

Audit & Risk Committee of Governing Body

Minutes of 21st May 2020

Present: Dr Fionnuala Anderson, Marie Carroll, Kieron Connolly, Maeve McConnon, Sam Dunwoody

In Attendance: David Smith, Bernard Mullarkey, Conor Logan, Elaine Dominguez (Minute-taker)

The Meeting was held as a Video Conference Meeting due to the Government's restriction requirements related to Covid-19.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was adopted as circulated.

Proposer: MMcC

Secunder: MC

2. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Adoption of Minutes of the Meeting of 26th March 2020

The Minutes of the meeting of 26th March 2020 were adopted as circulated.

Proposer: FA

Secunder: MMcC

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Presentation on Proposals to Embed and Streamline the Reporting of Risks

– it was noted that due to the Covid-19 restrictions and emergency planning, this item has been deferred until the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

5. Internal Audit

5.1 Updates on Follow-up Review Report & Student Records Review – the Audit & Risk Committee members discussed the updates contained in the tracking document, which lists the findings/recommendations from internal audit reviews. It was agreed that items which are deemed to be 'Closed' be removed from the 'live' tracking document. The following updates were noted:

5.1.1 Follow-up Review Report Findings

- (i) **Item 4. IT System User Access Process and Review Issues** – the review of the Active Directory has been completed and this finding is now regarded as being 'Closed'.

- (ii) **Item 10. Other Income Generation Policy** – there was no update available on this matter due to the absence of the Responsible Party. The President notified the Committee that the Responsible Party is due to return shortly and will take up this matter. It was identified that, should the absence of the Responsible Party continue, that the responsibility for actioning this item may be transferred to an alternative appropriate member of the Institute staff.
- (iii) **Item 12. The Approval of the Media Cube Licence Policy** – there was no update available on this matter due to the absence of the Responsible Party. The President notified the Committee that the Responsible Party is due to return shortly and will take up this matter. It was identified that, should the absence of the Responsible Party continue, that the responsibility for actioning this item may be transferred to an alternative appropriate member of the Institute staff.
- (iv) **Item 13. Annual Review of Funded Projects Income & the Performance of a Review of the Completeness of Income** – due to the Covid-19 crisis, the Institute has been unable to conduct a review of all income strands during 2020 in order to document the various categories of funding and identify appropriate and practical processes and procedures to ensure that all funding streams are proactively managed. It was agreed that the Institute makes a proposal at the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting, that this issue be 'Risk Accepted' due to the ongoing/fluid nature of funded projects and rentals.
- (v) **Item 15. Interpretation & Translation Services for Students** – the deadline for tender process for acquiring Interpretation & Translation Services for Students closed 30th April 2020; submissions are currently being reviewed and a decision is anticipated in coming weeks, with service provider(s) being in place for the start of the next academic year 2020/2021. The item is regarded as being 'In Progress', the Responsible Party is the Student Experience Manager and the due date is Q2 2020.
- (vi) **Item 19. External Examiner Reports (inclusion in Exam Boards and Recommendations Tracking)** – there was no further update in relation to the implementation of a formal tracker of EE recommendations. This element of the finding is deemed to be 'In Progress' and the Responsible Parties are the Heads of Faculty.
- (vii) **Item 20. Formal Procedures in relation to Continuous Assessment Process** – there was no further update regarding the documenting of formal procedures in relation to the continuous assessment process. This item is deemed to be 'In Progress' and the Responsible Parties are the Heads of Faculty.
- (viii) **Item 21. Update of IADT's Plagiarism Policy and Examination Administration Procedures and Regulations** – the updated Plagiarism Policy was approved by the Governing Body on 4th March 2020 and as a result this part of the findings is regarded as being 'Closed'. In relation to Examination Procedures and Regulations, a significant revision of the procedures has been completed and the updated Procedures/Regulations are currently being reviewed by the Registrar and Exams Office. It is planned to bring the updated

Procedures/Regulations to Academic Council for approval on the 4th June 2020. Item is deemed to be 'In Progress', the Responsible Parties are the Chairperson of the T&L Committee and the Registrar and the due date is Q2 2020.

- (ix) **Item 24. The Update of IADT's Procurement Policy** – there were no further updates in relation to the update of the Procurement Policy. The item is deemed to be 'In Progress' and the Responsible Party is the Secretary/Financial Controller.

5.1.2 Internal Audit Review of Student Records System

- (i) **Item 1. Enhancement of Procedures for the Management of Student Records (Grade 2)** – the user manuals/procedural documents for the Student Records Systems are currently in development, as are Reports to manage user privileges. In addition, a calendarised work plan is being created to manage the controls on student records, Digitary and CAO Connect. The Item is deemed to be 'In Progress', the Responsible Party is the Academic Administration & Student Affairs (AA&SA) Manager, and the due date is 1st June 2020.
- (ii) **Item 2. Consistent Purging of Data (Grade 2)** – the purging of this data is underway and the purging of data will be calendarised to December of each year. In addition, a short SOP in relation to this is being developed. The Item is deemed to be 'In Progress', the Responsible Party is the AA&SA Manager and the due date is 1st June 2020.
- (iii) **Item 3. Formal Contract with EduCampus (Grade 2)** - the SLA was approved by THEA and signed, on behalf of the Institute, by the Secretary/Financial Controller and circulated to all relevant Managers. The Items is deemed to be 'Closed'.
- (iv) **Item 4. Verification Process for Student Email Account Changes (Grade 3)** - all changes to email addresses are noted in a log, with the name, student number, date of birth and new email address, plus the name of the Academic & Student Affairs team member who changed the information. In addition, Digitary provides a very detailed log of what was changed and by whom, so the log can be verified against this record also. The Items is deemed to be 'Closed'.
- (v) **Item 5. Manually Generated Lists of Banner and CAO Connect Users (Grade 3)** - a system-generated list for Banner users is available, although not user-friendly. A system listing is now available on the CAO Connect portal, which clearly shows users, their roles and the courses to which they are assigned. The listing is automatically purged annually by the CAO and is then repopulated by the IADT CAO Correspondent. This item is deemed to be 'Closed'.

5.1.3 Internal Audit Review of Risk Management Framework

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the Institute was not in a position to implement the recommendations in the report relating to: a) the enhancement of the Institute's Risk Management monitoring (Grade 1); b) the review of the Risk Register (Grade 2), and c) the provision of Risk Management Training for all Managers (Grade 3).

6. Corporate Procurement

6.1 Contracts Control Sheet Update – the Audit & Risk Committee members were briefed on the contracts control sheet as circulated. The following service contracts were noted:

- (i) **Stationery Supplies** – it was reported that the OGP have had issues regarding a tender process for stationery supplies and have instructed Institutes of Technology to obtain any necessary supplies in accordance with their individual Procurement Policies. It was noted that this is currently the system in operation by the Institute.
- (ii) **Student Support (Interpretation and Translation)** - as previously reported, both the OGP and the EPS refused the Institute's request for a tender process to be carried out for Student Support (Interpretation and Translation) Services. As a result, the Institute was authorised to carry out a tender process for this service via eTenders and the closing date for submission of tenders was 30th April 2020. The submissions are currently being reviewed and it is hoped to have service provider(s) in place for the start of the new academic year 2020/2021.

7. Financial Statements

7.1 Financial Statements for year ended 31st August 2019, plus draft IADT Annual Report 2018/19

7.1.1 Update re Financial Statements for year ended 31st August 2019 – it was noted that on 6th May 2020, the Institute received an Audit Certificate from the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) in relation to the Financial Statement for year ended 31st August 2019. It was confirmed that the Financial Statements have been forwarded to the Higher Education – Research & Financial Section of the Department of Education & Skills for onward transmission to the Oireachtas. In addition, the approved Financial Statements were forwarded to the HEA. The S/FC briefed the Audit & Risk Committee members on the updates made to the original draft Financial Statements for year ended 31st August 2019, from those approved by the Office of the C&AG. The following updates were noted:

- (i) **Analysis of State Derived Income (Note 8)** – the amounts received column for Research Grants and Contracts was incorrectly populated with the 2018 figures. The figures were updated with no effect on the deficit for 2019.
- (ii) **Headcount of Governing Body Members (Note 9 Staff Costs)** – the number of GB members increased from 18 to 19 to reflect the appointment of a replacement member of the Governing Body.
- (iii) **External Auditor Fees (Note 12)** – during the audit, the Institute became aware that the audit fee charged by the Office of the C&AG would be €32K and not €29K.
- (iv) **Stationery and Office Materials (Note 12)** – due to a typographical error, the amount for Stationery and Office Materials was corrected from €50K to €58K. The understated amount of €8K was originally categorised in Other Expenditure and, as a result, this amendment had no effect on the deficit.
- (v) **Other Expenditure (Note 12)** – during the audit, the Institute increased the bad debt provision by €7K to reflect the doubtful collection of certain historical charges to local sports clubs that hired the all-weather pitch.

- (vi) **Other Professional Fees (Note 12)** – Other Professional Fees of €252K were categorised in further detail; this had no effect on the actual amount stated in the draft Financial Statements.
- (vii) **Accruals (Note 16 Payables)** – accruals were increased from €495K to €505K to reflect the increased External Audit Fees of €3K and the increase in Bad Debt Provision of €7K.
- (viii) **Payments Received in Advance (Note 16)** – Research Grants and Contracts increased by €2K from €339K to €341K due to an incorrect posting of €2K to Student Support Funding. Student Support Funding fell by the corresponding €2K (from €121K to €119K) and this had no effect on total Payables.
- (ix) **Capital Commitments (Note 19)** – during the audit, the Institute discovered that Capital Commitments were understated by €197K, which changed from €470,444 to €666,945. This had no effect on the deficit.
- (x) **Statement of Internal Control** – additional disclosures arising from the THEA Code were discussed and agreed with the Office of the C&AG, and included in the Statement of Internal Control.
- (xi) **COVID-19 Implications** – additional disclosures around the implications of the COVID-19 emergency were discussed and agreed with the Office of the C&AG. These additional disclosures were made in Note 2(a) Going Concern and Note 22 Post Balance Sheet Events.

It was noted that the HEA has confirmed that the current funding streams will continue to the end of 2020 and that there is no reason to believe that the Institute will not meet its financial obligations. As a result, the Governing Body can be confident that the Institute is regarded as being a 'going concern'.

7.1.2 Draft IADT Annual Report 2018/19 – the Institute's draft Annual Report 2018/19 was reviewed and Committee members were satisfied that it be recommended to Governing Body for approval at their next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 10th June 2020. Approval for forwarding to Governing Body was sought and a majority obtained via email post the Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

Proposer: FA
Secunder: MC

7.2 Update re Management Letter for Financial Statements for year ended 31st August 2019 – The Committee was advised that the formal Management Letter will be issued in advance of the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting, and that draft Management responses have been issued to the draft Letter.

8. Risk Management – Update on Covid-19 Progress

The President briefed Audit & Risk Committee members on the decisions and actions taken to-date as a result of the Covid-19 crisis:

- (i) **Assessments for progression years and 4th year students** – it was reported that all online examinations and assessments concluded successfully last week, with only two students requiring additional assistance. The work by the Institute's staff members to enable this process to be completed was acknowledged. Academic staff members are currently in the process of

assessing/grading papers/submissions. Final year students are now the focus of attention and there is a risk of a higher level of deferrals among final year students due to impacts of the Covid-19 crisis. This in turn will have an impact on student numbers for the next academic year 2020/2021.

- (ii) **Portfolio Submissions & First Year Applicants** – it was noted that in excess of 800 portfolios were submitted online and have been assessed, with scores being issued to each candidate; from a recruitment point of view, it is now a matter of monitoring the numbers of potential students who may choose not to take up the offer of a place at IADT. This could be due to the individual residing outside of the Dublin region, and choosing to attend third level studies locally in light of the Covid-19 crisis.
- (iii) **Strategic Planning** – it was reported that earlier this month, Prof. Philip Nolan (Chair of the Epidemiological Modelling Advisory Group of the National Public Health Emergency Team) recently provided a detailed briefing in relation to Covid-19 management strategies to all Institute of Technology Presidents. The recommendations/advice delivered at the briefing confirmed that the Institute's strategies to date are consistent with official recommendations, as well as the Government's Roadmap to Reopening Society and Business launched on 1st May 2020. It was reported that, following on from the Institute's Covid-19 Emergency Response Group, three Sub-Groups have been established: a) Academic Advisory Group (focussing on Academic Delivery for 2020/2021); b) Timetabling & Academic Planning Group and c) Campus Access, Wayfinding & Signage Group (focussing on operations and logistics). The Sub-Groups currently meet on a weekly basis and will submit reports to the Executive Team in the next 10 days, which will enable the Institute make decisions in relation to issues such as academic planning, the number of students permitted on campus at any given time, timetable delivery and health and safety on campus. It is planned to implement recommendations/procedures prior to 8th June 2020.
- (iv) **Return to Campus** – it was noted that the Institute acknowledges the high levels of anxiety experienced by staff members and students in relation to returning to campus amid the Covid-19 crisis. The Institute is currently managing an incremental return to campus, which stipulates that no staff member/student should be on campus unless it is absolutely necessary, and that staff members should continue to work remotely. The HR Office has issued a request for staff members to confidentially declare if they are among the 'high risk' groups, which can be due to personal circumstances (providing care for children/elderly relatives), underlying medical conditions, or anxiety around such a return to the workplace. The Institute's priority is that any return to campus in September 2020 is done in a safe and secure manner for all staff members and students. It is hoped that both staff and students will consistently implement the three main protocols: social distancing, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene. PPE such as disposable gloves and face masks will be optional, rather than compulsory.
- (v) **Institute's Income** – it was reported that, while the Institute is reasonably confident in relation to existing income streams, the Systems Funding Unit of the Department of Education & Skills are scrutinising Institutes of Technology's reserves and capital projects and plans. The Institute is confident that the PPP project (Digital Media Building) will continue to be considered and progress as scheduled. In relation to income in general, it was noted that the Institute relies on student numbers and, unlike other third level institutions, is not dependent on income from rentals or research grants. As a result, the S/FC is monitoring

additional costs to the Institute relating to current day-to-day operations, the transition to returning to 'normal' business and to the investment in new technologies/resources for online learning delivery.

A discussion arose regarding underlying conditions of returning and new students to IADT and resultant anxieties regarding entering on campus. The protocol of temperature testing for staff and students prior to entry to campus facilities was discussed. It was reiterated that the Institute's default position is that no staff member or student should attend on campus unless absolutely essential. In addition, permission to return to campus will be dependent on each staff member completing a Self-Declaration Return to Work Form confirming that they are symptom-free, not cocooning etc. The form must be submitted to the HR Office 3 days prior to any return to campus due date. It was reported that the Institute has a 'safe room' in place for staff who should feel unwell post entering the campus and that numerous hand hygiene stations will be installed throughout the campus. It is hoped that if the correct and required level of Government/HSE-advised protocols are implemented, that temperature testing for staff and students will not be necessary. In addition it was noted that those staff who declare themselves to be in a 'high risk' group, will not be expected to attend on campus for the foreseeable future. Safe Working from Home Protocols will be developed, in line with occupational health guidelines, for anyone requiring a more permanent working from home arrangement.

In relation to on-campus learning, it was reported that all class groups are being subdivided into learning units with a maximum of 10 students per learning unit; there will be no peer-to-peer mixing except via online; and practise-based modules will be delivered small groups throughout the year. The Executive Team has discussed future communications for new and returning students to address any concerns around the structure of academic delivery during 2020/2021, and to advise regarding the safety protocols to be utilised whilst on campus.

9. Review of PwC Audit & Risk Committee Training

It was reported that the training provided by PwC was informative, comprehensive and helpful. It was proposed that such training be provided to the next Audit & Risk Committee at an early stage of their term of office. It was agreed that this item can now be removed as an item on the Committee's Agendas.

10. Draft Schedule of Meetings 2020/2021

The draft Schedule of Audit & Risk Committee meetings for the academic year 2020/2021 was reviewed as circulated. It was noted that the items listed on the draft Schedule are proposed items. It was agreed that the Institute's Risk Register be reviewed at each Audit & Risk Committee meeting. In addition, it was proposed that audit and risk training be provided by the new internal auditors, Deloitte, at the first scheduled meeting of the new Audit & Risk Committee. It was confirmed that Committee members will be notified in advance of each meeting.

11. President's Expenses Update

It was reported that the S/FC has signed off on a number of the President's credit card statements via an online system, with the majority of expenditure relating to activities primarily for the Faculty of Film, Art & Creative Technologies. This is as a result of the Head of Faculty post currently being vacant and, therefore, the Faculty is dependent on

the President's credit card for any expenditure which cannot be processed via Agresso. It was reported that there was an inadvertent breach of security on the President's credit card, which was cancelled and incurred no loss or risk to the Institute.

12. Statutory Reporting

The Audit & Risk Committee was updated as follows in relation to Statutory Reporting:

- (i) **Data Breaches under GDPR** - there were no reportable data breaches since the Audit & Risk Committee meeting of 26th March 2020. It was noted that the data breaches relating to a commencement form and the theft of an Institute computer were reported to the Data Protection Commissioner and that actions have been taken to ensure such incidents do not occur again.
- (ii) **Accidents Reported to the Health & Safety Authority (HSA)** – no accidents required reporting to the HSA since the Audit & Risk Committee meeting of 26th March 2020.
- (iii) **Reporting under the Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy** – there were no reports made since those reported at the last Audit & Risk Committee meeting.
- (iv) **Student Complaints** – it was noted that in January 2020, a complaint was made by a number of students against an academic member staff. There was an acknowledgement of a breakdown in communication, with a number of recommendations made to address the issues. Communication on outcome sent via the Registrar in February 2020 and no costs were involved.
- (v) **Staff Complaints/Grievances/General Complaints** – there were no updates to report in relation to staff complaints/grievances/general complaints since the last Audit & Risk Committee Meeting.

13. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Implications

It was reiterated that the Institute will continue to consider EDI implications in terms of a return to working and studying on campus. The potential difficulties/concerns for incoming, returning and mature students regarding accessing additional learning supports, as well as inclusion and health and safety concerns will also be given careful consideration in the coming months.

14. A.O.B.

There were no items for discussion under A.O.B.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, 27th September 2020

Signed: _____

Dr Fionnuala Anderson
Chairperson

Date: _____