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Treasury Management Policy Statement

This statement sets out the policies, practices and objectives of The University of Aberdeen's treasury management activities, as agreed by the Court.

1. The University of Aberdeen adopts the key recommendations of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)'s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice.

2. The University of Aberdeen, in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice, defines its treasury management activities as:

The management of the institution's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

3. The University of Aberdeen regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the University.

4. The University of Aberdeen acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving best value in treasury management, and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

Treasury Management Practices

1. Risk Management

1.1. General Statement

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO), implement and monitor all arrangements for the identification, management and control of treasury management risk and will report annually on the adequacy/suitability of these. Furthermore, the CFO will report, as a matter of urgency, the circumstances of any actual or likely difficulty in achieving the institution's objectives in this respect. All reports will be in accordance with the procedures set out in Practice 6 below (Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements). In respect of each of the following risks, the arrangements which seek to ensure compliance with these objectives are set out.

1.2. Liquidity Risk Management

Liquidity risk is defined as the risk that cash will not be available when it is needed, that ineffective management of liquidity creates additional unbudgeted costs, and that the institution's business objectives will be thereby compromised.

The University of Aberdeen will ensure it has adequate though not excessive cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdraft or standby facilities to enable it at all times to have the level of funds available to it which are necessary for the achievement of its business objectives.

Management and Control

- Effective cash and cash flow forecasting and monitoring system which identifies the extent to which the University is exposed to the effects of potential cash flow variations and shortfalls.
- The University's policy is to maintain minimum cash balances equivalent to two month's operating and payroll costs.
- The University will hold operational accounts with enough counterparty listed banks to ensure funds held with one banking provider does not exceed £50M. Balances are reviewed monthly and surplus funds are distributed amongst other counterparty listed banks.
- Monitor its loan and facility covenant compliance on an ongoing basis appropriate to the risk as set out in the Financial regulations. A going concern report and a financing report or produced annually to monitor future compliance and actual performance.
- The CFO is authorised to arrange short-term overdraft facilities with the University's bankers.

1.3. Interest Rate Risk Management

Interest rate risk is defined as the risk that fluctuations in the levels of interest rates create an unexpected or unbudgeted burden on the institution's finances, against which the institution has failed to protect itself adequately.

The University of Aberdeen will manage its exposure to fluctuations in interest rates with a view to containing its interest costs, or securing its interest revenues while maintaining the security of the invested funds. It will achieve this by the prudent use of its approved financing and investment instruments, methods and techniques, primarily to create stability and certainty of costs and revenues but at the same time retaining a sufficient degree of flexibility to take advantage of unexpected, potentially advantageous changes in the level or structure of interest rates.

Management and Control

- It is policy to reduce the University's exposure to the uncertainty of receivable and payable interest rate fluctuations.
- The University, where possible, will lock out the risk by entering fixed interest rates on long-term capital financing and short-term deposits.

1.4. Exchange Rate Risk Management

Exchange rate risk is defined as the risk that fluctuations in foreign exchange rates create an unexpected or unbudgeted burden on the institution's finances, against which the institution has failed to protect itself adequately.

The University of Aberdeen will retain funds in currencies only to the extent that payments are due to be made in these currencies. Currency receipts surplus to this will be transferred into sterling at the best rate achievable.

Management and Control

- It is policy to minimise exposure to exchange rate fluctuations.
- The University aims to conduct all transactions in GBP as its base currency and the currency reflects most of its cost base.
- The University maintains Euro, US and Canadian Dollar accounts and where possible these will be used to match payments and receipts.
- Currency receipts, other than Euro, US and Canadian dollars, are converted into sterling upon receipt.
- Currency balances are reviewed monthly and currency exceeding the limits set out in Schedule B are translated into GBP.
- The CFO is authorised to buy and sell currencies with any of the organisations listed in Schedule D.

1.5. Inflation Risk Management

Inflation risk is defined as the risk that prevailing levels of inflation cause an unexpected or unbudgeted burden on the institution's finances, against which the institution has failed to protect itself adequately.

The University of Aberdeen will manage its exposure to varying levels of inflation, insofar as they can be identified as impacting directly on its treasury management activities, as an integral part of its strategy.

Management and Control

- The University will use reliable and informed sources of information on the likely future course of inflation rates that could impact on operational costs and future interest rates.
- The risk of real time interest rate rise due to inflation will be mitigated as the University, where possible, will lock out the risk by entering fixed interest rates on long-term capital financing and short-term deposits.

1.6. Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

Credit and counterparty risk is defined as the risk of failure by a third party to meet its contractual obligations to the institution under an investment, borrowing, capital, project or partnership financing, particularly as a result of the third party's diminished creditworthiness, and the resulting detrimental effect on the institution's capital or revenue resources.

The University of Aberdeen regards a prime objective of its treasury management activities to be the security of the principal sums it invests. Accordingly, it will ensure that its counterparty list is constructed with security in mind, but with a reasonable spread to make the most of market conditions. The list will be reviewed on a continuing basis and at least annually.

Management and Control

- The CFO is authorised to deposit surplus funds of the institution with, and purchase certificates of deposit issued by, any of the organisations on the approved Counterparty List (Appendix A) to ensure achievement of the best returns available.

- The deposit limits for counterparties are determined with reference to their short-term credit ratings. The CFO seeks external independent advice on the credit standing of approved counterparties and where there is reason to believe that a counterparty's credit standing is or may become impaired, apply lower limits than set out in the Counterparty List.
- Credit ratings and outlooks from Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor are also reviewed as part of the annual treasury policy update. Any changes to the counterparties list will be reported to the CFO and the Policy & Resources Committee.
- Organisational credit ratings for UK financial institutions must have investment grade ratings across all three credit agencies, speculative grade and in default are not permitted. The minimum credit rating for investment is set out below.

	Fitch	Moody's	Standard & Poor's
Short Term	F3	P3	A-3
Long Term	BBB-	BBB-	Baa3

1.7. Refinancing Risk Management

Refinancing risk is the risk that maturing borrowings, capital, project or partnership financings cannot be refinanced on terms that reflect the provisions made by the institution for those refinancings, both capital and revenue, and/or that the terms are inconsistent with prevailing market conditions at the time.

The University of Aberdeen will ensure that its borrowing, private financing and partnership arrangements are negotiated, structured and documented, and the maturity profile of the monies so raised are managed, with a view to obtaining offer terms for renewal or refinancing, if required, which are competitive and as favourable to the institution as can reasonably be achieved in the light of market conditions prevailing at the time.

It will actively manage its relationships with its counterparties in these transactions in such a manner as to secure this objective, and will avoid overreliance on any one source of funding if this might jeopardise achievement of the above.

Management and Control

Where it is the intention of the institution to raise capital for new institutional projects or renew existing borrowing facilities, the CFO will have regard to:

- The level of security for the project.
- The value of assets already held as security on existing capital projects.
- Requirements of the financial memorandum with the funding council.
- Statutory restrictions and the institution's own powers and rules.
- Restrictions on the institution's use of its property assets required by covenants.
- The maximum level of assets that should be provided as security without risking the overall stability of the institution.

The CFO will report to the University Court to explain the basis of any such requirement. Once approved in principle by Court, the CFO, along with the University's financial advisors, will conduct an appropriate process with potential funders to secure the best terms for the University. Any arrangements are subject to final review and approval by Court.

1.8. Legal and Regulatory Risk Management

Legal and regulatory risk is defined as the risk that the institution itself, or a third party with which it is dealing in its treasury management activities, fails to act in accordance with its legal powers or regulatory requirements, and that the institution suffers losses accordingly.

The University of Aberdeen will ensure that all of its treasury management activities comply with its statutory powers and regulatory requirements.

Management and Control

- The University will adhere to the provisions set out in Scottish Funding Councils Financial Memorandum and its own Financial Regulations.

1.9. Fraud, Error and Corruption, and Contingency Management

This risk is that the institution fails to identify the circumstances in which it may be exposed to the risk of loss through fraud, error, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings, and fails to employ suitable systems and procedures and maintain effective contingency management arrangements to these ends.

The University of Aberdeen will ensure that it has identified these circumstances and has taken appropriate action.

Management and Control

- The Universities procedures for treasury management activities require: -
 - All processes to be fully documented
 - A full record of the processes pursued in making decisions and executing transactions to create a clear audit trail
 - Internal control arrangements including segregation of duties where this is practical
 - Adequate cover to account for sickness and staff absences
 - Regular balancing of accounting and supporting systems
 - Restricted access to systems and services
 - External and Internal Audit activity
 - Banking Portal access and approval limit controls
 - Fraud and whistleblowing procedures
- The University has insurance providing cover of up to £5m in the case of named officer's error or defalcation. The University also has an approved fraud policy and whistleblowing procedures available on the Universities policy zone.

1.10. Market Risk Management

Market risk is defined as the risk that, through adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums an institution invests, its stated treasury management policies and objectives are compromised, against which effects it has failed to protect itself.

The University of Aberdeen will seek to ensure that its stated treasury management policies and objectives will not be compromised by adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums it invests, and will accordingly seek to protect itself from the effects of such fluctuations.

Management and Control

The University has approved procedures which limits its exposure to investments whose capital value may fluctuate (equities, bonds, collective investments, gilts, certificates of deposit etc). The University's approved instruments, methods and techniques are set out in Section 4.

2. Best Value and Performance Measurement

The University of Aberdeen is committed to the pursuit of best value in its treasury management activities, and to the use of performance methodology in support of that aim, within the framework set out in its treasury management policy statement.

Accordingly, the treasury management function will be the subject of regular examination of alternative methods of service delivery, and of the scope for other potential improvements. The performance of the treasury management function will be measured using appropriate benchmarks set out in Schedule A.

3. Decision Making and Analysis

The University of Aberdeen will maintain full records of its treasury management decisions, and of the processes and practices applied in reaching those decisions, both for the purposes of learning from the past, and for demonstrating that reasonable steps were taken to ensure that all issues relevant to those decisions were taken into account at the time.

4. Approved Instruments, Methods and Techniques

The University of Aberdeen will undertake its treasury management activities by employing only those instruments, methods and techniques as detailed in Schedule C to this document, and within the limits approved by the University of Aberdeen.

4.1. Investment and Deposit of Surplus Funds

The overriding principle guiding the investment of surplus funds is to achieve a satisfactory return while reducing risk to a level acceptable to the Policy & Resources Committee.

The University has appointed external fund managers to manage the investment of endowments funds.

Surplus cash balances may be invested as follows:

- Deposits with approved banks.
- Deposits with approved Building Societies.
- Certificates of Deposit issued by approved banks.

These surplus investments are limited to the names on the counterparty list in Appendix A.

The Treasury manager can initiate the investment subject to prior approval of the CFO or the Assistant Director of Finance.

5. Organisation, Clarity and Segregation of Responsibilities, and Dealing Arrangements

The University of Aberdeen considers it essential, for the purposes of the effective control and monitoring of its treasury management activities, for the reduction of the risk of fraud or error, and for the pursuit of optimum performance, that these activities are structured and managed in a fully integrated manner, and that there is at all times a clarity of treasury management responsibilities. The principle on which this will be based is a clear distinction between those charged with setting treasury management policies and those charged with implementing and controlling these policies, particularly with regard to the execution and transmission of funds, the recording and administering of treasury management decisions, and the audit and review of the treasury management function.

The CFO will ensure that there are clear written statements of the responsibilities for each post engaged in treasury management, and the arrangements for absence cover. These are detailed in Schedule D to this document.

The CFO will ensure there is proper documentation for all deals and transactions, and that procedures exist for the effective transmission of funds.

6. Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements

The University of Aberdeen will ensure that regular reports are prepared and considered on the implementation of its treasury management policies; on the effects of decisions taken and transactions executed in pursuit of those policies; on the implications of changes, particularly budgetary, resulting from regulatory, economic, market or other factors affecting its treasury management activities; and on the performance of the treasury management function.

As a minimum, the Policy & Resources Committee will receive:

- An annual report on the strategy and plan to be pursued in the coming year.
- An annual report on the performance of the treasury management function during the year, including the reasons for and the effects of any changes to the strategy set at the beginning of the year.
- An annual report on the performance of any external service providers.

The present arrangements and the form of these reports are detailed in Schedule C to this document.

7. Budgeting, Accounting and Audit Arrangements

The CFO will prepare, and The University of Aberdeen (via Policy & Resources Committee) will approve and, if necessary, from time to time will amend, an annual budget which will include income and costs associated with treasury management activities. The matters to be included in the budget will at minimum be those required by statute or regulation.

The form which The University of Aberdeen's budget will take is set out in the University's Financial Regulations. The CFO will exercise effective controls over this budget, and will report upon and recommend any changes required in accordance with Treasury Management Practice.

The University of Aberdeen will account for its treasury management activities, for decisions made and transactions executed, in accordance with appropriate accounting practices and standards, and with statutory and regulatory requirements in force for the time being. The present form of The University of Aberdeen's accounts is set out in the Finance Department web page (www.abdn.ac.uk/finance).

The University of Aberdeen will ensure that its auditors, and those charged with regulatory review, have access to all information and papers supporting the activities of the treasury management function as are necessary for the proper fulfilment of their roles, and that such information and papers demonstrate compliance with external and internal policies and approved practices.

8. Cash and Cash Flow Management

Unless statutory or regulatory requirements demand otherwise, all monies in the hands of the University of Aberdeen will be under the control of the CFO, and will be aggregated for cash flow and investment management purposes. Rolling short-term cash flow projections will be prepared on a monthly basis by the Treasury Manager, alongside long-term projections prepared in conjunction with the Financial Planning & Budgeting team. The CFO will ensure that these are adequate for the purposes of monitoring compliance with Treasury Management Practice 1.2 Liquidity Risk Management.

9. Money Laundering

The University of Aberdeen is alert to the possibility that it may become the subject of an attempt to involve it in a transaction involving the laundering of money. Accordingly, it will maintain procedures within its Anti Money Laundering policy for verifying and recording the identity of counterparties and reporting suspicions, and will ensure that staff involved in this are properly trained. The present banking arrangements are detailed in the University's Financial Regulations.

10. Staff Training and Qualifications

The University of Aberdeen recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff involved in the treasury management function are fully equipped to undertake the duties and responsibilities allocated to them. It will therefore seek to appoint individuals who are both capable and experienced and will provide training for staff to enable them to acquire and maintain an appropriate level of expertise, knowledge and skills. The CFO will recommend and implement the necessary arrangements.

11. Use of External Service Providers

The University of Aberdeen recognises the potential value of employing external providers of treasury management services, in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. When it employs such service providers, it will ensure it does so for reasons which will have been submitted to a full evaluation of the costs and benefits. It will also ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented, and subjected to regular review, and it will ensure, where feasible and necessary, that a spread of service providers is

used, to avoid over reliance on one or a small number of companies. Where services are subject to formal tender or re-tender arrangements, legislative requirements will always be observed. The monitoring of such arrangements rests with the CFO.

12. Corporate Governance

The University of Aberdeen is committed to the pursuit of proper corporate governance throughout its businesses and services, and to establishing the principles and practices by which this can be achieved. Accordingly, the treasury management function and its activities will be undertaken with openness and transparency, honesty, integrity and accountability.

The University of Aberdeen has adopted and has implemented the key recommendations of the CIPFA Code of Practice. This, together with the other arrangements detailed in the Schedules to this document, are considered vital to the achievement of proper corporate governance in treasury management, and the responsible officer will monitor and, if and when necessary, report upon the effectiveness of these arrangements.

Schedule A: Best Value and Performance Measurement

1. Frequency & Process for Tendering

The following services will be subject to tender every 3 to 5 years:

- Banking services
- Fund management services
- Financial adviser
- Cash management, money broking services and general financial advice.

The tender process will be that normally followed by the University, contained within the Procurement Policy and Guide to Procedures. The University Court is responsible for the appointment of the service provider, on the recommendation of the Policy & Resources Committee.

2. Performance Measurement

2.1. In-house Performance

The bench-mark for interest earned on self-managed funds will be:

Currency	Rate
Euros	The higher of base rate less 0.5% or 0%
US Dollars	The higher of base rate less 0.5% or 0%
GBP	Base rate

Quarterly reports to the CFO will show funds held, interest earned, and comparison to bench-mark.

2.2. Investment Managers

Where appropriate, benchmarks and reporting requirements as set out in Agreement with the Investment Manager.

2.3. Cash Managers

Where appropriate, benchmarks and reporting requirements as set out in Agreement with the Cash Manager.

2.4. Debt Management

Debtor days and an aged debt analysis are reported in the University's monthly management report.

Schedule B: Organisation, Segregation of Responsibilities and Dealing Arrangements.

1. Responsibility of Treasury Management Posts

1.1. The University Court

- Receiving and reviewing reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities.

1.2. The Policy & Resources Committee

- Approval of/amendments to the organisation's adopted clauses, treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices.
- Budget consideration and approval.
- Approval of the division of responsibilities.
- Approving the selection of external service providers and agreeing terms of appointment.

1.3. The Chief Financial Officer

- Recommending clauses, treasury management policy/practices for approval, reviewing the same regularly, and monitoring compliance.
- Submitting regular treasury management policy reports.
- Submitting budgets and budget variations.
- Receiving and reviewing management information reports.
- Reviewing the performance of the treasury management function and promoting best value reviews.
- Ensuring the adequacy of treasury management resources and skills, and the effective division of responsibilities within the treasury management function.
- Ensuring the adequacy of internal audit, and liaising with external audit.
- Recommending the appointment of external service providers.
- Reviewing or delegating review of banking platform user access.

1.4. The Treasury Manager

- Execution of transactions.
- Adherence to agreed policies and practices on a day-to-day basis.
- Maintaining relationships with third parties and external service providers.
- Supervising treasury management staff.
- Monitoring performance on a day-to-day basis.
- Submitting management information reports to the CFO.
- Identifying and recommending opportunities for improved practices.
- Submission of banking platforms' user access information to the CFO for annual review.

1.5. Delegation of Authority on Treasury Management Activities

TASK	LIMIT	APPROVED BY	ADMINISTERED BY
Bank Mandates		University Court	Treasury Manager
Payment platform roles/limits		Assistant Director of Finance	Treasury Manager
Short term investments (3-24months) up to £20M per transaction	£20M per transaction	CFO or 2 x Assistant Directors	Treasury Manager
Sell or buy foreign currencies	£1M GBP equivalent	Treasury Manager	Treasury Manager or Treasury Assistant
Corporate cards	£0-£5k	Treasury Manager	Treasury Assistant
Corporate cards	>£5k	Finance Operations Manager/Assistant Director	Treasury Assistant

1.6 Foreign Currency Trade Agreement

The CFO is authorised to buy and sell currencies with any of the organisations listed below:

Counterparties	Limits
University's Bankers	No Limit
UK Clearing Banks	USD 5 million EUR 5 million
Financial Brokers (regulated by the FSA)	USD 5 million EUR 5 million

The limits set out may be amended only with approval of the University's Policy & Resources Committee.

The CFO will take expert advice on the credit rating of any Financial Broker.

1.7 Currency Holdings

The limits set out below reflect the maximum monthly amount of currency the University should hold, excluding known short-term commitments.

Currency	Limit
EURO	€500k
USD	\$500k
CAD	\$50k

Schedule C: Reporting Requirements

The following matters should be included in reports to the Policy & Resources Committee.

1. Annual Report

- Commentary on treasury operations for the year.
- Cash flow compared with budget and commentary on variances.
- Annual financial strategy for the next financial year and guidance for three years reflecting the approved three year plan.
- Proposed amendments to the treasury management policy statement.
- Matters in respect of which the treasury management policy statement has not been complied with.

2. Periodic Reports

- Analysis of currently outstanding loans, deposits and investments by instrument, counterparty, maturity and interest rollover period.
- Commentary on treasury operations for the period.
- Cash flow compared with budget and commentary on variances.
- Commentary on continued applicability of annual financial strategy and proposals for amendments thereto.
- Revisions to following 12 months cash flow forecast and to estimates of future interest rates; effect on annual financial strategy and on revenue budget.
- Proposed amendments to list of approved counterparties and to limits.
- Proposed amendments to treasury systems document.
- Matters in respect of which the treasury management policy statement, the annual financial strategy or the treasury systems document have not been complied with.

Schedule D: Counterparty List

Clearing Bank & Subsidiaries	Moody's Short term	Moody's Long term	S&P Short term	S&P Long term	Fitch Short term	Fitch Long term	Limit
Barclays plc - parent	P-2	Baa2	A-2	BBB	F1	A	£20m
Barclays Bank plc	P-1	A1	A-1	A	F1	A+	£25m
Barclays Bank UK plc	P-1	A1	A-1	A	F1	A+	£25m
Lloyds Banking Group plc - parent	P-1	A2	A-2	BBB+	F1	A	£20m
Lloyds Bank plc	P-1	A1	A-1	A+	F1	A+	£25m
HBOS plc	P-1	A1	A-2	BBB+	F1	A+	£25m
Bank of Scotland plc	P-1	A1	A+	A-1	F1	A+	£25m
Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets plc	P-1	A1	A-1	A	F1	A+	£25m
Goldman Sachs International Bank	P-1	A1	A-1	A+	F1	A+	£25m
HSBC Holdings plc - parent	P-2	A3	A-2	A-	F1 +	A+	£25m
HSBC Bank plc	P-1	A1	A-1	A+	F1 +	AA-	£25m
HSBC Continental Europe (formerly HSBC France)	P-1	A1	A-1	A+	F1 +	AA-	£25m
HSBC UK Bank plc	P-1	A1	A-1	A+	F1 +	AA-	£25m
Santander UK Group Holdings plc - parent	P-2	Baa1	A-2	BBB	F1	A	£20m
Santander UK plc	P-1	A1	A-1	A	F1	A+	£25m
Nationwide	P-1	A1	A-1	A	F1	A+	£25m
Virgin Money UK plc	P-3	Baa2	A-3	BBB-	F2	BBB+	£20m
Clydesdale Bank plc	P-2	Baa1	A-2	A-	F2	A-	£20m
NatWest Group plc - parent	P-2	Baa1	A-2	BBB	F1	A	£20m
Royal Bank of Scotland plc	P-1	A1*/A1	A-1	A	F1	A+	£25m
NatWest Markets plc	P-1	A2	A-2	A-	F1	A+	£25m

Note: the counterparty list was reviewed in September 2022

Moody's Short Term Rating Scale

P-1	Superior ability to repay short term obligations
P-2	Strong ability to repay short term obligations
P-3	Acceptable ability to repay short term obligations
NP	Rated Not Prime

Moody's Long Term Rating Scale

Aaa	Highest quality, subject to lowest level of credit risk
Aa	High quality, subject to very low credit risk
A	Upper-medium grade, subject to low credit risk
Baa	Medium grade, subject to moderate credit risk and may possess certain speculative characteristics
Ba	Speculative and subject to substantial credit risk
B	Speculative and subject to high credit risk
Caa	Speculative, of poor standing and subject to high credit risk
Ca	Highly speculative, likely in (or very near) default with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest
C	Typically in default with little prospect of recovery of principal and interest

S&P's Short Term Ratings

A-1	An obligor rated 'A-1' has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It is rated in the highest category by Standard & Poor's. Within this category, certain obligors are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments is extremely strong.
A-2	An obligor rated 'A-2' has satisfactory capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, it is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligors in the highest rating category.
A-3	An obligor rated 'A-3' has adequate capacity to meet its financial obligations. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.

S&P's Long Term Ratings

AAA	An obligor rated 'AAA' has extremely strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. 'AAA' is the highest issuer credit rating assigned by Standard & Poor's.
AA	An obligor rated 'AA' has very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It differs from the highest-rated obligors only to a small degree.
A	An obligor rated 'A' has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments but is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligors in higher-rated categories.
BBB	An obligor rated 'BBB' has adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.

Fitch Short Term Ratings

F1	Strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments
F2	Good intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments
F3	The intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is adequate
B	Minimal capacity for timely payment of financial commitments, plus heightened vulnerability to near term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions
C	Default is a real possibility
RD	Indicates an entity that has defaulted on one or more of its financial commitments, although it continues to meet other financial obligations
D	Indicates a broad-based default event for an entity, or the default of a short-term obligation

Fitch Long Term Ratings

AAA	Denote the lowest expectation of default risk. They are assigned only in cases of exceptionally strong capacity for payment of financial commitments.
AA	Denote expectations of very low default risk. They indicate very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments.
A	Denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong.
BBB	Indicate that expectations of default risk are currently low. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered adequate but adverse business or economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.
BB	Indicate an elevated vulnerability to default risk, particularly in the event of adverse changes in business or economic conditions over time; however, business or financial flexibility exists which supports the servicing of financial commitments.
B	Indicate that material default risk is present, but a limited margin of safety remains. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.