AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE
Thursday 01 October 2020

DRAFT UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

David Willis (Chair)	Simona Fionda	Dr Alix Pryde
Melissa Tatton	Peter Thompson	

In attendance:

Professor Colin Bailey	Dr Sharon Ellis [for minute 2020.004]	Professor Matthew Hilton [for minute 2020.006]
Dr Rebecca Jones [for minute 2020.006]	Dr Nadine Lewycky	Charles Medley [internal audit]
Jonathan Morgan	Dr Catherine Murray	Louise Parr-Morley
Neil Thomas [internal audit]	Janice Trounson	Craig Wisdom [external audit] [for minutes 2020.008-9]

Apologies

Julian Reeve [external audit]

Welcome

2020.001   The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. The meeting was being held by video conference to ensure the continuation of good governance during the coronavirus pandemic.

Minutes and executive summary of the meeting held on 02 September 2020 [ARC2020/01]

2020.002   The Committee **confirmed** the confidential and non-confidential minutes of 02 September 2020 and **noted** the executive summary.

Matters arising [ARC2020/02]

2020.003   The Committee **noted** the matters arising. The following points were noted in the discussion:

Cyber Security

[a]   The criteria for reporting on cyber security would be finalised and reported to the next Committee meeting.

Compliance

[b]   The Committee received a list of key compliance roles and any vacancies. The annual legal compliance report would reflect conversations around the broader arrangements to support compliance. Future vacancies would be

reported to the Committee in the matters arising where there was an upcoming meeting. Where there was a gap between meetings, vacancies would be circulated by email to the Committee.

Business continuity

[c] The Committee asked for reports from the business continuity group to come directly to the Committee. The Committee would be receiving biannual reports on IT and cyber security issues every 6 months starting in March 2021. The Committee asked that these reports be expanded to cover business continuity more broadly.

Actions: [a] Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary

Annual report on research integrity [ARC2020/05]

2020.004   The Committee **considered** the annual report on research integrity. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity had been updated in October 2019. This had changed little in terms of recommended actions, but had encouraged a more integrated approach towards research integrity within the university.

[b] In response to the UK government's trusted research agenda, the university would bring together training, policy and guidance to provide academics with the latest information on the risks associated with foreign investment in research.

[c] The Committee asked how the university handled research misconduct allegations against academics before they joined Queen Mary. There were conversations about placing certain restrictions around individuals.

[d] The Committee asked how the university ensured that non-UK universities had the same approach to research misconduct when entering into a research collaboration. Due diligence was undertaken which included verifying published statements about research misconduct and ethical investment. The process around identifying and mitigating high risk partnerships was being reviewed and would provide academics with clear guidance.

Strategic Risk Management [ARC2020/03]

2020.005   *Minute 2020.005 is confidential.*

Return to campus [ARC2020/04]

2020.006   *Minute 2020.006 is confidential.*

Interim accountability return and timelines [ARC2020/06]

2020.007   The Committee **noted** the revised timelines for the accountability return. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] An additional paper on the interim financial data collection was due at the end of October but as it did not need Council or Committee approval it would be circulated at the next meeting for information. The TRAC return was due 31 March 2021 and would be approved through the normal meeting cycle. As in previous years, papers would be prepared for the Committee in November. Preparing the forecasts at this stage would be challenging, but there would be an opportunity to revisit it before submission to the Office for Students.

External Audit 2019 management letter: progress report on action [ARC2020/07]

2020.008   *Minute 2020.008 is confidential.*

External audit 2019–20 interim comments [Oral report]

2020.009   *Minute 2020.009 is confidential.*

Draft internal audit annual report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2019–20 [ARC2020/08]

2020.010   *Minute 2020.010 is confidential.*

Value for Money [ARC2020/09]

2020.011   The Committee **considered** the draft value for money statement to be included in the annual accounts. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The draft wove together the strategy and the Office for Students (OfS) priorities on value for money positive outcomes for students from all backgrounds. The pandemic had provided an opportunity to show how we have protected students' education in a real way.

[b] The Committee asked if the OfS definition of Value for Money would be aligned with that of internal audit. The Head of Internal Audit said that it was not a priority but expected that they would synchronise eventually.

[c] The Committee said that the narrative and examples were strong. The Committee said that there could be a more clear articulation of the impact at home and abroad. The Committee asked whether the definition of local community could be broadened to include all of east London. The Committee asked if there was a more recent example to demonstrate research quality than the 2014 Research Excellence Framework. The section on public and community engagement could include examples of educational opportunities, such as public lectures, that we provide to the community.

[d] The Committee asked if management was aware of how other universities were approaching this. We were going further in trying to weave together our strategic narrative and discussion around capitals.

[e] The draft sections on the strategic review and strategic risk would be brought to the next Committee meeting.

Actions: [e] Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary

Whistle blowing cases since the last meeting, including the Annual summary of disclosures 2019–20 [Oral report]

2020.012   *Minute 2020.012 is confidential.*

Fraud/financial irregularities occurring since the last meeting [Oral report]

2020.013   *Minute 2020.013 is confidential.*

Committee Terms of Reference 2020–21 [ARC2020/10]

2020.014   The Committee **noted** the Committee Terms of Reference for 2020–21.

*Audit and Risk Committee annual report draft 1 [ARC2020/11]

2020.015   The Committee **noted** the first draft of the annual report. The Committee would receive the final draft for sign off in November.

*Draft agenda for the next meeting [ARC2020/12]

2020.016   The Committee **noted** the agenda for the meeting on Thursday 29 October 2020.

Any other business

Committee membership

2020.017   [a] The Chair expressed his thanks to Monica Chadha for her many contributions to the Committee, including outside of meetings where she had recently been leading on cyber security. He would send an email to Monica on behalf of the Committee.

[b] The Chair said that despite her resignation, the Committee did not need another Committee member but that recruiting for a co-opted member with expertise in accounting remained a priority. The Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary said that recent enquiries had not been successful. He said that Governance Committee would be considering a proposal for advertising vacancies through executive search and this role would be included.

Dates of meetings in 2020–21:

➢ Thursday 29 October 2020 at 1500 hours via Zoom.
➢ Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 1515 hours in Colette Bowe Room, Mile End.
➢ Tuesday 9 March 2021 at 1500 hours in the Robert Tong Room, Mile End.
➢ Tuesday 8 June 2021 at 1500 hours in the Robert Tong Room, Mile End.