

## Audit Committee

### Minutes

**Meeting reference:** Audit 2023-24/01

**Date:** Wednesday 4 October 2023

**Location:** Boardroom (Braham Room 019)

**Members present:** Jim Crooks, Board Member  
Derek Waugh, Board Member  
Alistair Wylie, Board Member  
Patrick O'Donnell, Staff Board Member  
Debbie McIlwraith-Cameron, Board Member

**In attendance:** Lorenz Cairns, Depute Principal  
Iain Wishart, Vice Principal (Operations)  
Veronica Lynch, Vice Principal (External)  
Katy Lees, Head of HR & Organisational Development  
David Archibald, Henderson Loggie, Internal Auditor  
Isobel Syme, PA to Principal

**Apologies:** Pat Kenny, Deloittes, External Auditor  
Kirsty Hair, Deloittes, External Auditor  
Margaret Cook, Principal  
Fiona Smith, HISA President

**Chair:** Jim Crooks (left at 6 pm)  
Derek Waugh (from 6 pm)

**Minute Taker:** Isobel Syme

**Quorum:** 3

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**We will act with integrity in everything we do**

**Student Centred + Innovative + Ambitious + Respectful + Inclusive + Collaborative**

## **MINUTES**

Item		Action
1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>  Chair welcomed those present and noted apologies.	
2.	<b>Additions to the Agenda</b>  None received.	
3.	<b>Declaration of Conflict of Interest in any Agenda Item</b>  None	
4.	<b>Minutes of the meeting of Audit Committee held on 30 May 2023</b>  The minutes were agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.	
5.	<b>Actions arising from previous minutes</b>  <b>All covered in the meeting.</b>	
6.1	<b>Annual Health and Safety Report</b>  Head of HR and OD presented the Annual Health and Safety Report which covers the last financial year.  Chair noted the amount of information provided and asked about the impact of stress on staff both internal and external during these challenging times.  Head of HR and OD responded that we are doing what we can to mitigate this as much as possible.  Chair asked if there had been an increase in self-referrals.  Head of HR and OD responded that there had been no significant changes in the numbers.  Chair acknowledged that this is a difficult time for staff.  Head of HR and OD noted that short term sickness is higher than usual. The Riddor reportable target is currently zero and this will need to be amended. Any minor hospital visits re students need to be reported as students are classed as members of the public.  Board member queried an action plan for Rural Skills.	

	<p>Head of HR and OD clarified that every area has an action plan and audit. Priority 1 comes to the SMT and the Health Safety and Welfare Adviser will review all high risk areas.</p> <p>Board member noted the quarterly statistics on pages 33 – 34. The third quarter has higher numbers.</p> <p>Chair noted that there is higher occupational risks in certain areas eg Hairdressing.</p> <p>Chair noted that the number of sick days are down.</p> <p>Head of HR and OD clarified that some of this is down to hybrid working and presenteeism. This is known due to other indicators eg stress. Our figures are still slightly higher than other colleges.</p> <p>Chair noted that referrals to Rowan might be interesting going forward re numbers. This is an excellent provision for staff. Very comprehensive report and by and large encouraging. Mandatory training is reasonable. Commended all concerned in maintaining a good culture of health and wellbeing.</p>	
<b>6.2</b>	<p><b>Revised Terms of Reference – Health and Safety Committee</b></p> <p>Head of HR and OD highlighted the main change which is the change of Chair – now the Head of Estates.</p> <p>This was NOTED.</p> <p>The Board Member on the Health and Safety Committee is taking part in training.</p> <p>AST member (invited member) always attends.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Strategy – no items for this meeting</b>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Enterprise Risk Management Report and Strategic Risk Register</b></p> <p>Enterprise Risk Management Report and Strategic Risk Register update - Vice Principal Operations reported on the main highlights of the general overview paper.</p> <p>Progress slower than liked due to various factors including holidays, Action Short of a Strike, the HISA Team and the restructuring process, however there has been progress with regard to some controls now being 100% complete, a further 6 Audit points have now been completed and the Risk Management and Business Continuity Team have made considerable progress notably the Project and Planning Officer.</p>	

	<p>There has been a redesign of our risk strategies from the original 3: Strategic Risk, Significant Risk and Project Risk to Academic, Compliance, Financial, Operational, Reputational and Strategic.</p> <p>Risk Management will be added to an SMT meeting each quarter and the SMT will work with the Risk Management Team to prioritise and speed up the implementation of controls.</p> <p>Chair noted the increased clarity on strategic risks and to have them categorised in this way is good. Moving towards a solid state would be good – prologue on ERM fully embedded. Helps towards focussing work and the closer scrutiny from SMT is very helpful.</p> <p>Board member noted that he is totally supportive of these changes.</p> <p>Board member queried who will be leading this work when Vice Principal Operations leaves.</p> <p>Vice Principal Operations clarified that his post will be recruited to and that the Project and Planning Officer will be undertaking some qualifications in this area and will continue to support.</p> <p>Board member commended the work that has been done and queried how the risks within the categories will this be reviewed.</p> <p>Vice Principal Operations explained that the Dashboard is currently being developed with a traffic light system and it will be part of the ERM philosophy to keep checking these. The original document may disappear by the next meeting. All risks will go in front of SMT.</p> <p>Risk Management Dashboard to be in place for the next meeting.</p> <p>The Committee <b>APPROVED</b> the Risk Management Dashboard as a way of reviewing controls and their effectiveness.</p> <p>Internal Auditor commented that the monitoring and review is very helpful. Visually giving information to the Board. Positive confirmation.</p>	Vice Principal Operations
9.1	<p><b>Procurement/Creditors/Purchasing Audit Report</b></p> <p>Internal Auditor informed that rather than looking at procurement as a stand-alone item, this was looked at overall in conjunction with purchasing. Chunky report looking at a number of areas including strengths and weaknesses. Recommendations – some of these are procedural and systems along with some legacy issues.</p> <p>Need a review of the delegated authorities and a tightening up of the process for the Board to formally approve expenditure eg the</p>	

	<p>expenditure on the hair salon.</p> <p>Board member queried this fundamental part of the process and the grading at green. May need an action that is more focussed.</p> <p>Internal Auditor explained the mechanism in Bluqube for this and how to record within the system.</p> <p>Vice Principal Operations will look through this process and come back to the next meeting with an overview.</p> <p>Committee NOTED the information provided.</p>	Vice Principal Operations
<b>9.2</b>	<p><b>Data Protection Audit Report</b></p> <p>Internal Auditor provided some context to the report and the policy and procedural framework as well as the overall governance, building on all the hard work that has already been done.</p> <p>Recommendations include training on how to report data breaches, SARs, data retention and general data protection. A data protection compliance monitoring procedure and audit plan to be developed which reflects and builds upon existing practices.</p> <p>Committee NOTED Paper 6</p>	
<b>9.3</b>	<p><b>Business Continuity Audit Report</b></p> <p>Internal Auditor noted that this is focussing on work that has already been done in this area eg business critical areas. The IT business continuity plan grade discussed with regard to priority. Strengths and weaknesses noted and thanks given to staff at UHI Perth who helped with this report.</p> <p>The report was NOTED by Committee.</p>	
<b>9.4</b>	<p><b>Internal Audit Strategic Plan – update</b></p> <p>Committee NOTED Paper 8.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Freedom of Information and Data Protection quarterly update</b></p> <p>Committee NOTED the information provided.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Health and Safety Committee – 11 May 2023</b></p> <p>Paper 10 was NOTED.</p>	
<b>12</b>	<p><b>Date &amp; Time of Next Meeting</b></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursday 7 December 2023 at 6 pm</li> </ul>	
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Review of Meeting</b></p> <p>Committee confirmed that the meeting had been conducted in line with its Terms of Reference.</p>	

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Notes taken to help record minutes are also subject to Freedom of Information requests, and should be destroyed as soon as minutes are approved.

**Status of Minutes – Open ☒**

An **open** item is one over which there would be no issues for the College in releasing the information to the public in response to a freedom of information request.

A **closed** item is one that contains information that could be withheld from release to the public because an exemption under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies.

The College may also be asked for information contained in minutes about living individuals, under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018. It is important that fact, rather than opinion, is recorded.

Do the minutes contain items which may be contentious under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018?      **Yes** ☐      **No** ☒