

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2015
2:00 PM IN ROOM 216, SKINNER BUILDING

Present

Mr David Clements (Chair)
Rev'd Sally Myers
Dr Jim Smith
Mrs Bridget Starling

In attendance

Dr Anne Craven, Registrar & Secretary
Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mr David Hoose, External Auditor (Mazars)
Mr Joe Johnston, Internal Auditor (Uniac)
Dr Grahame Killey, Planning & Performance Manager (for item 7 only)
Professor Jayne Mitchell, Deputy Vice Chancellor
Ms Emma Smeaton, Governance Officer & PA to the University Council

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed Dr Anne Craven, Registrar & Secretary to her first meeting of the Audit Committee.

The Director of Resources REPORTED on the recent departure of the Head of Finance. It was NOTED that during the interim period he was covering the role with the support of the Finance team. The role had already gone out to advert with the closing date a few weeks away and interviews taking place towards the end of the month. A full accountancy qualification was a core requirement for the role and the significant benefits of the institution had been noted. The Committee wished the Director of Resources well with the new appointment.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Angela Crowe.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Action

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 November 2014

The minutes of the last meeting held on 11 November 2014 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them subject to the correction of the typo 'ENDORESED' to 'ENDORSED'.

5. Matters arising

(i) Action points

Members reviewed the matters arising table and NOTED the progress of actions arising from the previous meeting.

In addition, action was NOTED for the first bullet point of item:

8.(i) External audit – From the accounts

'With a maximum of two terms of office' would be added to the institutional governance statement on page 4.

The Secretary CONFIRMED that the amendment would be included.

(ii) Any other matters

There were no other matters to discuss.

6. TRAC – Transparent Approach to Costing

The Committee RECEIVED the annual TRAC return which formed part of the annual accountability return to HEFCE. The Director of Resources NOTED the previous year's return for comparison purposes. It was NOTED that BGU applies dispensation in completing the data as research income was below £3m from public sources. The return was APPROVED by the Committee.

7. Risk Register

The Chair welcomed Dr Grahame Killey, Planning and Performance Manager to the meeting for this item.

(i) AMHEC presentation on Risk – October 2014

The AMHEC paper on higher education risk was RECEIVED and NOTED for information. The paper outlined the different formats of higher education institution risk registers and the type of risks reported by various universities.

(ii) Risk management

The Planning and Performance Manager presented the paper on BGU's approach to risk management and the content of the Executive Risk

Register. The paper was essential for the effective governance and management of the institution's operations and would inform the Operational Risk Registers. The Executive Risk Register would form a key part of the Planning Framework to be presented to Council at its next meeting and would inform the development of Business Plans for 2015/16. The same standard template would be used across the institution and risks were prioritised by gross risk, side by side with net risk. It was NOTED that risks BGU6, BGU9 and BGU12 were incorrectly labelled with an upwards arrow and would be corrected with a downwards arrow. The 21 Business Plans aggregated up to Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) level and draft budgets for 2015/16 would be looked at during a CLT away day on 24 March. The process was intended to give shared ownership of risks.

GK

It was NOTED that the two recruitment risks were contradictory and insurance management should also be considered. The Committee AGREED that a discussion was required to consider BGU's risk appetite within the context of the Strategy. The Committee RECOMMENDED to Council that a half-day session on risk be scheduled in to take place before the end of the academic year.

AKC

8. Internal audit

(i) Internal audit plan 2014/15 update and reports

The Committee RECEIVED the internal audit plan 2014/15 which included an update on current sector developments; a summary of the internal audits finalised in the period; details of interim and final audit findings including observations; an outline of recent and upcoming events organised by UNIAC for audit committees and executives and a selection of current UNIAC briefing notes. Members NOTED the positive development for the University's Portfolio Diversification and Development and the positive progress made in the area of data within the past few months. Bridget Starling's attendance at the UNIAC Value for Money event was NOTED and slides would be made available to members upon request. The Deputy Vice Chancellor NOTED the Students Partnerships and Placements audit scheduled to take place in June 2015. It was the intention to involve students in this audit, therefore an April date was preferred. It was also NOTED that flexibility with regard to access to staff would be required due to the impending Ofsted inspection.

Members NOTED that the potential audits for the next academic year would be presented to the Senior Leadership Team before the next meeting of the Audit Committee and would come to the next meeting for approval.

**Next
meeting**

(ii) MKI audit tracker system

The Committee RECEIVED the MKI audit tracker report and NOTED the progress made. 36 actions had been agreed, 9 actions were in progress and 40 actions had been closed since the previous report. It was AGREED that the more detailed list would be brought to the Committee annually and would be available to view in the SharePoint area. The internal auditor and

<p>Secretary would look at the fundamental actions in more detail and liaise outside the meeting.</p>	<p>JJ/AKC</p>
<p>9. Overview of regulatory and reporting requirements</p>	
<p>(i) Institutional returns and reporting requirements</p> <p>Members RECEIVED the paper on institutional returns and reporting requirements that BGU were subject to, ranging from data returns to quality audits and from professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements to demands posed by charity legislation. It was AGREED that the paper would be taken to University Council for information.</p>	<p>AKC/ University Council</p>
<p>(ii) Quality Assessment Review</p> <p>The Quality Assessment Review of Higher Education currently being undertaken by the UK's funding bodies was RECEIVED. This would also be taken to University Council for information.</p> <p>Regulatory Partnership Group Operating Framework for Higher Education</p> <p>The current Operating Framework for Higher Education which included roles and responsibilities of organisations within the operating framework and a useful list of acronyms was also RECEIVED and would be taken to Council for information.</p>	<p>AKC/ University Council</p> <p>AKC/ University Council</p>
<p>10. Student data update</p>	
<p>The Secretary gave a verbal update on the improvements that BGU had made in the past few months in the area of data, notably the extensive set of plans for all the key HESA submissions in 2015 and the internally prepared, vast training programme for the data entry processes related to enrolment. The development had been commended by the auditors and the University had received excellent feedback from HESA on the quality of its data in its HESA Data submissions. Work was continuing regarding errors in the system but a great deal had already been completed. It was also NOTED that the Student Information Systems Manager post had gone out to advert, however, contingency measures were in place in the event of failing to appoint.</p>	
<p>11. Treasury Management Policy</p>	
<p>The Committee RECEIVED the updated policy that had previously been to the FE&GP Committee, NOTING that papers on the investment of funds were also attached. It was NOTED that the FE&GP Committee were happy with the policy and proposals. References to the Head of Finance for delegation of responsibility would be changed to the Director of Resources. The Committee RECOMMENDED the policy and proposals to the University Council.</p>	<p>University Council</p>
<p>12. Agenda suggestions</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal audit update and reports; 	

- Data update;
- Recruitment update;
- Implications of the general election result and outcomes of QAR – the DVC would prepare a report.

JM

13. Any other business

The Director of Resources REPORTED that the Public Procurement Regulations had been pushed through the previous week and would have a reasonable impact on the University. Anything over £25k may be required to go through the procurement framework with effect from 1 April 2015. The Director of Resources would update the Committee with further information at its next meeting.

SD/Next meeting

It was NOTED that a Fees Officer had been appointed and it was hoped that headway in work would be made quickly.

Changes to the way the institution reported and produced accounts were NOTED. Although the impact to BGU was relatively low the Director of Resources would produce a short paper for the next FE&GP Committee and would also bring this to the Audit Committee.

SD/Next meeting

14. Key items for University Council

- Risk management
- Internal audit reports
- Treasury Management Policy
- Regulatory and reporting requirements

15. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Audit Committee would take place on Wednesday 17 June 2015 at 2:00 pm.

Signed  Date 17/6/15

