

AUDIT COMMITTEE

13 NOVEMBER 2025

REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

A meeting of the Audit Committee was held via Zoom video conference from 10.00-11.30am on Thursday 13 November 2025.

Present:	Prof. N Braisby	
	Mr C Costigan (CC)	(Chair of Committee)
	Mr Jyotveer Gill (JG)	
	Prof. M Jones (MJ)	(Vice Chair of Committee)
	Dr L Marr (LM)	
	Ms E Shipp (ES)	
In attendance:	Ms H Al-Katib (HAK)	(for item 2.1 only)
	Mr D Balme (DB)	(observing full meeting)
	Ms K Deakin (KD)	(for item 3.2 only)
	Mr G Edwards (GE)	(for item 4.1 only)
	Mrs H Edwards (HE)	(for item 2.2 only)
	Mr R Higgins (RH)	(for item 4.1 only)
	Mrs L Hughes (LH)	(Note taker)
	Mr A Wheaton (AW)	(Vice Chancellor)
Apologies for absence:	Mrs J E Fawkes (JEF)	(University Secretary)

1) GENERAL MEETING GOVERNANCE

1579 1.1/ DECARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1580 There were no conflicts of interest reported.

1581 1.2/ APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOME

1582 There were apologies for absence from Jane Fawkes. The Chair welcomed Prof. Nick Braisby back to the Committee. He will resume the link role with dual membership on Audit and Finance Committee following recent changes in Board Leadership.

1583 1.3/ MINUTES AND REDACTED MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2025

1584 The minutes (and proposed redactions) of the Audit Committee meeting held on 22 May 2025 (as included at paper 1.3) were **APPROVED** as a true record and signed by the Chair of the Committee. The redacted minutes will be published on the external webpage after the meeting.

1585 1.4/ MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS SUMMARY

1586 The summary showing the outcome of actions from the meeting held on 22 May 2025 (paper 1.4) was taken as read with the Committee noting that two actions remains ongoing (development of a BCP Improvement Plan – though work has commenced – and a review of the potential impact of Martyn’s Law on the institution from a compliance perspective), both of which will report to the next meeting of the Committee.

1587 1.5/ AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024–25

1588 The Committee reviewed the draft Audit Committee Annual Report for 2024–25 as presented at paper 1.5.

1589 The Committee commented that it was clear it had continued to meet its terms of reference throughout the year with a continued focus on risk management and development of an internal audit service. There will be further work to come on the embedding of the service culturally in the next year.

1590 The Committee **PRE-APPROVED** the Audit Committee Annual Report 2024–25 for submission to the Board of Trustees on 3 December 2025 for final approval.

ACTION: Present the Audit Committee Annual Report 2024–25 to the Board of Trustees for approval on 3 December 2025. [LH]

2) RISK MANAGEMENT

1591 2.1/ UCEM RISK OVERVIEW

1592 The Chair welcomed Hannah Al-Katib, Director of Strategy and Planning, to the meeting.

1593 The Audit Committee considers risk at each of its meetings and accordingly reviewed the updated Institutional Risk Register at papers 2.1a and 2.1b which provided an overview of changes since the last report to the Committee. Work has also been undertaken to review the institutional Risk Matrix and Risk Statement and Process Guide which were presented in papers 2.1c, 2.1d and 2.1e.

1594 HAK advised the Committee that the updates in paper 2.1a would be taken as read.

1595 The Committee discussed cyber security and the Evalian training day held on 4 November to help the University consider its business continuity plan response in the face of a major cyber security incident. The workshop helped establish processes that will be implemented in terms of initial response and helped identify aspects of the agreed approach which are currently missing and will now be put in place. This will result in substantial refinement to the current BCP Plan (which is largely building focussed) and this will come forward to the Committee for review in due course.

1596 The Committee also discussed how the University is responding to the implications of the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper recently published by Government. It was suggested that with the paper proposing changes to student fees but not apprenticeship fees; the impact of this in terms of financial sustainability may need to be captured in the Risk Register. AW also advised that the Board will have a

detailed discussion on the White Paper's opportunities and risks for the institution on 3 December 2025 which will be able to feed into potential additions and amendments in the Institutional Risk Register. A substantive update on funding for apprenticeships is also anticipated in January 2026.

1597 The Committee welcomed the reduction in risk regarding the University's Student Information Systems (SITS) and noted the successful implementation of this project, congratulating all staff involved in executing the project successfully.

1598 **REDACTED**

ACTION: **REDACTED**

1599 HAK advised that how the institution measures and quantifies risk has been updated in the Risk Matrix, Statement and Process Guide and that this revised approach was reflected in the Risk Register presented at paper 2.1a/b. The Committee welcomed the revisions and believed it was a positive tool in helping understand the role of risk in the institution and the mindset of always being 'audit-ready' that is required by all staff. The Committee also welcomed the dynamic approach to escalating risks and the more appropriate levels of financial risk management. The Committee encouraged the revised approach to risk appetite being presented to the wider Board and not just the Audit Committee, which HAK will ensure happens at her annual slot regarding risk at the Board of Trustees. Whilst it is Audit Committee's role to review risk and mitigations, the risk appetite should probably be directed by the full Board.

ACTION: **Present the updated Risk Matrix and Process / risk appetite to the Board at their next annual Risk update. [HAK]**

1600 The Committee **NOTED** the updated risk register, the identification of the risks presented, and the mitigations put in place where required. The Committee **ENDORSED** the revised Institutional Risk Matrix and the Risk Statement and Process Guide and requested its presentation to the Board for full approval.

1601 2.2/ RISK DISCUSSION ITEM: LONDON SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE INTEGRATION RISK REGISTER

1602 The Chair welcomed Helen Edwards, Director of Academic Quality, to the meeting.

1603 DB introduced paper 2.2 which provided a live Integration Project risk register associated with the merger of LSA into the University. The integration work has been handled as a two-phase project, and this structure/rigour has been helpful through the initial phase of the work to stabilise post-merger. The institution is actively working on phase two now, which is integration for the longer term, following the conclusion of phase one.

1604 There are seventeen risk areas currently being managed through the project, with the cyber security risk considered the only immediate red risk at the current time, though noting that various current activities continue to lower this risk. The trajectory in all risk areas is decreasing overall through the approach adopted.

1605 The Committee queried why the Practice Network risk had been closed. This was because the immediate issue for the autumn recruitment was managed in phase

one and a wholly new approach to Practice Network is now being developed for autumn 2026 recruitment. The immediate risks on student recruitment for autumn 2025 were also closed as the project moved into phase two and focuses on recruitment for autumn 2026 instead. There are positive early signs to the annual recruitment process and the new Head of School, Lee Ivett, starts in post this month. These initial risks in the integration/merger process now need to evolve into business as usual.

- 1606 **REDCATED**
- 1607 The Committee discussed the increasing risk relative to accreditation of the LSA programme. HE assured the Committee that the risk is related to a revised approach for accreditation being introduced by the ARB which will apply to **all** institutions, not just UBE. There will be a new specification to accreditation and redefinition of routes into the profession for all institutions. The University was aware this work would come to fruition within the first two years post-merger prior to enacting the Transfer Agreement. The main driver for the increased risk is that the programme is not viable within the architecture field without the accreditation. The University has held some positive meetings to understand what will be required and has planned out the work it needs to undertake, which includes academic programme alignment and mapping of all module learning outcomes. Once this work is complete a decision can be made on whether the programme can proceed through the 'Major Change Process' or whether a full revalidation will be required. Overall, there is a 140-line action plan to work through ahead of submitting to the ARB. Accreditation remains under the existing agreement for the 2026/27 academic year but is required under the new process for 2027/28 onwards.
- 1608 The Committee **NOTED** the management of risk associated with the ongoing work to integrate the LSA into University of the Built Environment and the progress being made in reducing risk. The Committee was content that the project is being well managed and risks mitigated appropriately, and congratulated all staff involved in making this successful to date.
- 1609 The Chair thanked HAK and HE for their contributions and invited them to leave the meeting.

3) AUDITS

- 1610 3.1/ INTERNAL AUDIT PLANNING WITH RSM**
- 1611 The Chair welcomed Lisa Randall and David Kershaw from RSM to the meeting and made introductions.
- 1612 David Balme provided an introduction to the approach taken to establishing a working relationship with RSM and the development of an Internal Audit Plan since the Committee appointed the firm at its last meeting in May. RSM then introduced their draft Internal Audit Plan and Strategy (paper 3.1a) which has been developed through conversations with key stakeholders, review of institutional risk and external assurance/advisory work with other clients in terms of sector trends and emerging issues.

- 1613 RSM propose three distinct pieces of audit/review work in Year One which will add value to the institution in terms of assurance, compliance, controls and future process design. The three audits proposed are in safeguarding, cyber security and data integrity. The timescales for each one are still, however, being considered given the recent absence of the University Secretary from the business. RSM has also factored in time for follow-up in across the institution in terms of assessing the intended impact and in ensuring the recommendations are put in place.
- 1614 It is likely that the cyber security audit (covering all of UBE – Hong Kong and LSA too) will commence first and should also consider whether Cyber Essentials is the right accreditation for UBE (especially given the institution’s employer partnerships and apprenticeships delivery work). The second two may occur concurrently towards the end of the reporting year. The Committee welcomed this approach and also the clear integration and cross over between the three subject areas identified in this initial year. The Committee did also caution against trying to achieve too much in the first year, especially as that year is already 4-months in. Many actions will emerge from audits and internal teams need capacity to address them. It was recognised that the ‘potential’ list of audit matters for future years is a long list which will need refined by the Committee in due course.
- 1615 Members of the Committee also suggested that RSM could support the institution with auditing internal budget setting processes and with verifying that its risk management process is working effectively (especially given that audit work is driven from this process initially). These suggestions will be added to the matters for future consideration.
- 1616 The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed Internal Audit Plan and Strategy and that the audits to be undertaken in 2025-26 would cover cyber security, safeguarding and data integrity. The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed timescales for these audits as cyber security being the first and to start as soon as possible.
- 1617 The Chair thanked RSM colleagues for their contributions and invited them to leave the meeting.
- 1618 3.2/ EXTERNAL ASSURANCE REVIEW: ESFA FUNDING COMPLIANCE – INITIAL OUTCOMES (PER4MANCE SOLUTIONS)**
- 1619 The Chair welcomed Kate Deakin, Acting Associate Pro Vice Chancellor Apprenticeships, to the meeting.
- 1620 The Committee was reminded that at the last meeting in May 2025, the External Assurance Review work into the University’s ESFA Funding Compliance had just completed and only initial findings were available to be presented by Per4mance Solutions. The final report from this work was now provided to the Committee as paper 3.2a.
- 1621 REDCATED
- 1622 REDCATED
- 1623 The Committee **NOTED** the final outcomes from the External Assurance Review into the University’s ESFA funding compliance and that all recommendations made

through the review are being addressed internally. They praised the breadth and quality of work being delivered to such a high standard and with such a low error rate.

1624 The Chair thanked KD for her contribution and invited her to leave the meeting.

4) OFFICE FOR STUDENTS COMPLIANCE

1625 4.1/ PREVENT MONITORING

1626 The Chair welcomed Gethin Edwards, Director of Regulatory Compliance, and Richard Higgins, Head of Disability and Welfare, to the meeting.

1627 GE and RH presented an overview of the University's work to meet the Prevent Duty requirements in 2024-25 and the associated OfS data reporting on this requirement due for submission by 1 December 2025.

1628 RH provided some key highlights which included that the number of training refreshers required has dropped significantly this year but that this is largely due to timing of scheduled refresher training for existing staff which is on a three-yearly cycle. Just 12 speakers were approved through the external speaker process but this is likely to increase in coming years following the LSA merger. Prevent referral numbers remain consistently low which is largely as a result of the University's online delivery model.

1629 The Committee queried the percentage of staff that are up to date with their Prevent Training and RH confirmed this stands at 94% with the remaining 6% being actively managed to complete in the agreed timeframes (for new starters or refresher training). RH also confirmed that the external speaker policy is being reviewed in light of the Freedom of Speech Act.

1630 The Committee **NOTED** the Prevent Monitoring update provided and **PRE-APPROVED** the proposed Accountability and Data Return and Annual Accountability Declaration. They will proceed to the Chair of the Board for signature with the Committee's recommendation so they can be submitted to the OfS by the 1 December 2025 deadline and will be reported to the Board of Trustees as a Chair's Action at their next meeting.

ACTION: Secure the Chair's signature on the Prevent Accountability and Data Return and the Annual Accountability Declaration ahead of 1 December 2025 and report this to the full Board as a Chair's Action on 3 December 2025. [LH]

1631 The Chair thanked GE and RH for their contributions and invited them to leave the meeting.

5) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1632 5/ ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1633 There were no other items of business raised.

6) CLOSE

1634 The Chair thanked the Committee for the discussions and closed the meeting at 11.22am.

**Date of next meeting:
21 May 2026**

Signed 

Name Chris Costigan

Position Chair of Audit Committee

Date 20 May 2026