

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT



Audit & Risk Committee

Tuesday 8 March 2022 at 5.00pm
In Microsoft Teams

Minute of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on Tuesday 8 March 2022 at 5.00pm
via MS Teams

PRESENT: G Robertson (Chair Audit) M Williamson
H Honeyman K Keay
M Thomson S Middleton

IN ATTENDANCE: J Carnegie (Vice Principal) T D'All (Principal's/Board Chair PA)
S Taylor (Vice Principal) D Archibald (Henderson Loggie)
A Kerr (Audit Scotland)

1. WELCOME

G Robertson welcomed members of the Audit Committee.

2. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

G Robertson noted his role as Chair of the Board for Gardyne Theatre Limited. There were no other declarations of interest.

4. MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING –

The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 7 December 2021 was approved as an accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

Matters arising from previous meeting were closed.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT

6.1 Student Invoicing & Debt Management

D Archibald noted the Student Invoicing and Debt Management report highlighting the audit scope and noting that several areas of strength were recorded. The overall audit grade was satisfactory with 3 “minor” areas of actions.

J Carnegie noted that the College was investigating the potential for systems to support greater sharing of debt and payment information between functions. This could potentially be a major development and work was being led by the Head of ICT.

H Honeyman asked about the complexity of this, and the potential need for a cost-benefit analysis to be undertaken. J Carnegie noted that this was being considered, hence the decision to undertake a review, rather than agree to make the change identified. This approach was welcomed.

D Archibald noted the recommendation in the report reflects what is already happening in some other colleges and universities. A move in the direction to allow students to access all information including fees and having payments online and readily available.

J Carnegie said the College was looking at a possible project with two other colleges to look at other systems/ options available.

The report was approved.

6.2 Cyber Security

D Archibald noted the Cyber Security Report highlighting that it provided another layer of assurance around cyber security matters.

D Archibald summarised the audit scope and approach adopted, noting reference to the key elements of several cyber security frameworks that were drawn from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) approach that underpinned the audit approach adopted.

D Archibald noted the feedback provided by D&A College (around the cyber incident) to national groups was helpful to other bodies across Scotland to allow them to shape their processes and recover from attacks.

D Archibald noted that a broad range of strengths were identified within the report plus one minor recommendation in respect of cloud-based services.

J Carnegie noted that the College had successfully obtained its recertification for Cyber Essentials Plus in December 2021, demonstrating that recognised security management good practice was being applied.

The positive feedback was noted, and the report was approved.

6.3 21/22 Progress Report

D Archibald confirmed that delivery of the audit plan was on schedule, with no areas of concern. The report was noted.

6.4 Follow Up Summary

J Carnegie confirmed the College was continuing to make good progress in terms of the close out of audit recommendations.

J Carnegie noted the delayed action in respect of the roll out of the digital self-assessment tool. Discussion took place around this and the changes that had arisen in approaches to digital working and College systems as a result of the cyber-attack and COVID-19 since the original action had been raised.

Committee members confirmed that they were happy for the action noted to be closed in terms of follow-up reporting and that the updated practice in respect of Digital Capability monitoring be picked up through the work of the Human Resource and Development Committee. **S Taylor to progress.**

It was noted that Henderson Loggie would pick up on this change and action taken as part of their follow-up review activities. The report was approved.

7. EXTERNAL AUDIT

A Kerr noted that Audit Scotland were starting to plan audit arrangements for 2021/2022 and an initial audit assessment and planning meeting was scheduled with J Carnegie and B Ferguson to confirm arrangement and timetable for the Audit. The Annual Audit Plan would be issued to the Audit & Risk Committee at its May 2022 meeting.

A Kerr highlighted this was Audit Scotland's final year as external auditors for D&A College and the College will be advised of their new Auditors in due course.

8. STRATEGIC & COVID RISK REGISTERS

S Taylor summarised his report and the changes proposed in respect of the Strategic and COVID Risk Registers.

S Taylor noted that despite the proposed change in terms of Brexit risks, arrangements would remain under review in respect of the possible risks around availability and pricing on some materials.

S Taylor noted the College (and sector) was still awaiting a decision around the requested flexibilities from SFC and was lobbying SFC on the urgent need for clarity. It was noted that arrangements may be clearer when the announcements in respect of indicative funding were made later in March 2022.

S Taylor highlighted the inclusion of the new risk around the Climate Emergency Action Plan and Net Zero targets.

S Taylor noted that some discussions had been held around the point at which a separate COVID risk register would no longer be needed. This would remain under review and any change would be picked up through discussion with the Committee. H Honeyman noted that when COVID was given the endemic stage status (rather than pandemic) this may be the signal for a change of this type.

Potential risks arising from the Russian invasion of Ukraine were noted and J Carnegie summarised potential issues raised through a meeting with colleges, universities, and J Hepburn. It was noted that (other than increasing fuel and other costs) the risks impacting on the College were unlikely to be significant, but that this would be kept under review and a temporary risk developed if needed.

The updated Risk Registers were approved, and G Robertson noted the Risk Registers were in good shape.

9. COVID 19 UPDATE

S Taylor updated the Committee on arrangements in place to support the transition from the current COVID restrictions / mitigations. It was noted that these were based around the new Scottish Government strategy.

Significant mitigations such as face coverings and 1 metre distancing would no longer be required from 21 March 2022, with discussion with managers and unions favouring a planned transition period around these changes through to the April break.

The Estates and ICT teams would be undertaking work to return the campus to a more normal set up and after 18 April it was expected that more students and staff would return to campus.

The return to on campus activity would be planned and staged around what was best for the student group / curriculum / service involved, and S Taylor noted that there was no 'one size fits all' approach' as it was important that changes were made for the right reasons and to meet learner and staff needs. It was noted that this transition would take place over the period through to summer 2022 and learning from this return would inform the New Ways of Working project.

M Williamson stated that the approach adopted, and work undertaken by the College, was impressive and noted that it was positive to hear that this was focused on the needs of students and staff, with a flexible approach to the transition.

The update was welcomed.

10. AOCB

G Robertson noted that this would be his final Audit & Risk meeting (as he would be moving back to the Finance & Property Committee) and stated that he had enjoyed his time as Chair and thanked everyone for their support. He felt that the progress in allocating the Risk profile to the policy committees had been particularly beneficial for the College. Nominations for this replacement are underway.

M Williamson thanked G Robertson for his input as Chair. This was echoed by other Committee members.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Tuesday 7 June 2022.

Action Point Summary

Action	Responsibility	Date
Digital capability assessment outcomes to be confirmed with the HR&D Committee	S Taylor	November 2022