

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2016
2:00 PM IN SEMINAR ROOM 4, HARDY BUILDING**

Present

Mr David Clements (Chair)
Mrs Angela Crowe
Mr Richard Hallsworth
Rev'd Sally Myers

In attendance

Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mr David Hoose, External Auditor (Mazars)
Dr Grahame Killey, Planning & Performance Manager (PPM) (for items 6 & 7)
Professor Jayne Mitchell, Deputy Vice Chancellor
Ms Agnieszka Oczujda, Internal Auditor (Uniac)
Rev'd Canon Professor Peter Neil, Vice Chancellor
Mrs Natalie Pickles (Minutes)
Mr Matthew Pitts, Governance, Compliance & Operations Manager
Mr Sean Ryan, Internal Auditor (Uniac)
Mr Barrie Shipley, Head of Finance

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies from Committee Members. Dr Anne Jackson would also normally be in attendance in her capacity as Registrar and Secretary but had sent apologies on this occasion.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair reminded members of the Committee to complete the 'Financial Interests and Related Party Disclosures' forms (FRS8) if they had not already done so. Anyone requiring a new form was advised to contact the Governance Office (01522 583772).

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 September 2016

The minutes of the last meeting held on 27 September 2016 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

5. Matters Arising

(i) Action points

The Members reviewed the matters arising table and NOTED the progress of actions arising from the previous meeting. It was AGREED that all the actions had been captured on the table.

(ii) Any Other Matters

There were no other matters arising.

6. Internal Audit

(i) To receive the Data Assurance Key Information Set (KIS) Review

Sean Ryan from Uniac, BGU's internal auditors, presented the report, noting that the review gave reasonable assurance regarding BGU's systems and processes for compiling Key Information Sets. Most of the points within the report were noted as minor observations. Key observations 1 and 2 were around ensuring there was a clear link between what was provided to HEFCE and what was available on the website. Additionally, ensuring that students did not have to 'click' too many times on the website to get to the information they needed was advised.

Committee members discussed whether the deadlines for actions on the observations were realistic, given that they were assigned to the new Director of Marketing, Recruitment & Communications, who would be starting on 14 November 2016. The Vice Chancellor stated that ultimately the Registrar & Secretary was responsible and would be line managing this work. It was AGREED that with oversight from the R&S, the implementation dates could stay as they were, but the Committee recognised that achieving them might be a challenge.

(ii) Annual Report and Opinion

Sean Ryan confirmed that the amendments agreed at the previous Audit Committee had been made. The Committee RECEIVED the report noting congratulations to the University on achieving 'Ones' (substantial assurance) and 'Twos' (reasonable assurance) in all areas.

7 HEFCE Accountability Return

(i) To receive and consider a Value for Money Report (VFM)

The Head of Finance stated that previously, reporting on VFM had been an optional requirement and had been included within the Audit Committee Annual Report. It was now a HEFCE requirement to produce a VFM report as part of the annual returns process.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor suggested that on page 3, where the VFM report referred to the ESIF bid, two further successful funding streams to the institution should be included. These were the National Collaborative Outreach Project (NCOP) and the National Mixed Methodology Learning Gain Project.

S Deville

Audit Committee APPROVED the report, subject to the above amendment.

S Deville

(ii) To approve the HEFCE Draft Annual Assurance Return (Annex A, Part 1)

The DoR reported that the Annual Assurance Return was a requirement from HEFCE and was due for submission by 1 December 2016. He also reported that for the first time, in Part 2, governing bodies were being asked to provide assurance around student academic experience and student outcomes. It was NOTED that further information supporting this was going to University Council on 25 November 2016.

Audit Committee NOTED that it was happy to RECEIVE the Return for information and NOTED that sign off/approval would be under Council's remit.

8. To receive and discuss the Key Performance Indicators

The Planning & Performance Manager (PPM) led members through the key points on the KPI Dashboard, which provided an update on BGU's key performance indicators.

The Committee Members discussed recruitment, currently flagged as amber green. The PPM reported that Recruitment currently showed a mixed picture. Final enrolment figures were somewhat below target for the 3 year BA programmes but had been exceeded in other areas (foundation degrees/BA top ups/MAs). Recruitment for 16/17 was going to be the subject of scrutiny by the PMG group at its November meeting.

9. To receive and discuss the Risk Register

The PPM reported that page 3 on the document "BGU's Approach to Risk Management: 2016/17 Academic Year – updated Oct 2016" now showed the updated risk management process at BGU.

The PPM guided Committee Members through some of the key changes to the Risk Register. In respect of the first risk (HEFCE Quality Assessment) on the table, the DVC noted that the new operating model for quality assessment and related processes had already been highlighted to Council and BGU was very confident this would be signed off by HEFCE.

Three new risks had been added:

Pension Liabilities – added in relation to potential liabilities and the possibility of having to top up pension pots for academic and support services staff.

Capacity for REF 2021

Capacity to meet TEF requirements – flagged as high risk. The DVC reported that BGU had received their metrics workbook. Briefing events have been set up by HEFCE and they had also published more guidance. The TEF working group would be going through this. Actual submission would be January 2017. The Vice Chancellor reported that the Deputy Vice Chancellor, out of 1200 applications, had been appointed one of 80 National TEF Assessors.

Sally Myers commented that she was very pleased with the new format which was much more helpful for monitoring purposes, and that previous comments by the Committee had been taken on board. The members also advised that the discussion on risks surrounding student recruitment should be flagged to Council.

The PPM left the meeting.

10 To note the Policy Review Schedule

Matthew Pitts, Governance, Compliance and Operations Manager (GCOM), reported that he had revisited the Policy Review Schedule in order to revise the review dates so that they were spread out so as to avoid too many policies being reviewed all at once. There was further work to be done to the Policy Review Schedule in terms of which Committee/who would be approving each policy. A further update would be brought back to Audit Committee at a future meeting.

M Pitts

11 To receive and discuss the Safeguarding Policy

Audit Committee RECEIVED the Safeguarding Policy. It was NOTED that ultimately Senate would approve this policy; however, Audit had previously expressed some concerns over the content.

The GCOM stated that this Policy had now been revised and reviewed by Local Authority who had indicated it was a very good policy and had not recommended any changes. The Policy would now receive student consultation and be presented to Senate for approval.

12 To receive and consider the Audit Committee Annual Report

Audit Committee RECEIVED the tabled document "Audit Committee Annual Report".

One amendment was AGREED as follows:

- Page 2, P Buckler and B Starling needed to be removed.

Given the departure of Jim Smith, the number of current members of the Audit Committee was discussed. It was confirmed that the Governance Office was looking at recruitment following Governance & Nominations Committee's agreement to progress with this. Richard Hallsworth offered help with this if it was needed.

A Jackson/
S Deville

M Pitts/
Gov Office

As the document had been tabled, the DoR suggested that if members had any further amendments/suggestions, could they please provide these to Steve Deville by Friday 18th November.

All

13 Agenda management & review

Sally Myers advised that it would be helpful to receive guidance on this new feature of Council and Committee agendas for future reference. Sally Myers noted the following about the day's meeting:

- The pre-meeting information had been received and the meeting had been well chaired.
- She was unsure if item 7(i) (HEFCE Draft Annual Assurance Return, Annex A, Part 1) should have been on the Agenda.
- Updates from staff in attendance at the meeting had been clear and showed that they were knowledgeable in their role area and therefore provided Committee with confidence in what has been reported.
- It could be advisable to swap round item 8 (Risk Register) and 9 (KPIs) at future meetings

Overall positive feedback; however, Sally Myers also noted that whilst the Agenda and papers had been uploaded to SharePoint on Tuesday 1st November, she had received her paper copy by post on Friday 4th November. Additionally, there had been two papers that had been tabled at the meeting. Receiving these earlier could have improved effectiveness.

14 Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

15 Key Items for University Council

- Data Assurance Key Information Set (KIS) Review and Annual Report & Opinion
- Audit Committee Annual report (subject to any changes over the next week)
- Recruitment Risk

16 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Audit Committee will take place on Thursday 9th March at 2.00pm in Room 102.

Signed.......... Date.....9/3/17.....

