University Centre Peterborough

Minutes of an electronic meeting of the UCP Academic Board held at 13:00 on Friday 27th February 2026.

Present

Liz Knight (LK)	Chair and Academic Director UCP
Katie McAllister (KMc)	HE Manager Business & Education
Daniel Lee (DL)	HE Manager Teacher Training & Partnerships
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
Grace Theunissen	Curriculum Leader- Digital Arts
Jo Dawkins (JD)	Independent Member
Dr Aristeidis Dadoukis	Independent Member
James Wadsworth (JW)	Independent Member
Kamila Agina (KA)	Minutes- Senior HE Business Administrator

Students

Cory Brook	Student Officer and student governor
Helen Johns	Deputy Student Officer
Freshtah Nabizadah	Level 4, English Literature (Creative Writing)
Rosy Harris-Aebvtis	Level 5, Digital Art
Nicci Bowes	Level 4, Media Production
Elouise Wandrag	Level 6, Digital Marketing

Apologies

Matt Shough (MS)	Assistant Principal- Quality
David O'Garr	Assistant Principal – Curriculum

Non-Attendance – none

1 STANDING ITEMS

a. All were welcomed, and apologies were accepted.

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 5th December 2025 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 (LK)	Complete
Action Two	Provide IT training sessions and resources to students	HE Managers/ILT	Ongoing
Action Three	Incorporate a Student Support sessions in the January 6th Staff Development event.	Student Support/ HE Managers	Complete
Action Four	A detailed paper outlining progress of LLE and future plans will be presented in February	Katie McAllister, HE Manager/ Academic director	Complete
Action Five	Provide an update on the NSS QIP in February	Nick Reinis-Keightley/ HE Managers	Complete
Action Six	A detailed report on the peer review findings will be presented at the February meeting	Dan Lee	Complete
Action Seven	A report on alumni engagement and comparisons to prior year is required	Jemma Leggetter/ UCP Futures	ongoing
Action Eight	Distribution of the UCP 2025-2030 strategy to the Academic Board and UCP staff and students	Liz Knight	Complete
Previous Academic Board actions			
Action Five	2025-2029 Student Engagement Strategy.	NRK HE Manager / Student Officer / Student Council	Complete

2 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' FEEDBACK

Freshtah Nabizadah – Level 4, English Literature (Creative Writing)

The Cohort has raised a need regarding the need for a dedicated prayer facility at the University Centre Peterborough.

Feedback – There is an established multi-faith room in the main college site, which is open to university students. Due to current building constraints a prayer space cannot be designated. Students can speak to reception, and an empty space can be located on an ad-hoc basis.

Discussions are taking place regarding developing a neurodivergent-friendly "quiet space" on Level 2 and remains committed to considering a permanent multi-faith facility should future structural expansions become feasible.

Nicci Bowes – Level 4, Media Production

The cohort are happy with the grades received and will continue to keep working hard.

Rosy Harris- Aebvtis – Level 5, Digital Art Design
Cohort is happy with the lessons.

An issue was raised regarding students in a group session. Student Support and the HE Manager is aware of this, and feedback will be given to the students involved.

Elouise Wandrag – Level 6, Digital Marketing
The cohort is happy with their experience at UCP and advised that they felt heard regarding gluten-free option in the vending machines.

3 STUDENT OFFICER / REPRESENTATIVES FEEDBACK

Student Voice and Semester 2 Engagement
The Student Officers began the second semester with a series of 'Welcome Tutorials' designed to re-engage the student body with the 'Student Voice' and demonstrate the tangible impact of student feedback. A primary focus of these sessions was the 'You Said, We Did' strategy, which illustrates the direct correlation between student input and institutional enhancements, such as the implementation of a student kitchen and the provision of advanced transportation warnings.

Health, Wellbeing, and Support Services
To promote Spectrum Life Student Officers have been delivering, informative sessions to highlight the broader utility, including physical fitness modules, nutritional recipes, and exam preparation support.

Plans are currently underway to develop a dedicated "quiet space" on level two. This room is intended to students can decompress and manage stress within a quiet campus zone.

Community Building and Future Initiatives
Student Ambassadors have been involved in several events and creative displays such as Women and Girls in Science, Random Acts of Kindness, and seasonal celebrations. These initiatives, alongside participation in academic events have contributed to a growing sense of campus community.

The Student Officers, Student Ambassadors and Students Representatives are working together to review the 'Freshers Week' events and incorporate the feedback from students to improve the experience.

4A STUDENT NUMBERS AND CONVERSION PLAN

2026/27 Recruitment and Admissions Overview
University Centre Peterborough (UCP) is currently managing the 2026/27 recruitment cycle with a strategic focus on conversion and targeted outreach.
UCP has recorded three hundred and three UCAS applications to date, representing a 6.2% decrease compared to the same period in the previous academic year. This trend is reflective of broader sector changes and an earlier application deadline. Currently, there are sixty-three firm acceptances.

Despite this slight decline, there is significant growth in specific areas, including a 23.7% increase in applications from Peterborough College and a 43.8% rise in the 21–24 age category.

Conversion Excellence and Strategic Priorities
The conversion rate currently stands at 34%, significantly outperforming the sector average of 27%. Maintaining this performance through the "keeping applicants warm" project is a top priority, utilising communication, and taster days. Marketing efforts are being intensified for specific subject areas, including full-time Engineering, MA Creative Writing, and Computing. Additionally, re-engaging the mature student market has been identified as a critical demographic focus for the coming months.

Engagement Initiatives and Future Actions
Recent recruitment activities have been successful. The Counselling Progression Event and Animal Management taster day identified new potential applicants.
Creative subjects continue to gain visibility through initiatives such as the Peterborough Poet Laureate competition.

4B STUDENT SUPPORT

Student Support and Retention Strategic Update
Over the last three academic years Students Support has prioritised bespoke and student-centred interventions. Due to this there has been a substantial decline in withdrawal, falling from twenty-one instances in the 2022-2023 period to six as of February 2026. While intermissions have remained stable, the overall trend highlights the success of a "student-first" model.

Operational Success and Collaborative Impact
The current success is attributed to a comprehensive review of existing processes and policies initiated, and fostering closer collaborative ties between departments. This research-led innovation has ensured that support is a tailored response to the specific needs of the individual. The "Student Voice" has been the primary driver of these changes, with students providing the direct and honest feedback.

Current Pressures and Mental Health Trends
Staffing capacity is currently stretched to its limits as the team struggles to keep pace with a rising volume of requests. The complexity of student needs is increasing in line with sector-wide trends, particularly concerning mental health and intersectional challenges.
To mitigate these risks, there is an urgent need for continued staff training and the utilisation of existing resources on Canvas alongside some improved MIS reporting.

Future Strategic Direction
The focus for the upcoming period includes a thorough review of academic policies to ensure institutional consistency and the further refinement of Individual Learning Plans (ILP). Building stronger community ties and continuing to listen to the student body.

Lincolnshire Institute of Technology (IoT)
UCP is currently optimising the IoT bursary by identifying eligible students based on specific geographic criteria and providing initial financial support alongside tailored professional development opportunities, such as guidance for establishing independent counseling practices.

A central element of this strategy involves the collection of student case studies to document the diverse impact of such funding, fulfilling reporting requirements while

creating a compelling evidence base to attract further philanthropic investment from external employers and providers.

ACTION Two – Collate case studies that could be used as means to promote philanthropic bursaries - Student Support and HE Managers.

5 COURSE REVISIONS AND VALIDATION OUTCOMES

Academic Portfolio Revisions and Strategic Expansion

Approval has been secured from the Open University (OU) for the delivery of the Sport and Exercise Science programme at the Stamford site, this will increase student recruitment and strength regional skills development.

The Digital Marketer integrated degree has been formally retitled to Digital Marketing to ensure alignment with UCAS descriptors and national naming conventions, improving clarity for both prospective applicants and employers. This was in response to SEO data. The Applied Computer Science programme is set to utilise this year's major change to incorporate a new module, 'Programming for the Future,' as part of our LLE /modular offer.

Validation Outcomes and Revalidation Scheduling

Significant progress has been made regarding the validation and revalidation of academic programmes. The BSc Forensic and Police Investigation has achieved full re-approval for a five-year period, with all initial conditions successfully met.
The validation for the MA Creative Writing has been successfully completed, with approval recommended subject to specific conditions concerning staffing, documentation review, assessment mapping, and progression routes, with necessary work underway to meet the upcoming deadline.

Revalidations are scheduled for Psychosocial, Sociology, Business, and Counselling.
The revalidation timeline for Criminology has been adjusted; following a review of staffing capacity, the current validation period has been extended by one year to ensure the programme team can engage fully with the activity and produce a revised programme that meets expected academic and regulatory standards.

Strategic Partnership Development

The validation of a new Education portfolio is taking place in partnership with Lincoln Bishop University. There is a potential for UCP to become a Lead Provider for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) pathways.

Sam Mackey (Curriculum Leader - Early Years and Education) -

The curriculum is shifting from a traditional focus on early years and primary education to a broader, offering that addresses the needs of 0-19 years settings. This agile approach aims to make courses more accessible to mature students by directly relating academic theory to varied practical settings. Modular learning and apprenticeship opportunities are also embedded within the programme design.
Liz Knight (Academic Director) thanked Sam Mackey (Curriculum Leader - Early Years and Education) and Dr Katie McAllister (HE Manager Business & Education) for all their hard work with the Education course.

6 POLICY UPDATES AND APPROVALS/ ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Approval is being requested for the revisions to the Higher Education Student Attendance Policy. The minor revision is designed to strengthen institutional engagement monitoring, refine early intervention stages, and ensure continued alignment with Office for Students (OfS) and funding body requirements.

Higher Education Student Attendance Policy (UCP-ATT001) was approved by the Academic Board

The review and approval of the Admissions Policy has been deferred to the next Academic Board meeting to ensure that LLE/ modular provision and apprenticeships are included. Due to the retirement of the Academic Director, accountability is transitioning to the Vice Principal of Apprenticeships and Higher Education, and the new Accountable Officer.

Action Three – Review the accountability and responsibility lines within existing policies and amend accordingly due to staff changes.

7 APPROVALS OF THE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Strategy Consultation and Development

The development of the University Centre Peterborough (UCP) Student Engagement Strategy involved extensive consultation with both staff and students to ensure institutional buy-in and relevance. Student consultation included an extraordinary general meeting of the Student Council to gather feedback and establish focus groups.

Student Feedback and Key Enhancements

Consultation highlighted student experiences of isolation upon arrival, particularly within small cohorts, leading to the proposal of a student-led social initiative, provisionally titled the 'Calmer Cafe'. The strategy has been refined to enhance the sense of belonging and ensure robust mechanisms for feedback.

Strategic Structure and Implementation

The strategy has been extended from a two-year framework to a four-year period (2025-2029) to allow for more accurate tracking of tangible changes and long-term impact.

The Student Engagement Strategy was approved by the Academic Board and will be sent for design.

8 LIFELONG LEARNING ENTITLEMENT (LLE)

Lifelong Learning Entitlement Preparedness

UCP has positioned itself ahead of many partners by structuring its academic offer around 30-credit modules to align with the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) framework. A dedicated project group has developed guidance and finalised module structures, enabling potential delivery to commence in January 2027.

Regulatory and Financial Mapping

Recent clarification from the Student Loans Company confirms that LLE fees will be calculated according to credit volume and the institution's existing tuition fees. While this enables straightforward pricing for standard modules, uncertainty remains regarding

registration costs from awarding bodies and the financial viability of delivering high-cost subjects.

Strategic Implementation and Challenges
The initiative is designed to provide scaffolded routes into full qualifications, providing both upskilling and access for under-represented groups. Although the curriculum design is advanced compared to other Higher Education Institutions, significant work remains to develop the necessary administrative systems for applications and student monitoring.

9 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Complaint Resolution Metrics
There have been zero formal complaints recorded during the current academic year, resulting in a nil return submission to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. This outcome demonstrates the effectiveness of early resolution processes and robust student support mechanisms which prevent issues from escalating.

Compliments Process and Impact
The institution has successfully embedded an enhanced compliments process, ensuring the systematic collection of positive feedback from students, staff, and external partners rather than incidental capture. This structured approach provides a comprehensive overview of the student experience, acting as a counterbalance to regulatory reporting metrics.

Qualitative Feedback Trends
Analysis of feedback indicates a maturation in the feedback culture, with data showing a significant increase in the volume and specificity of compliments between December and February. Feedback has evolved from general praise regarding atmosphere and staff helpfulness to detailed recognition of teaching design, clarity of delivery, and the specific impact of pastoral care on learning and wellbeing.

Strategic Enhancement
The feedback loop directly supports the institution's student engagement strategy by identifying best practices to inform proactive enhancement activities. This process strengthens two-way dialogue and partnership engagement by providing students with a clear, visible route to highlight effective practices.

The importance of capturing data and evidence that led to enhancements needs to be logged in preparation for the next Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission.

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 improvement.

10 NSS QIP UPDATE

NSS Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
The QIP was shared and there was clear evidence of improvement and completed actions. An important indicator has been the internal Student Experience Survey.
Full results from the Semester One Internal Student Survey have been analysed, revealing high satisfaction rates across many programmes including Sociology, Education Studies, Biological Sciences, and Computer Science. Course leaders are currently utilising this

data, along with free-text comments, to provide targeted feedback to students in tutorials.

The current NSS response rate stands at approximately 45%, closely mirroring the figure recorded at this stage last year. Strategies are in place to increase participation, particularly within large Level 5 and 6 cohorts.

ACTION Five – NRK HE Manager and Student Officer to meet and discuss free text comments in order to improve the student voice and work of the Student Council.

11 HN/APMR

Pearson Annual Report Submission

The annual report for Pearson has been submitted, reviewed, and approved. The report outlines strategic improvements for the upcoming academic year, specifically focusing on refining assessment design, enhancing practical links to theoretical concepts, and developing new industry partnerships.

Documented strengths included staff expertise, comprehensive student support, and industry relevance. Conversely, the report requested specific improvements from Pearson, including the reinstatement of assignment checking services, provision of holistic assignment exemplars, and refined grading systems.

Course Leaders are actively adjusting suggested assessment designs to better suit learner needs and improve performance, rather than strictly adhering to Pearson templates. Furthermore, the report notes that the new HNC/HND Acting and Dance provision will be included in next year's survey, alongside final-year students in new Applied Computer Science and Sports programmes.

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of feedback from Pearson with many issues or questions going unanswered.

Action Six – The Academic Office and Quality Nominee will contact Pearson to address concerns regarding Pearson processes and lack of feedback.

12 UPDATES ON PEER REVIEW

Key Pedagogical Themes and Strengths

This year's data indicates a shift in priorities, with staff increasingly seeking feedback on managing complex classroom dynamics and respecting individual learner needs, while requests for support with basic session planning have significantly decreased.

Analysis of recent reviews identifies a focus on the balance between scaffolding student support and fostering independence. Staff are moving beyond functional adjustments toward creating "psychological safety" and managing sensitive topics within diverse groups. A notable institutional strength is the use of real-world analogies and industry experience to anchor abstract theories. Additionally, there is an evident shift from traditional "fixing" of student work toward a coaching model that utilises inquiry-based approaches to deepen critical thinking.

The report identifies specific areas for developmental focus, including "cognitive pacing" such as the effective use of wait times after questioning and ensuring equitable

participation in small group settings. To address these, the use of diverse pedagogical tools such as digital feedback methods and non-verbal participation techniques is encouraged. These insights are categorised into a "start, stop, continue" framework to provide clear direction for instructional clarity and assessment feedback.

Quality Assurance and validation
The current cycle shows no evidence of a "cosy culture"; instead, it reveals a culture of supportive challenge where observers provide specific, constructive critiques. To ensure these insights lead to sustained growth, the report recommends formally bridging the gap between peer reviews and Professional Development Reviews (PDRs). This includes setting specific teaching and learning targets based on observation/ review outcomes.

ACTION Seven – Good practice needs to be shared at the HE Conference and PDR (appraisal) objectives will reflect areas for development.

13 UCP Alumni Engagement Update

Alumni Engagement and Tracking
Awareness and uptake of alumni support services continue to grow, with an increasing number of graduates accessing one-to-one guidance and the Potential.ly platform. Historical engagement has been fragmented, and the institution currently lacks a centralised system to track graduate career progression or alumni contributions.

Establishing a structured tracking mechanism is a strategic priority to strengthen the professional network and improve student outcomes.

Graduate Outcomes and Demographic Gaps
UCP maintains a strong performance in graduate outcomes, with 70.3% of students progressing into positive destinations.
Despite this success, a persistent progression gap remains between young and mature learners. This disparity is a known national trend and is being actively addressed through the institution's Access and Participation Plan (APP).

Resource and Capacity Constraints
The UCP Futures team faces significant capacity limits, with the employability function currently operating at 0.5 FTE, a reduction from the previous 1.0 FTE. This staffing level restricts the team's ability to move beyond essential employability activities.
Consequently, the focus remains on high-impact professional services rather than broader, proactive alumni relationship management.

March Careers Month and Student Participation
March 2026 has been designated as a "Careers Month," featuring a diverse schedule of events including drop-in sessions, mock interviews with Amazon, and information fairs regarding postgraduate finance and study. A challenge remains student participation as consistent engagement is essential to retain the support of external employers who provide these professional development opportunities.

14 UPDATE ON OTHER COMMITTEES

No request was made to review the minutes of other committees.

15 AOB

Concluding Vote of Thanks
The Academic Board concluded with a formal and heartfelt vote of thanks for Liz Knight (Academic Director), marking her final session with the committee. Members expressed professional appreciation for her leadership and significant contributions to the institution's academic governance.

ACTION TABLE

See referenced minute for full details.	Action	Resp.	Date
Action One	The last minutes were confirmed for signature.	Chair (LK)	27/02/26
Action Two	Collate case studies that could be used as means to promote philanthropic bursaries	Student Support and HE Managers	24/4/26
Action Three	Review the accountability and responsibility lines within existing policies and amend accordingly due to staff changes.	Academic Office	22/5/26
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	22/5/26 (25/26 enhancements) and on-going
Action Five	NRK HE Manager and Student Officer to meet and discuss free text comments in order to improve the student voice and work of the Student Council.	Nick Reinis-Keightley (HE Manager) and Cory Brook (Student Officer).	27/3/26
Action Six	The Academic Office and Quality Nominee will contact Pearson to address concerns regarding Pearson processes.	Academic Office/ Quality Nominee	27/3/26
Action Seven	Good practice needs to be shared at the HE Conference, in SELT and PDR objectives will reflect areas for development.	HE Managers	2/7/26
Previous Academic Board actions			
Action Two	Provide IT training sessions and resources to students	HE Managers/ILT	22/5/26

POLICY APPROVAL

Policy	Amendments	Outcome
6.Higher Education Student Attendance Policy (UCP-ATT001)		Approved

Item	Approvals
7 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY	Approved

13 DATE & TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

22nd May 2026