

Belfast Metropolitan College Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

3.00pm 11 March 2025 at Titanic Quarter Board Room and via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Committee Members: Seamus McGoran (Chair); Bill Montgomery; Rose Byrne, Sinead Sharpe, and Maurice Keady.

Management: Damian Duffy, Interim Principal & Chief Executive (PCE); Aidan Sloane, Chief Operating Officer (COO); Laura Allen, Head of Finance (HoF); Lisa McCartney, Head of Corporate Development (HCD).

Auditors: NIAO; Joanne Lipton, NIAO (on-line) and Ian McCartney RSM UK

Observer: Neil Madeley, Department for the Economy (on-line)
James McClean RSM Uk (guest)

Secretary to the Governing Body: Jim Woods

**AC35
24/25**

Quorum: The meeting was quorate under the terms of Section 2 of Belfast Metropolitan College Audit and Risk Assurance Committee: Terms of Reference approved 11 December 2024 (3 governors).

Apologies: Kathy Doey NIAO and Heather Sampson DfE both of whom had deputies attending.

Welcome: James who is shadowing Ian McCartney for today's meeting.
Joanne Lipton
Neil Madeley from DfE attended.

Conflicts of Interest: There were no conflicts of interest declared under the terms of Section 8.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders V5 dated June 2022 (GB81a 21/22 22 June 2022).

Leadership Culture – Creative and Courageous Conversation in an 'atmosphere' OR 'culture' of challenge and respect in line with our Code of Conduct

AC36 24/25	Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2024 and 10 December 2024 The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meetings a true record.
AC37 24/25	Matters Arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2024 and 10 December 2024 There were no matters arising that are not on the agenda of this governance meeting.
AC38 24/25 Chair	Governance Guidance and Information Confirmation of certified accounts have been received. The Chair thanked to all involved for the speedy turnaround and meeting the tight rescheduled deadlines. The Committee noted receipt of the information.
AC39 24/25	Notification of change to the internal control environment under Section 12d of Governing Body Standing Orders V5 22 June 2022. Details are included in your papers of the circular 01-25 relating to the accounts 2024-25. A letter of understanding has been received and duly signed by IPCE. The Committee noted the information which had been circulated.
AC40 24/25	Chair's Business A copy of the Annual report of the Audit Committee for 2023/24 had been circulated with the papers. The Committee approved and adopted the report which was duly signed.
AC41 24/25	Financial Reporting Q2 The COO took members through the report which was a substantive item at the Resources Committee. The composite report provided details of Estates, IT and Finance KPIs. The Committee noted the information provided and action taken by Management.
AC42 24/25	NIAO Letter of Understanding and 2023-24 Final Report to those Charged with Governance and letter of understanding. The report has been circulated with the papers highlighted Good Governance The Committee noted the information provided by NIAO.

<p>AC43 24/25</p>	<p>RSM Internal Audit Business</p> <p>I McCartney presented the Internal Audit Progress Report, 12 March 2025. Two final reports had been issued and a number are scheduled to be issued. Notably the audit on Payroll and part-time claims had no recommendations.</p> <p>In addition, I McCartney took member through and emerging issues report and a benchmarking report which placed Belfast Met in a positive light.</p> <p>Discussion ensued in relation to data dictionaries and the interpretation of IA to specific settings.</p> <p>The Committee to noted the information provided by Internal Audit.</p>
<p>AC44 24/25</p>	<p>Compliance Reporting Q2 2024/25</p> <p>(a) Losses & Special Payments Q2 2024/25 There was incident to report that has been resolved.</p> <p>(b) Direct Award Contracts Q2 2024/25 There were no direct award contracts at this time.</p> <p>(c) Register of Gifts & Hospitality Q2 2024/25 The register was reviewed by members.</p> <p>(d) Whistleblowing Notifications Q2 2024/25 An investigation has been completed; lesson learned to be determined when the case is closed.</p> <p>(e) Register of Data Breaches Q2 2024/25 There have been 11 data breached six were confirmed as not reportable to ICO.</p> <p>The Committee to <u>note</u> the information provided and the action taken by Management.</p>
<p>AC45 24/25</p>	<p>Status of Outstanding Audit Recommendations Q1</p> <p>HCD reported on Status of Outstanding Audit Recommendations Q2 2024/25. In addition to 12 recommendations outstanding and 9 carried over. The detail was included in appendix 1. Overall, the College is in a strong position, as many outstanding items have a target for completion falling in Q3.</p> <p>The Committee <u>noted</u> the information provided on outstanding audit recommendations and the actions taken by Management.</p>
<p>AC46 24/25</p>	<p>Risk Management Report</p> <p>Status of Corporate Risk Register Report 2024/25.</p> <p>HCD presented the risk register to members. Two risks in relation to 2025/26 allocation and the lecturer pay dispute and the threat of industrial action have been escalated to red.</p> <p>Members discussed the impact that the potential industrial action would have on the learner and the learner experience.</p>

	<p>A discussion on the practical implications of support for learners categorised as SEN ensued. The conduct of examinations and the necessary adaptations meant that small, dedicated rooms have become a norm rather than exception.</p> <p>The Committee noted the Corporate Risk Register Q2 2024/25 and recommended the CRR to be reviewed at the Governing Body as further information around two new red risks in light of further information.</p>
AC47 24/25	<p>Meeting Feedback</p> <p>Committee members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members concluded that the meeting had been conducted in line with the responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee; and Members agreed that the conduct of this governance meeting provided evidence of good challenging conversation aligned to the Governing Body's commitments as set out at AC35 24/25 above.
AC48 24/25 Chair	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>No other notified business had been received.</p> <p>Meeting end at around 4.20pm</p>
AC49 24/25 Chair	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Governance Programme 2024/25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 June 2025

Governing Body Attendance Report and Governing Body Member Assessment 2024/25	
Participation at AC16 24/25 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Meeting 11 March 2025	
In-person at TQ Boardroom	via MS Teams
Seamus McGoran	Maurice Keedy
Bill Montgomery	
Sinead Sharpe	
Rose Byrne	

Approved for publication at the Governing Body 25 June 2025