AUDIT COMMITTEE
AGENDA
Thursday 4th February 2016 (Room 115) 10.00am

I	**Minutes** To approve: minutes of the meeting held on 5th November 2015	[Attached]
II	**Action Points**	[Oral Updates]
III	**Matters Arising/Matters for Report**	[Oral Updates]
IV	**Risk Register** To consider: A paper from the Secretary	[Appendix A]
V	**HESES15 Audit Report** To consider: A paper from the Director of Finance & Planning	[Appendix B]
VI	**Internal Audit - Progress Report & recommendation tracker** To consider: A paper from the Internal Auditors	[Appendix C]
VII	**Internal Audit – IT infrastructure** To consider: A paper from the Internal Auditors	[Appendix D] (Management responses to follow)
VIII	**Prevent – Response to HEFCE** To note: A paper from the Registrar	[Appendix E]

These minutes are for information only. Any corrections to the minutes will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the committee.

SOAS, University of London

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Thursday 4th February 2016

MINUTES

Members:	Steve Tinton (Chair)
	Andrew Popham
In attendance:	Graeme Appleby (Director of Finance & Planning)
	Richard Hewes (KPMG – Internal Auditors)
	Chris Ince (Secretary to Audit Committee)
	Laura Gibbs (Registrar)
	Sophie Venton (BDO – External Auditors)
Apologies:	Rosna Mortuza
	James Aston (BDO – External Auditors)
	Neil Thomas (KPMG – Internal Auditors)

22. Minutes
The minutes of the meeting on 5th November 2015 were **approved**. The Committee **noted** that under Minute 16, the Audit Committee was monitoring the risk register on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

23. Action Points
(i) MIN 5 - Key Performance Indicators
The Committee **noted** that this action would be delayed until the first meeting of 2016/17 as much of the work would have to take place once the development of the new Strategy and outcome of sustainability work was complete.

(ii) MIN 8 - Internal Audit Plan
The Secretary **reported** that the internal audit plan had been publicised to staff through the weekly e-newsletter and on the staff intranet, MySOAS. Further consideration would be given to other methods of communicating this to staff, such as departmental visits, when the next year's plan was prepared in the autumn.

(iii) MIN 10 – Safety audit
The Secretary **reported** on the progress that was being made to address the recommendation in the internal audit safety report. The Board of Trustees would be updated at its next meeting and a full report would be made to the next Audit Committee meeting.

(iv) MIN 17 – Staff overseas
The Director of Finance & Planning **reported** that work on policies relating to staff working overseas and necessary NI contributions is under development. It was noted that when overseas people are employed by SOAS, the contract is with SOAS, which means the

payroll is outsourced to the local country. This is a work in progress and is a sector-wide issue, but a low risk. It was also noted that there are issues surrounding work visas for staff and students working overseas.

It was **agreed** that the Bribery Act policy must be reviewed.

(v) MIN 17 – Credit card information
The Director of Finance & Planning noted that IFCELS does not retain any data, this is all held with the Finance directorate. The Language Centre does retain this documentation, but a spot check is carried out on a regular basis. It was **agreed** that this data would be held centrally in the Finance directorate going forward. There was also a suggestion that this information could be moved online in the future.

24. Matters arising/matters for report
There were no matters arising.

25. Risk Register Update (Appendix A)
The Risk Register update was **noted**. There followed a discussion about the ease of use of the Risk Register and how it should be more focussed. For example, the Risk Register should show KPIs, drivers, actions and how these actions are being monitored. This would help to identify the drivers of the risks and what actions can tackle them. An example Risk Register could be drawn up for the risk around Sustainability. It was **agreed** that this would be discussed further at Academic Board and Executive Board.

26. HESES Report (Appendix B)
The Audit Committee **received** the HESES Report for 2015/16. The Director of Finance and Planning **noted** that there are no issues with the quality of the return, but there was a need to further improve the process as there was a problem with the quality of input data for student returns. Therefore, considerable time was taken to check the data quality at the end of the process which would be better resolved at the start. This will be reviewed as part of the internal audit of data quality arrangements.

27. KPMG Progress Report and recommendation tracker (Appendix C)
The Internal Auditors **noted** that work on the library, core financials, data quality and Tier 4 would be carried out over the next few weeks and reported to the next meeting of the Committee. These elements were all part of the internal audit plan.

It was noted that seven recommendations had gone beyond the agreed deadline. The management updates had been received for these, along with reasons for the delays and revised deadlines had been **agreed**. The Government records may depend on the effectiveness review.

28. IT Infrastructure Review (Appendix D)
It was **noted** that there had been improvements since the last report. A draft IS strategy had been drawn up, but was yet to be widely discussed. The Committee **noted** that there had been some examples of poor governance around change management in IT systems. This work has now been incorporated into the Portfolio Board and operational issues were being dealt with. However, there was a need for strategic development. It was **agreed** that an update would be brought to the next Audit Committee.

29. Prevent (Appendix E)
The Registrar **noted** the difference between the legislation and the guidance that had followed. The Act dealt with issues of radicalisation and the freedom of speech, but the implementation of the guidance risked moving away from the wording of the Act. It was noted that the Act is not about monitoring, but supporting staff and students. HEFCE had visited twice about the articles published in the national media about radical speakers on university campuses, including at SOAS. The Director noted that the approach must be balanced and deal with wider or existing policies and our duty of care to students, staff and visitors.

To date, Prevent had been approached lightly by the School. The first stage of the monitoring has been completed, and the second stage was to supply our documentation to support and explain our approach. The deadline for this was 1st April 2016. The Director noted there was an informal sounding board of academics involved in the work in this area. These academics are content with the 'A' rating we awarded in relation to student engagement.

A training plan had been agreed for all staff, and will be approached via the student support handbook. Certain identified staff would be sent on more formal training.

It was **agreed** that the School's whistleblowing policy and points of contact would be checked.

30. Date of next meeting:
The Committee **noted** the next meeting would take place on 26th May 2016

AUDIT COMMITTEE: Action Points

Minute	Item	Action 2014/15	Deadline for report to AC	By
1 October 2015				
5	Deep Dive – KPIs	Discussion at BoT with a view to a revised set of KPIs post sustainability work	6/10/16	GA
10	Safety Audit	Report and management actions to be considered by Board of Trustees	22/4/16	CI
5 November 2015				
16	Risk Register Update	A new Risk Register format to be prepared, showing clearly the linkages between identified risks, the drivers of those risks, the actions being taken and the associated measurement/monitoring via KPIs. A traffic light system should be explored for risks and their drivers.	26/5/16	CI
23	Action Points	Formerly Minute 17 – Staff Overseas Review the Bribery Act policy	26/5/16	CI
25	Risk Register Update	Discuss the formatting of the Risk Register at Academic Board and Executive Board	26/5/16	CI
28	IT Infrastructure Review	Update on the strategic development of the governance of the IT change management	26/5/16	LG
29	Prevent	Check the School's whistleblowing policy and points of contact	26/5/16	CI