

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 13 MAY 2025 AT 18.30 IN THE BOARDROOM PORTADOWN CAMPUS OR VIA TEAMS

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mrs Patricia McCaffrey (Chair)
Mrs Geraldine Campbell
Mr Andrew Sloan
Mrs Sharon O'Hare

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Thomas Moore, Governing Body Chair (via TEAMS)
Mrs Lee Campbell, Principal/Chief Executive & Accounting Officer (via TEAMS)
Miss Joanne McGuigan, Interim Director of Finance & Planning
Mrs Pauline Wilson, Dept. for the Economy
Ms Catherin Keenan (RSM)
Mr Brian O'Neill, NI Audit Office
Mr Ryan Lunney, NI Audit Office (via TEAMS)
Ms Laura Murphy, NI Audit Office (via TEAMS)
Mrs Emma Foster Acting Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting commenced at 18.29.

Mrs McCaffrey welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were made for Mrs Singleton. Members conveyed their sympathies to Mrs Singleton and Dr Moore on their recent bereavements.

A02. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded Members to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interests held regarding any matters to be discussed. There were no declarations of conflict of interests.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 28 JANUARY 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee were reviewed for accuracy and unanimously approved as an accurate record on proposal from Mr Sloan and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair discussed each action in detail and members noted items to be closed off and those on track for completion in the Audit and Risk Committee Action Sheet.

Climate Change /Sustainability Framework

Ms McGuigan informed the meeting that a working group of representatives from across the DfE NDPB's has been set up to work through the impacts of the Climate Change Act. A report on this is due in 25/26.

**ACTION
by whom**

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Ms McGuigan informed the meeting that a series of workshops will take place in relation to the risks of governance around AI which will enhance the current governance framework and support the sector in the development of an AI strategy.

Insurance

Ms McGuigan informed the members that following approval from the Department of Finance the college will move to a new insurance provider who has a claims management process in place and will now deal with claims management.

A05. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

Nothing to note.

A06. Policy Approval

- a) Risk Management Policy
- b) Anti-Fraud
- c) Fraud Response Plan

The three policies were approved on proposal from Mrs G Campbell and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey.

A07. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER (CRR)

Ms McGuigan confirmed the CRR is reviewed monthly and took members through the current status, appetite and residual risk scores within the current CRR.

Discussion took place on each CRR noting no change in residual score to CRR 1,2,3,4,5 8,9 and 13.

CRR 2

Ms McGuigan informed the members that the college has achieved the Cyber Essential Plus. Discussion took place regarding the recent Marks and Spencer cyber incident and Ms McGuigan provided members with detail regarding controls within the college to mitigate the risk.

Ms McGuigan drew members attention to Risk 13 which includes the colleges inability to respond to Trade Union Industrial Action, this risk has been increased due to current Action Short of Strike taking place. The college is proactively managing the impact of this for the students.

CRR 15

Ms McGuigan took members through the detail of the newly introduced CRR 15 - Governance arrangements. Ms McGuigan confirmed all feedback received following the draft version being presented to the previous ARC has been considered. All members were content to approve CRR 15..

Mrs McCaffrey thanked Ms McGuigan for the report.

A08. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Mrs Keenan informed members that there were no additional final reports to bring to the meeting. The Governance audit is concluding, and initial findings have been shared, and a meeting has been set up to discuss the findings.

A draft is currently being drawn up for the Estates strategy Governance.
The student placement audit which will take place shortly the terms of reference have been drawn up for this.

Follow up reports will be brought to the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting which will take place in September.

A09. GLOBAL INTERNAL AUDIT STANDARDS (GIAS) 2025

Members noted the document.

A10. EMERGING RISK RADAR

Mrs Keenan gave members a brief overview of this document taking it as read.

A11. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

Mrs Campbell informed the members that the Governance audit is ongoing as per progress report. Mrs L Campbell and Mrs Foster will be meeting with Mr Doyle from RSM to discuss the initial findings after which the draft report will be completed where time will be given for a response if required.

A12. RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE

Ms McGuigan provided members with an update on recommendations from AI reports and NIAO. With regard to NIAO recommendations Ms McGuigan confirmed the College policy has been updated to reflect the recommendation and it will be brought to the F&GP meeting on 10 June for approval.

Ms McGuigan referred members to the remaining recommendations and confirmed these have been actioned with evidence provided to NIAO.

Ms McGuigan advised members DoF have issued new guidance Effective April 2025, and confirmed this will be incorporated into the July accounts.

Mrs McCaffrey thanked Ms McGuigan for this update.

A13. EXTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2024-2025

Mr O'Neill discussed the recent audit strategy with members.

Ms McGuigan informed members that work is underway to update the accounting system from the financial year 2025-2026 to reflect the year end changing from 31 July 2026 to 31 March 2026.

Mrs Wilson stated her team are working on getting this confirmed.

Mrs McCaffrey thanked Mr O'Neill for his report.

Mrs McCaffrey also thanked Ms McGuigan and her team for all their hard work in achieving the DfE deadline of 30th April 2025.

A14. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS

Ms McGuigan informed members there had been no direct award contracts since the last meeting.

A15. DfE COMPLIANCE AUDITS

Ms McGuigan confirmed that there were no final reports for compliance audits since the last meeting.

A16. DAO CORRESPONDENCE

Ms McGuigan gave members an overview of correspondence received.. Members noted these correspondence documents.

A17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None to report

A18 REVIEW OF MEETING

Mrs McCaffrey thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee is 23 September 2025 starting at 17.30 via Teams or in Boardroom Portadown Campus.

The meeting concluded at 19.25.

Mrs O'Hare left the meeting at 19.25.

CHART

25/11/25.

DATE

