

Minutes of the 21st Audit & Risk Committee meeting

Date: Wednesday 10th June 2026
Time: 11.00am, Room M219, Corporate Services Support Building

Chairperson: Dr David Dempsey

Attendees: Ms Kathleen Holohan
 Mr Sean Quigley
 Ms Imelda Buckley

Apologies: Ms Eileen Curtis

In attendance under the Code of Governance:

Ms Elaine Sheridan, VP Governance/University Secretary

In attendance: Ms Sarah Morrissey, Internal Auditor

In attendance for Agenda Item 2,3 & 4:

Ms Susan Green, Compliance & Risk Manager

In attendance for Agenda Item 4:

Mr David Denieffe, Chief Operations Officer (via MS Teams)
 Mr Ian Shiel, Head of Cybersecurity and ICT Risk (via MS Teams)

In attendance for Agenda Item 5:

Ms Shauna Whyte, VP People, Culture & EDI
 Mr David Denieffe, Chief Operations Officer (via MS Teams)

Secretariat: Ms Annette Byrne

Item Title	
1.	<u>Chairperson's Opening:</u>
	<u>Welcome & Approval of Agenda</u>
1.1	NOTED The Chairperson welcomed all to the meeting. Confirming approval of the agenda and noting that the meeting was quorate he commenced the business of the meeting.
1.2	<u>Conflict of Interest</u>
	NOTED The Chairperson invited members to declare any conflicts of interest, particularly in relation to items on the meeting agenda. The VP Governance declared a conflict of interest in respect of one matter under Item 8 and advised that she would absent herself from the meeting when that item was being

	considered. Ms Morrissey declared a potential perceived conflict of interest in relation to another matter under Item 8 and similarly indicated that she would absent herself from the meeting as required. No other attendees declared any conflicts of interest for this meeting.
1.3	<u>Approval of Minutes 14th April 2026</u> AGREED It was agreed to approve the minutes above, proposed by Ms Holohan and seconded by Dr Dempsey and to upload to the website.
1.4	<u>Matters arising (Action Log)</u> NOTED The Chairperson noted the matters recorded on the Action Log. It was further noted that the independent external review of the AGS process, as requested by the Committee, has commenced and is expected to conclude by the end of June.
2.	<u>Charities Report – Annual Return 2025:</u> NOTED Ms Green was welcomed to the meeting and outlined the requirements under the Charities Act 2009 and the Charities Code of Governance in relation to the CRA Annual Report for SETU for the year ended 31 August 2025. She advised that the report will require approval by the Governing Body prior to submission via the CRA portal. Ms Green also noted the obligation to complete a Compliance Record Form noting that this document is not uploaded to the portal but must be kept on record. Ms Green informed the committee that SETU Diverse Campus Services (Novus) separately completes and submits their annual report. This has been reviewed and approved by the SETU Diverse Campus Services (Novus) Board of Directors and Executive Management has also reviewed and considered both reports. Attention was also drawn to the commencement of philanthropic activity, and it was proposed that this be recorded in the Compliance Record Form for the relevant period. Ms Green drew attention to correspondence received from the Charities Regulator in recent weeks concerning financial transactions with countries identified as high-risk jurisdictions. She noted that this correspondence has been shared with the Chief Financial Officer to ensure that appropriate due diligence measures are in place and has also been circulated for the attention of the Governing Body. A brief discussion ensued on this matter, during which it was suggested that it would be beneficial for the Committee to receive a high-level briefing in relation to export controls. AGREED To accept and recommend for approval matters as outlined above.
3.	<u>Risk Matters</u> NOTED Ms Green provided the following updates in relation to risk matters; • An updated Risk Management Policy will be submitted for review early in the next academic year. This will include a review of the Risk Appetite and a proposal outlining a process for the escalation of extreme risks; • Progress in relation to the implementation of the risk management software (CalQRisk) across the University to support various strategic projects; • Ongoing improvements in the presentation and format of Risk Reports; • Assistance provided to the AI Steering Group in the preparation of an AI Opportunities Register, noting the “live” and evolving nature of this template; • Ongoing risk training (risk system and risk management processes) aimed at embedding a risk management culture across the University. It was suggested that the provision of a schedule for such training would be beneficial; • An update on the PESTEL analysis, as previously noted by the Committee, and ongoing work in this regard. The Chairperson thanked Ms Green for her update.

4.	<u>IT Risks</u> NOTED Mr Denieffe and Mr Shiel joined the meeting by invitation of the Committee for the purpose of further discussion in relation to the risks identified and recorded in the Risk Register relating to IT. Mr Denieffe commenced by providing an overview of the work currently in progress and ongoing to implement actions and mitigating measures. He also informed the Committee of challenges being encountered. Mr Shiel continued by outlining the volume of work involved in managing and updating user access rights and applying system patches. He assured the Committee that every effort is being made to ensure that robust processes are in place and consistently adhered to. A lengthy discussion ensued in relation to implementation priorities and timelines, during which members were given the opportunity to discuss remaining concerns. Progress in relation to the recommendations arising from the Cyber Maturity Assessment review undertaken by Deloitte were also discussed. While progress is being made, it was noted that challenges have been encountered; however, the programme of work required is ongoing as a matter of priority. The Committee acknowledged the work undertaken and ongoing. It was agreed that the status of all identified risks should remain as is. The Committee further requested that this matter remain on the agenda, with another update to be provided at the next meeting. NOTED Mr Denieffe provided the Committee with an update in relation to incidents that had occurred in recent months, noting that the safeguards and protections in place had successfully prevented any compromise. It was further noted that the matters had been reported to the relevant authorities, as required. He also outlined additional actions being undertaken to further strengthen cybersecurity awareness and training. The Chairperson thanked Mr Denieffe and Mr Shiel for their updates. Mr Shiel then left the meeting, and Mr Denieffe remained online for the next agenda item.
5.	<u>Update from HR on Pension & Payments</u> NOTED Ms Whyte was welcomed to the meeting. She commenced by providing an update, firstly in relation to the ASC pension underpayment that had been identified, outlining the current status and the corrective actions taken with a view to bringing the matter to a conclusion by the end of the current semester. It was also noted that an independent review of the matter is underway, the findings and recommendations of which will be implemented to inform any recovery or recoupment arrangements. It was further noted that such recoupment requirements are supported by a national circular. Ms Whyte provided assurance to the Committee, indicating that a reoccurrence of this issue is not anticipated, as strengthened controls and review processes have now been put in place. The Committee accepted and thanked Ms Whyte for this update. NOTED Ms Whyte continued with an update in relation to the review of the Technician to Technical Officer progression matter, outlining a pay scale alignment issue. She provided details of the cohorts examined and the outcomes of those reviews, noting that the majority of cases assessed appear to be compliant with progression requirements. Three remaining instances are subject to further review pending qualification verification. Ms Whyte provided assurance to the Committee that ongoing engagement is taking place with the affected individuals and relevant employee unions with a view to achieving a favourable resolution for all parties. The Chairperson thanked Ms Whyte and Mr Denieffe for their contributions, following which they both left the meeting.
6.	<u>Internal Audit Update:</u> 6.1 <u>IA Report - Review & Engagement of International Partners (Novus)</u> NOTED Ms Morrissey provided an overview of the review undertaken, outlining the work completed during the course of the review. This resulted in one moderate and two minor findings. She also detailed the associated recommendations and management responses, including the timelines for the

	implementation of these recommendations. The Committee acknowledged the comprehensive nature of the report and commended the work undertaken. AGREED To approve the <i>Review & Engagement of International Partners (Novus)</i> report as presented.
6.2	<u>Internal Audit Update</u> NOTED Ms Morrissey continued with the following updates; • Details of reviews completed as outlined in the Internal Audit Plan for 2025 (SETU Internal Auditor and Deloitte), • Request to “<i>close engagement without opinion</i>” on the review of External Accreditation of Academic Programmes as a result of alternative assurances provided by a review of the Academic Risk Register undertaken by the Joint Quality Committee and an accreditation review by Engineers Ireland relating to the School of Engineering. In accepting the request, it was agreed that the engagement is formally closed without opinion however these areas would remain on the Internal Audit Universe for consideration in a future internal audit plan; • Progress update in relation to the Internal Audit Plan 2026, noting progress of the Health & Safety review being undertaken by Deloitte; • Proposed changes to the Internal Audit Plan 2026-2028 as follows; ➢ To add a review of Critical Incidence Plans for early 2027, ➢ To remove Third Party Risk (Governance of partnership agreements) for consideration in 2029; ➢ To reschedule the review of Pensions Controls Procedures to 2026; ➢ To add a review of Governance of Monitoring Financial Sustainability for late 2027; ➢ To reconsider that Research Governance will be considered when reviewing Export Controls Compliance in 2027. The committee agreed to accept all proposals outlined above and thanked Ms Morrissey for her updates.
7.	<u>Draft ARC Annual Report to GB 2025/26</u> AGREED Subject to minor amendments, the Committee approved the Annual Report for 2025/26 for submission to the Governing Body. Mr Quigley left the meeting at 13.10pm.
8.	<u>Protected Disclosure Matters:</u> NOTED As declared at the beginning of the meeting, the VP Governance absented herself from the meeting at 13.10pm. Ms Morrissey provided an update in relation to an anonymous Protected Disclosure submission. She outlined the assessment she had undertaken and advised that it is complete and will be reviewed by Alternate Executive Review Group, and the report will be issued to the Chairperson of ARC following review. Ms Morrissey indicated that she has now been provided with a method of communication for the anonymous disclosure and will respond regarding the outcome in due course. The committee accepted the findings as outlined to them. The VP Governance rejoined the meeting at 13.13pm. NOTED Ms Morrissey provided an update in relation to an anonymous Protected Disclosure submission concerning an allegation of the misuse of public funds and inappropriate use of sectoral frameworks. She outlined her assessment of the matter and the outcome that had been communicated to the Reporting Person. Ms Morrissey advised that no further investigation is required, noting that appropriate recommendations have been implemented.

NOTED Ms Morrissey absented herself from the meeting at 13.16pm. The VP Governance provided the Committee with an update on a disclosure matter that has resulted in receipt of legal correspondence and given her responsibility for coordinating and directing legal matters within the University, the VP Governance advised the Committee of the parallel processes currently underway to address this matter, noting its complex nature.

Ms Morrissey returned to the meeting at 13.22pm.

9.

AOB:

NOTED Items included in Section B were received for information and noting purposes, as follows:

- Health & Safety Annual Report;
- Quarterly Compliance Reports (Q2) as at April 2026;
- Charities Regulator – Letter 19 May 2026;
- Final Approved IA Reports (*Staff Training Review 2026; Cyber Maturity Assessment 2025, Engagement with International Partners 2025 7 Follow-Up Review 2025*);
- Planning Memo – AGS Review Process.

There being no other matters arising, the Chairperson thanked members for their contributions and closed the meeting at 13.25pm.

Approved: Dr David Dempsey

ARC Chairperson

Date: 1st October 2026