Ci, Cii

COUNCIL

Title of paper: Strategic Risk Register Summary – Document Ci
Full Strategic Risk Register – Document Cii

Main purpose of the paper: For decision

Presenter(s): Chair of Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee and Registrar

Date of paper: 12 October 2026

Purpose of the paper

This paper provides an updated version of the full strategic risk register following review by risk owners and leadership teams, and by Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.

Relation to strategy and values

All area of University strategy.

Relation to regulatory requirements

Primarily, Office for Students Condition of Registration B1-5 (academic quality and standards); D (financial viability and sustainability); E (management, governance and accountability); G2 (financial support).

Recommendations:

Council are asked to endorse the updated register. This version was considered in depth by Audit Risk and Assurance Committee at its meeting in October.

Consultation to date (including any previous committee consideration and its outcome):

Executive Board 29 September 2026, and Audit Risk and Assurance Committee 8 October 2026.

Information Classification:

☒ **Internal** – Information intended for use by internal colleagues or trusted third parties.

Newcastle University Strategic Risk Register
October 2026

Introduction & Background
The Strategic Risk Register contains risks that could impact the delivery of the University's strategic objectives. These risks are considered regularly by Executive Board throughout the year and are subject to periodic deep-dive review by the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC). This annual review considers the Strategic Risk Register in its entirety. Executive Board are invited to review and comment on the updated register before it is presented to ARAC and Council in October.

The Strategic Risk Register has been refreshed to reflect the University's evolving operating environment, emerging strategic challenges and developments arising from delivery of the University Strategy and Next Generation Newcastle.

Summary
The Strategic Risk Register has been reviewed with risk owners and other key stakeholders. The review has focused on ensuring that strategic risks remain aligned with the University's strategic objectives and accurately reflect the uncertainties that could affect their delivery.

While the University's overall risk profile remains broadly stable, several risks have evolved in response to sector developments, including ongoing pressures on sector financial sustainability, challenges with international student recruitment, research funding, regulatory compliance, student expectations and cyber security.

Benchmarking
The Strategic Risk Register has been benchmarked against available sector risk intelligence, including the latest Uniac Higher Education Strategic Risk Analysis Report 2025/26 and as well as insights published by PwC and KPMG. This review indicates that the University's principal strategic risks remain closely aligned with those being reported across the UK higher education sector.

The benchmarking exercise also identified several areas that have increased in prominence across the sector during the last year, including partnership risk, digital estate resilience, artificial intelligence, workforce pressures arising from organisational change, and increasing uncertainty within the policy and regulatory environment.

These themes have been considered as part of the review. Further work is proposed to develop enhanced strategic consideration of AI-related risks and opportunities, alongside risks associated with organisational transformation and change.

Next Steps
Following consideration by ARAC in October, a timetable of strategic risk discussions will be developed for Executive Board. Where appropriate, the reviews will be aligned with other related Executive Board business to strengthen integration between strategic planning, performance and risk management.

Risks that are currently rated as red, or any that experience a deterioration, will be subject to more frequent review by Executive Board to ensure that mitigating actions remain effective and are being delivered as planned.

A review of the overarching risk appetite statement and the supporting appetite statements for individual strategic risk areas is scheduled to commence in October.

Kelly Oliver
Head of Risk & Compliance
23 September 2026