

Notes.



Meeting: ACCA UK Internal Audit Sector Panel

Location: Virtual (Teams)

Date: 11 March 2026

PRESENT:

Reshma Shah (Chair), Natalie Schopen, Melina Konsta, Fadeke Ayoola, Noman Jalib, Rob Hanley, Jane Nnadi, Si Mathavan, Robert Wilkinson, Clement Tambandini, Rebecca Hamilton, Stephanie Hume, Samie Rathnayake, Grace Museka, and Laura Tovey.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gemma Gathercole (Strategic Engagement Lead, ACCA UK), Karen Smith (UK Regional Head of Marketing, ACCA) and Sophie Hall (Sectors & Communities Manager, ACCA UK).

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Reshma welcomed the new panel members to the meeting, and facilitated introductions with Rob, Samie, Grace and Jane sharing their professional background and experiences.

2. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTIONS

Reshma highlighted that notes from the panel meetings will be made available on the ACCA Internal Audit hub, therefore it is important for the panel to read and approve the notes before publication.

Sophie clarified that published notes are anonymised and will focus on the main points, ensuring confidentiality. No objections were raised, and the panel approved the November meeting notes for publication.

3. 2026/2027 ANNUAL PLANNING

The Panel agreed and approved the proposed core objective:

As a Panel we will increase engagement between the ACCA Internal Audit Panel and ACCA Internal Audit members, to share ideas, support each other, and shape the profession together.

- Role of ACCA in supporting the panel

Sophie outlined her role on the Panel, highlighting three key areas of focus.

First, she emphasised the importance of capturing insights for internal reporting. These insights are shared with wider teams across ACCA, as well as senior leaders, helping to inform and shape ongoing work across ACCA.

Second, she highlighted the need to ensure internal audit members are well represented. This includes identifying and promoting opportunities for members to contribute to wider ACCA activity, such as policy roundtables, thought leadership research, member engagement and early careers advocacy.

Finally, Sophie noted the importance of collaboration in adding value to the wider membership. This may include supporting content and engagement initiatives such as articles, webinars, podcasts, and Link Up networking events.

- Communications

Panel members, including Laura and Jane, raised concerns about the limited visibility of resources such as the internal audit bulletin and podcasts, citing issues with marketing preferences and information overload. Sophie acknowledged these challenges and noted ongoing efforts to overhaul communications at ACCA for better reach and engagement.

- Topics for consideration

Several potential topics were suggested for future areas of focus, including potential podcasts or webinar series:

Laura proposed a series covering a broad range of emerging themes, including diversity within internal audit, the use of AI, energy, wider capital considerations, and private finance initiatives.

Jane suggested focusing on transformation, noting that internal auditors are often underprepared to effectively audit major change programmes within their organisations.

Si highlighted audit topics related to digital and human capital as additional areas of interest.

Reshma and Sophie encouraged panel members to propose external speakers or subject matter experts for future engagement activities. Sophie confirmed she can support with outreach and manage the associated logistics.

- Virtual Roundtables

The Panel explored the idea of trialling virtual roundtables, similar to the sector 'Talking...' sessions. Sophie explained these are usually hosted by one or two experts on a specific topic, with around 20 members joining for the discussion. Natalie and Jane agreed to help support and explore this further.

4. RAISING THE PROFILE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Reshma explained that through the coffee catch ups, it was clear that panel members are passionate about promoting internal audit, and therefore Karen was invited to the meeting to explore further.

Karen presented examples of ACCA and industry campaigns, including 'A World Without Accountants' and influencer partnerships, illustrating approaches to raise awareness, challenge misconceptions, and highlight the inclusivity and impact of the profession through relatable storytelling and creative content.

Sophie outlined an idea for a series of short, one-minute social media videos featuring panel members discussing their experiences, misconceptions, and the value of internal audit, with ACCA providing editing and branding support to ensure professional presentation and broad dissemination. The panel agreed in principle with Sophie offering to support in mapping out the content.

The panel also discussed using case studies or 'day in the life' videos to promote internal audit aimed at younger audiences and those at the start of their career. Sophie confirmed that ACCA UK's Early Careers Manager, George Tsounias will be joining the June meeting where this can be explored further.

Fadeke suggested organising university-based internal audit hackathons focused on real-world scenarios such as climate resilience, proposing these as collaborative, branded events to attract students and early-career professionals, with the potential for virtual participation and resource sharing.

5. MEMBER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC) UPDATE

Reshma outlined that the MAC serves as a forum for escalating panel discussions to higher ACCA governance and for receiving updates from other sector panels. Reshma proposed circulating the MAC notes to panel members for review and potential agenda inclusion. The panel agreed this would be useful, with Jane agreeing that it adds value in fostering alignment and cross-sector learning.

6. ACCA STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Gemma reported on ACCA's responses to recent government consultations, including those from the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the FRC, and described ongoing engagement with parliamentary committees and government departments, requesting panel anecdotes and feedback on policy impacts for use on ACCA's policy work.

Gemma also discussed the government's decision to shelve the audit reform bill, [ACCA's public response](#), and the implications for both external and internal audit, asking panel members to report any observed effects or challenges resulting from this policy change.

The findings of the 2026 Talent Trends survey will be released in May, with over 2000 responses received from the UK. Gemma encouraged panel members to support wider promotion when the survey relaunches later in the year, to increase response rates, enable more granular sector-specific insights, and help meet the threshold required for internal audit analysis.

7. ROUND ROBIN

There was some support for creating a panel WhatsApp group - to enable quicker knowledge sharing, peer support, and continued discussion beyond the quarterly sessions.

FOLLOW UP TASKS

Focus area	Key outcome	Suggested next step
WhatsApp Group	Members are interested in creating a panel WhatsApp group.	Anyone that would like to join a dedicated WhatsApp group to send mobile number to Sophie.
Promoting internal audit via videos & social media	Develop actionable ideas for raising the profile of internal audit, including potential social media campaigns and early career initiatives.	- Panel members to share their ideas around the key messages we want to deliver through a series of personal videos/podcasts to raise awareness of IA (e.g day in the life). Suggestions could be shared by a WhatsApp group to keep it real time and to seek agreement sooner. - Sophie to reach out to Karen Smith with the offer that the panel would be happy to feed into the next scheduled marketing/social media campaign to help shape content to further promote Internal Audit as a career choice for ACCA members. - ACCA UK's Early Careers Manager, George Tsounias to attend the next panel meeting to share the work of the ACCA and how panel members can get involved in early careers advocacy.
Virtual roundtables	Explore and plan an internal audit focussed roundtable	- Sub group of panel members to connect and to discuss what this could look like. Potential consideration might be - defining the purpose of the roundtable and desired outcomes; topics that we think would be good to explore either at a roundtable or podcast with an invited speaker. - Sub group to bring an approach to the next panel meeting for wider discussion. This sub group could also be an opportunity to network with fellow panel members/get to know each other more (something that panel members shared they would like more of). Jane and Natalie have already expressed an interest. Would other panel members like to join the discussion and support Jane and Natalie? - Panel members to suggest speakers for future podcasts or to attend a panel meeting