



## RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Officer Champions	President (Engagement & Sports) Students' Union President
Staff Champions	Chi Lau, Head of Business & Development Ben MacPhee, Chief Executive
Approval bodies and date passed	Finance & Risk Sub-Committee, 12th May 2025 Board of Trustees, 19th May 2025
To be reviewed by	May 2028

[What is risk management?](#)

[Why is Risk Management important?](#)

[Defining risk](#)

[Types of risk](#)

[The function and outcomes of the Risk Management Policy](#)

[Risk appetite](#)

[The Role of the Board of Trustees](#)

[The Role of Finance & Risk Sub-Committee](#)

[The role of the Leadership Team](#)

[Risk management as part of the system of internal control](#)

[The Risk Register & Dashboard](#)

[Risk Assessments](#)

[Scoring of risks](#)

[Risk Matrix](#)

**1. What is risk management?**

- a. Risk management is the structured identification and assessment of risks followed by decisions on the appropriate action to be taken in response to each significant risk which has been identified. It provides a framework within which to assess, evaluate and take action to mitigate risks to Christ Church Students' Union ('CCSU' or 'the Union').

**2. Why is Risk Management important?**

- a. Identifying and managing the possible and probable risks that the Union may face is a key part of effective governance, and the reporting of risk management forms part of the Union's annual return to regulators. By managing risk effectively, trustees can help ensure that:
  - i. Significant risks are known and monitored, enabling trustees to make informed decisions and take timely action;
  - ii. The Union makes the most of opportunities and develops them with the confidence that any risks will be managed;
  - iii. Strategic and operational planning is effective; and
  - iv. The Union's aims are achieved more successfully.

### **3. Defining risk**

- a. Raw risk is the level of risk faced by an organisation before any internal controls are applied. Internal control is a process, effected by an organisation's Board of Trustees, management, and other personnel designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives. Residual risk is the level of risk faced by an organisation after internal controls are applied.

### **4. Types of risk**

- a. Risks might be of the following types, although the list is not intended to be exhaustive; constitutional; compliance; environmental, financial; governance; health & safety; legal; operational; recruitment and retention; reputation; security; technological; and related to the wellbeing of staff, officers, and volunteers.

### **5. The function and outcomes of the Risk Management Policy**

- a. The Risk Management Policy has an important role in the Union's internal control and governance arrangements. This Policy explains the Union's underlying approach to risk management and documents the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the Finance & Risk Sub-Committee, managers, and other parties.
- b. Risk management is an extension of good management practice and maintaining focus on key areas of concern or threat.

### **6. Risk appetite**

- a. The Union recognises the potential benefits of a formal 'Risk Appetite Framework' to aid strategic decision making, but due to the relatively small size of the Union and low risk profile it is considered appropriate to manage risks on an individual, not a thematic, basis.

### **7. The Role of the Board of Trustees**

- a. The ultimate responsibility for the effective management of the Union rests with the Board of Trustees, and therefore their involvement in the key aspects of the risk management process is essential, particularly in setting the parameters of the process and reviewing and considering the results. It fulfils this role by:
  - i. Receiving accurate, timely, and clear information;
  - ii. Constructively challenging when developing strategy; and
  - iii. Setting the tone and influencing the culture of risk management within the Union.
- b. In practice, the Board of Trustees delegates the authority for oversight of the adequacy of the Union's risk management policies, procedures, systems, and controls to the Finance & Risk Sub-Committee. Therefore, the Board's role is to provide leadership within a framework of prudent and effective controls which enables risk to be assessed and managed.

## 8. The Role of Finance & Risk Sub-Committee

- a. The Finance & Risk Sub-Committee, operating under its delegated authority from the Board of Trustees, has a key role in providing an independent opinion on the effectiveness and adequacy of the Union's systems of risk management and internal controls. This is to ensure maintenance of a sound system to safeguard stakeholders' interests and the organisation's assets, and alerting the Board of Trustees to any emerging risk issues.
- b. The Committee achieves its role by reviewing all material controls, including financial, operational, and compliance controls and risk management systems. The Committee further achieves its role by evaluating the effectiveness and adequacy of the Union's internal controls by:
  - i. Reviewing the previous year and the Union's performance on risk management and internal control; and
  - ii. Considering the internal and external risk profile of the coming year and deciding if current internal control arrangements are likely to be effective.
- c. In evaluating the effectiveness and adequacy of the Union's internal controls the Finance & Risk Sub-Committee will consider the following aspects:
  - i. The control environment;
  - ii. Ongoing identification and evaluation of significant risks;
  - iii. Information and communication; and
  - iv. Monitoring and corrective action.

## 9. The role of the Leadership Team

- a. The Union's Leadership Team, consisting of the Chief Executive, Deputy CEO, the Head of Business & Development, and the three Sabbatical Officers do this by:
  - i. Identifying and evaluating significant current risks faced by the Union;
  - ii. Identifying emerging risks that may become significant in the future, and where possible, also identifying early intervention that may mitigate the impact of these;
  - iii. Identifying and suggesting mitigative action for risk reduction and internal control;
  - iv. Reviewing the Risk Register & Dashboard on a bi-monthly basis, assessing progress against risk mitigation action plans; and
  - v. Providing adequate information in a timely manner to the Finance & Risk Sub-Committee on the status of risks and controls.

## 10. Risk management as part of the system of internal control

- a. The Union's system of internal control incorporates risk management. This system encompasses a number of elements that together facilitate an effective and efficient operation, enabling the Union to respond to a variety of operational, financial, and commercial risks.
- b. Risk Register and Dashboard

- i. The Risk Register & Dashboard helps to facilitate the identification, assessment, and ongoing monitoring of risks significant to the Union.
- c. Strategic Planning
  - i. The strategic planning process, which takes place in 3-yearly cycles, helps the Union to identify large-scale opportunities and threats trustees need to be aware of to ensure the Union is able to fulfil the stated charitable objects and purpose, for the benefit of members.
- d. Annual Budgeting
  - i. The budgeting process agrees objectives, action plans, resources and budgets for each budget holder, each financial year. These will take consideration of the three year strategic plan.
- e. Policies and Procedures
  - i. Attached to significant risks are a series of policies that underpin the internal control process and aid with compliance.
- f. Monitoring and Reporting
  - i. Comprehensive and regular reporting is designed to monitor significant risks and their controls.
- g. Finance & Risk Sub-Committee
  - i. The Finance & Risk Sub-Committee meets at least four times a year, usually two weeks before the Board of Trustees, and operates under its delegated authority from the Board of Trustees.
  - ii. **The Finance & Risk Sub-Committee will provide oversight, reviewing systems and identify emerging risks.**
- h. External audit and benchmarking
  - i. The external audit provides feedback to the Finance & Risk Sub-Committee and trustees in the form of the Management Letter which comments on the operation of the internal financial controls reviewed as part of the annual external audit.
  - ii. Benchmarking against other students' unions to compare framework for identifying, assessing, and managing risks.
- i. University scrutiny
  - i. The University, via the Finance & Resources Committee, Health & Safety Committee, Students' Union and University Partnership Forum, and other appointed liaisons has oversight of the Union's finances and activity.
- j. Third party reports
  - i. From time to time the use of external consultants will be necessary in areas of specialist expertise, such as health & safety, governance, or service delivery.

The use of specialist third parties for consulting and reporting can increase the reliability of internal controls.

## 11. The Risk Register & Dashboard

- a. The Union's Risk Register & Dashboard is a key component of the system of internal control and risk management and helps to facilitate the identification, assessment, and ongoing monitoring of the ten most significant to the Union. The Risk Register & Dashboard evolves as the objectives and obligations of the Union change and develop, as well as being responsive to the internal and external operating context of the Union.
- b. The Risk Register & Dashboard is formally reviewed bi-monthly by the Leadership Team, detailing progress against risk mitigation plans, with emerging risks added and reduced risks deleted, as required.
- c. The Risk Register & Dashboard is then reviewed at every meeting of the Finance & Risk Sub-Committee. It is then formally submitted to the Board of Trustees for Note and Discussion, if required.
- d. The Risk Register & Dashboard is updated based on the following:
  - i. Input from staff and elected officers;
  - ii. Consideration of the internal and external operating environment;
  - iii. With consideration to the Union's strategic plan;
  - iv. With consideration to the Union's Key Performance Indicators; and
  - v. With consideration to the Union's annual operating plan.

## 12. Risk Assessments

- a. Assessments of risk for buildings and regular activity are required to be formally reviewed annually, but more frequently if the need arises. Any one-off events which are outside the scope of these assessments would need individual and specific risk assessments in place before the event or activity commences.

## 13. Scoring of risks

- a. Risks are measured in terms of their likelihood of occurrence and their potential impact. The Union measures likelihood and impact scores on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is a very low likelihood and 5 is very high, and where 1 is an insignificant impact and 5 is very serious). A measure of total risk can be ascertained by multiplying the two scores together, so the minimum score will be 1 and the maximum would be 25. Any risk scoring 12 or more is defined as a significant risk to the Union.

Score	Frequency	Description	Score	Impact	Description
1	Rare	This will probably never happen or recur	1	Negligible	No material negative impact
2	Unlikely	Do not expect it to happen or recur but it is possible it may do so	2	Minor	Impact would be felt, but this is not considered significant
3	Possible	Might happen or recur occasionally	3	Moderate	Impact would be localised and control measures should be actively considered
4	Likely	Will probably happen or recur, but it is not a persisting issue / circumstance	4	Major	Impact would be significant so robust control measures are required and active monitoring of these - F&R Aware
5	Almost Certain	Will undoubtedly happen or recur, possibly frequently.	5	Catastrophic	Impact would be devastating, control as above - Board of Trustees Aware

**14. Risk Matrix**

a. The Risk Matrix is a simple system utilised to measure raw and residual risk.

		Impact				
Likelihood		Very High = 5	High = 4	Medium = 3	Low = 2	Very Low = 1
Very High = 5		25	20	15	10	5
High = 4		20	16	12	8	4
Medium = 3		15	12	9	6	3
Low = 2		10	8	6	4	2
Very low = 1		5	4	3	2	1

b. Blue - the risk is very low, and shows no need for concern. These would not usually appear on the Risk Register & Dashboard as the 10 biggest risks the Union faces.

c. Green - performance is satisfactory and on target. This aspect of the risk is likely to be well managed.

- d. Yellow - performance is adequate and active risk management is occurring. Progress in managing this risk may have been delayed, or a slight adverse trend may have arisen, or it might concern an external risk whereby the Union's scope for mitigation is limited. The risk management process may require attention to ensure the risk does not increase further.
- e. Amber - performance is a cause for concern, and mitigation requires prompt implementation and close monitoring.
- f. Red - The risk management process is not currently working and/or risk exposure continues to remain high.