



Report from the Risk and Audit Committee

Board's primary role in relation to this paper:

- ☐ A. Set strategy
- ☒ B. Set risk appetite
- ☐ C. Oversee performance
- ☐ D. Understand context

Purpose

1. This paper provides a report on the work of the Risk and Audit Committee following its meeting on 21 November 2024. An oral report of the meeting was given to the board at its 4 December 2024 meeting.
2. No decisions are required from the board.

Summary of the meeting

Update from the chief executive

3. The chief executive updated the committee on a number of key areas of work.

National Audit Office (NAO) audit planning report

4. Exempt from publication.

NAO value for money and insight

5. The value for money and insight report, and the report on the government's general grants schemes were shared with the committee.
6. It was recommended that members read the forthcoming good practice guide on fraud and error reporting.

OfS accounting policies

7. The committee endorsed the OfS accounting policies as a basis for preparation of the OfS financial statements for 2024-2025. There is a new policy to address the NAO finding on grant commitments from the 2023-24 audit.

Cyber security report

8. The quarterly dashboard was shared with the committee. Exempt from publication.

9. Exempt from publication.

10. Exempt from publication.

11. Exempt from publication.

12. Exempt from publication.

Data Futures update

13. At the time of the meeting, 220 providers had completed their submissions for this year's student data collection, and 42 were still to submit data of sufficient quality. The deadline had been extended to 29 November.
14. The Director of Resources and Finance was to meet Jisc and the other statutory customers to discuss how to proceed beyond 29 November with an incomplete data collection. The committee discussed to what extent it would be possible to use an incomplete data collection.
15. This year, the delays were primarily due to providers not being ready: partly because of delays to last year's collection running so far into this year's preparatory time, and partly because of ongoing challenges with some providers' software suppliers. Jisc was providing frequent updates on submissions and our oversight and scrutiny has been significantly increased compared to last year. The OfS was also pushing Jisc to work closely with providers to ensure that they submitted their data. The OfS will determine a range of regulatory interventions, depending on the reasons for non-submission.
16. Exempt from publication.
17. [Exempt from publication] and [exempt from publication] from PwC joined the meeting to present a summary of the findings of the independent review, which covered the 2022-23 data collection. The board has received the report from the independent review, so its key themes are not repeated here.
18. The committee noted the difficulty of the dual role of the OfS, which is both a client accepting delivery of the Data Futures programme, while also part of the governance system. It was agreed that it would be difficult for the OfS to separate the two aspects of its role.
19. The committee recommended that the OfS ensures that there is a shared understanding of the use of the data by both the statutory customers and the sector. The data must be useful to the sector in order to incentivise timely and accurate submissions.
20. The impact on the wellbeing of staff involved in the data collection due to increased workload and pressure was noted.

Deep dive – OfS data strategy

21. The OfS emerging data strategy was presented to the committee. The board subsequently received a similar presentation at its meeting on 4 December 2024 and so the details are not included in this report.
22. The committee challenged the executive to ensure that the sector, Jisc and HESA are aligned on data requirements and the rationale for collecting the data.

23. The committee encouraged the executive to find efficiencies and to ensure teams are structured effectively.

Risk management

24. Exempt from publication.

25. Exempt from publication.

26. RAC also received a detailed update on the high strategic risks.

Internal audit

27. KPMG gave an update on its internal audit work. Good progress is being made against the plan. KPMG sampled 15 internal audit actions resolved by management and KPMG confirmed that it had seen appropriate evidence to demonstrate closure.

28. Exempt from publication.

Paper publication

29. To be published externally with the board papers.