



MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 JUNE 2025 AT 9.45 AM, IN THE ENGINE ROOM BOARD ROOM, THE ROUNDHOUSE, DCG

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MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 JUNE 2025 AT 9.45 AM, IN THE ENGINE ROOM BOARD ROOM, THE ROUNDHOUSE, DCG AND REMOTELY

Present: Andrew Dymond (Chair), Stuart Ellis, Rosslyn Green

In attendance: Jo Clifford (CFO), Cheryl Tacchi (DPO)
Gareth Jones and Mark Matley (RSM – External Auditors)
Rob Knowles (UNIAC) – minute no. 57/24-25

Rose Matthews (Clerk)

PART ONE - GENERAL MINUTES

52/24-25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Heather Kelly

53/24-25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM

All members were eligible and the meeting was confirmed to be quorate.

The Chair did declare an interest on the Bursary Audit which had been completed by PWC for the DFE, a company he worked for. HE had no involvement with this audit or the department who carried this out.

54/24-25 FRAUD AND IRREGULARITY

There were no instances of fraud or irregularity to report to date for the year.

55/24-25 REVIEW NOVEL, CONTENTIOUS OR REPERCUSSIVE TRANSACTIONS

No transactions to report.

56/24-25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2025 were formally approved.

Action

Date

57/24-25 INTERNAL ASSURANCE: UNIAC HE DATA REPORT

Rob Knowles of UNIAC presented the assurance report on HE data.

The report had been commissioned in response to the OFS Audit of 2022-23 data carried out in 2023-24, which had provided limited assurance.

Focusing on three key areas: assessment of progress against the OFS action plan, accuracy of HE data in the 2425 S current year ILR, and ILR preparation and submission processes. He highlighted the importance of capturing study intentions on enrolment and the implications of qualification and entry data on funding.

The report concluded reasonable assurance that data management processes are effective with one high risk finding and three medium risks.

The College will undertake to complete the actions as outlined in the report including development of procedural documentation, further training and staff development, and review of the capture of FUNDCOMP and STULOAD fields.

The Chair asked if RK felt there was confidence in the team now as they were carrying out their review. The main contact was the Director of Data and Business Intelligence and this related to the reference of key person dependency.

The Chair summarised the report as having little impact on funding but improvements in terms of data capture.

The CFO explained it had be useful having UNIAC who had provided advice on how this had been approached by other institutions and the report provided a fair reflection of where the College were at. Controls were in place to provide more assurance on the data and everyone had been trained at quals on entry which will need to be revisited for September.

The Chair asked if there was capacity to complete all the actions by the August date. The CFO would revisit with the team with the aim it was ready for September.

RESOLVED: The Committee accepted the UNIAC HE Data report and the assurance it provided.

58/24-25 DFE BURSARY AUDIT

The CFO presented the DFE Bursary Audit, which found no funding errors but made two recommendations. The College has accepted and implemented these points, and the audit has prompted a review of data processes and documentary evidence.

The audit prompted a review of data processes and

documentary evidence, leading to improvements in how data is managed and documented.

SE questioned giving learners funds and then having to evidence they have arrived at the College. He asked if that was common practice in other areas. The CFO confirmed it was not, funds are place on students' cards for catering and course equipment (e.g. hairdressing) as bought and given to them. There is not the option to do that with transport. The first rule is always to give in kind.

RESOLVED: The Committee accepted the Bursary Audit.

59/24-25 DATA PROTECTION REPORT

The Data Protection Officer shared the Data Protection Report, which provided an overview of activities to date

The college conducted a cyber phishing simulation on 1st May, which overall was positive. Twelve staff members clicked on the link, but no one entered credentials, and 264 staff reported the email as phishing.

The college reported 17 data breaches since the start of the academic year, with two serious breaches reported to the ICO. Measures have been taken to address these breaches, including training videos and guidelines on data handling.

SE asked if there was anything at the start of documents that says 'no unauthorised reading' to avoid them anyone accessing when they shouldn't compromising themselves. He said he had no idea if IT could check if they had only read the first page, but could act as a deterrent. It wasn't something the College did, but they would certainly discuss it.

SE said another thing was a leavers checklist, where they commit to deleting all information. This was something the College had in place.

RESOLVED: The Committee accepted the Data Protection Report.

60/24-25 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

The CFO provided a verbal update on the internal audit plan. Interviews were taking place after the meeting to recommend appointment of the new internal auditors.

In terms of the internal audit plan for the year, the HE Audit had been completed and the Director of IT was shortlisting three organisations that could carry out the Cyber Security audit. The Clerk to invite the Director of IT to the next meeting.

Clerk

31/06/25

The Chair said it would be interesting to see if the College were carrying out the right backups, particularly in relation to third party software, as many recent attacks were linked to third parties.

A decision had been made at the last meeting to defer the strategy review. It was hoped the new auditors would carry out the mock funding audit early in the new academic year.

RG asked if that could be brought back to the next meeting and asked if there was a contingency if the mock funding audit could not be carried out in time. If that did not happen. The contingency would be to approach the framework for another provider to carry out.

RESOLVED: The Committee accepted the update.

61/24-25 EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

- **EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN FOR 2024-25**
- **FE EMERGING ISSUES, INCLUDING AUDIT FRAMEWORK FOR EXTERNAL AUDITORS**

The external audit plan was presented, outlining key risks, materiality, and the timetable for the audit. The plan includes a focus on income recognition, going concern, and governance.

Discussion took place in relation to the Johnson building and how this would be recorded on the audit with **Members questioning how this currently appeared on the financial statements.**

Both subsidiaries would be prepared on a going concern basis. **RG queried MBS, which she thought was dormant.** It was confirmed MBS accounts were not trading but was not dormant.

Attention was drawn to the external audit fees. **RG asked if they included the income tax audit fees.** There was a separate fees for tax and grants. **The Chair asked if a table be included with these additional costs, even if just an estimate at this stage.**

The Chair asked if there was anything from the last audit meeting that needed to be reflected on in terms of the internal audit. Gareth Jones (GJ), of RSM explained he had been kept aware of correspondence and there was no heightened internal audit risk from RSM's perspective.

RG referenced the line in the report 'it may be necessary to defer due to reporting deadlines'. She asked if that was a caveat or if the auditors expected that. GJ acknowledged that things can arise, but nothing was expected at this stage, however, they would not blindly sign off the accounts.

The Emerging Issues document was discussed with

GJ

01/10/25

reference to the Framework for Internal Auditors.

RESOLVED: The Committee discussed and accepted the External Audit report and approved the External Audit Plan for 2024-25.

62/24-25 STRATEGIC RISK REPORT AND CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The CFO presented the latest Strategic Risk Report and Risk Register.

There were 24 risks under review and no change was reported in the current period, with the three high risks remaining the same following preventative controls. These were retention and recruitment of staff, key financial pressures and financial targets. A thorough review had taken place in terms of the register and preventative controls.

The committee were appraised of current litigation, health and safety RIDDOR reportable incidents, alongside any significant safeguarding incidents and PREVENT referrals. There were no reported instances of significant fraud to report.

The College has implemented additional security measures and is working on capital improvements for site security.

RESOLVED: The Committee accepted the Risk Register Report.

63/24-25 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING REPORT

The CFO presented the Internal and External Recommendations Monitoring Report which monitored key recommendations from prior audits.

The college has made substantial progress on internal and external recommendations, with some actions still in progress. The HE data report and bursary audit recommendations will be added to the tracker.

Members questioned the overdue recommendations and asked how long it was likely to be before these were resolved. The CFO said she was reasonably confident these would be achieved, but the higher education ones involved a lot of work.

The Chair said it would be good next time to look at the five overdue to highlight those overdue now and if that has changed in the next report.

RG asked if the UNIAC audit had raised some of the same actions as the OFS or if the OFS ones had been

completed. The CFO explained the action with regards to training had been carried out, but the new report deemed it wasn't sufficient and the documentation had not been completed. They had also picked up some new things.

RESOLVED: The Committee accepted the Internal and External Recommendations Monitoring Report.

The meeting concluded at 10.45 am.