University of Exeter

AUDIT COMMITTEE

SUMARY MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

24th February 2017

PRESENT: Mr Nicholas Bull FCA (Chair) (2018)

Mr Richard Hughes FCA (2017) Ms Judy Hargadon (2017) Mr Nick Caiger (2017)

Mr Nicholas Swift ACA, ACT (2018)

Ms Alison Reed ACA (2019)

IN ATTENDANCE: Registrar and Secretary, Mr Mike Shore-Nye

Chief Financial Officer, Mr Andrew Connolly

Director of Planning, Policy and Business Intelligence, Dr Michael Wykes

Director of Compliance, Governance and Risk, Mr Christopher Lindsay

(Secretary)

Risk and Compliance Officer, Ms Tracey Tuffin
Deputy Secretary to Council, Ms Jacqueline Hodges
Insurance, Audit and Risk Manager, Mr Paul Hirst

Ms Ruth Ireland, BDO Ms Muriel Lewis, BDO Mr Mike Rowley, KPMG Ms Becky Bruce, KPMG

Chief Information and Digital Officer, Mr Alan Hill (for item under minute

17.05)

CIRCULATION: Audit Committee Members and Officers/Council circulation

Action (Minute reference)	Owner	Progress
Make amendments to the	Risk and Compliance Officer	Completed
November minutes and submit	(Tracey Tuffin)	
to the Chair of the Committee.		
(17.03)		
Upload the final approved	Deputy Secretary to Council	Correct version of the Minutes
version to BoardPacks and	(Jacqueline Hodges)	from November's meeting are
notify all members. (17.03)		available on Boardpacks
, , ,		marked 'FINAL'
Ensure that updates to papers	Deputy Secretary to Council	Updates will be avoided when
are communicated as	(Jacqueline Hodges)	possible. If necessary, an
appropriate. (17.03)	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	email explanation will be sent
app. op. acc. (23.00)		to all attendees.
Make the updates to the	Assistant Director of HR Policy	Completed
Public Disclosure Policy (17.04)	and Reward	Completed
Table Disclosure Folley (17.04)	(Andrew Johnson)	
Identify and map linked	Insurance, Audit and Risk	Update to be provided at the
policies, and also review and	· ·	May meeting
compare approaches at a	Manager (Paul Hirst)	iviay illeetiilg
number of similar universities	(Paul Hilst)	
before presenting a summary		
of the current approach at		
Exeter with a proposal for		
enhancement for Audit		
Committee consideration.		
(17.04)		
BDO to incorporate an audit	BDO (Chris Mundy)	Oral update to be provided at
against the Modern Slavery		the May meeting
Act within the Audit Plan at a		
point to be agreed with the		
Director of Compliance,		
Governance and Risk. (17.04)		
Cyber Security Roadmap:	Risk and Compliance Officer	Completed. Update provided
Reflect the amended target	(Tracey Tuffin)	in the Risk and Compliance
dates in the audit		officer's Report presented at
recommendation report to be		the May meeting
presented to the next meeting.		
(17.05)		
Review the risk registers for	Risk and Compliance Officer	Completed
appropriateness of risks	(Tracey Tuffin)	
related to the Bribery Act.		
(17.05)		
Compliance, Governance and	BDO	Discussion ongoing with BDO
Risk Structure and Framework:		
Provide example models		
relevant to CGR. (17.06)		
Provide an update on the KPIs	Director Compliance, Risk and	To be defined as part of a
to measure the success of the	Governance	broader piece of work being
Directorate. (17.06)	(Chris Lindsay)	undertaken within Professional
• •	<u>'</u>	Services
related to the Bribery Act. (17.05) Compliance, Governance and Risk Structure and Framework: Provide example models relevant to CGR. (17.06) Provide an update on the KPIs	BDO Director Compliance, Risk and	To be defined as part of a

Provide the Fraud Resilience review at the next meeting and action the planned audit amendments as noted (17.07) Record the new target dates in the next report (17.07) Resure that risk commentary was provided to include mitigation and managing actions for each data return (17.09) Review the Pension Costs risk to split between ERBS and USS for the next corporate risk report in October 2017 (17.09) Incorporate risk, risk appetite and strategic planning into the White paper exercise to be conducted in June (17.09) A new Corporate risk to be registered with regard to alternative student pathways such as degree apprenticeships and the risk to student recruitment (17.09) Upload the final approved version to Boardpacks and notify all members (17.10) Provide a tax compliance update at the next meeting (17.13) Propose Committee meeting dates for 2017/18 (17.14) Review indexing and create a Boardpacks policy (17.15) BOO Completed Completed Completed to the May meeting Included in report presented to the May meeting Included in report presented to the May meeting Noted Following discussions between CL and IB, recommendation is made for an alternative pathway to integrate into the existing "Portfolio of Programmes" risk and trigger and controls of this risk be reviewed. Upload the final approved version to Boardpacks and notify all members (17.10) Provide a tax compliance update at the next meeting (17.13) Propose Committee meeting dates for 2017/18 (17.14) Review indexing and create a Boardpacks policy (17.15) Review indexing and create a Boardpacks policy (17.15)			
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17.1 Welcome and introductions

REPORTED

The Chair welcomed Ms Alison Reed as a new member of the Committee, and Mr Paul Hirst, Insurance, Audit and Risk Manager, as a new attendee.

17.2 <u>Declarations of Interest</u>

REPORTED:

That there were no declarations specific to this meeting.

17.3 Minutes

REPORTED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2016 be approved, subject to the following amendments:

(a) That minute 16.38 (j) be amended to read as follows:

RECEIVED:

A report from the Chief Financial Officer setting out the dates and details of the tender for internal audit. The Committee noted that the contract for internal audit was due for tender in academic year 2017/18 and that the University was currently in the first "roll on" year of two specified in the original "2+2" contract with BDO.

- (b) That a record should be made at minute 16.41 to confirm that no actions arose from the meeting with External and Internal auditors without officers present.
- (c) That minute <u>16.42 RESOLVED (a)</u> be amended to state that the Committee was satisfied that the non-audit work completed by KPMG was sufficiently independent from the audit work.
- (d) That minute 16.48 be amended to note that the nature of the update was "oral" rather than "verbal".

RESOLVED:

That if any paper is amended after the first circulation of BoardPacks, it should be made clear to all members, including version number and the dates of all amendments.

ACTION: Risk and Compliance Officer to make the above amendments to the

November minutes and submit to the Chair of the Committee. *Deputy Secretary to Council* to upload the final approved version to BoardPacks

and notify all members.

ACTION: Risk and Compliance Officer and Deputy Secretary to Council to ensure

that updates to papers are communicated as appropriate.

17.4 <u>Matters Arising in the Minutes</u>

(a) Minute 16.38 (d), Information Security and Information Governance

REPORTED:

That the University was blocking access to some websites at the present time, and work was underway to define a broader policy on controlling access and monitoring. The next meeting of the Information Governance and Security Steering Group was due to be held on 22 March 2017 and would consider website access control and monitoring as part of a broader discussion on IT security at the University.

(b) Minute 16.45 (b) University Fraud Policy (Whistleblowing)

REPORTED:

- (i) That there had been no incidents of Whistleblowing within the past year.
- (ii) That there were routes to make disclosures of concern with regard to fraud, financial irregularities and other issues. A distinction was made between these routes, which related primarily to identifying an individual or group of people taking inappropriate actions. The Whistleblowing process related specifically to public interest disclosures.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the policy be updated to reflect the current Designated Officer, and that formatting issues be addressed.
- (ii) That the Committee was satisfied that there are relevant processes in place, however the visibility of these processes could be improved.
- (iii) That the means of raising concerns be mapped to relevant policies (such as the Fraud Policy and the Bribery Act Code of Conduct) and clearly signposted to ensure that people were aware of the process and able to report concerns.

- (iv) That the recording of any concerns raised should be centrally recorded as part of the process, enabling the Committee to obtain assurance that the process is being followed.
- (v) That, as the University is obliged to report any serious incidents (including those that might relate to bribery and fraud) as part of the Annual Assurance Return to HEFCE, Audit Committee should be notified as early as possible of any case/incident that is deemed to be serious.

ACTION: Assistant Director of HR Policy and Reward to make the updates to

the Public Disclosure Policy

ACTION: Insurance, Audit and Risk Manager to identify and map linked

policies, and also review and compare approaches at a number of similar universities before presenting a summary of the current approach at Exeter with a proposal for enhancement for Audit

Committee consideration.

(c) Minute 16.49, Modern Slavery

CONSIDERED

An update from the Head of Legal Services on the seven key work streams that the University has in place to ensure compliance with the Modern Slavery Act (paper AUD/17/04). Concern was raised that this is a tick box exercise, and that Audit Committee should be providing assurance that the processes are being properly applied.

RESOLVED

That Audit Committee was concerned that there needed to be evidence of effective implementation of the Act rather than an administrative process and that an audit should be completed of the work streams at an appropriate point to ensure delivery.

ACTION: BDO to incorporate an audit against the Modern Slavery Act within

the Audit Plan at a point to be agreed with the Director of

Compliance, Governance and Risk.

17.5 Cyber Security Roadmap

Alan Hill, The Chief Information and Digital Officer was in attendance for this item.

CONSIDERED:

An update from the Chief Information and Digital Officer on progress with Information Security and related audit recommendations, which included a detailed explanation of the planned pathway to obtain the required accreditation to the Government Cyber Essentials Scheme. The timeframe for completion was presented as a "roadmap" on page 4 of paper AUD/17/05, showing when each of the outstanding IT audit recommendations would be completed.

REPORTED:

- (a) It was noted that this is a large and complex piece of work, and that the recommendations were dependent on the schedule of work required to close them. There was a contract in place with cyber security specialists Securious to assist with this. Approval was requested from the Committee to extend the target dates of the recommendations in line with the plan. The security related recommendations would be addressed as a priority, with those not related to security addressed from September 2017.
- (b) The Committee questioned whether the University was sufficiently protected in the interim while the work to meet Cyber Essentials requirements was underway. It was confirmed that cyber security specialists were in place to respond comprehensively and close down an incident should it occur.
- (c) A concern was raised with regard to plans to ensure compliance with the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). It was clarified that this relates primarily to Information Governance rather than Information Security, and that there was a separate project underway, managed by Rhiannon Platt, Information Governance Manager. IT would be working with the Information Governance team where appropriate. Mandatory training has now reached in excess of 1,000 members of staff. More queries are now being raised, evidencing that awareness is increasing.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Chief Information and Digital Officer be thanked for his presentation, which clearly explained the requirements, dependencies and justification for the timescales of the project.
- (b) That the Committee approved the proposal that the target dates be extended as requested to align with the delivery plan and dependencies.

ACTION: Risk and Compliance Officer to reflect the amended target dates in the audit recommendation report to be presented to the next meeting.

17.6 Compliance, Governance and Risk Structure and Framework

CONSIDERED:

An update from Chris Lindsay, Director of Compliance, Governance and Risk (previously the Head of Governance and Compliance) on the new Directorate of Compliance, Governance and Risk (CGR), noting how the Directorate had been established from the previous Governance and Compliance Office on a cost neutral basis to broaden and restate the priority for compliance as a University-wide issue and provide a strong compliance underpinning for delivery of the University's strategic objectives.

REPORTED:

- (a) That there would be particular focus on building a compliance framework across the University, providing visibility and clarity of where regulation, legislation and policy have impact. To support this, a compliance, Governance and Risk Network from across the University would also be put in place to facilitate implementation of compliance policy and process in a cohesive and structured manner, raising the profile and status of compliance activity, and also allowing horizon scanning and more proactive responses.
- (b) That while there was some compliance activity that sat outside of the directorate, this would be brought together by the proposed compliance framework and Compliance, Governance and Risk Network.
- (c) That there were 2 key streams that sat within the directorate:
 - Academic and Corporate Governance: pertaining to Governance and support with regard to Legal, Research, Teaching Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Student Cases and the Committee Secretariat.
 - ii. <u>Risk and Business Continuity</u>: pertaining to the facilitation of activity across the University with regard to Insurance, Audit and Risk, Information Governance and compliance activity such as the Prevent Duty.
- (d) That the Committee raised a number of questions about the new structure:
 - (i) Whether there was list of all compliance activity that sat outside of CGR to ensure that all areas are covered. In response, it was indicated this was not yet in place but would be picked up by the creation of the compliance framework and the broader CGR Network.
 - (ii) That risks related to the Bribery Act in particular required more focus. In response, the Chief Financial Officer confirmed that all contracts with international agents had bribery act clauses. There was mandatory training in place for staff in relevant roles.
 - (iii) That Insurance, Audit and Risk was a large area for one person the Insurance, Audit and Risk Manager to cover. In response, it was confirmed that although there is there one manager responsible for this area, he was supported by an experienced team and that the expertise within professional services and college teams and the engagement process with these teams by CGR staff facilitated wider management across the University.
 - (iv) That there was a need to ensure a means to provide assurance that the Directorate was achieving its objectives. It was confirmed that BDO could provide models that have been used elsewhere. The Director of CGR is

working with his management team to set measureable KPIs to demonstrate performance against targets.

RESOLVED:

That the following actions be completed to confirm that the concerns raised were addressed.

- (a) That risks with regard to the Bribery Act be reviewed to ensure that they are recorded and reported appropriately.
- (b) That relevant KPIs be set across the Directorate to measure and report on success against target.

ACTION: Risk and Compliance Officer to review the risk registers for

appropriateness of risks related to the Bribery Act.

ACTION: BDO to provide example models relevant to CGR

ACTION: Director of CGR to provide an update on the KPIs to measure the success of

the Directorate.

17.7 Internal Audit

(a) The Internal Audit Progress Report

CONSIDERED:

A report from BDO on audit progress as set out in paper AUD/17/07

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Internal Auditors provided an overview of the 5 reviews completed since the November meeting and highlighted key outcomes. It was noted that actions resulting from these would be included in the ongoing recommendation follow up process.
- (ii) That a Fraud Resilience review should have been completed by this meeting but had been put back at management's request.
- (iii) That changes were proposed to the audit plan to defer the review of the Research Services and IIB restructures until 2017/18, given that the development and implementation of the directorate structures was still on going.
- (iv) That it had been proposed to split the review of Transformation Services into two reviews, one in March 2017 assessing the overall programme and risk management, and one in June 2016 reviewing benefits realisation of the earlier concluded projects
- (v) That comparative benchmarking was now included in the report. It was noted that care should be taken in interpretation as different institutions

used internal audit in differing ways, therefore a straight comparison might be misleading.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Fraud Resilience Review be completed by the next meeting.
- (ii) That the proposal for the deferral of the reviews of Research and IIB restructures be approved.
- (iii) That there was no requirement to revisit the overall programme and risk management review as sufficient assurance had already been received. The Transformation audit should therefore focus on benefit realisation, taking into account that not all benefits would be financial. Benefits should also be recorded as better service to customers and staff engagement and development.
- (iv) That the Committee appreciated the visibility that the benchmarking provided, and understood that there may be differences in the use of internal audit across institutions.

ACTION: BDO to provide the Fraud Resilience review at the next meeting.

BDO to action the plan audit amendments as noted.

(b) The Internal Auditors Audit Recommendation Follow up Report

CONSIDERED:

The follow up report on progress with internal audit recommendations from the internal auditors, as set out in paper AUD/17/08.

REPORTED:

That it was noted that in some cases the University had marked recommendations as closed, but that there was no evidence to support the completion. In these cases, the recommendations had been reopened by BDO. This had been fed back to management requesting the required evidence. In most cases, this related to plans in place for resolution of a recommendation rather than actual resolution.

RESOLVED:

That good progress had been made, however focus must be kept on outstanding items.

(c) A report by the Risk and Compliance Officer on progress with audit recommendations

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Risk and Compliance Officer on progress with audit recommendations, as set out in paper AUD/17/09, with a particular focus

applied to "aged" recommendations, originating from audits conducted prior to the appointment of BDO.

REPORTED:

- (i) That of 19 aged recommendations marked as closed by management, 18 had been verified and completed by BDO. One aged recommendation had been reopened (Capital Procedures to integrate with Project Management and include measurable benefits and benefit monitoring), however this would be fully evidenced within a short timeframe.
- (ii) That 5 aged recommendations remained ongoing, all of which were being progressed.
- (iii) That 29 ongoing recommendations related to Information Technology and are included within the Cyber Security Roadmap plan detailed at minute 17.05.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That it was acknowledged that the 5 aged recommendations were progressing, and should be reported with appropriate target dates at the next report, and thus no longer showing as "overdue".
- (ii) That approval had been given for an amendment to the IT recommendations timeframe under minute 17.05, therefore those recommendations should also have their target dates amended and no longer be shown as "overdue".

ACTION: Risk and Compliance Officer to record the new target dates in the next report.

17.8 <u>Data Assurance</u>

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Data Returns for the following areas:
 - i. Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Return
 - ii. HESA Staff Return
 - iii. HESA Finance Return
 - iv. Higher Education Students Early Statistics 2016 (HESES)
 - v. Medical and Dental Survey
 - vi. National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) Student Return
 - vii. HESA Offshore Aggregate Return
 - viii. Teach First Student Return
 - ix. Graduate job destinations
 - x. TRAC data assurance 2015/16

REPORTED:

- (a) That the HESES return included a narrative illustrating the data validation and approval processes that the data returns follow prior to submission. The Committee sought to clarify the purpose of receiving these reports and the value which Audit Committee was adding to this process. Whilst it was noted that the Committee did not provide assurance on the quality of the data and has limited visibility of the mechanisms of the process, it was considered important that the rigour with which the data assurance reports were prepared was reviewed by the Committee in light of the potential financial and reputational risks which could be incurred by the institution.
- (b) That, in addition to potential fines, the implication of errors in returns could be significant with regard to reputation. The Internal Auditors confirmed that this activity was managed in a variety of ways by other institutions, including either (i) increased internal audit, for which BDO has received training from HEFCE, or (ii) including the assurance narrative for each return in the same manner as that provided to the Committee for the HESES return.
- (c) That the Committee noted that there was no commentary alongside the risk status for each return identifying the controls that reduced the likelihood and impact from the stated Gross to Net scores.

RESOLVED:

That going forward, the mitigation and managing actions would be provided along with the risk score for each return.

ACTION: The Director of Policy, Planning and Business Intelligence to ensure

that risk commentary was provided to include mitigation and managing actions for each data return.

17.9 Risk Management

CONSIDERED

The first report of the 2016/17 Risk Management cycle, as set out in paper AUD/17/14.

TO NOTE: This item related to the Committee's annual review of the full University risk registers and risk management process across the University. The first report set out in paper AUD/17/14 had also been reviewed by Risk Dual Assurance at its meeting in November 2016, by VCEG at its meeting in November 2016, and by Council at its meeting in December 2016, including a review of the categories used within the report and the appropriateness of their use.

REPORTED:

(a) It was confirmed that the report clearly identified via the appetite and tolerance model the main risks to the University that have been reported within the Corporate, College and Professional Services risk registers. It was confirmed that each Dual Assurance Group was asked to review risks where there was either an

- impact on or from them. A full list of DA Groups and the risks allocated to them was included with the report.
- (b) That the annual Council "White Paper" exercise to brainstorm the key risks to the University had been rescheduled from December to June, with the approval of Council. This would allow the exercise to provide a better feed into the beginning of the next reporting cycle.
- (c) That Audit Committee was asked to comment on the system, processes and robustness of the reporting.
- (d) That, overall, Audit Committee was satisfied that the current risk management process was sufficient to provide assurance. However, there was a danger that a risk may not be considered appropriately in relation to key strategic decisions.
- (e) That there was an ongoing concern about the culture within the University regarding the serious consideration of risk. An update to the University Leavers Checklist regarding handover of risk responsibility had been outstanding for some time and had only recently, after 18 months, been addressed. This was a matter of concern to Audit Committee and there was an expectation that risk actions would be progressed in a more timely manner in future.
- (f) A concern was raised that risk should be constantly evaluated rather than a scheduled task according to the reporting cycle. Risk leads in each area should always be alert to new risks emerging or changes to existing risks.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the risk with regard to pension costs should be split into 2 risks going forward: A category 2 for ERBS as the University owned scheme, and a category 3 risk for USS, over which the University has far less influence.
- (b) That the Council "White Paper" exercise in July should include a review of institutional risk appetite.
 - (c) That consideration should be given to the identification of a new corporate risk associated with the development of programmes and their value to students, especially given the increased competition from new and alternative HE providers in a rapidly changing HE marketplace.

ACTION: Chief Financial Officer to review the Pensions Costs risk to split between

ERBS and USS for the next corporate risk report in October 2017

ACTION: Risk Dual Assurance to incorporate risk, risk appetite and strategic

planning into the White Paper exercise to be conducted in June

ACTION: A new Corporate risk to be registered with regard to alternative student

pathways such as degree apprenticeships and the risk to student recruitment – *Director of CGR* to discuss with the *Director of ESE*

17.10 Expenses Policy

CONSIDERED:

The revised University Expenses Policy as approved by VCEG and set out in paper AUD/17/15.

REPORTED:

That the review of the University Expenses Policy had brought together policies from different areas into one overarching central source. It was noted that the policy places personal responsibility on the claimant and approver to ensure that the claims are defensible, in line with policy and represent value for money.

RESOLVED:

That the erroneous word "hours" should be removed from section 5, Subsistence.

ACTION: Deputy Secretary to Council to upload the final approved version to BoardPacks and notify all members.

17.11 Audit Strategy (KPMG)

RECEIVED:

- (a) A report from Mike Rowley, KPMG on the external audit plan and strategy. The focus of audit has returned to activity as normal and were no specific areas of concern
- (b) An update on trends within the HE sector, noting general concerns with regard to the impact of BREXIT, the development of degree apprenticeships and the potential impact of an institution becoming insolvent. The latter was seen as a significant risk as such an event would be likely to drive the cost of borrowing up for the other HEIs, alongside the more specific costs associated with requirements to transfer students and programmes.

17.12 Part II Papers

CONSIDERED:

The following papers:

- (a) Vice-Chancellor and Provost's Report to Council (paper AUD/17/17)
- (b) The Annual Provider Review Preliminary Assessment from HEFCE (paper AUD/17/18), noting that there were no current concerns.
- (c) Prevent Annual Report Outcome Letter from HEFCE (paper AUD/17/19), confirming that the University had demonstrated due regard to the duty, with one outstanding action relating to the University's policy with regard to web filtering or web blocking. HEFCE is comfortable that the University is working to progress this, and an update will be provided to them once the work has been completed.

RESOLVED:

That with regard to (c), the Committee had sufficient assurance from the Chief Information and Digital Officer that web filtering/ TOR browser blocking was being considered appropriately and that the new policy in development would provide mitigation.

17.13 Tax Strategy

The following items were discussed in addition to the agenda:

REPORTED (by the CFO):

That, at Part II of the Council meeting agenda for the meeting held in December 2016, a tax strategy had been included and could be accessed by members of Audit Committee via the papers of that meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Chief Financial Officer would provide an update at the next meeting of the Committee on the University's tax exposure and associated risk and compliance

ACTION: Chief Financial Officer to provide a tax compliance update at the next meeting.

17.14 Committee Calendar

REPORTED:

That the University calendar for 2017/18 had been published, however the Chair was unable to attend on some of the dates set for Audit Committee and there was a need to identify new dates.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair and the Secretary would circulate some prospective dates to Committee members and attendees for meetings of Audit Committee in 2017/18.

ACTION: Chair to propose Committee meeting dates for 2017/18

17.15 Audit Committee Papers

REPORTED:

That the BoardPacks facility would benefit from an indexed archive system to enable easy access to previous papers. A policy was also required to ensure that papers could not be amended after first circulation without informing members, and that no paper could be amended retrospectively.

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Secretary to Council would investigate the potential for an indexed archive, and create a policy with regard to the circulation and amendment of papers.

ACTION: Deputy Secretary to Council to review indexing and create a BoardPacks policy

17.16 Date of next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of Audit Committee would be held on 10^{th} May 2017 at 10.00am in the Ted Wragg room, Northcote House.