Council Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Terms of Reference:

The duties of the Council Audit and Risk Assurance Committee shall be:

1. To satisfy itself that effective frameworks are in place and keep under review the effectiveness of the University’s risk management, control environment and governance arrangements, including consideration of culture and behaviours where appropriate.

2. To advise the governing body on the appointment of the external auditors, the audit fee, the provision of any non-audit services by the external auditors and any questions of resignation or dismissal of the external auditors.

3. To discuss if necessary with the external auditors, before the audit begins, the nature and scope of the audit.

4. To discuss with the external auditors problems and reservations arising from the interim and final audits, including a review of the management letter incorporating management responses, and any other matters the external auditors may wish to discuss (in the absence of management where necessary).

5. To consider and advise the governing body on the appointment and terms of engagement of the internal audit service (and the head of internal audit, if applicable), the audit fee, the provision of any non-audit services by the internal auditors and any questions of resignation or dismissal of the internal auditors.

6. To review the internal auditors’ audit risk assessment and strategy; to consider major findings of internal audit investigations and management's response; to review the external auditors' management letter, the internal auditors' annual report, and management responses; and to promote co-ordination between the internal and external auditors. The Committee will ensure that the resources made available for internal audit are sufficient to meet the institution’s needs (or make a recommendation to the governing body as appropriate).

7. To monitor the implementation of agreed audit-based recommendations, from whatever source.

8. To ensure that all significant losses have been properly investigated and that the internal and external auditors, and where appropriate the Office for Students accountable officer, have been informed.

9. To keep under review on behalf of the Council the effectiveness of the University’s approach to risk management, to receive the corporate risk register, and regular reports on the management of the University's significant risks and to forward to the Council reports of the Committee's consideration of issues relating to risk management and internal controls.

10. To oversee the institution’s policies on whistleblowing, fraud and irregularity, including being notified of any action taken under that policy.

11. To satisfy itself that satisfactory arrangements are in place:
   
   (a) to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness value for money;
   
   (b) to demonstrate value for students, as identified by the sector regulator; and
   
   (c) for the management and quality assurance of data and any other returns submitted to HESA, the Student Loans Company, the OfS, Research England and any other bodies as appropriate.

12. To satisfy itself that an effective framework is in place to manage the quality of learning and teaching and to maintain academic standards.

13. To receive any relevant reports from the National Audit Office and its equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the funding councils and other organisations.
14. To monitor annually the performance and effectiveness of external and internal auditors, including any matters affecting their objectivity, and to make recommendations to the governing body concerning their reappointment, where appropriate.

15. To consider elements of the annual financial statements in the presence of the external auditors, including the auditors’ formal opinion, the statement of members’ responsibilities and the statement of internal control, in accordance with the OfS Terms and Conditions of Funding for Higher Education Institutions.

16. In the event of the merger or dissolution of the institution, to ensure that the necessary actions are completed, including arranging for a final set of financial statements to be completed and signed.

Reports to: Council.

Membership:

Chair (Member of the Council):
Adrian Stone 2022-25

Three lay members of the Council:
Adrian Belton 2017-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23
Claire Brownlie 2021-24
Tony Wray 2018-21, 2021-23

Up to five lay members, as approved by the Council:
Lisha Chauhan 2021-24
Ashiedu Joel 2021-24
Alison Kay* 2021-24
Professor Andrew Taylor 2019-22, 2022-25

In attendance (ex-officio):
Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Gill Valentine
Chief Financial Officer Joanne Jones
University Secretary Jeannette Strachan (Interim)

Secretary Kate Sullivan (University Secretary’s Office)

Quorum: Two members of the Committee, of whom at least one should be a member of Council.

*Alison Kay appointed as a member of the Council, with effect from 1 August 2021.