collaboration with the MIS team, the course transfer workflow was completely overhauled, successfully eliminating historical processing backlogs for up to six months caused by missing data fields.

6 Course revisions and Validation outcomes

Open University (OU) Portfolio Developments
BA (Hons) Therapeutic Counselling & Psychotherapy (Top-Up): Achieved a full five-year revalidation with zero conditions.
MA Creative Writing: All validation conditions successfully cleared for a confirmed September 2026 launch, marking UCP's historic first postgraduate offering. The panel issued strong commendations for its unique relevance to local community creative practice.
Sociology & Psychosocial Studies: Revalidation documentation has been submitted to clear two remaining minor conditions and is awaiting final sign-off.

Leeds Beckett University (LBU) Portfolio & Capacity Management
Stage 1 and Stage 2 validations for the new Education portfolio are complete, with final conditions due by 11 June 2026. To preserve institutional workload balance ahead of the comprehensive upcoming OU institutional reapproval cycle, periodic revalidations for Business and Criminology have been intentionally deferred to the 2026/27 academic year.

Operational Update: Exam Board Layout
The board approved a strategic shift for the 2026/27 exam boards in agreement with the Open University. To circumvent peak June logistical issues and maximize external examiner engagement with students, the June summer exam boards will move entirely online. In turn, external examiners will fulfill their annual statutory site visit during the February exam boards to conduct live student panels and view showcases first-hand.

7 Policy updates and approvals

Dannie Abbott (Academic Office Manager) presented a comprehensive policy suite review. This cycle marks a major governance realignment following the retirement of the Academic Director. Policy accountability will be shared between the Vice Principal (Apprenticeships & HE) and the CFO as Accountable Officer. Policies were categorised into five operational tiers to update names, post titles, and structural timelines.

Specific focus on the 'HE Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour, Harassment, or Sexual Misconduct Policy (V1.2).' To incorporate a compassionate, trauma-informed framework containing expanded statutory definitions, strict investigation windows, mandatory annual staff training, clear boundaries on staff-student relationships, and robust interim no-contact mechanisms to fully meet updated OfS safeguarding standards.

The Terms of Reference (ToRs) were reviewed and approved by the Academic Board Members. There is still a need to review the attendees of each meeting.

ACTION REQUIRED (Three) – ToRs, meeting attendees to be reviewed – JW

ACTION REQUIRED (Four) – The Higher Education Student Protection Policy is to be presented at the Council meeting. – JW

ACTION REQUIRED (Five) – Review "Treating Student Fairly, C6" after conference July 26

8 Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)

UCP has met its critical initial operational milestone by launching its dedicated, public LLE webpage following DfE confirmation that approved providers will be searchable via GOV.UK. A cross-departmental, Admissions and MIS Working Group has been actively mobilised to build a modular application system and interest registration portal. In terms of sector lobbying, UCP is actively engaging Pearson to establish equitable registration fees for 30-credit modular blocks. Simultaneously, exploratory discussions have commenced with Lincoln Bishop to establish an education provision partnership, effectively expanding UCP's regional LLE footprint.

9 Complaints, Compliments and Positive feedback

Complaints

The Academic Office confirmed a formal Nil-Return Position with zero formal student complaints filed since the last meeting, enabling UCP to maintain its clean standing with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

Compliments,

Specific commendations highlighting the exceptional execution of the UCP Creative Showcase and the Amazon Mock Interview events. To capture these outputs systematically, the Enquiries Team will embed feedback collection mechanisms directly into post-event communications moving forward.

10 SES update

The Semester 2 Student Experience Survey (SES) tracking indicated an initial response lag, prompting a data-collection extension until 24 April 2026 to ensure statistical validity. Overall satisfaction moved from 92.7% in Semester 1 to 91.2% in Semester 2 (a negligible 1.5% variance). However, an 11% engagement drop between semesters indicates mid-year survey fatigue.

Qualitative metrics revealed resource friction points regarding library physical and digital learning spaces, alongside requests from mature students for faster communication regarding sudden room changes. Faculty are required to issue clear 'You Said, We Did' action logs, and a joint IT/Estates inquiry into library resource deficits will be launched immediately.

11 Update on teaching, Scholarship and staff development

An institutional audit compiled from forty-one academic faculty members confirms a highly qualified core delivery team: 93% hold formal teaching credentials, 51% possess a master's or PhD, and 54% hold higher-tier HEA Fellowships. Critically, 32% are actively progressing within the fellowship pipeline. Research engagement is strong, with 41% participating in active scholarship this year.

The all-staff conference is taking place in July. Planning is currently taking place, and full information will be released.

12 UCP Award and Employability update and activity

In alignment with the academic year-start survey, University Centre Peterborough (UCP) launched 'Employability Month' across the Peterborough and Stamford campuses in March 2026. A key highlight was a collaboration with Amazon to provide mock interviews and career talks. While participating students highly praised the rigour of these sessions, engagement was low, with only six learners participating. This highlights a strategic challenge for UCP in balancing the risk of damaging prestigious employer relations due to low attendance against the ongoing effort to deliver the initiatives student's request.

Currently, UCP's positive outcome rate stands at 70.3%, which sits above the institutional benchmark. However, data reveals a progression gap between mature and younger learners, indicating that further targeted work is required to support younger demographics. To sustain these positive outcomes, UCP will focus on raising student awareness of available pathways and maintaining access to key career software. Additionally, to incentivise exit-survey completion and ensure graduates update their contact profiles, UCP will introduce a tiered 'Alumni Pin' initiative (Bronze, Silver, and Gold) at graduation, fostering lifelong collaboration with the institution.

13 Update on other committees

No requests for detailed review were made, and the papers were officially noted for information only.

14 Meeting date

The Chair presented the formal 2026/27 committee schedule, noting that dates are structurally aligned with current parameters minus one day to preserve institutional continuity. To bridge the long gap between seasonal cycles and provide timely data oversight, a new short-agenda October meeting has been added to review final enrolment performance numbers and inform the mandatory financial return to the OfS. While structural copies initially indicated in-person sessions, the Chair clarified that meetings would continue online, with the intention to hold at least one Academic Board session in person to promote physical collaboration.

Board Outcome: The 2026/27 Academic Board meeting schedule was formally APPROVED with the following core dates locked into the institutional calendar:

HE Academic Board (Fridays, 13:00 – 15:00): 9 October 2026, 4 December 2026, 26 February 2027, and 21 May 2027.

UCP Council (Wednesdays/Thursdays, 16:30 – 18:30): 2 September 2026, 17 November 2026, and 24 June 2027.

15 AOB

The Chair concluded the session by issuing profound thanks to the academic staff, external members, and student body for their contributions throughout the academic year. Best wishes were extended to outgoing Student Officer Cory Brook for his onward journey.

The Board was invited to comment on the proceedings and express their satisfaction with the meeting. No comments or objections were raised, and the proceedings were noted as accepted.

ACTION TABLE

See referenced minute for full details.	**Action**	**Resp.**	**Date**
Action One	The last minutes were confirmed for signature.	Chair (JW)	27/02/26
Action Two	To structurally review module specifications and assessment loads during the upcoming course revalidation processes to enhance scheduling flexibility.	Academic Office and Course Leaders	July 26
Action Three	ToRs, meeting attendees to be reviewed	VP apprenticeship and HE	July 26
Action Four	The Higher Education Student Protection Policy is to be presented at the Council meeting	VP apprenticeship and HE	June 26
Action Five	Review “Treating Student Fairly, C6” after conference July 26	VP apprenticeship and HE	July 26

POLICY APPROVAL

Policy Code / Title	Key Scope of Review / Amendments	Status
ASS005 HE Academic Appeal Policy V3.2	Standard cyclical review; core framework retained.	Approved
UCP Academic Committee Structure TOR v3.4	Realignment of committee paths and reporting lines.	Approved
UCP-APL001 HE Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy V2.1	Minor procedural updates and terminology alignment.	Approved
UCP-ASS002 HE Security of Summative Assessment V1.2	Standard updates to secure storage and digital criteria.	Approved
UCP-ASS004 HE Academic Integrity Policy V1.2	Structural adjustments regarding formal investigation steps.	Approved
UCP-ASS006 HE Extensions & Extenuating Circumstance V1.2	Compassionate, evidence-proportionate structural adjustments.	Approved
UCP-ASS007 HE Student Intermission of Study Procedure V1.2	Clarification on safe return dates and funding triggers.	Approved
UCP-ASS008 HE HNC-D Assessment Policy V1.2	Pearson-specific alignment and grading verification.	Approved
UCP-COM001 HE Student Complaints Policy Issue 6	Timeline transparency and informal resolution tracks.	Approved
UCP-CRI001 HE Declaration of Criminal Convictions V1.3	Risk-assessment panel alignment and statutory links.	Approved
UCP-DIS001 HE Student Disciplinary Policy and Code V1.3	Forwarded to UCP Council for final ratification.	Approved
UCP-FIN002 HE Care Leaver Support & Bursary V1.3	Updated local authority funding brackets and eligibility.	Approved
UCP-FIT001 HE Fitness to Practise Policy V2.3	PSRB compliance for Counselling and Education streams.	Approved

UCP-FIT002 HE Fitness to Study Policy V2.3	Early intervention thresholds and supportive plan triggers.	Approved
UCP-IP001 HE Intellectual Property for Students V1.2	Cyclical baseline verification; no changes to student ownership.	Approved
UCP-REC001 HE Recruitment and Admissions Policy v1.1	Adjusted for 2026/27 clearing parameters and DBD rules.	Approved
DIS002 Unacceptable Behaviour, Harassment & Misconduct V1.2	Trauma-informed overhaul; full Office for Students compliance.	Approved
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY	Full institutional engagement update approved for deployment.	Approved

Item	Approvals
The 2026/27 Academic Board meeting schedule	Approved
Term of Reference (Terms)	Approved

15 DATE & TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

9th October 26