


**AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
ACTIONS AND KEY DECISIONS OF THE MEETING**

Meeting Date and Time:	Thursday 21 st July 2022 at 11.30
Location:	Futureworks and via Teams
Present:	Ian Falconer, Chair
	Gwyn Arnold, Vice Chair
	David McIntyre, Member
	Prof. David Vaughan, Member
In attendance:	Alan Doyle, Finance Director
	Ben Norris, Clerk
	Kate Sayer, Secretary
	Phill Liggett, Facilities Manager
	Ian Musgrave, UNIAC
	Elly Holmes, UNIAC
	Michael Rigby, Leonherman

No.	ACTIONS
1	Secretariat to add the monitoring of the AB Action plan to the ARAC Indicative Work Schedule and to the DAPs risk register. (3b-1)
2	FD and Facilities Manager to speak to IM at UNIAC regarding best practice in monitoring compliance levels for the new OfS Quality & Standards Ongoing Conditions of Registration. Risk Management team to investigate this risk. (3cii-1)
3	FD to speak to IM at UNIAC to discuss the commissioning of a short, timely audit on the retention strategy and practices at Futureworks. (3ciii-1)
4	VP to add an Admissions risk to the Risk Register. (4a-1)
5	Secretariat to add the review of Academic Risk to the ARAC Indicative Work Schedule. (4b-1)
6	Secretariat to add a separate assurance recommendations tracker to the regular ARAC action tracker provided to meetings. (5d-1)
7	[This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.] (6a-1)
8	VP to include relevant emerging topics from the 27/07/22 ARAC meeting in the ARAC Annual Report. The report should reference the academic rather than financial year. (7a-1)

No.	KEY DECISIONS
1	DAPs timeline should come to ARAC regularly to provide assurance.
2	QAA no longer to be designated quality body – potential implications of this on DAPs to be discussed at the BoD in August and ARAC in November.
3	An implementation plan of the recommendations of the Student Voice audit to come back to the next ARAC meeting.
4	The Chair or DM will oversee the analysis of the Data Quality review to ensure that the self-assessment is done objectively against specified criteria.
5	MH from Leonherman to forward through external audit Plan asap.
6	Competence standards in relation to the Natasha Abrahart ruling of May 2022 should be looked at in more depth by the Academic Board and reported back to ARAC in November.
7	There should be a deputy for each role on the Disaster Recovery Plan, if possible, to strengthen communication channels.



AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21st JULY 2022 @ 11.30
via Teams and at FUTUREWORKS
For General Release

Present: **Ian Falconer, Chair**
Gwyn Arnold, Vice Chair
Dave McIntyre, Member
Prof. David Vaughan, Member

In attendance:

Alan Doyle, Finance Director
Ben Norris, Clerk
Kate Sayer, Secretary
Phill Liggett, Facilities Manager
Ian Musgrave, UNIAC
Elly Holmes, UNIAC
Michael Rigby, Leonherman

1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed the members and set out the order of the meeting. Ian Musgrave and Elly Holmes from UNIAC joined the meeting at the start. Michael Rigby from Leonherman joined for item 4d only.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS:

- a. Minutes of 28.04.22 for Accuracy – the minutes were approved in terms of content and accuracy. The Chair welcomed the new format of the minutes which included a coversheet summary of decisions and actions.
- b. Action Tracker – the following overdue action was discussed:
 - [ARAC]Apr-19|BER(1.10) – work is underway on the Strategic Plan, with a supporting Operational Plan being written imminently. The wider staff body have been consulted about the Strategic Plan, and the next draft will be circulated again before being presented to the Board of Directors in late August.

Completed actions were accepted and signed off by the committee. The following complete action was highlighted:

- [ARAC]Jan-22|5c(1) – Request that the Board of Directors consider providing some assurance to ARAC that the Academic Board action plan is achievable and adequately resourced – it was noted that although this action was marked as complete, it should not be archived as there are still staffing vacancies in the Academic Quality department. This item is therefore to be monitored through adding it to the ARAC indicative workplan and the DAPs risk register.
- c. Matters Arising –
 - i. Board Assurance Framework – as requested, a RAG rating and assurance owner column had been added to this document which the Chair noted was very helpful. The framework will help drive an assurance plan for the committee for the next few months. With exception of a minor grammatical error, the document was welcomed by the committee.
 - ii. New Quality & Standards Ongoing Conditions of Registration – the Academic



Board had asked ARAC for advice on ascertaining the level of compliance at Futureworks with the new OfS regulations. The committee noted that this was a new and emerging risk and expressed surprise and disappointment that such a significant risk had not been dealt with. External support to ascertain best practice could be requested from UNIAC but the work to determine compliance was best done in-house. The Finance Director and Facilities manager are to liaise with UNIAC and forward this issue to the risk management team. The committee agreed that for ARAC to seek assurance about a risk which management knew had yet to be addressed was not the best use of its resources.

- iii. [This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.]
- iv. Update on Digital Strategy – a small Cyber Review has been completed by UNIAC and the Cyber Security Strategy is being worked upon. A new staff intranet is to be launched soon as a central hub for all policies, procedures, newsletters etc. The Digital Strategy has a clear plan that is being followed which was noted and welcomed by the committee.
- v. [This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.]

[Action: Secretariat to add the monitoring of the AB Action plan to the ARAC Indicative Work Schedule and to the DAPs risk register.] (3b-1)

[Action: FD and Facilities Manager to speak to IM at UNIAC regarding best practice in monitoring compliance levels for the new OfS Quality & Standards Ongoing Conditions of Registration. Risk Management team to investigate this risk.] (3cii-1)

[Action: FD to speak to IM at UNIAC to discuss the commissioning of a short, timely audit on the retention strategy and practices at Futureworks.] (3ciii-1)

4. COMMISSIONING ASSURANCE:

- a. Risk Register – the committee reviewed the updated Risk Register. With reference to the minutes from the Board and its subcommittees (see section 12), the main areas of risk were DAPs, student recruitment and retention, accessibility, compliance, and the successful functioning of the Academic Board.
[This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.]
The committee was pleased that the risk management process was generally working, however members were concerned that this was not the case in all areas of risk and a wider staff awareness of what needs to be done to mitigate risks is required.
- b. Indicative work schedule for AY22/23 – the review of Academic Risk should be added to the workplan for the year and the Workplan should be supported by an assurance plan for the next 12 months.
- c. Internal Audit update – EH from UNIAC reported on the audit of the Student Voice that had recently been carried out at Futureworks. There were no high-risk findings and a number of recommendations and suggestions were given which will be considered by the management team. The assurance provided by the report was welcomed and the Committee requested that a full implementation plan come back to the next ARAC meeting to give assurance that any issues highlighted in the report are to be addressed.

[IM and EH left the meeting at this point]

Other internal reviews that are being done in-house were discussed:

- Due to the small staff team at Futureworks, the Data Quality review would be carried out by the Head of Registry Services and Business Intelligence, who was responsible for the data being assessed. The Terms of Reference for this



review are to be finalised and sent to the Risk Management Team for approval. It was also agreed that a member of ARAC (either the Chair or DM) would oversee the analysis done to ensure that the self-assessment was carried out objectively against specified criteria.

- The review of social media was not a risk-based review and therefore did not provide assurance which the Committee could rely upon. Accordingly, it had not been included in the document pack.

The committee noted the summary report and was happy to hear that the use of reviews and audit in management decision-making was growing at Futureworks.

[MR joined the meeting at this point]

- d. External Audit update – the representative from Leonherman detailed the timetable for the external audit on the 2021-22 accounts. It is aimed that the audit work will be complete by 16th December, just before the Christmas break. Per auditing guidelines, as it acted on behalf of those charge with governance, the Committee had expected to see the audit plan and associated documents (for example the audit risks to be addressed, confirmation of independence etc.). These will be forwarded to the committee in the coming weeks. The plan should include the dates when the external audit will go to the BoD for approval, when it will be seen by ARAC, and when it will go to the OfS and then Companies House.

[MR left the meeting at this point]

[Action: VP to add an Admissions risk to the Risk Register.] (4a-1)

[Action: Secretariat to add the review of Academic Risk to the ARAC Indicative Work Schedule.] (4b-1)

5. RECEIVING ASSURANCE:

- a. [This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.]
- b. Review of compliance returns – the committee welcomed the assurance that all returns had been completed on time.
- c. Review of investigations into whistleblowing, fraud and irregularity – the Vice Principal reported that the documentation on whistleblowing within the staff handbook and the Freedom to Speak up Policy were correctly linked and therefore no further work was needed in this area. The committee accepted the clarification given.
- d. Response to the Disability Access Risk Assessment – the Facilities Manager presented the Response to the BISON Assist Risk Assessment of the Riverside and Media City Campuses. An action plan has been drawn up alongside a structured workplan which should ensure all actions are completed by the end of August 2022. The action plan for the Disability Risk Assessment is to come to the next meeting of ARAC in November. The overview of assurance recommendations is also requested to come to future meetings.
- e. Report on competence standards – the report produced by the Risk Management Team in response to the Natasha Abraham ruling of May 2022 was provided to the committee. This ruling relates to a case at The University of Bristol in which the institution was found not to have made reasonable adjustments to the assessment methods used on this student’s programme; the student, who suffered from mental health issues, eventually took her own life. The report provides recommendations for Futureworks which should be looked at in more depth by the Academic Board and reported back to ARAC. As such, the timing of the next ARAC meeting will be altered to take place after the next Academic Board meeting in November. The committee welcomed the report and looked forward to being updated on how the risks were to be managed.



[Action: Secretariat to add a separate assurance recommendations tracker to the regular ARAC action tracker provided to meetings.] (5d-1)

6. MANAGING ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS:

[This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.]

[Action: This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.] (6a-1)

7. REPORTING ASSURANCE:

- a. ARAC Annual Report initial draft – a short discussion took place regarding the first draft of the ARAC Annual Report. Suggestions were made on style, and the headings were agreed. It was also advised that any emerging topics covered in this meeting were included in the report.
- b. Disaster Recovery plan – this document was provided for information only. The Chair was pleased to see the plan and would like to see how it will be communicated to staff and how it will be tested. It was pointed out that it would be advisable to allocate a deputy for each role on the plan, in order to strengthen communication channels.

[Action: VP to include relevant emerging topics from the 27/07/22 ARAC meeting in the ARAC Annual Report. The report should reference the academic rather than financial year.] (7a-1)

8. REVIEW OF MEETING AND MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The Chair and committee members summarised that the main topics of the meeting: [This section contains commercially sensitive information and has been redacted.] The meeting overran by an hour due to the number and substantive nature of the topics being discussed. The Secretariat were asked to show the papers to the Chair before sending out to the wider committee if feasible.

9. AOB:

None.

10. ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION:

None.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Date of the next meeting:

- The meeting is to be altered from the published date, to take place after the next Academic Board meeting. It will therefore take place on Tuesday 8th November 2022 11.30am. Other scheduled ARAC meetings in the 2022-23 cycle should also be altered to 11.30am.

12. ESSENTIAL READING:

- a. Minutes & actions of other committees:
 - i. Board of Directors
 - ii. Academic Board
 - iii. Action plans

The documents were referred to in section 4a Risk Register.