

CORPORATION BOARD of UNITED COLLEGES GROUP
Monday 15 December 2025, 5.30 pm – Paddington Campus

Members Present: Stephen Davis (CEO), Franklin Asante (Chair), Stephen Grainge, Tanya Rose, Colin Smith, Grainne Brankin, Serene Stennett (Student governor), Janet Davidson, Tim Ryan, Jessica Amarteifio (Student governor), Nadia Babar (staff governor), Alastair Procter, Ross Mackenzie, Dasha Dockree, Airina Gordon (staff governor), Rob Bradley* and Andrew Dowsett* (from 6.30 pm).

In attendance: Zoë Lawrence (Director of Governance), Amanda Thorneycroft (Chief Finance Officer), James Wilson (Principal), Floyd Milligan (Director of Development), Paul Bradley (Director of Business Intelligence), and Peter Hardy (Addleshaw Goddard – relevant agenda items only).

1	<p>PROCEDURAL</p> <p>Welcome and apologies for absence The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Laura Griffin, Alex Fyfe and Nick Porzig*.</p> <p>The Chair introduced Dasha Dockree (new independent member) and Airina Gordon (new staff governor) as this was their first full Corporation meeting.</p> <p>*denotes co-opted governor.</p> <p>Announcements SD reported to the Corporation that UCG had recently been awarded membership of the Chartered Institute of Further Education and that he, and others had attended the award ceremony the previous week. Members appreciated the achievement of this accolade and how it extends the college’s positive reputation with external stakeholders.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest in the agenda items None were declared.</p>
3	<p>I. Approve minutes of meeting held on 22 October 2025. The minutes (confidential and non-confidential) were approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>II. Matters arising The matters arising concerned the S106 Agreement which was covered as a main item on the agenda.</p> <p>III. Request to raise Grey Box (for information only) items No items were raised.</p>
4	<p>STRATEGIC <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>I. CEO Report - Balance Score Card (BSC) SD reported that at this point in the academic year all KPIs bar student attendance were on track. He referred to discussions initiated at the recent TLS Committee which included measures to improve attendance through alternative approaches with particular students who were not yet ready for the college environment. He highlighted that financial health had moved from RI to Good and was confident at this stage that the BSC targets would be met by year end. SS asked what a negative value for value added meant. SD explained that this</p>

	<p>related to the expected level of progress, and when students did not achieve this then it showed a negative score, with zero being the expected level. AP commented that the staff mix had deteriorated since the last report. SD acknowledged this and explained that it was an issue in particular areas of provision (for example ECBE and supported learning) where there were staff vacancies, plus some growth where temporary staff were being used. He said that some permanent appointments had been made so there was a lag to the data. DD asked if there was a seasonality to the student attendance figures. SD said that there was likely to be a bit more data cleansing from the beginning of term so there was a little seasonality to it. He was anticipating being able to share 4 week rolling attendance figures with the Corporation soon. ET commented on the new staff turnover metric. AP asked for information on how UCG benchmarked in the FE sector on this KPI.</p> <p>SD presented his CEO's report which included reference to an international strategy which he hoped would be discussed with Governors at the Strategy Event in January. He also mentioned his presentations at the AoC Conference, the college's Food for Thought campaign, and his meeting with Angela Knight (former Treasury Minister). SD had also recently been appointed to the Board of Skills Development Scotland (equivalent of Skills England). Members noted the level of external validation that the college was receiving and how this enabled a further degree of assurance. AP commented that he had read with interest Appendix 3 which included reports from each of the career clusters. He thought these reports impressive and innovative with broad reach in tackling issues and challenges. SD thanked AP for his feedback and would relay his comments to those involved.</p> <p>II. Outline Programme for Strategy Event (17 January 2026)</p> <p>FA provided a short summary of the topics that would be discussed at the Governor Development and Strategy Event on 17 January 2026. The day would include several parts focussing on students, curriculum, growth and collaboration, and the outcome of the external governance review (EGR). FA thanked committee chairs and other governors for their contributions to the EGR and advised that the draft report would be provided soon.</p>
5	<p>COMMITTEE MATTERS</p> <p>Property & Infrastructure Committee – Grainne Brankin (Chair) <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>Peter Hardy joined the meeting for this item.</p> <p>I. Wembley Park Project <i>(See Confidential Minutes)</i></p> <p>Peter Hardy and Rob Bradley left the meeting at the end of this item.</p>
	<p>Teaching Learning & Skills Committee – Colin Smith (Chair) <i>(Papers circulated in advance)</i></p> <p>CS provided a short summary of the key items discussed at the TLS Committee on 10 November. These included a presentation from JW on alternative approaches to supporting students not yet ready to learn, a detailed review of student achievement, the embedding of the developmental lesson observations to improve teaching and learning and the new Ofsted framework.</p> <p>I. Self-Assessment Review (SAR)</p>

	<p>This year's Self-Assessment Review had been discussed in detail with Governors at the SAR Validation meeting on 21 October 2025. The amendments from that meeting were agreed with the TLS Committee on 10 November. The final version was presented for Corporation approval. The Corporation resolved to approve the Self-Assessment Review for 2024/25 to be submitted to the DfE.</p> <p>II. Link Governor Feedback</p> <p>Several of the link governors had provided written reports which were included in the papers and taken as read. In addition to this, governors had also attended curriculum coffee mornings with staff and students and fed back on their experiences. AP mentioned that some students had raised timetabling of maths and English and use of technology as issues. CS said that whilst he had not yet provided a written summary, he found the link governor visits very useful particularly to meet with students and triangulate information provided through the board papers. AD said that his link governor career cluster which included T levels were looking for placements for students and asked if any of the governors could suggest possible opportunities which could be followed up. SG had attended two of the coffee mornings and said that meeting the different students was uplifting and he was struck by their ambition and drive. The next coffee morning was at the Willesden Campus on 3 February, and all governors were welcome to attend.</p>
7	<p>Finance & Resources Committee – Ross Mackenzie (Chair)</p> <p>I. External Auditor's Report: Financial Statements Audit and Regulatory Findings Report 2025</p> <p>RM provided a summary of the joint F&R/Audit meeting held on 1 December 2025 where the committees considered the external auditors report. It was noted that there had been a smooth transition to the new external auditors HaysMac, and that there had been a private session at the meeting without the executive present in line with best practice. Since that meeting a minor change to their report had been made in respect to income for CWC Enterprises. This change was immaterial to UCG. An unqualified opinion had been provided.</p> <p>II. UCG and CWC Enterprises Financial Statements for year ending 31 July 2025</p> <p>A table of the changes to the Financial Statements which had been made since the 01 December meeting when the committees review them was included in the papers. Most of the changes were presentational or reflected the income change to CWC enterprises mentioned above. AT confirmed that the accounts had been taken back through the auditors following the changes made. RM said that the Committees had received papers on the going concerns of both UCG and CWC Enterprises (which had been shared with the Corporation in the Grey Box for information) and had discussed in detail the financial positions of both entities concluding that both would continue as a going concern until at least 31 December 2026. On this basis, the Corporation resolved to approve the Financial Statements for UCG and CWC Enterprises for signing and submission to the DfE.</p> <p>III. Regulatory Self-Assessment</p> <p>The Regularity Self-Assessment was relied on by the external auditors as part of their audit. It had been reviewed by the F&R and Audit Committees at the joint meeting on 01 December 2025 and was recommended to the Corporation for approval. The Corporation resolved to approve the Regularity Self-Assessment for signing by the Accountable Officer and Chair to the Corporation.</p> <p>IV. Management Accounts (Oct 2025)</p>

	The October management accounts had been reviewed by the F&R and Audit Committees on 01 December 2025. These were taken as read and there were no questions.
8	<p>Audit Committee</p> <p>I. Audit Committee Terms of Reference (ToR) SG presented the amendments to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference which related to updates to DfE policy documents and removal of reference to the ESFA which had been disbanded. There were no changes to the substance of the ToR. The Corporation resolved to approve the amendments to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference.</p> <p>II. Audit Committee Annual Report SG presented the Audit Committee Annual Report which set out the work of the committee over the past year. The format of the report was in line with external requirements. The Corporation had no questions on the report. The Corporation resolved to approve the Audit Committee Annual Report for signing and submission to the DfE.</p>
10	<p>AoB No items were raised.</p>
12	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Monday 30 March 2026</p> <p>Meeting closed 7.10 pm</p>

Minutes taken by Zoë Lawrence 16 December 2025

SIGNED:

Date:

Franklin Asante