Project Assurance Services

KCG.
Higher Education Internal Audit

Project assurance – ensuring institutional and user needs are met

A good project management process is an essential component of the institution's governance arrangements as, if successfully implemented, it contributes significantly to the success of individual projects. Project failure or delay can result in excess costs being incurred or cause significant business disruption.

We provide members with independent assurance that their projects are under control through the application of sound project management techniques/methodologies and disciplines.

Project management reviews

We will develop formal terms of reference for the work, clearly identifying the assurances that will be delivered and how we will provide timely feedback throughout the lifetime of the project, if required. Typically, we provide assurance on the following project objectives:

1. Ensuring that there are effective governance and overall management arrangements in place for the project, including, where appropriate, a steering committee in place, a project manager appointed and key staff have been identified and responsibilities defined.
2. Project disciplines have been established; there is a dynamic, detailed project plan which is monitored by the steering group and lessons learnt from previous projects have been applied appropriately.
3. Key objectives and success factors for the project have been defined and there is clear linkage between these and the institution's overall strategy
4. There is demonstrable senior management ownership, support and leadership for the project.
5. The project engages throughout, and at an appropriate level, with users and other stakeholders, including at the feasibility and definition of requirements.
6. User approval is sought at milestones stages and there is adequate training and documentation is in place.

The scope and depth of assurance might range from an initial overview assessment of the project, to a full blown project assurance audit which would interact with the project at key phases, providing real time commentary and opinion to the steering group.

We would comment and provide recommendations for improvement on areas, including:

- Compliance with policies, procedures and controls built into the chosen project methodology.
- The effectiveness of risk management procedures and risk mitigation.
- The adequacy and effectiveness of controls built into operations.
- The on-going financial viability of projects.
- The achievement of user requirements and other project benefits and outcomes.
- The reliability that can be placed upon project assurance, if any.

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Planning project management reviews

We ensure that all project management reviews are planned in partnership with you to ensure that there is joint ownership of the scope and objectives for the review. We will gain an understanding of the project objectives, the project control and management arrangements, and team responsibilities. We will also perform, or if already prepared by the project team confirm, the assessment of project risk to highlight specific areas where assurance may be required.

We adopt a phased approach to our work, with reporting milestones, to ensure that you are engaged in signing off each phase before approving the next stages in the auditing process. This ensures that deliverables are fit for purpose, and costs are proportionate to the level of risk and can be effectively monitored.

What you can expect

Our team is experienced in working alongside institutions that have run large, complex projects. They can therefore provide you with best practice advice and comparative experience. Our methods are scalable and the team is therefore at home working on smaller, self-contained projects.

Our team has considerable experience of large IT projects in both the public and private sectors.

We plan, in partnership with our members, to ensure that there is buy-in to our interaction with the project, and to clearly identify, jointly, where assurances are required. This also ensures that the reporting process, style and timetable are agreed upfront. We adopt a pragmatic approach to our work, recognising that one size does not fit all; we tailor our work to fit your needs.

The objective is to assure outcomes are achieved: