

## Audit Committee

### Terms of Reference:

- (a) To appoint the University's External Auditors through a formal procurement process. To reaffirm that appointment, each year during the contracted period, through a recommendation to Senate. The Audit Committee may also remove the External Auditors before the end of their term if serious shortcomings are identified.
- (b) To report to Senate 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.
- (c) To discuss with the External Auditors, before the audit begins, the nature and scope of the audit.
- (d) To discuss with the External Auditors problems and reservations arising from the interim and final audits, including a review of the Report to those charged with governance, incorporating management responses, and any other matters the External Auditors may wish to discuss (in the absence of management where necessary).
- (e) To appoint the University's Internal Auditors through a formal procurement process. The Audit Committee may also remove the Internal Auditors before the end of their term if serious shortcomings are identified.
- (f) To report to Senate on the appointment and terms of engagement of the Internal Audit service, 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.
- (g) To review the Internal Auditors' audit risk assessment, strategy and programme; consider major findings of Internal Audit investigations and management's response and 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 Senate, as appropriate).
- (h) To keep under review the effectiveness of the University's risk management, control and governance arrangements and, in particular, to review the External Auditors' Report to those charged with governance, the Internal Auditors' Annual Report, and management responses. The Committee shall make recommendations to relevant committees or to the Vice-Chancellor to ensure that measures are taken to deal effectively with matters raised in audit reports.
- (i) To monitor the implementation of agreed audit-based recommendations, through the Internal Audit – Status of Recommendations report.
- (j) To ensure that all significant losses have been properly investigated and that the Internal and External Auditors and, where appropriate, that the Department for the Economy (DFE) has been informed.
- (k) To consider, approve and oversee the implementation of the institution's policies on Fraud and Whistleblowing, including being notified of any action taken under these policies.
- (l) To provide ongoing assurance to Senate, in respect of the management and quality assurance of data.
- (m) To satisfy itself that satisfactory arrangements are in place to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- (n) To consider and approve the University's Register of Interests Policy, the Policy for the Acceptance of Gifts, Gratuities and Hospitality and the University's arrangements to ensure compliance with the Bribery Act 2010.
- (o) To receive any relevant report from the Northern Ireland Audit Office, the National Audit Office, or any other body which fulfils a recognised audit function in respect of the University or related institutions, funded in full, or in part, from public funds.
- (p) To monitor annually the performance and effectiveness of the External and Internal Auditors, including any matters affecting their objectivity.
- (q) To consider the draft annual financial statements, in the presence of the External Auditors, ensuring that sufficient consideration has been given to all relevant matters, that there is compliance with relevant legislation, accounts directions, and accounting standards, and that there are no major disagreements between the External Auditors and the Planning and Finance Committee and/or the Director of Finance over accounting policies.
- (r) 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.

- (s) To report on a regular basis to Senate and to compile an Annual Report which, following consideration by Senate, will be sent to DfE – this annual report shall include an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the University’s arrangements for risk management, internal control, governance and value for money.
- (t) The Committee is authorised by Senate to obtain outside legal or other independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of non-members with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary, normally in consultation with the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer and/or the Chair of Senate. However, it may not incur direct expenditure in this respect in excess of £10,000 without the prior approval of Senate.

**Membership:**

<b>Composition</b>		<b>Current Members</b>
Members:	Three lay members of Senate excluding those included in the membership of the Planning and Finance Committee	Mr K Jess (Chair) Ms A McGregor Mr E McMullan
	Two co-opted members	Mr N Coburn Ms H Kirkpatrick
In Attendance:	President and Vice-Chancellor	Professor I Greer
	Interim Registrar and Chief Operating Officer	Mrs W Galbraith
	Interim Director of Finance	Mrs A McLaughlin
	Representatives of the Internal Auditors (Deloitte)	Mr I Howse Mrs S Bonar
	Representatives of the External Auditors (KPMG)	Mr S O’Keefe Ms L Harrison
	Relevant University Officers	As Required
<b>Quorum:</b>	3 members, including 2 members of Senate	
<b>Serviced by:</b>	Registrar’s Office	
<b>Reports to:</b>	Senate	
<b>Receives reports from:</b>	Risk Management Committee Value for Money Group Internal and External Auditors	