

Meeting	Joint Meeting of the Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committees
Date and time	Wednesday 27 January 2021 at 9.00 a.m.
Location	Via Microsoft Teams

College Secretary
20 January 2021

AGENDA

Welcome and Apologies

Declarations of Interest

ITEMS FOR DECISION

- 1. DRAFT AUDITED ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2019/20
(CONFIDENTIAL)**
 - a) Covering Report by Director of Finance
 - b) Draft Inverness College Annual Audit Report by Ernst & Young
 - c) Letter of Representations
 - d) Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 July 2020
 - e) End of Year Return to SFC

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 2. MEETING WITH EXTERNAL AUDITORS**
Report by Board Secretary
- 3. ANNUAL AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**
Report by Director of Finance and Board Secretary
- 4. AOCB**

Board of Management

Subject/Title:	Covering Report on the College Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2020
Author: [Name and Job title]	Roddy Ferrier, Director of Finance
Meeting:	Joint Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committee
Meeting Date:	27 January 2021
Date Paper prepared:	20 January 2021
Brief Summary of the paper:	To summarise the key points reported in the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2020.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	To discuss the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2020 and recommend to the full Board of Management for approval.
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	Compliance – adherence to the Financial Memorandum with UHI as RSB, compliance with various accounting requirements.
Resource implications:	Yes / No If yes, please specify:
Risk implications:	Yes / No If yes, please specify: Operational: Organisational:
Equality and Diversity implications:	No If yes, please specify:
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	N/A

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Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]	Confidential		
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes/No]	No		
*If a paper should not be included within “open” business, please highlight below the reason.			
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research (S27)		Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs (S30)	
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (S33)	x	Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court (S36)	
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act (S38)		Other (please give further details)	
For how long must the paper be withheld? (express either as the time which needs to pass or a condition which needs to be met.)	Until the Scottish Parliament have approved the annual accounts.		

Further guidance on application of the exclusions from Freedom of Information legislation is available via

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/ScottishPublicAuthorities/ScottishPublicAuthorities.asp> and

http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/web/FILES/Public_Interest_Test.pdf

Board of Management

Subject/Title:	Meeting with External Auditors
Author: [Name and Job title]	Lisa Ross, Board Secretary
Meeting:	Joint Audit & Finance and General Purposes Committee
Meeting Date:	27 January 2021
Date Paper prepared:	19 January 2021
Brief Summary of the paper:	<p>The paper outlines the areas for discussion and related questions which the Committee might like to ask our Auditors.</p> <p>A decision on the proposed dates for meeting with auditors is to be agreed.</p>
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion and Decision
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with::	Compliance with Code of Good Governance and Audit committee terms of reference in that it is a requirement for the Audit Committee members to meet with the internal and external auditors without the executive team present at least annually.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	
Resource implications:	No
Risk implications:	No
Equality and Diversity implications:	No
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	

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Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]	Non-Confidential		
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes/No]	Yes		
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Recommendation

It is recommended that Audit Committee members consider the guidance herein, and bring with them to the meeting questions and issues around which purposeful discussion with the External Auditor can be based.

Introduction

It is considered good practice for Audit Committees to meet with internal and external auditors at least annually in a private session where management is not present. This approach allows the Audit Committee to ask questions on matters that might not have been specifically addressed as part of the audit work. The private session allows the Auditor to provide candid, often confidential, comments to the Audit Committee on such matters. It also presents an opportunity for the auditor to provide feedback to the Committee about its own performance and possible areas for development and improvement.

Meeting with Auditors

It is proposed that the Audit Committee will meet privately with the external and internal auditors on the proposed dates below. This will allow time for a new Chair to be appointed to the Audit Committee following the departure of the Interim Audit Chair, Fiona Neilson.

The Audit Committee will meet privately with the external auditors at the end of the Audit Committee Meeting being held on 09 March 2021.

The Audit Committee will meet privately with the internal auditors at the end of the Audit Committee Meeting being held on 01 June 2021.

Areas for Discussion and Related Questions

Overall, private sessions can play an important role in the development of a trusting and respectful relationship between the Audit Committee and the Auditor. Questions often focus on one or more of the following areas:

Attitudes – management's attitude toward financial reporting, internal controls and towards Auditors themselves.

Resources – the adequacy of people and other resources within the financial management area and the audit function.

Relationships – the nature of the relationship between the Auditor, Management and the Audit Committee.

Other issues – other issues of concern to the Audit Committee or the Auditor.

Evaluation of Auditors' performances

The Internal Auditors Performance review was due to be completed in June 2020 with the then Audit Chair scheduled to meet with the Interim Finance Director outwith the Committee meeting. However due to the Audit Chair soon stepping down from the role the annual review for 2020 was not carried out. The review for 2021 is due to be completed in June 2021 and the new Chair of the Audit Committee will work with the Director of Finance to ensure that this is carried out.

The External Auditors Performance review was due to be completed in February 2020 however this does not appear to have been carried out. The review for 2021 will be carried out within the meeting scheduled to take place on 09 March 2021.

The Board Secretary will ensure that all future performance reviews are diarised and will be carried out by the Committee yearly to ensure that we maintain compliance with the Code of Good Governance and the Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

Board of Management

Subject/Title:	Annual Audit Committee report to the Board of Management 2019-20
Author: [Name and Job title]	Lisa Ross, Board Secretary
Meeting:	Audit Committee
Meeting Date:	27 January 2021
Date Paper prepared:	19 January 2021
Brief Summary of the paper:	This report highlights the membership of the Audit Committee, meetings held, those attending and the key reports presented during 2019-20. This includes both the work carried out by the Internal Auditor BDO for 2019/20, and the External Auditor Ernst & Young for the audit of the 2018/19 financial statements. Other key areas of the work of the committee are highlighted, specifically risk management, health and safety and approval of policies relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	For approval of this report to be taken to the Board of Management on 18 February 2021.
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	The Audit Committee is required, in accordance with Scottish Funding Council guidance to report annually to the Board of management. The report relates to the discussions and actions in relation to risk management Linked to Opportunity and Growth in Sustainability within the strategic plan, specifically managing our risks
Resource implications:	Not directly, but indirectly in relation to the management of risk
Risk implications:	Yes Operational: as outlined in the Risk register Organisational: as outlined in the Risk register
Equality and Diversity implications:	N/A
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	No consultation carried out – report is a statement of work carried out by the Audit Committee throughout 2019-20

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Annual Audit Committee Annual Report to the Board of Management

Title	Inverness College UHI Audit Committee Annual Report 2019-20
Introduction	The Audit Committee is required, in accordance with Scottish Funding Council guidance to report annually to the Board of Management. This report covers the work of the Audit Committee during the 2019-20 Academic Year.
Membership	<p>The Membership of the Committee during the 2019-20 academic year was as follows:-</p> <p>Hazel Allen, Chair Jaci Douglas, Vice chair Sarah Burton Innis Montgomery Fiona Neilson Steve Walsh Sally Blyth Samantha Cribb</p> <p>Board Secretary – Lisa Ross (Clerk to the Committee)</p>
Meetings	<p>4 meetings were held throughout the year and the attendance was as follows:-</p> <p>17 September 2019 Hazel Allen, Sarah Burton, Jaci Douglas, Fiona Neilson (Hazel Allen chaired this meeting)</p> <p>26 November 2019 Hazel Allen, Sarah Burton, Jaci Douglas, Innis Montgomery (Hazel Allen chaired this meeting)</p> <p>10 March 2020 Jaci Douglas, Innis Montgomery, Fiona Neilson, Sally Blyth (Jaci Douglas chaired this meeting)</p> <p>02 June 2020 Hazel Allen, Fiona Neilson, Innis Montgomery, Samantha Cribb, Sally Blyth (Hazel Allen chaired this meeting)</p> <p>The internal auditors, BDO, attended all four meetings in 2019-20. Ernst & Young attended the meetings in November 2019 and June 2020.</p>

	<p>The Director of Finance attended the September 2019, November 2019 and June 2020 meetings.</p> <p>The Principal attended every meeting as did the Director of Organisational Development.</p> <p>The Depute Principal (Planning and Student Experience) attended the March 2020 meeting.</p>																		
Terms of Reference	<p>The terms of Reference were reviewed in May 2019 by the Audit Committee and are due for further review in May 2021.</p>																		
Internal Audit	<p>Provider The Internal Auditors are BDO. They were appointed for the three year period 2017-2020 at a cost of £60,480.</p> <p>Audit committee assessment of performance The annual review of the performance of BDO was discussed at the meeting held on 2nd June 2020. Whereby it was noted that the Annual Review of Internal Auditors performance is usually completed with the Finance Director. As the recently departed Interim Finance Director had the most involvement with BDO it was agreed that the Chair would arrange to meet with the Interim Finance Director to complete the annual review out with the meeting and bring back their thoughts for discussion at the September 2020 meeting.</p> <p>Review of internal audit plan The Internal Audit Strategy 2017-2020 set out the programme of audits to be undertaken in each of the three years from 2017. The rationale for the inclusion of particular reviews was based on the Auditors initial review of the Colleges risk register, discussions with a number of key stakeholders and consideration of various documents, publications and information sources.</p> <p>Eight internal audit reviews and the follow up review were undertaken during 2019-20. Three of the eight are regulatory reviews, these being the Student Support Funds, FES Return and EMA. The outcomes of all reviews has been presented to and discussed by Audit Committee. The initial conclusion is reflected in the summary table below and is not expected to change.</p> <p>The plan was based on the proposed allocation of days for set out in the 2019-20 operational plan. There was no change in the time spent – Planned v budget. 41 days’ work was undertaken.</p> <p>Summary of Internal Audit reports 2019-20</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="387 1246 2168 1417"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="387 1246 981 1294"></th> <th colspan="5" data-bbox="981 1246 2168 1294">Overall Report Conclusions – see appendix I</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="387 1294 981 1374"></th> <th data-bbox="981 1294 1167 1374">RED</th> <th data-bbox="1167 1294 1352 1374">AMBER</th> <th data-bbox="1352 1294 1538 1374">GREEN</th> <th data-bbox="1538 1294 1848 1374">Design</th> <th data-bbox="1848 1294 2168 1374">Operational Effectiveness</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="387 1374 981 1417">Student Support Funds</td> <td data-bbox="981 1374 1167 1417">0</td> <td data-bbox="1167 1374 1352 1417">0</td> <td data-bbox="1352 1374 1538 1417">0</td> <td data-bbox="1538 1374 1848 1417">n/a</td> <td data-bbox="1848 1374 2168 1417">n/a</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Overall Report Conclusions – see appendix I						RED	AMBER	GREEN	Design	Operational Effectiveness	Student Support Funds	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
	Overall Report Conclusions – see appendix I																		
	RED	AMBER	GREEN	Design	Operational Effectiveness														
Student Support Funds	0	0	0	n/a	n/a														

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Education Maintenance Allowance	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
FES Return	0	0	1	n/a	n/a
Business Planning and Performance Management	0	1	1	Moderate	Moderate
Cash Handling	0	2	2	Moderate	Moderate
Health and Safety	0	6	1	Limited	Limited
Estates Management	0	2	1	Moderate	Moderate
Marketing and Communication	0	2	2	Moderate	Moderate
Follow Up	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Overall gradings were defined as follows

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	DESIGN of internal control framework		OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS of internal controls	
	Findings from review	Design Opinion	Findings from review	Effectiveness Opinion
Substantial (GREEN)	Appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks.	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives.	No, or only minor, exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied.
Moderate (BLUE)	In the main there are appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks reviewed albeit with some that are not fully effective.	Generally a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives with some exceptions.	A small number of exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	Evidence of non compliance with some controls, that may put some of the system objectives at risk.

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Limited (AMBER)	A number of significant gaps identified in the procedures and controls in key areas. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	System of internal controls is weakened with system objectives at risk of not being achieved.	A number of reoccurring exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	Non-compliance with key procedures and controls places the system objectives at risk.
No (RED)	For all risk areas there are significant gaps in the procedures and controls. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Poor system of internal control.	Due to absence of effective controls and procedures, no reliance can be placed on their operation. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Non compliance and/or compliance with inadequate controls.

Recommendation Significance

High (RED)	A weakness where there is substantial risk of loss, fraud, impropriety, poor value for money, or failure to achieve organisational objectives. Such risk could lead to an adverse impact on the business. Remedial action must be taken urgently.
Medium (AMBER)	A weakness in control which, although not fundamental, relates to shortcomings which expose individual business systems to a less immediate level of threatening risk or poor value for money. Such a risk could impact on operational objectives and should be of concern to senior management and requires prompt specific action.
Low (GREEN)	Areas that individually have no significant impact, but where management would benefit from improved controls and/or have the opportunity to achieve greater effectiveness and/or efficiency.

Audit reports

Summary of Recommendations made

High	0
Medium	13
Low	8
Total number of recommendations:	21

The Committee made specific comments on reports as follows:-

FES

- BDO were asked to clarify a statement within the FES return regarding fundable student numbers and agreed to do that.

Business Planning and Performance Management

- A meeting was requested by the Depute Principal Planning and Student Experience to clarify some of the findings and recommendations from the audit.

Health and Safety

The Committee noted the expected completion date of January 21 of the audit which begun in March 2020 and a discussion over whether this was a feasible deadline took place which highlighted:

- Proposed change of system - discussions have been held within the Partnership with regards a common system but this has now been rejected due to the cost which means we may have to consider a possible extension to the SHE contract.
- The impact of Covid-19 and access to the building.
- Liability – whether VDE checks are being carried out by staff at home.
- Record keeping and whether staff are fully engaging with processes.
- Training available on Safetyhub and whether this is being used and properly monitored.
- That focus remains on all Health and Safety issues – not just those affected by Covid-19. It was AGREED that this issue will be revisited at the next meeting for further discussion.
- Fire Evacuation plans and Fire Marshalls.

Estates

The Committee noted that the Estates Dept. are now involved in their budget setting and an update of their spend will be taken to the next meeting for discussion. Additional funding has been allocated from SFC with regards Covid compliance.

	<p>Closed Meeting</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit Committee and the Director of Finance held a closed session with the Internal Auditors during April/May 2020 to discuss concerns which had been raised by SMT. A further meeting was due to be held with the Chair of the Audit Committee in June 2020 to agree timings for the 2020/21 audits but this did not take place.</p> <p>Overall opinion of risk management, control and governance arrangements</p> <p>It was the opinion of BDO that “based on the reviews undertaken during the period, and in the context of materiality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In four of the five assurance audits performed, the risk management activities and controls in the areas which we examined were found to be suitably designed to achieve the specific risk management, control and governance arrangements. Based on our verification reviews and sample testing, the risk management, control and governance arrangements in these four areas were operating with sufficient effectiveness to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance that the related risk management, control and governance objectives were achieved for the period under review. • However, our review of Health & Safety identified that further work was required to ensure robust processes. As such, we are not able to provide reasonable assurance based on our verification review and sample testing, that risk management, control and governance arrangements were designed and operating with sufficient effectiveness in this area to provide reasonable assurance that the related risk management, control and governance objectives were achieved for the period under review. • In addition, we were not able to gain assurance that management were taking sufficient action to implement previously agreed recommendations and make improvements to the control environment.
<p>External audit</p>	<p>Ernst & Young</p> <p>Ernst & Young completed their audit of the accounts for the year ending 31 July 2019. This was the third report by Ernst & Young who had been appointed by the Auditor General for Scotland as the external auditor for the financial years 2016/17 to 2020/21. The fee for the 2018-19 audit was £26,503.</p> <p>These accounts were submitted to and approved by the Board of Management on 17 December 2019. Ernst and Young’s independent auditor’s report provided an unqualified opinion that the financial statements</p> <p>Ernst and Young’s independent auditor’s report provided an unqualified opinion that the financial statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gave a true and fair view in accordance with the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) of the state of the affairs of the College and Group as at 31 July 2019 and of its surplus for the year then ended; • had been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• had been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Funding Council, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, and regulation 14 of The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). <p>Audit committee assessment of performance</p> <p>The annual review of the performance of EY for the year 2018/19 was scheduled to take place in February 2020 however this has not yet been undertaken.</p> <p>Closed Meeting</p> <p>It is proposed that the Audit Committee will have a closed session with the External Auditors following the Audit Committee being held on 09 March 2021.</p> <p>Audit of annual accounts 2019-20</p> <p>EY has carried out the Audit of the Annual Accounts for 2019-20 and this forms part 1b of the agenda.</p>
Other work done	<p>Health and Safety</p> <p>Health and Safety reports are submitted to each audit committee throughout the year.</p> <p>COVID-19 has had a significant impact upon the College operations since the turn of the calendar year, which resulted in a contingency management group being formed in January which is headed by Ken Russell, Depute Principal as chair of the group. However it has been a positive year for the College in terms of having had no reportable incidents or significant injuries, and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, was undergoing a continuing trend of increased reporting, predominantly for minor incidents – while of course it is not desirable to have an increase in incidents, it is believed that the increase is due to more proactive reporting rather than an increase in incidents.</p> <p>With this said, there is much to do to ensure that the College has a robust and reliable Health & Safety Management System in place to support Health & Safety improvement. The BDO internal audit has reinforced many of the observations made by the Health & Safety Manager and as such, the measures and actions for improvement have been identified, with key components being the implementation of a HSG65 compliant Management System in addition to a fully functioning and fit for purpose software package.</p> <p>Riddor</p> <p>There have been no RIDDOR reportable incidents for academic year 2019-2020 in comparison to a single RIDDOR event for 2018-2019. There has been a change of Health & Safety Manager within the reporting year (November 2019) and since this appointment, several observations regarding Health & Safety arrangements and areas for improvement have been identified, in particular regarding the conducting and management of Risk Assessments.</p>

Incidents

The College had been observing an increased trend in the reporting of incidents comparable to the previous year, prior to the onset of COVID-19. This may be viewed in a positive light as it superficially implies involvement with Health & Safety within the workforce. However, analysis of incidents within the reporting system is hindered in some respects by the parameters in which the system has been configured to record them.

A key cause of the issue is due to the outdated organisational structure that the system is configured with, though this is compounded by the custom and practice of mis-recording certain events as incidents which further contaminates the data. The lack of clear and readily available (or acknowledged) guidance on the use of the system plays a significant role in this misunderstanding, in addition to other, wider issues relating to the use of the SHE software system.

The key component to effectively utilising a Health and Safety Software System is the configuration of data sets and the accurate representation of the organisational structure. The organisational structure which is currently in use is largely obsolete, though this is exasperated by ad-hoc 'updates' which have not migrated or redirected data appropriately, thus causing multiple issues for the end user, as well as for the local administrator (Health & Safety Manager).

Policies

The following key policies were reviewed during 2019/20

- Annual Review of Risk Management Policy
- Food Safety and Allergens Management Policy
- Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Information Policy
- Data Protection Policy.

The Annual report on Data Protection and Freedom of Information was presented to the committee in June 2020 with the Complaints and Public Interest Disclosure information being presented to the committee in September 2020. No major issues were reported.

Value for Money and Procurement Annual Report 2019-20

This report will be discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting being held on 27 January 2021 and then the Board of Management meeting on 18 February 2021.

Business Continuity Plan

An internal audit review took place within 2019 with a final report being made available in March 2020. This audit resulted in a number of recommendations. The remaining actions are to be completed in the coming months and the full BCP will be updated accordingly.

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Opinion	<p>The Audit Committee is of the opinion that the risk management of activities and controls in the areas examined by BDO were found to be suitably designed to achieve the specific risk management control and governance arrangements.</p> <p>The Audit Committee concurs with the (draft) opinion of BDO that the risk management, control and governance arrangements were operating with sufficient effectiveness to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance that the related risk management, control and governance objectives were achieved for the period under review.</p>
Circulation	Copy to the Auditors once approved by the Board of Management
Conclusion	<p>The Audit Committee is pleased to report to the Board of Management that in its opinion the College has adequate internal controls, procedures and systems in place</p> <p>Signed..... Chair, Audit Committee</p> <p>Date</p>