

Paper 1

Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
held on Thursday 20 February 2025 at 11.30am-1.30pm on Campus

Present:

Andy McGoff	Chair/Board Member
Margaret McLean	Board Member

In attendance:

Ingrid Earp	Board Secretary (Minutes)
Roddy Henry	Principal
Mary Slater	Director of Operations
Clare Robertson	Internal Audit, BDO
Deepasri Selvam	Internal Audit, BDO

Apologies for absence: Aislinn Wood, Board Member

Part A – Opening Business	
1.	Welcome, Apologies and Declaration of Interest The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that David Hamer has resigned from the Board and therefore also the Audit and Risk Committee. This leaves a vacancy on the Committee.
2.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting, 31 October 2024 (Paper 1) The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record. Action Log (Paper 1a) The Action and Decision log has been updated accordingly.
3.	Matters Arising There were no matters arising not covered in the Action Log.
Part B – For decision	
4.	Business Continuity Policy and Plan (Paper 2) The Principal talked through the policy which has been revised and amended substantially from the previous one. A number of other policies will sit beneath this one. Discussion took place as to whether there should be more mention of the role of Board and in particular with reference to communications issued on behalf of the College should there be an incident. The Principal agreed that it could be made more explicit that the Board will be kept informed throughout any incident, and any potential incident or risk to the College reputation will be relayed to Board as soon as possible and lines to take will be agreed. The fifth bullet point under section 3.1 in the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to read 'Advise and consult the Board of Directors and key stakeholders as appropriate'. Action A&R03:B4 Principal to amend section 3.1 BCP as agreed.

	<p>With regard to comms with the business park tenants it was noted that the College would be responsible for these. The Committee accepted this as long as the Head of Estates and Facilities is aware of this responsibility.</p> <p>The question was asked about contacting staff, students etc and the Principal informed the Committee that he was confident that this should not be an issue as most of the key College information is stored in the Cloud and accessible remotely.</p> <p>Decision A&R03:B4 Committee agreed to recommend the BCP for approval to Board.</p>
5.	<p>Procurement Policy (Paper 3) The Director of Operations talked through this amended policy which has been revised in consultation with APUC (Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges).</p> <p>A Member asked if the thresholds for approval also covered signing a contract. The Director of Operations said that this is covered in the College Financial Regulations however the Committee agreed it would be best practice to have this in both.</p> <p>Action A&R03:B5 Director of Operations to amend the Procurement Policy re thresholds for signature of contracts and make sure it is in line with the Financial Regulations.</p>
6.	<p>Data Protection Policy (Paper 4) Committee were informed that once the Policy is approved the Data Protection Officer (DPO) will carry out revised staff training. (The DPO is external to the College).</p> <p>After discussion the Committee approved the Policy.</p> <p>Decision A&R03:B6 Committee approved the Data Protection Policy.</p>
7.	<p>Reserves Policy (Paper 5) This policy had recently been approved due to changes in the guidance on the treatment of job evaluation.</p> <p>Action A&R03:B7 Typo on page two to be corrected.</p> <p>Decision A&R03:B7 Subject to the correction of the typo the Committee agreed the revised Policy.</p>
Part C – For discussion	
8.	<p>Internal Audit 2024-25 Update (Paper 6) The Student Recruitment Internal Audit is now complete with the Data Protection one due to be carried out in the middle of March and the Strategic Planning one in May/June. The scope of the strategic planning audit was discussed with Committee noting that it appeared to be quite backward looking and perhaps the next phase can be more forward looking.</p>
9.	<p>Monitoring of Audit Recommendations (Paper 7) The Director of Operations talked through the outstanding recommendations. The revised recommendations to policies as well as the introduction of new policies is being worked through with Anti-Bribery and Value for Money to come to the next meeting of A&R.</p>

	<p>Training for staff about recruiting staff has been delayed and a revised date of March 2025 put on it.</p> <p>The Finance Team are currently amending the financial planning procedures, trying to make them clearer and more concise.</p> <p>Regarding the Cyber Security Audit the date for the cyber incident response plan has been revised to August 2025.</p> <p>With reference to the External Audit recommendation the fixed asset register remains outstanding but it should be complete by the end of the financial year and from then on will be a rolling activity.</p> <p>Sustainability reporting will be a requirement going forward and the Chair also pointed out a new accounting standard for 2026/27 which refers to leases so suggested the College begin to pull together a list of all the leases they are party to.</p>
10.	<p>Risk Register Update (Paper 8)</p> <p>The Principal reported a change to risk 3, failure to maintain business continuity, has been reduced due to the revision of the Business Continuity Plan.</p> <p>The risk around financial sustainability remains challenging with a break even position forecast for the current year but future years are uncertain. The £150k written off by SFC will be added to the bottom line for the current year.</p>
11.	<p>Climate Change Risk Register (Paper 9)</p> <p>After having worked with EAUC there has been significant improvements to the Climate Change Risk Register and it was welcome that the College is not doing too badly given the age and type of building the main building is. Thanks were extended to the Head of Facilities and Estates for the ongoing work on this.</p> <p>Action A&R03:C11 Board Secretary to add this item to the Committee planner as an item for discussion on an annual basis.</p>
12.	<p>Internal Audit Procurement (Paper 10)</p> <p>The BDO representatives left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>The minute for this item will be a closed minute due to the commercial nature of the item and the discussion taking place.</p>
Part D – For information	
13.	<p>Student Recruitment Internal Audit (Paper 11)</p> <p>The Audit gave moderate assurance with a number of areas of good practice noted. The Admissions Policy is to be updated as a result of the Audit and the amount of users able to access Pro-Solutions will be limited going forward. The Principal noted that the Admissions Policy had been approved at the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting the day prior to this meeting.</p>

Part E – Closing Business

14.	<p>Financial Regulations There has been just the one change since the Regulations were last approved and this is item 9.3. Decision A&R03:E14 Committee approved the slight revision and agreed to circulate the final version to full Board.</p>
15.	<p>Insurance Renewal The Director of Operations reported that the current insurers had offered to fix the cost of the insurance renewal for the next two years if the College agrees to remain with the provider for the two years. Committee asked that the Director of Operations check that there is no overlap or duplication with the Trusts insurance. Action A&R03:E15 Director of Operations check what is covered by both College and Trust insurance.</p>
16.	<p>Date of next meeting Thursday 15 May 2025 at 11.30am</p>