AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE
Wednesday 16 September 2026

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

Dr Alix Pryde (Chair)	Patricia Gallan QPM	James Hedges
Malcolm Hitching	Indy Hothi	Jonathan Pears

In attendance:

Professor Colin Bailey CBE	Dr Sharon Ellis	Karen Kröger
Jonathan Morgan	Dr Nadine Lewycky	Neil Thomas [internal audit]
Amy Warby [internal audit]	Hamid Ghafoor [external audit]	
For m. 2026.003 only:	James Patterson	

Apologies:
Sue Ladell [external audit]

Welcome, apologies and declaration of interests [ARC26/01]

2026.001 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. The Committee **noted** the declaration of interests of Committee members and regular attendees.

Report on Strategic Risks and KPIs [ARC26/02]

2026.002 *Minute 2026.002 is confidential.*

Assurance report on research integrity cases 2025–26 [ARC26/03]

2026.003 The Committee **considered** the assurance report on research integrity cases in 2025–26. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] There had been a low number of formal allegations and no investigations during the year. A new research integrity action plan and governance structure had been introduced. A recent survey of research staff showed that 60% had taken research integrity training compared to the national benchmark of 53%. The training was currently optional, but there was a proposal to make it mandatory for doctoral students and staff in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. In the same survey, around 30% of respondents reported not knowing how to report research integrity issues.

[b] The Committee asked whether the low number of misconduct allegations indicated a culture where staff did not feel comfortable reporting research integrity issues or were unaware of the process. Although the number of formal allegations was low, there was a larger number of people raising

queries. Experience at other universities showed that improved training rates led to increased reporting. Signposting to relevant policies and processes would also be considered to improve reporting.

Progress on actions from the 2025 management letter [Oral report]

2026.004 The Committee **considered** an oral update on the actions from the 2025 management letter. There had been no significant control deficiencies requiring action.

An update on the progress of the 2026 external audit [Oral report]

2026.005 The Committee **received** an oral update on the progress of the 2026 external audit. The final audit had started with the audit team on site. No significant issues had been raised during the interim audit.

Draft narrative for the financial statements 2025–26 [ARC26/04]

2026.006 *Minute 2026.006 is confidential*.

Progress on actions from previous internal audits [ARC26/05]

2026.007 The Committee **considered** an update on actions from previous internal audits. Seven actions were overdue, none of which were high priority. All actions were in progress. Reports on business continuity from the 2022/23 and 2023/24 audit plans had provided limited assurance and progress on actions in this area had slowed due to a staff vacancy, leading to the completion deadline being extended from the initial target date of 30 June 2025 and the revised target date of 31 May 2026 until March 2027. The Committee requested a progress update at the November 2026 meeting.

Action: University Secretary

Planned internal audit reports [ARC26/06]

2026.008 The Committee **considered** the outcomes of planned internal audit reports on data management, maintenance and staff recruitment. The following points were noted in the discussion:

Data management

[a] The report received a rating of partial assurance with improvements required based on the number of medium priority actions. The rating had been driven by a lack of robust controls in place to support the deletion of records in line with retention requirements. This was being developed as part of the Data Retention, Deletion and Compliance Project, which was in the early stages of development. It was noted that reductions in data storage would contribute to financial and environmental sustainability and support the executive's work to become an AI enabled university. The executive had confidence that the team had the right skills to implement change and there had been a step change in communications about improvements. Existing infrastructure governance provided a mechanism to provide assurance on progress. The Committee asked how it could help support the executive's work to improve data management. The executive said that the

Committee's requests for regular updates would help to maintain focus on the work and agreed to confirm the timing of the next update.

Maintenance

[b] The report had received a rating of significant assurance with minor improvement opportunities. The maintenance processes were generally well designed and the implementation of a new system for estates management was ongoing. The report identified opportunities to strengthen performance monitoring arrangements. Reporting arrangements and the dashboard facility were under development which would offer greater visibility on performance.

Staff recruitment

[c] The report received a rating of significant assurance with minor improvement opportunities. The controls were well established and were operating effectively. Opportunities had been identified to strengthen the identity verification process. The sample testing had identified a small number of instances where the pre-employment checks were incomplete or insufficiently evidenced.

Action: Chief Operations Officer [a]

Draft internal audit annual report for 2025–26 and plan for 2026–27 [ARC26/07]

2026.009 The Committee **considered** the draft internal audit annual report for 2025–26 and plan for 2026–27. At its previous meeting, the Committee had agreed to revisit the timing and content of planned reviews relating to TEF2027. It was agreed that KPMG would share a short commentary by the end of the coming week and that Committee members would be invited to provide feedback to enable confirmation of the internal audit plan for 2026–27.

Action: KPMG

A report of a fire in the Engineering Building [ARC26/08]

2026.010 *Minute 2026.010 is confidential.*

Prevention of Tax Evasion Policy [ARC26/09]

2026.011 Minute 2026.011 is confidential.

A report on whistleblowing cases in 2025–26 [ARC26/10]

2026.012 *Minute 2026.012 is confidential.*

Cases of fraud or financial irregularities since the last meeting [Oral report]

2026.013 *Minute 2026.013 is confidential.*

Minutes of the previous meeting [ARC26/11]

2026.014 The Committee **confirmed** the minutes of the meeting held on 09 June 2026.

Matters arising [ARC25/12]

2026.015 The Committee **noted** the matters arising.

Committee terms of reference, membership and effectiveness [ARC26/13]

2026.016 The Committee **considered** its terms of reference, membership and effectiveness. The following points were noted in the discussion:

[a] The Committee said that the overall provision of information was good and that the papers and cover sheets supported the Committee to fulfil its responsibilities. Committee members suggested that the full internal audit reports could be replaced by a summary report pulling out the key themes, with the full reports made available in the document library.

[b] Committee members asked whether it was within the Committee's remit to receive the stress testing on financial projections after it had been developed between the executive and Finance and Investment Committee. Since it was an assessment of risk, and financial stress could lead to other stresses on the organisation, it was considered a helpful conversation for the Committee to have.

[c] The Committee said that the working relationships were positive and that the executive was receptive to challenge. Members valued the input of the attendees and agreed that the right people attended the meetings.

[d] Members said that the Committee was focusing on the right issues and fulfilling its responsibilities. The Committee would keep the deep dive topics under review to ensure they aligned with the university-wide priorities.

Actions: *Head of Secretariat [a];*
Chief Financial Officer [b]

Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2025–26 Draft 1 [ARC26/14]

2026.017 The Committee **considered** the first draft of the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report for 2025–26. It was agreed to amend the section on internal audit reports to show that the Committee was satisfied with the management response and the completion of actions. The conclusion would also be updated to make it clear that it was the internal audit opinion, and a paragraph would be added to show that the Committee received other assurances and had formed its own opinion of the control environment, which was positive. Committee members were invited to send other updates to the Secretary after the meeting.

Actions: *Head of Secretariat*
Committee members

Draft agenda for the next meeting [ARC26/15]

2026.018 The Committee **noted** the draft agenda for the next meeting on 05 November 2026. The internal audit annual report would be removed since it had already been considered.

Dates of meetings in 2026–27:

- Thursday 05 November 2026 at 1515 hours, rooms 2.16/2.17, Department W.
- Wednesday 10 March 2027 at 1500 hours, rooms 2.16/2.17, Department W.
- Wednesday 16 June 2027 at 1500 hours, rooms 2.16/2.17, Department W.