



Date: Tuesday 16 May 2023

Time: 18:00

Venue: Online

## Risk & Audit Committee Minutes

Chair: Ben Booth

Members:	P	AP	AB
Adrien Jouis, Student Member (AJ)	✓		
Ben Booth, Chair of Risk & Audit Committee	✓		
Hamza Ahmed, Education Officer		✓	
Kerem Isik, Student Member (KI)	✓		
Mary Mcharg, Activities & Engagement Officer	✓		
Rachel Lim, Student Trustee	✓		
Umair Mehmood, Welfare & Community Officer			✓

In Attendance:
Deb Nichols, Director of Operations
Dorota Dominiczak, Director of Finance
Max Keeble, Head of IT & Digital, (item 3)
Rebecca McLoughlin, Minutes

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced Max Keeble, The Head of IT & Digital who would be presenting item 3 on the agenda. The Chair noted apologies from the Education Officer.

RECEIVED

### 2. Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting on 17 November 2022

The Committee approved the minutes from the meeting on 17 November 2022 as a true and accurate record

APPROVED

### 3. Data Protection Report

The Head of IT & Digital confirmed that they were also the Data Protection Officer for the Union. They highlighted the main points from the Data Protection Report:

- The number of requests and demand for the various data protection services has increased since the previous year, though largely only in terms of small/quick issues. There have been no major issues or breaches reportable to the Information Commissioner's Office.
- A near-final draft of the UCL Data Sharing Agreement has been produced and will be reviewed with UCL imminently.
- The next few years will involve increased data sharing with UCL due to the need to track performance and student engagement under the Student Life Strategy.

The Committee noted the need to unpublish elected representatives from the website once they are no longer in an elected position.

The Committee discussed the possibility of removing the Student Life Strategy clauses from the UCL Data Sharing Agreement to enable it to be approved quicker. The Head of IT & Digital replied that this could be a possibility and would look into this. The Chair highlighted the need to get an agreement in place imminently. The Committee discussed dealing with personalised data in an anonymised way and the Head of IT & Digital confirmed that this is something they have been thinking about.

**RECEIVED**

#### **4. Review of Audit Arrangements**

The Director of Finance noted that the Union's external auditors, Buzzacott, have been engaged since 2019. They confirmed that it is good practice to periodically re-tender services of auditors and external experts which would require the Union to re-tender in approximately 18-24 months.

The Committee asked if there were any negatives or positives to changing external auditors. The Director of Finance responded that there are none, but it is good practice re-tender after 5-6 years as you are getting a fresh pair of eyes for the audit review.

The Director of Finance proposed that the current external auditors, Buzzacott, are used for the 2022-23 and the 2023-24 audit and then we re-tender for a new external auditor.

The Committee approved using Buzzacott for the next two audits for 2022-23 and 2023-24 and then we re-tender for a new external auditor.

**RESOLVED**

The Director of Finance stated that Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the organisation's operations. They added that an internal audit review is typically used to review the financial controls, processes and procedures and any regulatory compliance and to recommend improvements. The Director of Finance went on to confirm that they would like to engage with external experts to commission a review of two specific areas of its operations. The first area is VAT health check and an advisory review of the Union's structure for tax compliance (VAT and Corporation tax). They highlighted that there are specific rules and concessions which apply to students' unions, and there is a limited number of experts in this field to seek advice. The Director of Finance went on to confirm that the VAT experts from Crowe Accountants wish to work with the Union to deliver this advisory review for a fee of £5K.

The Committee asked if £5k was good value for this type of review. The Director of Finance responded that due to the significant increase in funding for Student Life Strategy and non-commercial operations there be an increase in our irrecoverable VAT and this review will help us to recover this and ensure we are compliant.

The Committee asked if the Director of Finance had any idea what might be suggested from the review. The Director of Finance replied that one of the main things would be how we account for VAT in our Cafes especially as there are so many specific regulations regarding this area and the ramifications can be significant if done incorrectly. The Committee discussed the

possibility of having a separate trading company but as this has not been done before, it would be good to find another Union that has trialed this to see how it has worked.

The Committee asked how the £5k would be accumulated to pay for the review. The Director of Finance confirmed that they have money in their budget for the improvement of finance systems. They added that all budget expenditure has to be approved by the Finance Committee and the Board.

The Committee agreed to the engagement of Crowe Accountants to undertake the VAT and tax review.

**RESOLVED**

The Director of Finance outlined that the second area of it's operations that they would like to engage with external experts on is a Procurement and Contract Management advisory review with recommendations to uniform the approach across all departments and ensure compliance, value for money, best practice, and an ethical and sustainable approach to procurement in the future. The Director of Finance confirmed that they had approached several experts and advised that the London University Procurement Consortium (LUPC) procurement team is best suited to undertake this advisory report. They added that the Union has formed a working group to lead this project and to engage the departments benefiting from this review. The Director of Finance noted that this review would cost in the region of £20k which includes around 265 hours of their time.

The Committee discussed the value of the goods and services we buy. The Director of Operations noted that £20k is not a lot considering the amount we spend, and the risk involved. They added that it would also be extremely valuable to have advice on managing contracts.

The Committee asked if there may be any help available from the University regarding this. The Director of finance replied that the scope of this review would take up considerable time and resources that they would not have the capacity to provide.

The Committee agreed to the engagement of London University Procurement Consortium (LUPC) to undertake the Procurement and Contract Management review.

**RESOLVED**

## **5. Health & Safety Report (Quarter 1 & 2) & Annual Review**

The Director of Operations summarised the Health & Safety Report and highlighted the following:

- Peter Weaver (PW) transferred Health & Safety objectives to Rohan Perera (RP) in October 2022.
- The Health and Safety committee meets every quarter to discuss relevant matters.
- The organisation has introduced the SU Health and Safety Management System for contractor management, which operates within the framework of facilities management.
- Significant progress has been made in the T100 Lite.

- The organisation completed the updating of its new health and safety website in January 2023.
- Improving access for RiskNet incident reporting
- Undertaking compliance inspection commencing May 2023
- Q2 (2023) reported RIDDOR incident manage by Head of Health & Safety – Further action undertook Toolbox talks, refresh training

The Committee noted that there was a low number of incidents during the first quarter, and this would most likely increase next term. The Director of Operations confirmed that they hoped there would be rise in reporting incidents and also a rise in reporting near misses. The Committee asked if there were any plans for a new reporting system. The Director of Operations replied that as we use UCL premises we have to use their reporting system.

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**6. Update on financial performance**

The Director of Finance gave a brief overview of the update on financial performance.

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**7. Risk Management Policy**

**RECEIVED**

**8. Risk Register Monitoring Report (until May 2023)**


The Director of Operations gave a summary of the Risk Register Monitoring Report up to May 2023. The Chair asked if it would be beneficially for any serious risks to be escalated from the Risk & Audit Committee. The Director of Operations said that it would be beneficial, and the Chair suggested that they draft up an email for them to send onto the Chief Executive.

**ACTION:** The Director of Operations to draft a letter for the Chair to be sent onto the Chief Executive regarding any significant risks.

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**9. Any Other Business**

There was none.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Ben Booth
Signature:	
Date:	14-11-23