
Approved Minutes

Present:	Mrs Emma van der Lugt (Chair)	Governor	EvdL
	Mr John Searson	Governor	JS
In attendance:	Mr Simon Arthurs	Director of Finance	SA
	Mrs Ali Chinn	PricewaterhouseCoopers	AC
	Mr Charlie Martin	PricewaterhouseCoopers	CM
	Mr Stephen Plant	University Secretary/Registrar	SP
	Professor Rob Warner	Vice-Chancellor	RW
	Andrea Fincham	Secretary	AF

1. Apologies & declaration of conflict of interests

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Prof Gina Radford, Governor (GR), Mrs Victoria Holbrook, Governor (VH) and Mrs Heather Ancient, PricewaterhouseCoopers (HA). As the resultant meeting was not quorate, it was agreed that items would be discussed with the proviso that an additional Audit Committee be reconvened (perhaps to coincide with the Board on 27th March 2020) to finalise and approve those discussions.
- 1.2 There were no declared conflicts of interest.
- 1.3 EvdL welcomed CM to his first meeting and AC explained that due to internal structural changes at PWC, CM would now be the company's internal audit representative.
- 1.4 EvdL recorded her thanks to US for her previous expertise and service to the Committee.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting (1 November 2019)

- 2.1 The minutes were approved with no amendments.

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 All matters arising were considered complete.

4. To consider the effectiveness of the committee

- 4.1 Following discussion around key points, the positive effectiveness of the committee was agreed.
- 4.2 More expertise within the Committee's member would be beneficial; it was noted this was an agenda item at the forthcoming Governance & Nominations Committee.
- 4.3 EvdL requested internal audit reports earlier in the year to enable rigour.

5. To review the Strategic Risk Register

- 5.1 SA provided an update on changes to the Risk Register and the key risks recently discussed at SMT. Although there is no change to the cyber-risk, this will be reviewed now that the IT Services and Infrastructure Manager, Peter Waterfield, has taken up his role.
- 5.2 There is no immediate risk change due to Brexit, however this will still be monitored closely.

- 5.3 New risks include OfS reportable events, which will be outlined to the Board of Governors by SP and could result in regulatory intervention for non-compliance; and the safeguarding of data quality, particularly financial which, now that it has been identified, will be reviewed to upgrade and improve efficiency.
- 5.4 It was noted that an OfS consultation on monetary penalties has been launched, with which the University would be engaging.
- 5.5 OfS registration is currently ranked as a 'tolerable' risk but should now be reconsidered as a potential 'key' risk, following sector advice received from Victoria Holbrook.
- 5.6 The, as-yet unknown, impact of the Corona virus may prove to be a business risk and will be monitored. RW reported that staff and students are being kept abreast of Public Health England's advice and academic colleagues have been asked to ensure on-line resources are up to date in case there is a need for anyone to self-isolate. Students have also been reassured that their degrees will be protected if necessary.
- 5.7 SA reported that the risk management policy aligns with HM Government's *The Orange Book, Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts*

6. Review the internal auditors' audit risk assessment and strategy

- 6.1 AC updated the committee on progress and activity to date and future audits. CM explained that the internal audit code of practice had been released. This is principles-based and will be applied proportionately to each organisation.

7. Internal Audit Reports

a) DBS

- 7.1 AC noted that report findings deemed the partnership as low risk with the sole recommendation of ensuring students were aware of where to find relevant policies and procedures.
- 7.2 A concern was raised that the result of the report did not mirror the NSS results that had necessitated the audit. However, it was acknowledged that the delay in agreeing the remit of the audit had given QUASU and academic colleagues time to work with DBS to improve their practices which were reflected within the report and with evidence of an improved NSS performance in the last cycle.

b) Marketing & Student Recruitment

- 7.3 The broad scope of the audit was recognised and AC reported that the findings were low risk; the only recommendation involved updating the 2018 marketing strategy to reflect the current positive performance of the university, and this is already in preparation for the July Board.

8. To consider the list of Outstanding Audit Recommendations

- 8.1 HR – staff development outcome evaluation and PDR review
- 8.2 Sports Centre – weakness in governance strategy and risk register relations. SA reported that regular reconciliations are now taking place
- 8.3 Key financial controls – fixed assets and cash. SA is working with John Bailey, Director of Estates & IT Infrastructure with discussions around JML

8.4 RW reported that discrepancies within the governance of the MSU had come to light and it was agreed the University could support them by requesting an audit to ensure their compliance with their own constitution and governance obligations.

8.5 It was noted that SP was engaging with MSU to action immediate improvements.

9. To consider the Value for Money Report - promoting economy, efficiency and effectiveness

9.1 SA recapped on the outline that was presented at November's meeting. Going forward, the business planning process will necessitate areas to outline what their key outcomes are and to identify measurable KPIs

9.2 VFM will align with Tribal data which, when presented to the Board, will demonstrate that the University is in-line with sector and are improving overall.

ACTION: SA to provide a summary report to Board of Governors

9.3 VFM will be presented by a balanced scorecard graphic.

ACTION: Slides to be distributed (AF)

10. Sports Centre Consultation Outcome & Action Plan

10.1 RW noted that a recruitment drive was currently underway which has resulted in a 12% increase in membership in January and 10% in February compared with the previous year.

10.2 As the sports facilities are disproportionately large for the current student body, the consultation paper has benchmarked the University against larger institutions rather than those of a comparable size.

10.3 The cost of student subsidy was noted and RW confirmed that various initiatives were underway to increase utilisation and income.

10.4 The recruitment of a Director of Sport is underway with a view for the position to be filled in July.

Action Log

Minute	Action	Owner	Deadline
9.2	Provide summary of Value for Money (VFM) Report to Board of Governors	SA	Board of Governors meeting – 27/03/2020
9.3	Distribute VFM slides to the Committee with the draft minutes	AF	13/03/2020