Committee Minutes

Committee:	**Quality Audit**
Date/Time:	19th February 2025, 11:00am – 1:00pm
Chair/Members:	Interim Chair: David Orford (DO) Chair of Admin, HR and Campus Management Committee Chair – Dr Sheku Kakay (SK) (Bm) Chair of Marketing, Admissions & Retentions Committee – Dr Cristiana Shepherd (CS) (Bm) Chair of Student Support and Student Experience Chair – Dr Maxine Pryce-Miller (MPM) (Bm) Chair of Teaching & Learning Committee - Dr Robert Hyland (RH) (Bm) Marketing, Admissions & Retentions Committee – Linlu Wang (LW) (Bm), Ammar Anjum (AAn) (Bm) Ayhan Ahmed (AAh)(Bm) Quality Assurance Manager – Yasmeen Mansur (YM) (Bm) Deputy Academic Operation Manager – Syed Mohammed Raza (RZ) (Bm) Deputy Programme Lead, Business & Management - Syed Fakhar Abbas (SFA) (Bm) Larisa Pavel (LP) (Bm) Centre Managers: Yasir Ijaz (YI) (Ln), Saqib Ayub (SA) (Mnc), Maria Siddiqa (MA) (Lc), Muhammad Ahsan (MAh) (Bd) HR/Operations representative – Shazina Taimoor (ST) (Bm) Burcu Yaldiz (BY) (Ln) Representative of Student Support – Ali Jone Bukhari (AJB) (Bm)
In attendance:	Non-Executive Director – Prof. Simon Jones (PSJ) Clerk – Funmi Ekisola (FE)

Actions shown in bold.

1. Welcome & introductions

DO welcomed all to the meeting and informed all that He was chairing the meeting on an interim basis as the original chair has left the organisation. He was certain that a new chair will be on board before the next meeting

2. Conflicts of Interest

DO asked if there were any conflicts of interest to which the members disclosed there was none.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from LP and TG.

4. Protocols for the Meeting

FE reminded all members and attendees that their phones should be muted so as not to disrupt the meeting.

5. Terms of Reference

Item for use at future meetings.

6. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 November 2024 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

7. Action Tracker

DO noted that all actions in the action tracker have been completed, except for QA41 which remains RAG rated amber as it is pending completion at the next Teaching and Learning committee meeting.

RH confirmed that at the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting in April, the agenda will include clarification of the split of duties between campus managers and campus academic liaisons and nomination of academic liaisons across campuses

8. Strategic Update

a. Committee Reports

DO requested that each committee chair present only the matters to be reported to the committee, rather than their entire minutes. He then yielded the floor to the committee chairs to present their key reports.

i) Teaching & Learning Committee

The key points raised within the Teaching and Learning Committee minutes were as follows

a. The shift from 20 to 30 credit modules is under a process of review. However, this is taking some time. We are currently examining the data by cohort, which is to be RAG rated, and presented to the next cycle of committee meetings. Registrar's office is now supporting teaching and learning in compiling that data.
b. Branded and Visual Identity compliant slides to promote the SES and NSS events were prepared and presented to students. We hope there will be strong uptake.
c. We have struggled to receive rubrics from LTU, so we have made the decision to create rubrics in house as we cannot allow an LTU absence to impact the quality of our services.
d. The Associate Dean Teaching and Learning has created a new Academic Development Unit, which has the responsibility for making academic resources and will be converting assessment policy into easily understood pieces (podcasts)
e. Academic misconduct matters are shifting from student support to the teaching and learning team.
f. We are awaiting a data driven report on continuation and attainment of cohorts 5, 8 and 11
g. There have been English and IT support sessions for the January intake – this will continue for the May intake – and we are monitoring to see if online sessions have much uptake.
h. We are struggling to identify disaggregated Moodle engagement – but we are looking into how we can get this data.

i. Placements is creating a passport and glossary to graduate outcomes, to assure students are equipped with appropriate ways of describing their post-graduation work.

DO commended the good initiatives being carried out by the committee

    ii)   Marketing, Admissions & Retention Committee

The key points raised within the Marketing, Admissions & Retention Committee brought the following matters to the committee

1. The MAR committee meeting lasted exactly two hours as requested during the last QA committee meeting. However, with student attendees, it would have slightly overrun. Reviewing the recording reveals that the time was spent on productive discussions to enhance departmental performance. Notably, this is the only committee covering three departments which has led to significant improvements rather than just sections of three departments. While the MAR committee still suggests a slightly longer time slot could be beneficial, they respect the QA chair's decision.
2. The Marketing team exceeded most of their targets, except the number of leads generated. However, they increased the conversion of leads to enrolments. The committee agreed with the department's suggestions to improve their performance for the next quarter and added a few more, e.g., use of AI to expedite video editing, engage more with other brands, deeper analysis of the ROI.
3. The admissions team met their targets, except for Level 7 and undergraduate at Leicester campus which were quite low. The committee agreed with the suggestions to improve recruitment for the next intake and put forward suggestions to enhance this, e.g., share feedback from outreach with other teams, develop further support for new entrants.
4. The retention team also met most of their targets with some fluctuations with withdrawals and attendance per cohort. The committee discussed some informal complaints made against the team and suggested interdepartmental work to address these and enhance student retention, such as a plan of support for the break between levels, particularly between levels 3 and 4

DO asked CS for her opinion about the recruitment market. She responded that it is currently buoyant and presents opportunities that need to be strategically tapped. She further noted that the team has identified key actions to leverage market conditions. However, she highlighted that LTU's set targets on student recruitment numbers have been a limiting factor.

    iii)   Administration, HR & Campus Management Committee

The key points raised within the Administration, HR & Campus Management Committee minutes were as follows

a. All departments reporting to the committee will be sharing their strategic plans with the committee
b. Committee will be measuring each department and campus manager by their strategic plan
c. Broad range of HR, Administration and Operations policies will be reviewed in the course of the year

d. Salary banding for all staff will be attended to this year – this has been shared with all staff by HR
e. Other non-financial ways of sourcing the library are being reviewed e.g. free books, journals, newsletters and articles from publishing houses
f. SSS strategy on staff to student ratios will be implemented in compliance with OfS standard
g. In fulfilment of E6 condition, establish a Counselling Support Unit- counselling and safeguarding officers

DO commented that item g. should be reported to the Academic Board.

iv) Student Support & Student Experience Committee

The Chair of the Student Support & Student Experience Committee raised a single point from the minutes: the appointment of a mental health nurse.

MPM reiterated the urgent need for SSS to employ a mental health nurse to support both students and staff in addressing mental health challenges, emphasizing the importance of improving support services.

LTU has already flagged this role for recruitment; however, as this matter has remained outstanding since September 2024, it must now be escalated to the Academic Board for resolution

DO noted to bring the matter to the attention of the Academic Board

DO also requested for members opinions about this appointment. SK highlighted the need to also appoint disability officers across the five campuses as this is a requirement from LTU. MPM responded that the Mental Health Nurse appointee should not only have expertise in mental health but also an extensive background in learning disabilities to provide comprehensive support.

b. Updates to the Quality Assurance Action Plan

SK presented the Quality Assurance action plan. What had been achieved in the last three months and outline for the next three months.

What has been achieved for the last three months:

Implementation of the Self-Assessment Report	OfS Conditions Template – Indicators and Measures
Implementation of the Quarterly Review Report	Implementation of Collaborative Operational Delivery Plan
Disciplinary Panel – staff and students	Student & Staff complaints panels
Complaints Appeals Panel	Policy Review Panel – Associate Deans
Working collaboratively with the LTU QAO	

Target for the next three months:

Internal Moderator	QAA Mock Assessment
Developments of staff recognition Awards	Staff satisfaction Survey– with HR
Quality Assurance Tracker	Academic Staff Appraisal Template
Peer Review (staff) and Peer Mentoring (students)	Research Seminar Coordinator
Periodic Monitoring of CRM	End of Year Online staff Satisfaction survey
Monthly/Quarterly Quality Assurance Bulletin	

c. LTU Quarterly Review

YM presented the LTU quarterly review for health and social care and business management The report showed commonalities between the two courses and they are:

1. Large cohorts with variable progression rate
2. Retention of students that pass is relatively low
3. Level 4 progression, on or just below target
4. Level 5 progression consistently above target
5. Some modules have very high pass rate compared to others
6. Degree awards show no 1st class and variable proportion of 2:1 award at the minimum threshold for Business undergraduate study, few 1sts class but substantial proportion of 2:1 award, % of 1st /2:1 award are above target for health and social care.
7. Variable proportion of entrants graduating with a degree for both business management and health& social care.

YM then presented the improvement actions being undertaken to improve the pass, progression and grade outcomes and these include

1. collaborative department team meeting to ensure students have the right support to progress in semester two.
2. T & L delivery to incorporate more interactive and student-centred teaching methods, including gamification to help increase student engagement and knowledge retention of module material.
3. Revisions to programme inductions, including pre-course introductory sessions/preparatory courses before the module begins. E.g. numeracy skills and basic accounting classes to help students understand financial concepts
4. Use the module review forms, to conduct a comprehensive review of the module and assessment structure to identify what may have contributed to students' lower than expected performances in specific modules.
5. Scheduled English Support, IT Support and Module Support sessions have been introduced to offer all students opportunities to seek help with their module content and assignment
6. Academic Development Unit (ADU) has also been created, the team are currently working on resources in area such as critical thinking, questioning skill and academic integrity, which will benefit students to support them to higher pass rates and improve overall grade outcomes

DO commented that the report indicated poor student performance as pass rates were below minimum threshold.

MPM responded that LTU has been informed about the launch of the Academic Development Unit (ADU) and explained how teaching and learning initiatives will further

support students. However, the impact of the ADU will not be measurable until another 12 months.

DO then asked if SSS's standing in the sector was at risk. MPM assured that it was not, but emphasized the need to improve internal process to solidify SSS's position. This requires:

a. Stronger departmental collaboration to create a cohesive institution rather than fragmented operations.
b. Standardization across departments, ensuring that each unit has a clear understanding of its roles, responsibilities, and jurisdiction from end to end.

FE to include on the Academic Board agenda, standardization of departments where each department has a clear understanding of its roles, responsibilities, and jurisdiction from end to end. PSJ to work with SK on standardization of departments and the reporting structure of all departments in SSS

SK informed the committee that the standardization task was originally planned in collaboration with the Dean but had to be put on hold following the Dean's departure and the receipt of the OfS letter. He, however, confirmed that the standardization of job function per department will be done.

CS clarified that the Appeal panel mentioned in SK's report is a Complaints Appeal Panel and not an Academic Appeal panel. She cautioned against over-reliance on LTU data as it has proven to be incomplete, unclear, misleading and inaccurate, which negatively skews SSS performance report. CS recommended that when presenting reports based on LTU data, a caveat should be included to highlight potential inaccuracies.

MPM supported this point, citing multiple instances of data inconsistencies from LTU, which makes SSS appear worse off than it actually is.

DO inquired whether these concerns have been raised with LTU, to which MPM and SK confirmed that SSS had requested a review of the data and LTU had acknowledge the request. Meetings will be held to resolve the inaccuracies and inconsistencies.

DO asked SK to clarify whether his comment on the QAA mock assessment was related to the OfS. SK clarified that it was not related to OfS but rather that QAA had requested a quality plan and set an April timeline to assess SSS's structures, processes and governance structure. QAA has 2 reviewers working on SSS assessment.

RH recommended reviewing the PwC Data Futures: Independent Review report on the OfS data capture across universities. The report highlighted inconsistencies in data collection across universities reinforcing that LTU is not the only institution facing these challenges.

d. OfS Quality Plan

SK presented the OfS Quality Plan, outlining both accomplishments and pending tasks that must be completed within the next three weeks.

Accomplishments:

The following key governance and compliance documents have been prepared:

1. Draft Organogram
2. Student Protection Plan
3. Risk Management Framework

4. Value for Money Policy
5. Fit and Proper Person Policy
6. Bullying, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy
7. Ethics Policy

Pending Tasks (To be completed in the next three weeks):

1. Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Compliance
2. Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Compliance
3. Values – UKCAB/SSS
4. Committee of University Chairs (CUC) – Code of Governance
5. OfS Registration Application Form: Annex F

These pending tasks remain a priority to ensure full compliance with OfS requirements and successful completion of the Quality Plan objectives.

e. Policies & Procedures Update

SK presented policies and procedures that have been updated in the last quarter. These include:

1. Student and Staff Complaints policies and procedures
2. Application Feedback and Complaints policies and Procedure
3. Disciplinary policy and procedure
4. Employee Code of Conduct policy
5. Loyalty Bonus

9. LTU Partnership update and potential partnerships

Potential Partnerships

There is an ongoing set of soft and research exchanges with the University of Derby. Two of their researchers presented workshops at Scholars in December, RH presented research work in February, another faculty is presenting for SSS in March, and Joshua Malcolm is presenting work at the end of the term. Following that, there is a research conference involving Derby faculty in April. This is all to help continue build strong brand awareness of SSS at Derby pending the approval of the partnership. The partnership with Derby has been paused as the university have requested for SSS QAA or OfS registration.

There are a few other possible courses that are under review for possible collaboration – these include cyber security and data analytics; event management and fundraising; health management, and television production.

In each case SSS has strong support within the departments and executive. However, all of these are subject to risk assessment. SSS is assured of sufficiently demonstrating high-quality facilities, resources and provision.

Re LTU partnership

There have been several meetings regarding the coming E6 requirements – this is a requirement to have a single source of information on Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. SK has developed a policy on this, peripheral materials are being developed to be housed on the website. This may include a poster, a short video, or a statement that articulates our policy.

DO asked RH whether capital intensive courses such as cybersecurity and data analytics have been costed before approaching universities. RH confirmed that a minimum threshold, viability report and cost analysis are already in place. He also noted that these courses would have a gradual rollout, starting with foundation year.

DO further inquired whether other courses, such as Game Development, had been considered. RH responded that while it has been discussed, it would be part of a later phase, as the necessary hardware for such courses is not yet in place. However, other courses are being assessed for introduction in specific campuses where demand is high and where they are expected to have strong enrolment figures. This initiative is part of a five-year strategic plan.

10. Annual Report form the Chair to the Academic Board

Item not for use at this meeting.

11. Items of committee business to report to Academic Board

The committee agreed that DO/FE prepare key items for reporting to the Academic Board. Post meeting, based on the written reports from the committees and from the discussions at the meeting, the following key items were raised:

1. Administration, HR & Campus Management Committee – SSS Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy and procedure in fulfilment of E6 conditions.
2. Student Support & Student Experience Committee- The appointment of a mental health nurse with extensive experience in learning disabilities be prioritised and accomplished
3. Tasking the Head of Quality Assurance for Collaborative Partnership with the standardization of departments where each department has a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities, to forestall overlap of jurisdiction and standardize processes. Please note that this falls within the purview of the Dean who plays a primary role in ensuring standardization at the academic level

12. Any other business

None was raised

13. Date of next meeting
There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.00 noon. Date of next meeting Birmingham Campus, Hybrid, 15 May 2025, 11:00am – 1:00pm

Action Table

Number	Action	Responsible	Deadline
QA41	Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee to report on adding to the next agenda the split of duties between campus managers and academic centre leads and ensure the nomination of academic centre leads across campuses	RH	21/04/25
QA48	Chair of Administration, HR & Campus Management Committee to update the committee on Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy and procedure in fulfilment of E6 conditions.	SK	21/04/25
QA49	Ensure to add to the Academic Board agenda, the appointment of a mental health nurse with extensive experience in learning disabilities be prioritised and accomplished	FE	4/04/25
QA50	Ensure to add to the Academic Board agenda - Tasking the Head of Quality Assurance for Collaborative Partnership with the standardization of departments where each department has a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities, to forestall overlap of jurisdiction and standardize processes. Please note that this falls within the purview of the Dean who plays a primary role in ensuring standardisation at the academic level.	FE	4/04/25