Chapter 28
Advanced Education—Managing Risks Related to its One Client Service Model System

1.0 MAIN POINTS

By July 2017, the Ministry of Advanced Education had partially implemented the three recommendations related to managing risks related to its unsupported critical IT system, the One Client Service Model (OCSM) system. At July 31, 2017, the OCSM system hardware and software were vendor supported. The Ministry was negotiating changes to its service-level agreement with the Ministry of Central Services to address the outstanding recommendations. The Ministry is requesting periodic information from the Ministry of Central Services to enable it to analyze risks to the OCSM system, develop plans for upgrading and patching IT infrastructure, and outline responsibilities for upgrading and patching IT infrastructure.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes our follow up of management's actions on the recommendations we made in 2015. In 2015, we assessed the Ministry's processes to manage risks related to the OCSM system. Our *2015 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 32 concluded that for the 12-month period ended August 31, 2015, the Ministry of Advanced Education had, except for the three areas reflected in our recommendations, effective processes to manage the risks to service delivery from its unsupported critical IT system, the OCSM system.

The OCSM system is used to deliver key post-secondary services of the Ministry, certain post-secondary institutions,[1] and the Ministry of the Economy. Key post-secondary services include student financial assistance, training programs, registration services and employment-related counselling.

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance* (including CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Ministry's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. The Ministry's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To carry out our audit engagement, we interviewed Ministry staff, reviewed committee minutes and relevant documents, and assessed the reasonableness of supporting documentation.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the

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[1] Post-secondary institutions that use the OCSM system include the seven regional colleges, the Association of Regional Colleges, Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, and Gabriel Dumont Institute.

recommendation at July 31, 2017, and the Ministry's actions up to that date. We found that the Ministry has partially implemented our recommendations.

3.1 Updates to Service Level Agreement to Address Recommendations Not Complete

> *We recommended that, to analyze risks and make decisions about its One Client Service Model system, the Ministry of Advanced Education periodically obtain information about its One Client Service Model system's:*
> - ➢ *Indirect costs*
> - ➢ *Information technology infrastructure end of life or end of support dates*
> - ➢ *Estimated information technology infrastructure upgrade costs to maintain vendor support* (2015 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2016)

Status – Partially Implemented

> *We recommended that the Ministry of Advanced Education develop and implement a plan, over the One Client Service Model system's expected remaining life, for upgrading and patching the information technology infrastructure on which the system resides.* (2015 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2016)

Status – Partially Implemented

> *We recommended that the service level agreement between the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Ministry of Central Services clearly outline responsibility for upgrading and patching the information technology infrastructure on which the One Client Service Model system resides and the associated costs.* (2015 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2016)

Status – Partially Implemented

At July 2017, the OCSM system hardware and software were vendor supported[2] but the Ministry had not yet finalized a plan for upgrading and patching IT infrastructure over the system's expected remaining life.

Since our 2015 audit, the Ministry received information from the Ministry of Central Services (its IT service provider) on the OCSM system's IT infrastructure end of life or end of support dates, and IT infrastructure costs to upgrade the OCSM system to its current vendor-supported state. The Ministry requested from Central Services information on indirect costs (such as costs to repair the OCSM system's IT infrastructure), but had not received it.

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[2] Vendor supported means that its vendor will provide technical support and updates to fix known security problems or vulnerabilities.

Also, as of July 2017, the Ministry was negotiating changes to its IT service-level agreement with Central Services. It was requesting that an appendix to the current agreement include the following:

➢ Central Services periodically provide the Ministry with information on the OCSM system's IT infrastructure end of life or end of support dates, and estimated costs for upgrading and patching the IT infrastructure to maintain vendor support

➢ Central Services and the Ministry work together to develop upgrading and patching plans to maintain the OCSM system in a current vendor supported state

➢ The specific responsibilities for upgrading and patching of IT infrastructure and for the associated costs of the Ministry and Central Services, respectively