

Meeting of Audit Committee

MINUTES (Part One)

Date	Wednesday 8th March
Time	16.30 to 18.45
Location	Via Zoom
Present (Governors):	Chair: Andrew Gilchrist Mary Hughes, Paul Stedman, Nicholas Woolf
In attendance (officers)	Ashok Patel (Interim Executive Director Finance) Melissa Drayson (Director of Governance) Karen Champion (Head of MIS) Item 3 only
By invitation	Christine Ricketts (Principal and Chief Executive)
In attendance (auditors)	Kevin Moloney (TIAA)
Apologies for absence	Rick Parris (co-opted member)
Quorum (2)	The meeting was quorate throughout

Item	Action lead
1. Preliminary items	
1.1 Apologies for Absence No apologies were received	
1.2 Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interests relating to matters on the agenda. Previously declared interests were carried forward.	
1.3 Urgent other business notified in advance No urgent matters of other business had been notified in advance.	
2. Minutes	
2.1 Part One Minutes of the meeting on 30 November 2022 Subject to the correction of a minor typo, the Minutes were APPROVED as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair.	
2.2 Minutes of Special Audit Committee meeting on 20 February 2023	

Subject to the correction of a minor typo, the Minutes were APPROVED as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair.

2.3 Matters Arising

The Committee noted completed actions, and those on the agenda, and requested an update on any outstanding actions.

Item 8: The review of the fraud policies to ensure that they reflected the latest definitions of fraud would now be undertaken by the Director of Governance and Interim Executive Director of Finance.

**EDF/Dir
Gov**

3. Internal Audit Progress Report

Supporting papers by the Internal Auditors, TIAA

3.1 Summary controls and assurance (SICA) report

The report covered finalised audits since the last meeting, along with an overall progress report and follow up on outstanding recommendations

i. MIS Systems (2021-22 audit plan)

The audit had been an advisory rather than an assurance review. The draft findings had been included in the 2021-22 annual report. One priority 1 recommendation had been made relating to the full implementation of the REMs reporting suite. It was noted that implementation deadlines had been agreed with the previous interim Head of MIS and several were now due, or had passed. The permanent Head of MIS (attending for this item) had been in post since January.

Management gave a progress update on each action under the Priority 1 recommendation. Each was nearing completion but would require a revised implementation deadline. A management decision had been made not to reinstate the REMS working group until initial projects had been completed and bedded in.

Assurance was provided to the committee that key reports were sent to Heads of Learning including weekly attendance register compliance reports, and monthly ILR reports to identify students who were not meeting conditions of funding. Governors commented that MIS worked best when curriculum staff fully understood the data. It was confirmed that the Executive Director Curriculum met regularly with all Heads of Learning for this purpose.

AGREED:

- i) **that the Audit Partner and Head of MIS should meet to review the recommendations thoroughly, update on progress and agree revised implementation dates.**
- ii) **That an update would be brought to the next Committee meeting.**

TIAA/
Head MIS

ii. Progress against the 2022-23 Internal Audit Plan

Fieldwork was in progress for the Safeguarding and Apprenticeships Audits. The Risk Management draft report had been issued to the SLT and was currently indicating an opinion of Substantial Assurance. The Internal Auditors would be meeting the Interim EDF to discuss.

Learner numbers and MIS audits would be undertaken by the end of the academic year. Meetings would be held with the Head of Apprenticeship and MIS to progress these.

The terms of reference for the planned Purchasing and Procurement audit would be shared with the EDF to establish if there are any particular area of risk that require urgent review. There was uncertainty as to why this area had been included as it had been covered to an extent within the Key Financial Controls audit in 2021-22. The Committee gave its support to swapping this audit if considered in the college's interests by the Internal Auditor and EDF.

iii. Update on Implementation of Recommendations

In total, 43 recommendations were listed from the previous year's audit work, of which 26 had been implemented, five were not yet due, nine were due but had been given a proposed revised implementation date following discussion with managers. Three remained overdue as an update from management was still awaited. These all related to the staff wellbeing audit and would be picked up with that team **ACTION (PCE)**

The Committee considered the revised implementation dates for the nine recommendations where a request had been made and challenged on whether these were realistic. It was proposed that a holistic review of these was needed against the strategic plan and key risks.

AGREED: That a review of all outstanding recommendations would be undertaken and an implementation plan devised and reported back to the Committee

EDF

4. Risk Management

Supporting papers presented by the EDF and PCE

4.1 Risk Register

As the risk register had been updated by the former Executive Director Finance and Resources, the Principal and Chief Executive answered questions.

Governors noted the downgrading of some risks from Red to Amber, and challenged whether the risk relating to information systems should have been reduced in the light of the discussion on MIS. This would be flagged as an area for review following discussion between the internal auditors and Head of MIS.

Governors also considered that Health and Safety risks should be prioritised given staff shortages, and the planned refurbishment of the estate. Assurance was given that the current Director of Estates was qualified in this area.

It was agreed that Financial Risk needed to be given prominence regardless of current rating.

The Interim Executive Director Finance requested time to fully understand the risk register and the rationale for some of the ratings. His experience at other colleges would prove useful in this regard.

ACTION: That a review of the risk register would be undertaken and reported back at the next meeting. EDF

Other Urgent Business

There was none

Date of Future Meetings

23 May 2023 at 18.00

Signed

(Chair)

Date