MEETING OF ARGYLL COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Friday, 26th June 2020 1pm to 3.30pm

A G E N D A
Via Webex Teams

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'For information' items will be taken as read, unless a governor wishes to raise a specific issue arising from these papers.

ITEM	SUBJECT	STATUS	
20.2.1	Welcome and apologies		
20.2.2	Declarations of Interest & to identify any items deemed confidential 20.2.3 – Confidential Item 20.2.23 – Confidential Item 20.2.24 – Confidential Item 20.2.25 – Confidential Item 20.2.27ii – Confidential Item		
20.2.3	Minutes of previous meeting: 13th March 2020	To approve	Attached
20.2.4	**Matters arising** (*not covered elsewhere in agenda*) **i)** Update on nursery **ii)** Update on Helensburgh funding draw down	For information For information	Oral report Oral report
20.2.5	**Chair's Report**: **Overview of activity and key issues**	To note	Oral report
	RESOURCES		
20.2.6	**Draft Finance & General Purposes Committee minute of 12 June 2020**	To approve	Attached
20.2.7	**Management accounts for period to 30 April 2020**	To note	Attached

Please send any apologies or questions to Vicky (Secretary to Board): victoria.daveney@uhi.ac.uk / mobile: 07384 246325

20.2.8	**Draft Audit Committee minute of 12 June 2020**	To approve	Attached
20.2.9	**Internal Audit Plan**	For information	Attached
20.2.10	**SFC Financial Forecast and Return**	To approve	To follow
20.2.11	**Health And Safety** (standing item): H&S issues		
20.2.12	**Draft Budget 2020/21**	To approve	Attached
	STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE		
20.2.13	**Principal's Report for period ended 31 May 2020**	For consideration	Tabled
20.2.14	**Draft minute of Learning, Teaching & Engagement committee held on 21 March 2020**	To approve	Attached
20.2.15	**Early and further withdrawal KPIs for full time FE courses to date 2019/20**	To note	Attached

20.2.16	**Update on progress towards targets – 2019/20**
	    a) FE Credits
	    b) HE FTEs
	    c) HE FTE predictions for 20/21
		To note	Attached

20.2.17	**Student Mental Health Paper**	For information	Attached

20.2.18	**Update on learning, teaching and enhancement items in last quarter:**
	    a) May/June Schools Link Activity
	    b) Joint shared delivery of HNC/D Computing with WHC and NHC
	    c) Promotional Videos
	    d) CDN College Expo
		To note	Attached

20.2.19	**Policies for approval**
	    a) UHI PVG Policy
	    b) UHI FE Guidance
	Approved by LTE Committee 12/6/20.
		To note
		To note
			Attached
			Attached

20.2.20	**Student Survey Summary** Survey carried out during lockdown	For information	Attached

Please send any apologies or questions to Vicky (Secretary to Board): victoria.daveney@uhi.ac.uk / mobile: 07384 246325

20.2.21	**UHI Strategic Developments**
	    a) Executive Office Review (previously
	           circulated to Board)
	    b) UHI Partnership Change Plan
		For information and discussion	Attached
			Attached

20.2.22	**Academic Calendar 2020/21**	To note	Attached
	PEOPLE		
20.2.23	**Draft minute of HR&R committee meeting of 12 June 2020**	To approve	Attached
20.2.24	**Summary of Recruitment – Confidential Item** • Quarterly trends report	To note	Attached
20.2.25	**Confidential Item** • Redundancy	For information	Verbal
20.2.26	**NRPA Shadowing Update**	For discussion and approval	Attached
20.2.27	**Trade Union Recognition** Confidential item	For discussion and approval	Attached
	BOARD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT		
ii)	**AOCB** • Board Strategy and Induction Day	To discuss	Verbal
iii)	**Date of next meeting:** Committee Meetings – Friday 11th September, Location TBC Board Meeting – Friday 2nd October, Location TBC *(3 weeks, rather than 2, between meetings as Graduation was originally planned for Friday 25th September)*	To note	

Please send any apologies or questions to Vicky (Secretary to Board): victoria.daveney@uhi.ac.uk / mobile: 07384 246325

Board Meeting – 26th June 2020

Agenda Item 20.2.10

2020 Financial Forecast Return (FFR) for colleges 2019-20 to 2021-22

The following is the narrative I would intend to submit to Scottish Funding Council together with the figures as per the 2020/21 Budget presented for approval at this Board meeting. Two years forecasts are being sought and I would propose that the second year's forecast would be very similar to this year's with the only adjustment being a further 2% increase in salaries and income from Commercial, and other non-teaching grants reverting back to pre-COVID levels. A breakeven position is expected for this second year.

Commentary

1. Introduction

These forecasts have been prepared based on assumptions set out within the SFC guidelines for completion of the FFR.

Broadly these are:

- Reduction over the next 2 years of 3% of running costs
- Increases in salary costs of 2% per annum
- No reduction in teaching grants in 20/21

As a geographically diverse college, with college centres now operating in the 5 main towns in Argyll, and with centres on 4 islands, our estate strategy has been mainly to contain the costs of having to have a number of centres rather than one large campus.

The built environment of our college though is not good, with the centre in Dunoon continuing to be a priority as the space available and lack of staff and student space becomes more and more difficult for us. Discussions have been started with a number of parties who may be able to assist with funding for new premises in Dunoon, and has been recognised as a priority by both HIE and Argyll & Bute Council. We have budgeted £500k in 20/21 towards the costs of purchasing suitable land and for associated surveyor/architect costs to get this underway.

Improvements to both our centres in Lochgilphead, and in Islay and Helensburgh are planned for 20/21 when COVID regulations allow. Funding for Lochgilphead and Islay will be from funds accrued in previous years but as yet unspent. Funding for Helensburgh alterations are from funds due to be received from UHI's Strategic Investment Fund (SIF). The funding for Dunoon will be from our reserves.

2. Review of Financial Performance 2019-20

The outturn forecast for the year ended 31 July 2020 indicate that at present we anticipate a very small deficit for the year before any adjustment for pension liability. We do however anticipate that we may receive the UHI SIF funding before the year end, which would mean a surplus would be realised.

The College exceeded its Credit target by over 800 in 2019/20, as we did in the previous year, meaning we were one of the only UHI partners to achieve/exceed our Credit target, and contributing significantly to the achievement of the Highland and Islands region credit target. No additional income was available for the extra credits delivered. It is a source of disappointment to us that over the past 5 years we have consistently overdelivered, but receive no additional funding in year, and have had no increase in our credits over those years. It would appear that this will be the case for 2020/21 also. HE numbers were just under 200 FTEs, so our income from RAM was lower than expected as we had originally forecast for 220 FTEs.

£47k was brought in for our PGDE (teacher) training.

Grant funding for National Bargaining (NB) was significant in the year, but it is well documented that costs for Argyll College for NB are also significant, with salaries increasing from £29k to £41.5k over the last 3 years and pension costs increasing from 2% to 23%. Because of these increases our total staff costs are over £3m which means we are also subject to the Apprenticeship Levy which costs us a further £16k per annum.

We continued to host the Developing Young Workforce Argyll project, this is likely to run for at least a further year.

We sought to divest ourselves of the nursery we run in Oban, with discussions starting at the beginning of 2019. We recognised that it did not provide a service used by our staff or as a placement nursery for our students, but due to difficulties in recruiting a suitable manager, a fairly significant time input from our already stretched management team was required. Discussions with a number of parties were held, but ultimately could not be taken further. The decision was taken to close the nursery from 26th June 2020. Obviously CIVID meant it had to close sooner than this, but staff were employed until 26th June. All staff were made redundant with effect from this date. We would hope to rent the building at a later date.

3. Changes in tuition fee income and other income

The assumption regarding SFC grants which we currently receive through NHC prior to confirmation of our assigned status is that they will be in line with this years grants. We have assumed the same funding % split between UHI partners going forward. Indications are that there will be no increase in credits over the period of the FFR projections and our HE numbers are forecast to be at the same level as in 2019/20 ie 200 FTE.

4. Commercial income/activities

As per last year, our commercial activities are being managed by our Head of Communications and indications are that income from this source we felt could be increased substantially. Clearly COVID has had an effect on that, and we suspect is likely to do so for the rest of 2020 and we have therefore anticipated a reduction of 50% in this income for 2020/21 to only £8500.

We are limited in the increase in activity we can reasonably provide in Argyll given the limited time available as all of our support staff already have significant portfolios and in order to develop commercial activity any further will involve employing someone specifically for business development.

We have recently reinstated the facility for CSCS testing in our Dunoon centre but again, COVID has had a significant affect on both income achieved and income forecast for 202/21.

Whilst we were continuing to increase our provision of first aid courses, health and safety courses and personal licence training, we have to recognise the limits of the resources we have available, with barriers to any dramatic increase in income from this area being space constraints within our centres.

5. Changes in staff and non-staff costs

Due to NB, tutor salaries exceed those of most of our support staff including the majority of our senior management team. However, we are forecasting increases of only 2% each year for both teaching and support salaries. We do recognise the need for a number of new support staff roles as currently our support team is very stretched and we have to recognise that this is not sustainable longer term. We are also heavily dependent on a small number of key staff, and succession planning needs to be a priority over the next two years. In 2020/21 we intend to be fully signed up to NB, and all relevant teaching staff will be moved to FTE contracts. This will result in higher costs and much less flexibility in our teaching team. We will be looking to maximise teaching hours available and we can see that this will necessarily mean fewer staff being taken on when staff move on. We continue to look at rationalisation of our curriculum and recognise the need for larger class sizes to allow us to make our courses viable. To the end, a number of courses are now being run in conjunction with two partner colleges. These courses can be networked, and this should ensure there are always sufficient numbers to run the course, whilst reducing the teaching cost through shared resources.

With regard to non staff costs, whilst we will strive to continue to control those as we have been doing for some years, it is difficult to see how we can deliver the 3% efficiency cuts sought by SFC. Our procurement assistant though continues to deliver significant savings in our learning resources costs, and improved use of PECOS.

6. Balance Sheet - Cash position

Our cash position is not expected to deteriorate in 2020/21, clearly so long as income and expenditure is in line with that budgeted. Because of large costs of depreciation, but the predicted breakeven results in each of the forecast years, cash reserves are forecast to increase

over the period of these forecasts, which is why we intend to invest some of our unrestricted reserves in purchasing land suitable for building new premises in Dunoon.

7. Risk Management

Key risks this year are all about COVID. The achievement of targets is not felt to be an issue other than if COVID related restrictions mean we cannot carry out some of our practical courses and courses with schools. However, we are assured that SFC will not seek to claw back for any COVID related failure to meet targets.   Indications for recruitment at present time are good.

In terms of costs, our main risk continues to be the effects of national pay bargaining and the consequences of this for all of our staff costs.   There is little we can do to mitigate this other than look to reduce staff numbers or increase class sizes (very difficult given the area in which we operate).

We have previously discussed the issues with our estates and maintenance, and are aware of the need to keep ongoing maintenance at a steady level to keep unplanned costs to a minimum, but this is not always easily achievable.

8. Other information

We were awarded funding from Argyll & Bute Council for the post of Maritime Centre Development Manager for two years. This is a new post developed in conjunction with HIE and Argyll & Bute Council as part of Oban as a University Town. The project manager has recently taken up post. It is planned that a new Maritime Centre will be built in Dunstaffnage outside Oban, and funding for this forms part of the Council's Rural Growth Fund bid. The £4m included in our Capital expenditure sheet is for this building, which will be entirely grant funded.

Ailsa E Close

25/06/20

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Draft Budget 2020/21

The income figures for grants from SFC and UHI are based on figures provided by UHI, so it would appear to be safe to include them in the budget as confirmed and accurate.

We are forecasting income of £5.8m for the year, with almost £1.675m of that for National Bargaining funding.

Now budgeting for a pay rise of 2% for salaries in line with assumptions suggested by Scottish Funding Council for Financial Forecast Return, and movement of majority of teaching staff to FTE contracts has been budgeted.

Assumptions for other costs has been noted against expense headings.

A capital expenditure budget is attached and this will be further discussed at the meeting.

All figures carry a COVID warning, but we are budgeting for a £13k surplus for 2020/21.

Ailsa Close
25/06/2020

Argyll College UHI Ltd

INCOME	Expected Outturn 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	
SFC Credits Income	2,587,070	2,808,952	Per UHI No funding for ESIF credits due to Region not meeting Credit target in 19/20
UHI Income - RAM less Microram	362,331	383,775	Per UHI
UHI Income - PGDE	47,238	53,831	Per UHI
UHI Income - Other	128,550	129,000	Flatrate £20k, SSC£109k
SAAS Income	259,000	259,000	Based on 2019/20 actual
ILA Income	6,000	6,000	
DYW income	140,000	140,000	Project funding, small amount of management costs covered
Bursary Income/Student support	50,000	50,000	
Modern/Foundation Apprenticeships	72,000	36,000	Unclear for 2020/21, assumed 50% reduction
Maintenance/Capital Grant income	62,000	106,086	Per UHI HE £26262 FE £119824 less £40k capital expenditure
MITC funding	13,000	52,000	From Council for staffing
Bank Interest Received	3,000	2,000	Interest rates minimal
FE Student Fees	95,000	66,500	Expected reduction of 30% due to COVID
HE Student Fees - Taught	35,000	24,500	Expected reduction of 30% due to COVID
Commercial Training Activity	17,000	8,500	Expected reduction of 50% due to COVID
Commercial Training Activity - CSCS Income	1,500	750	Expected reduction of 50% due to COVID
Nursery Income - Fees	105,000	0	
Property Lease Income	3,959	0	
Room/Facility Hire - With Own Insurance	929	465	Expected reduction of 50% due to COVID
Room/Facility Hire - Without Own Insurance	810	405	Expected reduction of 50% due to COVID
Vending Machine Income	800	400	Expected reduction of 50% due to COVID
Hairdressing Income - General	5,000	2,500	Expected reduction of 50% due to COVID
Catering Income	5,000	2,500	Expected reduction of 50% due to COVID
Feed-In Tariff	4,000	4,000	
Other income	2,200	0	
National Bargaining Grant funding	1,166,269	1,675,000	Per UHI
Income from Staff	0	700	
Graduation Income	400	550	
Branded clothing income	1,000	700	
	5,174,056	5,813,414	
LESS: EXPENDITURE			
Staffing Costs - Salaries	1,417,333	1,386,563	Payrise of 2% included. No nursery staff, but includes DYW
Staffing Costs - Employer's NI	125,560	137,551	
Staffing Costs - Employer's Pension	181,744	299,498	Assumption that everyone is in Local Authority Pension scheme
Staffing Costs - Maternity cover	1,000	0	
Staffing Costs - Sickness cover	10,000	30,000	2 staff members on average on long term sick leave
Staffing Costs - Travel and Subsistence	20,000	10,000	Reduction through COVID for at least half of year?
Staffing Costs - Training	6,000	22,500	Intention to improve staff training and devlpt in 2020/21 Av spend £500 per FTE
Staffing Costs - Disclosure	1,000	1,000	
Staffing Costs - Recruitment	3,000	3,000	Not thought that recruitment will be high this year
Staffing Costs - Other	55,263	18,000	Apprenticeship Levy
Teaching Staff Costs - Salaries	1,713,000	1,945,197	With current staffing levels but move towards FTE contracts 1.5% payrise
Teaching Staff Costs - Employer's NI	134,000	175,068	
Teaching Staff Costs - Employer's Pension	313,000	447,395	Teachers pension contributions are at 23%. Assumed all staff join
Teaching Staff Costs - Maternity cover	1,000	5,000	
Teaching Staff Costs - Sick Pay	10,000	30,000	
Teaching Staff Costs - Travel and Subsistence	12,000	7,000	Reduction through COVID for at least half of year?
Teaching Staff Costs - Training Other	12,000	22,500	Intention to improve staff training and devlpt in 2020/21 Av spend £400 per FTE
Teaching Staff Costs - Disclosure	1,300	2,000	
Teaching Staff Costs - Recruitment	3,000	3,000	Not thought that recruitment will be high this year
Teaching Staff Costs - Other	42,000	12,000	Joint marketing with WHC
Payments to Subcontractors	66,000	25,000	MITC project costs
Learning Resources/Matls	50,000	40,000	COVID reduction expected in materials costs
Student PPE/Kit	10,000	30,000	This may be higher than usual because of COVID
Payments to Awarding Bodies - SQA	60,000	60,000	
Payments to Awarding Bodies - CITB	3,000	5,000	
Payments to Awarding Bodies - BCS	8,000	8,000	
Payments to Awarding Bodies - Activ Training	3,500	3,500	
Marketing and Promotion	50,000	60,000	Increased marketing required to help with student recruitment
Health and Safety Costs	20,000	80,000	Expected to increase exponentially because of COVID requirements
Non Chargeable Catering Costs	2,000	3,000	
Property Costs - General maintenance	40,000	70,000	
Property Costs - Lease Costs	57,500	50,000	Arran, C'town, Bute, Dunoon

Property Costs - Venue Costs	8,000		5,000	COVID reduction
Property Costs - Rates and Water Charges	17,000		17,000	Will be no change
Property Costs - Utilities	65,000		65,000	Lower for 2 months as centres shut until Sep likely
Property Costs - Cleaning	30,000		50,000	Cleaning expected to be intensified when we return
Property Costs - Other Property Costs	4,000		4,000	
Insurance	31,000		31,000	
ICT Maintenance and Support	117,000		117,000	
Equipment repairs	5,000		5,000	
Equipment Lease Costs	40,000		40,000	Printers
Company Vehicle Costs - Fuel	2,500		5,000	
Company Vehicle Costs - Repairs and Maintenance	3,000		3,000	
Company Vehicle Costs - Road Tax	300		300	
Company Vehicle Costs - Other	40,000		40,000	EV lease costs
Supplies and Copying	12,000		10,000	
Postage	4,000		4,000	
Telecoms	18,000		18,000	
Other expenses	4,000		4,000	
Donations	500		0	
Subscriptions	27,000		30,000	HISA, Celcat, Cascade, other software
Professional Fees - Audit and Accountancy	20,000		30,000	New auditors both internal and external
Professional Fees - Legal	30,000		20,000	
Professional Fees - Other	5,000		5,000	
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Travel & Subsist	20,000		10,000	Lower travel costs through COVID
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Hardship	10,000		20,000	Higher hardship costs through COVID
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Sanitary product	3,000		10,000	
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Graduation	7,000		7,000	
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Other	3,500		3,500	
Governance Costs - Travel & Subsistence	500		1,500	
Governance Costs - Other	500		500	
Bank Charges	550		550	
Loan Interest - BoS Fixed Rate	2,000		0	Loan paid off
Bad debts	1,500		5,000	
Vending Machine Costs	2,300		2,300	
Hairdressing Supplies - General	500		500	Likely to be low until COVID regulations ease
Hairdressing Supplies - Retail	0		0	
Hairdressing Costs - Other	400		400	
Food Purchases	8,500		8,500	Likely to be limited until COVID regulations ease, no nursery lunches
	4,975,750		5,564,822	
Operating surplus	198,306		248,591	
Non Capital Fixed Assets	15,000		50,000	Move to laptops replacing PCs in centres
Loss on sale of asset (building)	0			
Depreciation	185,000		185,000	
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year	(1,694)		13,591	

Proposed Capital Expenditure 2020/21

Non capital fixed assets

40 laptops at £500 each, replace desktops	20,000
Charging trolleys 4 at £1500 each	6,000
Replacement of VC equipment	24,000
	50,000

Helensburgh Centre

Refurbishment originally planned when funding was received	60,000

Dunoon Centre

Architects, purchase of land	500,000

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Argyll College | Colaiste Earra-Ghàidheil

Draft Minutes – Learning, Teaching & Engagement Committee
held at 10.30 pm on Friday 12th June 2020
via Webex Teams

Present:	Andrew Campbell, Chair (AMC); Elodie Nowinski (EM); Faye Tudor (FT); Rosemary Allford (RA); Vicky Gunn (VG); Martin Jones (MJ)
Apologies:	No apologies
In Attendance:	Elaine Munro (EM); Ailsa Close (AEC); Vicky Daveney (VD)(Secretary)

	Item	Action
20.2.1	**Welcome & apologies for absence.** The Chair welcomed all governors to the meeting and welcomed Elodie Nowinski, Rosemary Allford and Vicky Gunn to their first committee meeting.	
20.2.2	**Declarations of interest & any items deemed to be confidential.** There were no declarations of interest.	
20.2.3	**Minute of previous meeting held on 28th February 2020** To be signed at next meeting held in person.	Approved
20.2.4	**Matters arising:** There were no matters arising	
20.2.5	**Update on progress towards targets – 2019/20** a) FE Credits – EM confirmed that target had been exceeded by 397 as at 1st June. Year end position is expected to be around 7,200, as only May/June schools link activity still to be counted. This will be the fourth academic year that the college has exceeded the credit target by over 400 credits. There is additional cost to the college of over achievement but no additional income received. MJ stated that the over-delivery helps the region to meet its overall target with SFC and with Argyll College's consistent track record it should be well placed to receive any extra credits that become available. FT asked whether the credit total includes things which could not be delivered due to covid-19. EM confirmed that it is only achieved credits. RA asked whether credit targets for this session and next session will take Covid-19's impact into account? EM confirmed that the SFC have stated that colleges will receive the funding they were due this year and MJ stated that next year if any targets aren't reached due to covid-19, there will be no loss of funding. b) HE FTEs – EM explained that unlike FE targets that are set by the region for each academic partner and have not been amended for a number of years, for HE each UHI academic partner submits predictions on expected achievement each year. 199.6 is the current FTE and is unlikely to change, with the target being 201. c) HE FTE predictions for 2020/21 – EM confirmed that next year's prediction is 193.5. In addition, following interviews in February, 19 applicants have been offered places on PGDE Teacher Training programmes – primary and secondary. These FTEs are funding separately outwith the normal UHI resource allocation model (RAM) and outwith the normal HE FTE predictions. MJ added that local councils see PGDE as particularly important and the college would like to build on this type of activity	Noted

		in both nursing and social work too, thereby providing a future workforce for rural areas. VG expressed interest in providing local education for key worker areas.	
20.2.6		**Early withdrawal KPIs** EM explained that last year's early withdrawal figures had been disappointing but had improved this year, with 4% compared to 8% last year. EN asked if any particular measures had been implemented? EM stated that early intervention and good pastoral care were put in place by centre managers, and teaching and support staff had a heightened awareness of the importance of supporting and retaining students. VG asked if there might be an effect on continuity next year if students are unable to implement the more practical elements of their course, eg hairdressing and childcare placements. MJ acknowledged that it is critical that marketing activity for next year makes it clear to students what to expect, to avoid disappointment and disengagement which may result in early withdrawal. EM added that the college does offer several practical courses and some with work a placement element, and is talking to teaching teams and the college sector in general and taking guidance on how to ensure delivery by adapting or delaying certain elements. The position will be clearer at the next committee meetings.	Noted
20.2.7		**Student Mental Health paper** EM stated that there had been a significant increase in declaration of mental health issues, particularly in FE students. The appointment of a student counsellor in March has had a positive impact. FT commented that the student telephone survey had been useful, as mental health issues are one of the main problems centres deal with. EN confirmed that mental health issues are a problem for the college sector and supporting students in returning to college, or continuing to work from home, will be a priority next year and questioned whether there should be priority placed on who returns to the centre if social distancing continues. MJ confirmed that funding from SFC was allocated to engage the counsellor. RA supported the initiative and asked if its impact is being measured, given it is from specific funding. EM confirmed that the counsellor provides updates and the college will be reporting back to the SFC.	
20.2.8		**Update on learning, teaching and enhancement items in last quarter:** a) May/June Schools Link Activity – EM stated that due to Covid-19 teaching staff have been given access to school's online systems for the first time. There are 11 schools in our area, each with different timetables and all want face-to-face teaching. This has helped to identify the advantages of online learning and in the future may help introduce our courses to smaller schools who haven't previously been able to get enough students to make a course viable. MJ expressed his hope that this might remove the barrier to efficient delivery by the college and enable future conversations with the council. b) Joint shared delivery of HNC/D Computing with WHC and NHC – EM confirmed that teaching teams across the 3 partner colleges have divided the units up, with an even split in credits. This ensures the viability of the course running each year, previously low numbers for individual colleges would result in difficult decision being made about course continuity. c) Promotional Videos – EM confirmed that the marketing team have produced promotional videos featuring Q&A sessions with teaching staff. Preparation is also under way for a virtual open day on 24th June. The marketing team are working closely with a teaching teams to develop an on-line induction programme for next year. d) Virtual CDN College Expo – EM explained that the Expo had been online this year with seminar sessions being delivered as a series of on-line tutorials. Argyll College's digital media tutor provided a tutorial at the event. AMC was pleased to see the links with schools opening up further and the shared delivery with partner colleges. EN was impressed with the videos and joint shared delivery. FT was also pleased about the joint delivery, as it will help traditionally fragile numbers and guarantee the course running each year. VG stated that collaborative provision is key and if the model works it could be a prototype for delivery within UHI.	

20.2.9	**Policies for approval**
	EM explained that these are part of the UHI single policy project to align policies across the partnership and create common policies.
	    a) UHI PVG Policy
	    b) UHI FE Guidance
		Approved

20.2.10	**Student Survey Summary** EM explained that although teaching very quickly switched to online at the start of lockdown, there was concern about students engaging with their course and whether they were coping with mental health, finance, technology etc. Centre staff phoned all full time FE and HE students and in a conversational way ascertained how they were coping. The survey has been useful in allowing staff to follow-up where required and signpost students to the various mental health support available to them. EN queried whether those finding it difficult to work at home had specified why? EM confirmed that the reasons were generally due to other caring responsibilities, eg home schooling young children. FT confirmed that it had been a positive experience with many students pleased to hear a familiar voice.	
20.2.11	**FE and HE applications to date for 2020/21** EM confirmed that they are looking positive and explained that FE applications are always much later than HE. SVQ Childcare applicant numbers are quite low but this could be due to the impact of Covid-19 and potential applicants uncertainty about how work placements can happen. HE is up 16% on the same time last academic year. EN asked if a higher than usual churn is expected? EM said that we may get more HN students as they may decide to stay at home rather than move to larger towns and cities. MJ stated that given our mode of delivery is already networked for some courses, Covid-19 may not impact as negatively on us, although hands on courses may be more of an issue. RA said that students deciding to stay at home this year and delaying university may benefit Argyll College. VG also suggested that students anxious that they may not be able to secure work may decide to remain in education.	
20.2.12	**QA actions taken to ensure adherence to awarding body guidance in relation not assessment and resulting of students** EM explained that this was a summary of all the processes and procedures put in place to follow awarding body guidance and ensure robust decision making.	**Noted**
20.2.13	**MA improvement action plan** EM explained that there has been a consortium approach between 8 of the UHI partner colleges in contracting with SDS for the last 2 years. This effectively allows for more flexibility between partners and reduces bureaucracy. Following on from the usual monitoring and audit processes SDS issued an improvement notice, although individually each college had very little-non-compliance, overall action was required. The consortium and local college action plans have been submitted and a response is awaited from SDS.	**Noted**
20.2.14	**SLA with Borders College for delivery of HNC Horticulture** EM stated that the college has a very good team of horticulture tutors offering NC/HNC/HND across Argyll and also delivering HNC and HND to Dundee & Angus College. The HNC will now be delivered to Borders College from the start of the next academic year. MJ provided some strategic background that horticulture is a flagship for Argyll College, due to the individual involved and the physical environment of the region. This has allowed for provision to be exported to bigger colleges. Last year a member of staff had funding to develop more online materials as well as a MOOC, which will be available worldwide.	
20.2.15	**AOCB** MJ asked that the committee formerly acknowledge the hard work of teaching staff to make sure assessments took place and the student experience remained positive further to lockdown. The committee members concurred with this and AMC agreed that the work the college staff have been doing has been exceptional.	

	AMC informed the committee that a new Chair is required for LTE and asked for notes of interest.		
20.2.16	**Date of next meeting.** Committee Meetings – Friday 11th September, Location TBC Board Meeting – Friday 27th September, Location TBC		
	Signed by ………………………………………………………………………… **Date ……………………………………………….** **Chair of Learning, Teaching & Engagement Committee**		

To: **Argyll College Board**

Date: **26 June 2020**

Status: **To Note**

Subject: **Further and Early withdrawal - full time FE to date 2019/20**

The early withdrawal statistic for full time courses starting at the beginning of the academic year relates to students who leave college before 1st November; for courses starting after this date early withdrawal is calculated as anyone leaving the course before 25% of the course duration has been completed.

Further Withdrawal is any student who leaves college either on or after 2nd November or for courses starting after the beginning of the academic year after 25% of the course duration.

- 173 Full Time FE students enrolled at the start of this academic year. Of these 9 withdrew before 1st November, giving an early withdrawal statistic of 5%   A further 23 students withdrew after 1st November, giving a further withdrawal percentage of 13%

- A further 55 full time FE students started in January 2020, studying short full time courses – this means each week students attend college on a full time basis but the length of the course is shorter than a full academic year. Short full time courses starting in January would complete by the end of the academic year.   Of these 55 enrolled students, 2 withdrew before completing 25% of the course duration, giving an early withdrawal statistic of 3%; a further 5 withdrew from study giving a further withdrawal percentage of 9%

- Overall 228 full time FE students enrolled this academic year. 11 were early withdrawals (4%) and 28 were further withdrawals leaving after the 25% date (12.3%), giving an overall total withdrawal from full time courses for 2029/20 of 17%.   This is an overall 10% reduction in withdrawal compared to last year.

- Of the students who withdrew from their full time course, 4 left to take up employment in the sector they were studying. A further 11 students who withdrew indicated health reasons as the main reason for leaving their course.

  The table below gives a comparison of early, further and total withdrawal for the last 4 years:

Academic year	Early w/d	Further w/d	Total w/d
2019/20	4%	12%	17%
2018/19	8%	18%	26%
2017/18	3%	15%	18%
2016/17	9%	12%	21%

Details of student withdrawal by course is shown in the table below.

FE Full time courses 2019/20 Course	Enrolled	Early w/d	Further w/d	Total w/d	Still current
Access to HN Business Administration & Computing	12		1	1	11
Access to Nursing (SWAP)	18	3		3	15
Agriculture NC at SCQF Level 6	7		1	1	6
Art and Design NC Level 6	6			0	6
Beauty Care and Make-Up NC Level 5	6		4	4	2
Computing with Digital Media NC at SCQF Level 5	11		4	4	7
Early Education and Childcare NC at SCQF Level 6	10		2	2	8
Horticulture NC at SCQF Level 5	4	2		2	2
Social Sciences NC at SCQF Level 6	8	1	1	2	6
Social Services (Children & Young People) SCQF 6	29	1	5	6	23
Social Services (Children & Young People) SVQ at SCQF 7	30	1	3	4	26
SP Education for Life	11		1	1	10
SVQ in Hairdressing and Barbering at SCQF level 4	4	1		1	3
SVQ in Hairdressing at SCQF level 5	5			0	5
SVQ in Hairdressing at SCQF level 6	3			0	3
SVQ in Professional Cookery at SCQF Level 4	1			0	1
SVQ in Professional Cookery at SCQF Level 5	4		1	1	3
SVQ in Professional Cookery at SCQF Level 6	4			0	4
Subtotal	**173**	**9**	**23**	**32**	**141**
Withdrawal %		**5.2%**	**13.3%**	**18.5%**	
Short Full Time - January starts					
Agriculture NC	4			0	4
Construction NPA	15	1	1	2	13
Health and Social Care: An Introduction NPA	10	1	2	3	7
Hospitality NC at SCQF Level 5	5			0	5
Nat 5 Maritime Skills - SFT	21		2	2	19
Subtotal	**55**	**2**	**5**	**7**	**48**
Withdrawal %		**3.6%**	**9.1%**	**12.7%**	

	Enrolled	Early w/d	Further w/d	Overall w/d	Current
Total	228	11	28	39	189
Overall % withdrawal		4.8%	12.3%	17.1%	

To: Argyll College Board

Date: 26 June 2020

Status: To Note

Subject: 2019-20 Update on progress towards targets

  a) **FE 2019/20**

The FE credit target for 2019/20 is 6716 - core credit target is 6582, with 134 ESIF credits.

To date, the credit count is 7113, exceeding target by 397 credits. With only May/June schools link activity to be counted, the anticipated end of year position is expected to be ~ 7200.

The current regional progress towards target is shown below, by partner:

Academic partner	Core credit target	ESIF credit target	Total credit target	Current position (01.06.20)	Over/under achievement
Argyll	6,582	134	6,716	7,113	**+397**
Inverness	28,915	296	29,211	27,978	-1,233
Lews	5,348	0	5,348	3.911	-1,437
Moray	18,807	0	18,807	17,414	-1,393
NHC	12,335	155	12,490	11,743	-747
Orkney	3,603	145	3,748	3,749	**+1**
Perth	23,655	1,200	24,855	24,374	-481
Shetland	4,309	0	4,309	4,099	-210
WHC	6,828	270	7,089	7.089	-9
Regional	110,382	2,200	112,582	107,469	-5,113

As can be seen above Argyll College and Orkney College are the only UHI partners to have achieved 2019/20 credit target at 1 June 20020.

The Argyll College four year trend is the following:

Year	Core credit target	ESIF target	Total credit target	Final credit count	Over/under achievement
2018/19	6582	100	6682	7504	**822**
2017/18	6617	0	6617	7149	**532**
2016/17	6617	0	6617	6702	**85**
2015/16	6617	0	6617	6706	**89**

The UHI region four year trend showing the % of Argyll contribution to the regional credit target is:

Academic year	Regional core credit target	Regional ESIF credit target	Total regional credit target	Final regional count	Over / Under achievement	Argyll - % contribution to regional count
2018-19	110,382	2,200	112,582	114,525	**1943**	6.55%
2017-18	110,968	2,200	113,168	114,843	**1675**	6.23%
2016-17	110,968	4,400	115,368	116,735	**1367**	5.74%
2015-16	110,968	3,490	114.458	116,778	**2320**	5.74%

b) HE 2019/20

Predicted FTEs were 201; revised predictions made at early statistical return (ESR) in early December were 194 FTE. The current FTE count at 27.05.20 is 199.6 which is likely to be the final FTE count at the end of the academic year.   The 199.6 FTEs comprise 160 full time students and 125 part time students, of which the majority will be very part time possibly only enrolled on a single degree module.

In addition there 12 PGDE teacher education students that are funded outwith the RAM. 8 are studying primary teaching and 4 secondary teaching

The table below compares FTEs and student headcount for the last 4 academic years:

		Headcount		
	FTEs	Total	Full time	part time
2019/20	199.6	285	160	125
2018/19	200.1	280	170	110
2017/18	221.6	290	195	84
2016/17	180.5	226	165	61

c) Predicted HE FTEs for 2020/21

The first round of predicted FTEs for 2020/21 academic year, set at 195.3, have been submitted to UHI.

In addition there will be PGDE teacher education student FTE numbers that are outwith the RAM. Following interviews on 21 February, nineteen applicants have been offered places on the programme.

To: Argyll College Board

Date: 26 June 2020

Status: For Information

Subject: Student Mental Health

Student Counsellor and Well Being Co-ordinator report

SERVICE COMMENCED - 2nd March 2020.

First referral received 28th February. Student sessions commenced - 4th March.

Active promotion/awareness of service to students and staff undertaken by working with Marketing and Comms colleagues releasing videos, fliers and setting up Wellbeing page on the college website. Information made available on this page includes: -
- Contact details and how to access the service
- Helpful Apps and links to mental health self-help sites e.g. MIND, NHS
- Link to Big White Wall – see information below regarding
- Link to UHI Mental Health support page with helpline information

Fliers devised to raise awareness of services and tools include:-
- What online tools will work for me?
- Getting the most from counselling
- Person Centred Counselling what to expect

In addition to the above:
- Drop-In sessions arranged to meet staff and students in Helensburgh, Dunoon, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead but these had to be cancelled due to lockdown.
- One to one introductory discussions held by Video Conferencing (VC) or telephone with College centre staff.
- Creation of a Health and wellbeing registration form
- Developing links with other academic partner counselling services, notably Perth, Inverness, West Highland College etc.
- Becoming a member of the UHI Counselling Network (CN) and the UHI Mental Health Strategy Implementation Group (MHSIG).

LOCKDOWN – 20TH MARCH 2020
Information provided and activities engaged in includes:
- Advice re COVID-19
- COVID-19 and mental wellbeing, looking after yourself at this time information leaflet
- Video for mental health week
- Fliers to highlight service still running via Video Conference, Telephone, Instant Messaging, EMAIL etc.
- Continued representation on MHSIG and CN to ensure consistency in service provision where possible throughout Argyll College/UHI.
- Completion of Online Counselling Diploma Course (13wks). This course is to provide myself with additional skills to deliver counselling across a number of online synchronous and asynchronous delivery platforms.

Cases to date - The majority of calls have come from anxious students in relation to submission of work and COVID-19. Other issues included the following:

- Depression/low mood *
- Eating Disorders *
- Bi-polar/anxiety *
- Anxiety re- exams, deadlines for thesis, lockdown situation. (contact has mainly been around these issues).
- Autism Spectrum Disorders – Anxiety/panic attacks
- Relationship difficulties

*represents cases who following assessment were referred/transitioned and are now under GP and Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT), as appropriate. This ensures these students are accessing the correct service and have ongoing support available to them.

Contact was made directly by students and often following the discussions they had had with Centre and Support staff in the course of the Student Survey carried out over the phone after the Easter break, or via recommendation by their course tutor.

I currently have no outstanding concerns regarding any students.

April was a quiet month, however, May saw a lot of calls regarding stress/anxiety about submitting dissertation and other assessment work, uncertainty regarding how study will continue next term etc. These cases were each generally over 2/3 sessions at most and resolved with the help of liaising with course tutors, centre staff and student support teams.

At the time of writing this report there has been a drop in calls, I assume as term is coming to an end. I have had some positive calls from students who have now received results and passed and are in a much better place and now planning next steps which has been great to hear.

Big White Wall (BWW). This is a confidential 24hr online service, with trained practitioners to provide extra support as needed. They provide helpful and creative online tools to help students express how they feel and a wide range of guided self-help courses. UHI subscribe to this service on behalf of all UHI partners. This service runs 24hrs a day 365 days a year. Big White Wall will continue to run over the summer, and this is posted on the student website. (see below) Feed back regarding this service has been very positive across the board.

Plans for return in August

Looking ahead to next term there is still uncertainty over our return to 'normality'. However, I am looking to involve student representatives and Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA) in compiling questionnaires for students and staff to see what they would find helpful from the service. E.g. Drop ins – coffee and chat, group work, etc.

- To continue to liaise with and meet as many staff and students as possible to get them familiar and encourage use of the service.
- To continue to offer support to promote social and emotional competency and build resilience to ensure our students have a positive learning experience.
- To continue to develop resources and training for college staff to use to help them feel more confident in supporting students in their classes with mental health issues.

Maggie Melville
Student Counsellor and Wellbeing Co-0rdinator

To: **Argyll College Board**

Date: **26 June 2020**

Status: **To Note**

Subject: **Update on learning, teaching and enhancement items in last quarter**

a) **May/June Schools Link activity**
   Schools change timetable in late May each year after the national exam diet. This year, in the absence of school exams, timetables changed in early May. In collaboration with each of the 11 schools in the Argyll College area and mirroring how schools are engaging with pupils at this time, it has been agreed college tutors will have a single engagement each week with schools link pupils via google classroom, with a task set for the students to complete between sessions. This weekly interaction will continue until the end of the school academic year on 26th June.

   This is the first time college tutors have been given access to google classroom. Teaching staff are working to prepare interesting and interactive lessons for schools students. This on-line interaction is likely to continue at the start of the next school academic year and if permitted to continue beyond that time could increase access to a wider range of schools link provision to pupils in smaller schools, where it can be challenging to recruit viable cohorts each year. On-line delivery would reduce the difficulties that arise due to the lack of a common timetable or even common hours for a school day which is the current situation with Argyll schools.

b) **Joint shared delivery of HNC/D Computing with WHC and NHC**
   Argyll College, West Highland College and North Highland College have agreed to jointly deliver HNC and HND Computing from next academic year. Until now each college has taught these courses separately, with small cohorts and uncertainty each year on whether student recruitment will be sufficient to ensure the courses go ahead. This shared delivery ensures the viability of the provision each year, regardless of the cohort size in any one of the delivery partners.

   Teaching teams across the three UHI colleges have agreed who teaches which units to ensure an even split in credits taught by each partner and have devised a timetable for delivery. Each partner will teach 5 credits in each qualification level to all students in the three partners. The funding for each partner will be calculated via the UHI resource allocation model, currently the MircoRAM.

   Discussions are on-going between the three colleges regarding joint delivery of other HN programmes.

c) **Promotional Videos**

The Argyll College marketing team, working closely with teaching teams, are running a series of promotional videos and Q&A sessions with teaching staff, to raise awareness of college curriculum and specifically to promote key curriculum areas and encourage student interest and applications. You can view the first of these here: https://www.facebook.com/argyllcollege/posts/1443615042485128

The team have also produced another fantastic promotional film for the college, which can be accessed from this link https://youtu.be/IRPcWQ-UJ9Y and are currently preparing for an interactive virtual open day on 24th June.

d) **Virtual CDN College Expo**

The College Development Network (CDN) College Expo this year is a virtual event, being held on Thurs 11th June. The theme this year is 'The Future is Now:Learning from Lockdown'. As well as keynote speakers and a number of seminar sessions there is a programme of virtual activity sessions, which this year is a series of YouTube videos. One of the YouTube tutorials from an Argyll College Digital Media tutor has been selected for inclusion – you can view his easy photo manipulation tutorial from the link below:

Sam Tweedlie's Quick and easy Photopea tutorial

Argyll College – Online Open Day 24th June 2020

Due to COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions, Argyll College organised an online Open Day. Response was positive and there are plans for a partnership wide online open day on 5th August, the day after SQA exam results are published.

Overview of the day from Mo McKenna – Head of Marketing and Communications

During the day we had 29 telephone or skype appointments with applicants and facilitated 5 careers sessions for SDS. Thanks must go to the 12 tutors plus Liz Richardson, Head of Student Services who spoke to applicants and to Judi Worthington, Centre Manager in Arran who did a phenomenal job of co-ordinating all of these meetings and in dealing with applicants to ensure they got the most out of the contact.

There was good engagement on social media (facebook and twitter) including some from HISA, and we dealt with 8 direct message enquiries on the facebook page. And as a direct result of the open day a tutor was able to set up one student with a summer internship with InspirAlba, and several centre staff managed to convert enquiries to applications.

Sample Feedback from Participants

Hi There,

I took part in your open day today and thought that the whole experience was very good.

The first thing I did was to view a short video regarding a course that I was interested in. I then made enquiries to gain more information.

The whole process was easy and any requests I made for more information were answered promptly. I finished with a telephone conversation, and the tutor that I spoke with at the college in Oban was very friendly and answered all my questions in an efficient and pleasant manner.

My only concern is that timetables are not given out until near the start date. This makes it difficult for future planning if you are trying to combine work and study.

If you held other online open days, I would definitely recommend them to other people.

Many Thanks

Fiona Maclarty

This has been really helpful and I think this is a great idea because it removes any nerves about meeting someone in person. As someone that has anxiety that part really helped me be myself over the phone.

I would like to see more of these in the future as they allow people to easily ask questions and know what their next step should be.

Martin

Link to supporting videos

https://www.argyll.uhi.ac.uk/study-with-us/open-day-2020/ and scroll down to see the video library, covering subjects from childcare to computing and digital media, and horticulture to hospitality.

Policy on Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme membership for students

POL

Lead Officer (Post):	Click or tap here to enter text.
Responsible Committee:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date policy approved:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Date policy due for review:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	Click or tap to enter a date.

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request. Please contact the Governance and Policy Officer on 01463 279000.

Policy Summary

Overview	This policy is required to set out the position of the University of the Highlands and Islands and all academic partners ("the University partnership") with regard to administration of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme for students.
Purpose	The policy will support a consistent approach to PVG scheme membership across the partnership and parity of student experience.
Scope	The policy applies to all students, applicants and prospective applicants for all University partnership courses regardless of mode or level of study.
Consultation	The policy has been developed by a group of practitioners from the University partnership to ensure that best practice is reflected in the policy and accompanying procedures. The policy will be briefed to all relevant members of staff and made available to students and applicants via websites and as part of the application process.
Implementation and Monitoring	The University and academic partners are individually responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed in their own institution.
Risk Implications	This policy will reduce risks associated with legislative obligations, reputational damage and relationships with placement providers for the University partnership by ensuring that best practice from across the partnership is being shared and followed. This policy will reduce the risk for applicants and students by guiding them to an appropriate course for their personal circumstances and maximising opportunities.
Link with Strategy	This policy supports the University partnership's commitment to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all, aligned with the Strategic Theme of "Our Students", responding to the diversity of our student population by enhancing inclusive practice, and widening access and participation. It also aims to ensure the partnership discharges its duty of care for vulnerable groups we interact with as part of the programmes we deliver.
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Completed March 2020 – no further action.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Policy Statement

1.1   This policy supports our commitment to provide information to applicants and students about PVG Scheme membership requirements for specified programmes and to fair, transparent and consistent administration of student applications to the PVG Scheme.

1.2   University/Academic Partner Name recognises and complies with the legal and statutory obligations that arise from legislation including the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and other relevant guidance and regulations.

2. Definitions

2.1   **Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme:** The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme helps make sure people whose behaviour makes them unsuitable to work with children and/or protected adults and cannot do 'regulated work' with these vulnerable groups.

2.2   **Disclosure Scotland**: An executive agency of the Scottish Government that provides disclosure services and the PVG membership scheme for employers and voluntary organisations.

2.3   **Regulated work**: There are two types of regulated work – work with children and work with protected adults. Regulated work is usually jobs including: caring responsibilities, teaching, providing personal services and working directly with children and/or protected adults.

2.4   **Listed status:** Disclosure Scotland keeps a list of people unsuitable to do regulated work with children and a list of people unsuitable to work with protected adults. The lists are separate, although people can be on both lists. If Disclosure Scotland adds someone to one or both of these lists, it is known as being 'listed'.

2.5   **Children**: Any individual under the age of eighteen years old.

2.6   **Protected Adults**: An individual aged 16 or over who is provided with (and thus receives) a type of care, support or welfare service.

2.7   **Criminal convictions:** If you have been found guilty of committing a crime this conviction may be disclosed as part of the PVG Scheme application.

The three categories of convictions that will be disclosed are: All unspent convictions; spent convictions for offences that are disclosed according to rules; and spent convictions for offences that must be disclosed. Further information is available on the Disclosure Scotland website.

3. Purpose

3.1.   This policy sets out how the University partnership complies with our legislative duties related to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 in relation to education provision.

3.2.   Where our staff and students interact with members of vulnerable groups, we fully comply with the law and uphold the standards expected in the education sector.

3.3.   This policy is guided by the following principles:

3.3.1   We will require students to apply for PVG Scheme membership only where it is necessary and required by the relevant legislation.

3.3.2   Information will be processed and handled sensitively and confidentially, ensuring full compliance with Data Protection legislation.

3.3.3   Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent participation in a course. Please see 3.5 for further information.

3.4   The University partnership has two categories of course subject to PVG Scheme membership:

3.4.1   Category 1: Courses where PVG Scheme membership is required to successfully achieve target qualification, where there is guaranteed contact with vulnerable groups in key elements of the course. If the applicant is listed (i.e. not not allowed to work with one or both of the vulnerable groups) the applicant/student will be unable to achieve target qualification and may be unable to enrol or required to leave the course.

3.4.2   Category 2: Courses where PVG Scheme membership is required for specific optional modules/units, where there is guaranteed contact with vulnerable groups in optional module/unit(s), but an alternative pathway exists to achieve target qualification. If the applicant/student is listed (i.e. not allowed to work with one or both of the vulnerable groups) applicant/student will not be able to enrol on specific optional modules/units.

3.5   Where an applicant is not listed but has criminal convictions that are disclosed as part of the PVG Scheme membership process, a risk assessment will be carried out that will ascertain the applicant's suitability for the course and a future career in the relevant area.

Access to a full range of placement opportunities is subject to the outcome of the PVG Scheme application, which may disclose previous criminal convictions.

4   Scope

4.1   This policy applies to the University and all academic partners.

4.2   This policy applies to all applicants and students regardless of level or mode of study.

5   Exceptions

5.1   This policy does not apply to staff and recruitment to vacancies. Information on staff PVG processes can be obtained from the relevant Human Resources department.

6   Notification

6.1   The policy and related information will be published on our website and course pages where Category 1 or Category 2 PVG Scheme membership conditions apply.

6.2   Staff will be made aware of this policy and any associated guidance through team meetings and information being cascaded from senior management teams.

7   Roles and Responsibilities

7.1   Academic Partner Boards of Management/University Court are/is responsible for approving the policy and ensuring its legal compliance.

7.2   Principals and Senior Management Teams are responsible for overseeing operational compliance with the policy, and cascading information to appropriate teams.

7.3   Line managers are responsible for supporting relevant staff to follow the policy in their day-to-day role.

7.4   Relevant staff are responsible for following the policy in their day-to-day role and highlighting any operational challenges that arise.

7.5   The Policy Ownership Group are responsible for developing the policy, accommodating any legislative changes and submitting the policy to Partnership Council for endorsement.

7.6   Students are required to inform staff if they become subject to any criminal investigation or are subject to consideration for listing. Withholding this information may result in the student being unable to obtain the award for which they enrolled.

8   Legislative Framework

- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equalities Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009

9   Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

The University and academic partners have their own versions of policies. The links below refer to University/Academic Partner Name 's policies. For other policies please refer to the relevant academic partner websites.

- Approved Placement Policy
- Complaints Handling Procedures
- Criminal Convictions Policy
- Fitness to Study Guidelines
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Promoting a Positive Learning Environment Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Code of Conduct

10 Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0				
1				

Department/Section: Date of Assessment: Review Due:

Author/Owner: Signature: Date:

Step 1

Aim of proposed activity/decision/new or revised policy or procedure:

New ❏
Revised ❏
Existing ❏

Who will be affected?	Who will be consulted?	Evidence available:

Step 2

Potential Positive/Negative/Neutral Impact Identified. P, N, N/I	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage/Civil Partnership*	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Eliminating Discrimination									
Advancing Equality of Opportunity.									
Promoting Good Relations.									

Step 3

Action to be taken:

Summary of EIA Outcome – please tick

No further action to be carried out ❏

Amendments or changes to be made ❏

Proceed with awareness of adverse impact ❏

Abandon process – Stop and Rethink ❏

Please forward completed EIA forms to Nicholas Oakley, Governance and Policy Officer.

AP Logo

AP Name, University of the Highlands and Islands

Further Education Guidance Policy

POL

Lead Officer (Post):	AP Representative on Policy Ownership Group
Responsible Department:	Delete row if not applicable to your AP
Responsible Committee:	AP Name Board of Management
Date policy approved:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	New policy for 2020/21 academic year
Date policy due for review:	Spring 2023
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	01/02/2020
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	n/a

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request. Please contact the Governance and Policy Officer on 01463 279000.

Policy Summary

Overview	The policy is required to assist further education students and staff understand student entitlement to guidance during courses.
Purpose	The policy explains the terminology around guidance, the key areas addressed in the guidance entitlement and the roles and responsibilities of students and staff with regards to guidance.
Scope	The policy applies to all further education students (see Sections 4 and 5 for further details).
Consultation	The policy has been developed by a policy ownership group made of practitioners from academic partners delivering further education.
Implementation and Monitoring	AP Name Senior Management Team are responsible for supporting staff responsible for delivering guidance and their managers to implement this policy. Monitoring will be carried out at a local level by AP Name and at a regional level by the Single Policy Environment Project and Quality staff.
Risk Implications	This policy reduces risk for students, staff and academic partners by clarifying the guidance entitlement which students can expect.
Link with Strategy	This policy is linked to individual Access and Inclusion strategies and the Regional Outcome Agreement.
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Completed February 2020, no further action.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Policy Statement

1.1. This policy, together with the associated Guidance Entitlement, represents a guidance framework for further education students.

1.2 Our aim is to provide a learning experience that allows students to gain insight into their abilities, interests and preferred learning styles through the provision of effective and appropriate academic and pastoral guidance.

2. Definitions

2.1 **Guidance**: AP Name's Guidance provision focusses on four key areas - personal development, academic feedback, progression (including careers advice) and pastoral care.

2.2 **Guidance Entitlement**: This document sets out the standard of guidance that students can expect from AP Name from pre-entry to completing their course of study.

2.3 **Pre-entry**: The time before a student enrols on a course, including preparing for an interview for access to the course.

2.4 **Start of programme**: The period of time when a student begins their course, including activities such as enrolment and induction.

2.5 **During programme**: The period of time during the academic session.

2.6 **Pre-exit**: Activities relevant to the preparation of students to progress on from their current course of study.

3. Purpose

3.1 AP Name is committed to supporting all our students in achieving their educational and personal goals by providing a comprehensive guidance service.

3.2 We will provide holistic support to students by taking a joined-up approach to how a student is supported, utilising where necessary the full range of guidance options with information that is clear, accurate, relevant and up-to-date.

3.3 All students have an individual and personal starting point in their development. In order to help students progress from this starting point we will work in partnership with them. The policy and Guidance Entitlement are intended to empower students and enable them to be active participants in the guidance process.

3.4 Our guidance provision focuses on four key areas:

3.4.1 Personal development: Developing the self-confidence and interpersonal skills of our students and enable them to make decisions and choices within a lifelong learning process

3.4.2 Academic feedback: Motivating our students towards completion and success, developing their learning skills and essentials skills for progression

3.4.3 Progression (including careers advice): Providing information to our students to help them progress onto a new course of study or into employment.

3.4.4 Pastoral care: Supporting the wellbeing of our students. This includes signposting and referring to relevant specialist services.

3.5   Distance learning students will be able to access guidance and support via telephone, email, videoconference and online, including websites and virtual learning environments.

3.6   We will work in partnership with external agencies. This includes organising sessions aimed at students, securing training for our staff from appropriate providers, and referring students to expert and specialist help where appropriate.

3.7   We will use feedback from students and staff to develop our guidance provision and carry out regular reviews to ensure we continue to improve our service.

4.   Scope

4.1   This policy applies to students enrolled on courses normally up to and including SCQF Level 6 (see Section 4.2 for variations to this criteria).

4.2   There are a small number of Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) courses at SCQF Level 7 that are considered as Further Education courses for the purposes of the university partnership. This policy applies to these students.

5.   Exceptions

5.1   This policy does not apply to Higher Education students, e.g. normally those students studying courses at SCQF Level 7 and above (see Section 4.2 for variations to this). Higher Education students should refer to their local student support service.

6.   Notification

6.1   Students should be made aware of this policy and the Guidance Entitlement during their induction. The policy and Guidance Entitlement will be made available online.

6.2   Staff responsible for providing guidance should be familiar with the policy and Guidance Entitlement, and will be made aware of changes by their line managers.

6.3   Line managers of staff responsible for providing guidance should be familiar with the policy and Guidance Entitlement, and will be informed of changes by their senior management team.

6.4   Senior management teams should be aware of the policy and Guidance Entitlement, and will be informed of changes in senior management team meetings.

7.   Roles and Responsibilities

7.1   Students should be prepared to engage fully with staff in order to maximise the benefit of their guidance entitlement.

7.2   Staff delivering guidance (name of team) – promoting guidance entitlement to students, delivering guidance entitlement, identifying issues with delivery and escalating, and referring to specialist services.

7.3   Managers are responsible for implementing the policy operationally, supporting staff delivering guidance, responding to escalated concerns, reporting successes and challenges to Senior Management Team

7.4   Senior Management Team are responsible for supporting managers to implement the policy, operational oversight of the policy and reporting to the Board of Management on the policy.

7.5   Board of Management are responsible for approving the policy and strategic oversight of it.

7.6   The Further Education Guidance Policy Ownership Group are responsible for reviewing the policy and Guidance Entitlement.

8.　Legislative Framework

Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

Scotland's Career Strategy 2020

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Data Protection Act 2018

Education (Scotland) Act 2016

Equality Act 2010

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Human Rights Act 1998

Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015

Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

9.　Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

Admissions Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy

Fitness to Study Procedure

Learner Support Policy

Mental Health Strategy

Promoting a Positive Learning Environment Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Student Carer Policy

Student Disciplinary Procedure

10.　Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0			New policy	FE Guidance Policy Ownership Group
1				
2				
3				
4				

AP Name Further Education Guidance Entitlements for Students

	Full-time (including distance learners)	Part-time (including distance learners)	Apprentices / work-based learners	Online learners
Pre-entry	• Access to timetable information • Access to broad course information / course handbook • Awareness of key point of contact - Personal Development Adviser (PDA) / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent details • Access to clear, current and relevant information around wider services / support / student life: Nursery info; funding availability and support; campus orientation; HISA; library and study support; additional learning support; wellbeing support; accommodation; FAQs • Awareness of how to get in touch with the college if you have any queries or need support before you start	• Access to timetable information • Access to broad course information / course handbook • Awareness of key point of contact - Personal Development Adviser (PDA) / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent details • Access to clear, current and relevant information around wider services / support / student life: Nursery info; funding availability and support; campus orientation; HISA; library and study support; additional learning support; wellbeing support; accommodation; FAQs • Awareness of how to get in touch with the college if you have any queries or need support before you start	• Access to timetable information • Access to broad course information / course / apprentice handbook • Awareness of key point of contact - Personal Development Adviser (PDA) / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent details • Access to clear, current and relevant information around wider services / support / student life, including where appropriate: Funding availability and support; campus orientation; HISA; library and study support; additional learning support; wellbeing support; FAQs. • Awareness of how to get in touch with the college if you have any queries or need support before you start	• Access to timetable information • Access to broad course information / course / apprentice handbook • Awareness of key point of contact - Personal Development Adviser (PDA) / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent details • Access to clear, current and relevant information around wider services / support / student life, including where appropriate: Funding availability and support; HISA; library and study support; additional learning support; wellbeing support; FAQs. • Awareness of how to get in touch with the college if you have any queries or need support before you start
Start of programme / Induction	• Given a student card as part of your enrolment • Awareness of the Student Code of Conduct / expectations of me • Given a comprehensive overview of support services highlighting -	• Given a student card as part of your enrolment • Awareness of the Student Code of Conduct / expectations of me • Given a comprehensive overview of support services highlighting -	• A student card will be made available to you as part of your enrolment • Awareness of the Student Code of Conduct / expectations of me • Given a comprehensive overview of support services highlighting -	• A student card will be made available to you as part of your enrolment • Awareness of the Student Code of Conduct / expectations of me • Given a comprehensive overview of support services highlighting -

Start of programme / Induction continued	wellbeing services; funding availability and support; learning support; signposting and referral to specialist services e.g. mental health support and counselling. • Engagement in a programme of Induction led by the course team • Engagement with your PDA / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent • Feel well orientated around the campus • Issued with relevant PPE / kit • Awareness of HISA / opportunities for class rep / wider student life • Awareness of the online Student Hub • Engagement in ICT orientation including email, Bright Space and MyDay • Opportunity to provide feedback through the Early Experience Survey	wellbeing services; funding availability and support; learning support; signposting and referral to specialist services e.g. mental health support and counselling. • Engagement in a programme of Induction led by the course team • Engagement with your PDA / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent • Feel well orientated around the campus • Issued with relevant PPE / kit • Awareness of HISA / opportunities for class rep / wider student life • Awareness of the online Student Hub • Engagement in ICT orientation including email, Bright Space and MyDay	wellbeing services; funding availability and support; learning support; signposting and referral to specialist services e.g. mental health support and counselling. • Engagement in a programme of Induction led by the course team • Engagement with your PDA / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent • Where appropriate: Feel well orientated around the campus • Where appropriate: Issued with relevant PPE / kit • Access to regular 'check-ins' with PDA / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent • Awareness of HISA / opportunities for class rep / wider student life • Awareness of the online Student Hub • Engagement in ICT orientation including email, Bright Space and MyDay	wellbeing services; funding availability and support; learning support; signposting and referral to specialist services e.g. mental health support and counselling. • Engagement in a programme of Induction led by the course team • Engagement with your PDA / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent • Access to regular 'check-ins' with PDA / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent • Awareness of HISA / opportunities for class rep / wider student life • Awareness of the online Student Hub • Engagement in ICT orientation including email, Bright Space and MyDay
During programme	• Engage in a range of activities which develop my employability skills • Access to regular 'check-ins' with PDA / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent • Access to 1:1 support from PDA or equivalent around progression / next steps • Ongoing tailored support, advice and guidance from relevant staff • Access to responsive support services through staff or self-referral system;	• Engage in a range of activities which develop my employability skills • Access to regular 'check-ins' with PDA / Personal Academic Tutor or equivalent • Access to 1:1 support from PDA or equivalent around progression / next steps • Ongoing tailored support, advice and guidance from relevant staff • Access to responsive support services through staff or self-referral system;	• Engage in a range of activities which develop my employability skills • Access to 1:1 support from PDA or equivalent around progression / next steps • Ongoing tailored support, advice and guidance from relevant staff • Access to responsive support services through staff or self-referral system; signposting and referral to specialist	• Engage in a range of activities which develop my employability skills • Access to 1:1 support from PDA or equivalent around progression / next steps • Ongoing tailored support, advice and guidance from relevant staff Access to responsive support services through staff or self-referral system; signposting and referral to specialist

	signposting and referral to specialist services e.g. mental health support and counselling. • Opportunity to be involved in the life and work of the college	signposting and referral to specialist services e.g. mental health support and counselling. • Opportunity to be involved in the life and work of the college	services e.g. mental health support and counselling. • Opportunity to be involved in the life and work of the college	services e.g. mental health support and counselling. • Opportunity to be involved in the life and work of the college
Pre-exit	• Opportunity to provide feedback on your college experience through the Student Satisfaction Survey • Access to references for future jobs / education applications • Opportunity to discuss progression and/or career options with relevant staff member	• Opportunity to provide feedback on your college experience through the Student Satisfaction Survey • Access to references for future jobs / education applications • Opportunity to discuss progression and/or career options with relevant staff member	• Opportunity to provide feedback on your college experience through the Student Satisfaction Survey • Access to references for future jobs / education applications • Opportunity to discuss progression and/or career options with relevant staff member	• Opportunity to provide feedback on your college experience through the Student Satisfaction Survey • Access to references for future jobs / education applications • Opportunity to discuss progression and/or career options with relevant staff member

Appendix 4

Department/Section: Date of Assessment: Review Due:

Author/Owner: Signature: Date:

Step 1

Aim of proposed activity/decision/new or revised policy or procedure:

New ❏
Revised ❏
Existing ❏

Who will be affected?	Who will be consulted?	Evidence available:

Step 2

Potential Positive/Negative/Neutral Impact Identified. **P, N, N/I**	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage/Civil Partnership*	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Eliminating Discrimination									
Advancing Equality of Opportunity.									
Promoting Good Relations.									

Step 3

Action to be taken:

Summary of EIA Outcome – please tick

No further action to be carried out ❏

Amendments or changes to be made ❏

Proceed with awareness of adverse impact ❏

Abandon process – Stop and Rethink ❏

Please forward completed EIA forms to Nicholas Oakley, Governance and Policy Officer.

To: **Argyll College Board**

Date: **26 June 2020**

Status: **For information**

Subject: **Student Survey – summary report**

In April 2020, we undertook a telephone survey of all full-time FE and HE students currently enrolled. 392 students were included, and the response rate was over 80%. We have included non-respondents in the statistical analysis below. There was no discernible pattern amongst non-respondents with an even distribution of location, level and mode of study.

The survey was conducted by Centre Managers and support staff and took the form of a conversation, designed to enable students to discuss any problems they were experiencing. Aside from data collection, our aim was to ensure students felt supported during the period of enforced home working. Anecdotal feedback (not captured by questions) was that students were grateful for the personal contact and felt valued and supported by our concern for their welfare.

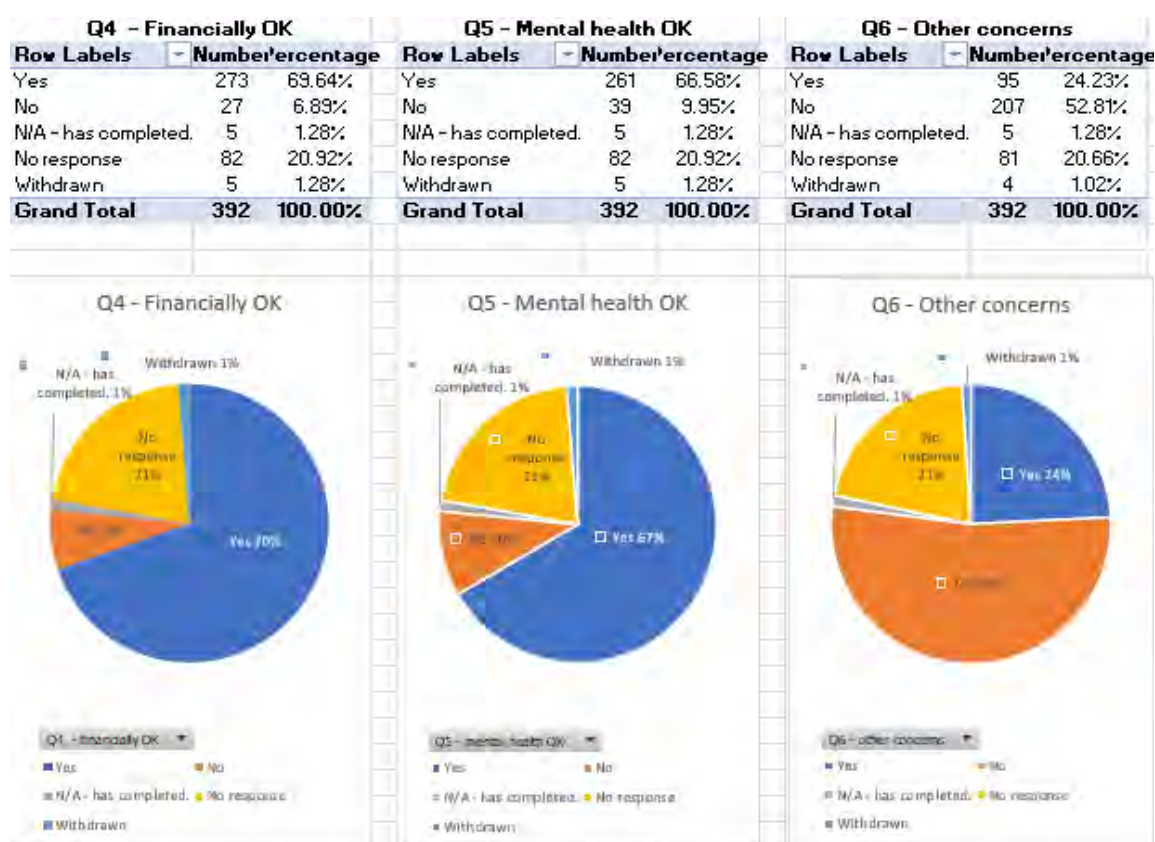Students were asked a series of 6 questions. The first 3 were:
1. (If classes are online) have you been able to join in with scheduled classes?
2. Have you been able to log into Brightspace since you've been working at home?
3. Are you happy with the level of support from your tutors/support staff?

Q1 – Engaged with class			Q2 – Engaged with Brightspace / Learning A			Q3 – Happy with support		
Row Labels	Number	Percentage	Row Labels	Number	Percentage	Row Labels	Number	Percentage
Yes	256	65.31%	Yes	258	65.82%	Yes	294	75.00%
No	46	11.73%	No	20	5.10%	No	6	1.53%
N/A – has completed.	5	1.28%	N/A – has completed.	6	1.53%	N/A – has completed.	5	1.28%
No response	80	20.41%	No response	81	20.66%	No response	82	20.92%
Withdrawn	5	1.28%	N/A	22	5.61%	Withdrawn	5	1.28%
Grand Total	**392**	**100.00%**	Withdrawn	5	1.28%	**Grand Total**	**392**	**100.00%**
			Grand Total	**392**	**100.00%**			

Q1 - Engaged with class

Q2 - Engaged with Brightspace / Learning Assistant

Q3 - Happy with support

46 students (12%) told us they had not engaged with classes. The reasons for this were drawn out in supplementary questions and ranged from difficulty coping with family/children at home, general stress due to the situation, and only in a minority of cases was this due to any technical difficulty. Some of the issues are around being available at the scheduled class time, as only 5% told us they had not engaged with the VLE Brightspace (which allows access to learning materials at any time). Overwhelmingly (75%), students were happy with the support provided by us, only 6 students reported dissatisfaction. Of these 6 students, 3 are on degree programmes, and 3 on HN courses. In one case the student's individual support needs posed difficulties for remote support, some degree students felt a lack of contact from tutors. In all cases, individual issues were followed up.

The final 3 questions were:
4. Are you coping ok financially?
5. How are you coping with the lockdown, are you felling stressed or anxious?
6. Have you got any particular worries or concerns around your course?

Q4 – Financially OK				Q5 – Mental health OK				Q6 – Other concerns		
Row Labels	Number	ercentage		Row Labels	Number	ercentage		Row Labels	Number	ercentage
Yes	273	69.64%		Yes	261	66.58%		Yes	95	24.23%
No	27	6.89%		No	39	9.95%		No	207	52.81%
N/A – has completed.	5	1.28%		N/A – has completed.	5	1.28%		N/A – has completed.	5	1.28%
No response	82	20.92%		No response	82	20.92%		No response	81	20.66%
Withdrawn	5	1.28%		Withdrawn	5	1.28%		Withdrawn	4	1.02%
Grand Total	**392**	**100.00%**		**Grand Total**	**392**	**100.00%**		**Grand Total**	**392**	**100.00%**

Fewer than 7% of students reported financial difficulties to us. These students were signposted to hardship funds.

Almost 10% of students reported mental health difficulties – unsurprisingly these ranged in magnitude and often were not as a direct result of COVID19, having been presnt prior to lockdown. Students were approriately signposted to support services including our new student counsellor.

The range of other concerns expressed by students is shown in further detail in the chart opposite. The most commonly cited concern was 'difficulty in working at home'. Many students found it difficult to find the time to study because they have children of different ages to home school; internet is very slow making study frustrating; or 'not enough time in the day with family to support'.

Another big concern was around exam and assessment arrangements. It should be noted that this survey was carried out between 20th and 25th April when we were still waiting for / receiving guidance from SQA on this matter.

Another significant concern was around completion of practical work, particularly relevant for HNC Childhood Practice students who require to complete 60 hours placement to qualify for SSSC registration. These issues continue to be addressed.

Main Concern for Students

Concern	Value
difficult to work at home	39
mental health	30
assesments or exams	21
completing practical work	12
timescales/ finish dates	8
already applied for…	8
money	5
illness (COVID & non-COVID)	5
progressing next year	3
withdrawn due to situation	2
graduation	1
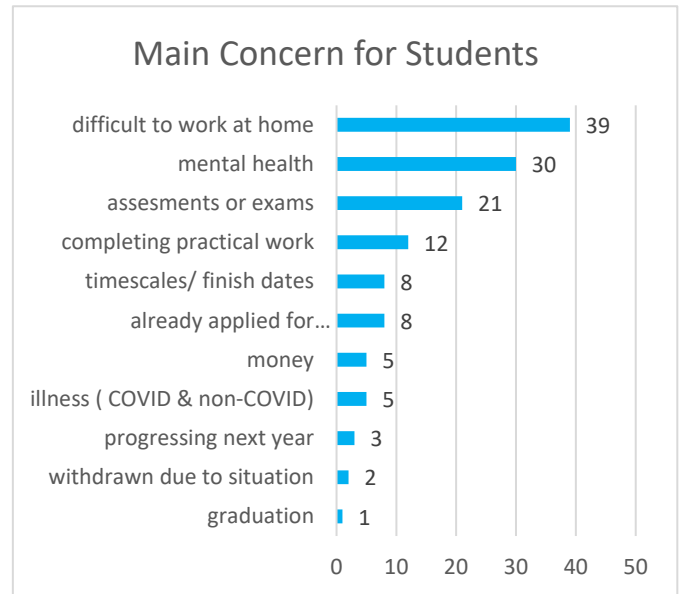
Mo McKenna
Head of Marketing and Communications

Partnership assembly

Panel report and recommendations

May 2020

Chair's Introduction

Before you read this report, I thought it would be useful to say something about what it contains and what it does not.

The panel spoke to staff from over thirty executive office teams as well as reading the thoughtful submissions they had all given us in writing. We saw some exemplary work by these teams. After each meeting between a group of panel members and a group of staff the panel members reported back to the whole panel. In many of these sessions the members reporting back were filled with enthusiasm and admiration for what they had heard both about the current work of the teams and the ideas that they had for improvement.

Not all of that will be as visible in this report as both the panel members and the staff in executive office would have liked. That is because we have focussed the report on the things we felt needed to change. The recommendations in the report are ones that the panel agreed on relatively quickly and unanimously. They are largely about how the teams in executive office are managed and led and their work organised. The panel's view was that the many strengths we saw in the individual teams we met could be used even more effectively if the structure around their work was better.

Our recommendations, which can be found between pages 7 and 29 of this report, come out of what we heard and read. We also heard many good ideas from teams and much of this detail has been included within the annexes to the paper. We do not want these ideas to be lost. We recognise the confidentiality around the written submissions and what was said in the meetings and wish to respect that. So, we will be asking those supporting the panel's work to report these to senior management so that they can consider ways forward.

We spoke largely to people in executive office. We recognise there will be views from the academic partners too. We saw some very good examples of how people in the executive office work with partners. We also heard a strong wish to do more and engage even more effectively with academic partners. We would welcome views from partners on that. The world has changed in the relatively short time since we started this evaluation. Stronger partnership working will be even more important in the future.

Since the executive office evaluation panel began its work the coronavirus pandemic has happened. The final consequences of this pandemic are currently not known but they will clearly be significant. Staff and teams across the university partnership will have responded to this emergency by working together, supporting students and each other, cutting through bureaucracy and organisational boundaries to take decisions across the collective business.

Undoubtedly there will be significant lessons to learn from staff across the university partnership about the response to the pandemic, and far greater clarity about the future priorities that will emerge as the university partnership and the country respond to the outcomes of the virus. The recommendations that this report sets out should be enacted within this spirit, to help shape the university partnership so it is as effective as possible to overcome the challenges of the future.

Professor Kenneth Miller

Glossary of terms

The panel asked that some of the terms used within this document be explained. These are noted in the table below.

Executive office	This describes the teams, functions and staff that were within the scope of this evaluation. Broadly speaking, the non-teaching elements that are directly employed or managed by the University of the Highlands and Islands.
University partnership	This describes the university and the academic partners in totality.
Academic Partners	The nine assigned colleges and the four specialist institutions that are part of the university partnership.
Senior management team	The senior management team of executive office.

Foreword

This report contains the recommendations of the executive office evaluation panel. The panel met with representatives from executive office teams who do not directly deliver academic activity in early March 2020 after reading written views from each team. Staff from the Centre of History and the School of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences were not included as part of the evaluation.

The panel were struck by the very open, honest and candid way that staff engaged with this process. Executive office has considerable strength and depth of dedicated, hardworking professional staff across the functions that it delivers. There is significant talent and an understandable pride in how much, working alongside academic partner colleagues, they have delivered over the last three decades.

Equally, the panel were struck by the sub-optimal structural arrangements that these staff are working within. Significant impact on the ability to deliver could be achieved by developing improved management arrangements and structures, by improving clarity and transparency of strategic direction linked to roles and responsibilities within executive office and across the partnership, and by building on the positive culture and behaviours the panel observed.

The panel found that there was considerable commonality in what staff presented and the recommendations set out in the bulk of this report build upon those discussions. Three things were also very clear from staff that should preface any of the work that is taken forward to deliver upon the recommendations set out within this report.

It was clear that:

1. There is a significant appetite for change amongst staff, sometimes quite radical change, and they want that change to start now.
2. Staff want to work in partnership with their colleagues in academic partners, not in competition, to make the university partnership as successful as possible and some have found very effective ways to do this that others could learn from.
3. They do not want this opportunity for change to be passed over, but – because other change projects have not been fully implemented – they are sceptical about whether this opportunity will be grasped.

The recommendations are necessarily at a high level and so are generalisations: the need for change varies across the organisation. This report focusses on drawing out those things that need to be addressed, but this should not take away from what is already delivered. Executive Office should see this report as an opportunity to make real and positive changes to how it operates.

The membership of the panel is set out in Annex 1.

Scope of the evaluation and "Executive Office"

The scope and details of the executive office evaluation were agreed as part of the partnership assembly recommendations in the Autumn of 2019. The objective of the evaluation is to ensure that the functions of executive office and their links into the partnership contribute, and are enabled to contribute, the maximum benefit to the partnership whilst ensuring that the needs of the university court, and the accountabilities that it holds, are met. In particular:

- consider the contribution and effectiveness of executive office within the context of the wider partnership within which it operates;
- ensure that there are transparent mechanisms for people to easily understand, both now and in the future, the roles of executive office and the contributions it makes;
- maximise the effectiveness and fitness of purpose of executive office and the nature of the contributions that it makes to the partnership;
- ensure that the work taken forward by executive office fits seamlessly with that undertaken by academic partners so there is clarity and reduced duplication;
- ensure that performance management and target setting of functional areas within executive office maximises partnership-wide impact;
- explore whether there are areas of specialism that could be added to the partnership, or further invested in, for the benefit of all;
- ensure that reporting lines support collegiate decision making and respect the accountabilities of the university court; and
- provide recommendations to the university court for changes to functions to enhance the effectiveness and the contributions that executive office activity makes.

This report provides the first step in the process to deliver on these aims, and the recommendations set out in the body of the report will support the realisation of the benefits of this process. Some of the aims, in particular providing the necessary clarity and transparency of the contribution of executive office, have only been achieved in part, but this is picked up within the recommendations themselves.

Executive Office staff have made clear from the beginning of this process that they do not believe that the contribution of Executive Office can be properly assessed or measured in isolation, and that it is within consideration of the wider activities of university partnership that its impact must be considered. The panel appreciate that view, and it is clear that in implementing the recommendations account must be taken of how the new arrangements fit within a partnership context and must be part of wider discussions about the shape of the university partnership.

The panel were asked to include within the scope of the evaluation all executive office teams except those involved in the direct delivery of academic provision. The teams within scope are:

Table 1 – Executive office teams that are part of the evaluation

Academic Development	Faculty and subject networks	Libraries
Academic Registry/Faculties and Academic Standards Team (FAST)	Finance	Marketing
Admissions	Governance and records management	Planning
Business Improvement	Graduate school office	Research office
Communications and external relations	Human resources	Senior management team
Development Office	Internal audit	Single policy environment
Educational development unit	International	STEM
Employer engagement and key accounts	Knowledge exchange	Student records office
European and international development	Learning and information services	Student services team
Facilities and procurement	Learning and teaching academy	Webteam
		Work-based learning hub

Executive office was asked to provide a corporate overview of the university to provide the context within which to conduct the evaluation and all teams were asked to complete a proforma, attached at Annex 2. The panel, separated up into pairs, met each of the teams mentioned in Table 1, the majority of the discussions being concluded over a single week at the beginning of March.

Staff were assured that their anonymity, both in terms of the written proformas and the discussions that were held with panel members, would be respected.

The development of the University of the Highlands and Islands

Over the last three decades colleagues, past and present, within the university, academic partners, and external stakeholders, have contributed to the development of the newest higher education institution in Scotland. This has grown from the UHI Millennium Institute in 2001/02 to the University of the Highlands and Islands in 2010 with teaching and research degree-awarding making powers and designation as the Regional Strategic Body for Further Education.

The panel cannot really do justice to the work that has gone into making the vibrant, diverse university partnership that now exists and the impact that it has had on the lives of so many people. An institution that at the end of 2018/19 academic year had awarded 45,734 higher education qualifications to students across the region and beyond.

The panel reviewed a wide range of contextual information at its meeting in May that demonstrated the story of the university. The key milestones and achievements are set out in Annex 3, but it is a story of significant sustained growth over the last two decades. HE student numbers (FTE) have risen from 3,655 to 7,278, mirrored by the range of courses offered at a variety of different levels.

Figure 1 – Growth in total HE FTE student numbers over time
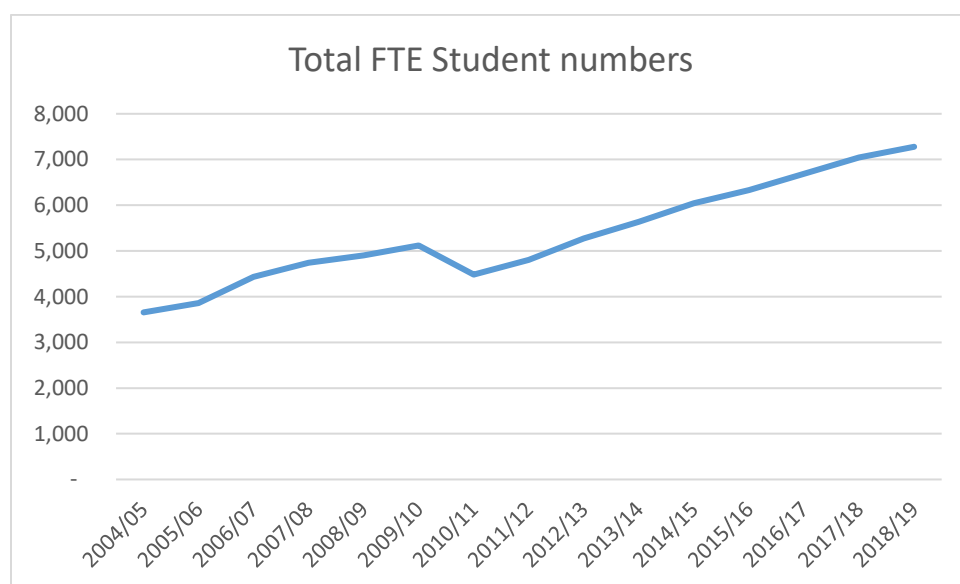
Table 2 Number of taught courses offered from 2001/20 to 2018/19

	Taught Masters	Postgrad Diploma	Postgrad Certificate	PGDE primary teaching	Honours*	Ordinary*	Diploma Higher Education	Higher National Diploma	Certificate Higher Education	Higher National Certificate
2001/02	1	-	-	-	7	-	1	-	1	-
2002/03	2	-	-	-	7	-	1	34	1	56
2003/04	3	-	-	-	10	-	1	34	1	62
2004/05	4	-	-	-	10	-	1	34	1	62
2005/06	6	-	-	-	12	-	1	34	1	63
2006/07	7	-	-	-	13	-	1	34	1	60
2007/08	8	-	-	-	14	-	1	36	1	60
2008/09	8	-	-	-	14	-	1	36	2	60
2009/10	9	-	-	-	15	-	1	36	2	55
2010/11	10	-	-	-	18	-	1	30	3	50
2011/12	10	-	1	-	26	-	1	30	3	40
2012/13	12	1	2	-	29	1	2	25	3	40
2013/14	15	2	2	2	36	1	3	25	3	40
2014/15	18	2	3	2	44	1	3	23	3	40
2015/16	25	1	3	4	54	1	4	23	4	42
2016/17	32	1	4	4	60	1	4	23	4	43
2017/18	37	2	5	4	68	2	4	23	4	44
2018/19	41	2	5	4	72	2	3	23	4	44

Honours courses may not have been validated for honours at initial approval

Joint awards are not included separately. In 2020/21 a total of 112 honours level courses will be available, if joint awards are included

The profile of students has also changed over time, with the proportion of HE students who are full time rising from around 40% in 2001/02 to 60% in 2018/19. The vast majority of these students, around 90%, are from Scotland, with 5% from the rest of the UK, 2% from the EU and 3% from other international areas in the last academic year.

Research has become a major part of what the university brings to the region. In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) the university was the best performing young university in Scotland. Over 69% of the research submitted for review achieved the top two grades: internationally excellent and world leading across a broad range of units of assessment including:

- Allied health professions, dentistry, nursing and pharmacy
- Earth systems and environmental sciences
- Geography, environmental studies and archaeology
- Area studies
- Language and linguistics
- History

Research and knowledge exchange income was almost £30m in 2018/19, bringing considerable strength and depth to what the university partnership can offer students and the region.

These achievements are a snapshot of the milestones in the growth of the University of the Highlands and Islands, and it was evident in the discussions with the panel the significant pride that executive office staff felt in being involved and supporting the ongoing delivery of the university partnership.

Recommendations

The panel has identified eight recommendations for consideration by the university court and the senior management team. A number of these are broad in nature, but require a specific, targeted response. Undergoing an evaluation is a challenging exercise for any organisation and it is commendable that executive office has allowed the panel to undertake this work.

It is clear that the university partnership has delivered a huge amount over the past three decades since its inception. The development of a successful regional university through partnership with colleges and specialist institutions delivering the range of local and regional activity is an astonishing achievement.

However, this growth has come at a cost, and the challenge of working together, negotiating progress across fourteen institutions has taken its toll on the internal and partnership-wide arrangements that bind the university partnership together, that ensure its effectiveness and efficiency. These have not been systematically updated and realigned as the university partnership has matured, and the difficulties with trust have created greater cross-partnership challenges and sucked more time and focus into managing relationships at a senior level, than focussing on the how business is undertaken and developed.

The recommendations set out below all speak to the deficiencies that have emerged in the corporate arrangements that executive office staff are asked to work within. The panel found, in the vast majority of areas, driven, professional, focused teams striving to deliver competent and professional services with their colleagues within executive office and across academic partners.

All of these teams face challenges in how they deliver, but many have overcome the difficulties in managing relationships across the organisational boundaries of the university partnership. However, they can be hampered by the lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities, established and recognised priorities, and strategic vision within an organisation that has outgrown its corporate arrangements. The lack of clarity and transparency has had, in some cases significant, consequences for the effectiveness and efficiency of executive office and the university partnership.

The additional challenge of the coronavirus pandemic makes it imperative that the senior leadership of executive office, supported by academic partners, put in place refreshed arrangements that will bring focus, direction and clarity for the significant work that is undertaken by staff across executive office.

The panel noted at its last meeting that the Interim Vice Chancellor is already developing several of the necessary workstreams to address the recommendations within a new university partnership wide change implementation plan and this will hopefully provide reassurance for staff that the report is being proactively acted upon.

1. Transparency and clarity
What was the issue identified?

The panel asked for contextual information about the operation of executive office, including teaching activities, to provide a baseline from which to discuss the individual contribution of each team. The contextual information that was provided to the panel did not give them the clarity they were seeking. This is in contrast to the proforma responses from staff which were comprehensive and detailed.

Executive office
The University of the Highlands and Islands is a unique institution and is tasked with leading a federal arrangement with nine assigned colleges and four specialist partners. It undertakes four primary functions:

1. Leadership – As the executive arm of the university court, executive office provides the leadership function for the university partnership. It is accountable and responsible for, amongst other things, the regional strategy, the distribution of funds, setting priorities and ensuring the delivery of high-quality further education, higher education, research and knowledge exchange.
2. Compliance – As the regional strategic body, funding body and award-making institution for higher education it must ensure that its activities, and those of the academic partners comply with the relevant legislative and regulatory standards. It reports on these to a variety of different bodies, such as the Scottish Funding Council and the Quality Assurance Agency.
3. Support – It provides a variety of functions to support the delivery of HE and FE across the university partnership. For some functions it does this once, for all partners, for others the functions are split between executive office and academic partners.
4. Teaching and research– Executive office delivers some educational provision directly, most notably in the School of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences and the Centre for History. It also 'germinates' HE courses that are then transferred to academic partners. Together executive office and academic partners are an academic institution, whose sole functions are further education, higher education, research and knowledge exchange.

The panel focussed on the first three of these, but to understand executive office there was discussion of all four in its sessions prior to meeting teams. As noted, these areas of business have grown and changed significantly since the university partnership's inception adapting to the increased volume of students and complexity, external factors such as the Post 16 Education (Scotland) Act, or new opportunities, such as the transfer of nursing education from the University of Stirling.

The teams provided descriptions of their responsibilities and accountabilities within their proformas and a precis of these are set out in Annex 4. To ensure greater transparency the academic units have also been added to this detail to provide a comprehensive picture of what is undertaken by the various teams in executive office.

University responsibilities and activities

Whilst teams could clearly articulate their roles and responsibilities there is a lack of clarity in how executive office as an organisation describes, organises and communicates the different areas of its business. In some cases it was not clear to the panel how or why functions were delineated across teams with similar remits, or how they had been organised to interconnect with the university partnership more broadly.

The panel requested an organogram (a diagram of the reporting lines for teams) for executive office, to understand the complex relationship between teams and their reporting lines. Executive office was unable to provide this, though an incomplete one from last academic year was provided. Using the detail set out in the proformas the team supporting the panel have now drawn together an organogram for executive office and this will be published soon after this report.

Some teams themselves noted that they believed there was a lack of understanding and knowledge within academic partners of the full scope of the activities that executive office undertakes to support the academic partners either directly or indirectly.

Corporate information

Staff presented an overview of executive office to the panel in February to provide the context for the more detail discussions will teams. They explained some of the challenges that they had in presenting this information, as formal financial accounting requirements and ways of presenting the information do not elicit the detail that people wanted to see. Staff information was provided in a report and made available to panel members, though no-one spoke to the panel about the detail it set out.

The panel had a number of questions about the detail of the information provided. The Interim Vice Chancellor agreed to refresh the information and represent it alongside the draft report at their meeting in April. However, the impact of coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the capacity of some of the core corporate teams so this work, while it remains a necessary supplement to this report, is pending.

What is the impact of this and what actions should be taken?
The evaluation panel process provided an opportunity to present succinctly and transparently what executive office does, how it spends the money it receives, how it organises into teams to deliver and support the university partnership and how those teams report through to senior management and so to the vice-chancellor. It provided the opportunity to present the achievements of the whole organisation in much greater depth than the panel have been able to include within this report.

The panel believe that it is important to the transparency of the partnership that this picture of executive office must be completed and maintained. Without this clarity it is unsurprising that functions are duplicated within academic partners, and the contribution and extent of executive office functions is not clearly understood.

Executive office needs to find ways to present what it does, how it does it and how it resources its activities more clearly.

Recommendation
Executive office should publish clear and transparent information on how it spends the resources it receives, the roles and functions of the teams it deploys, and how these are aligned and report into senior management.

2. Strategic aims and direction
What was the issue identified?

The majority of teams highlighted the lack of strategic aims and direction that exists within executive office. Whilst there is a strategic plan, many teams felt they did not see how it linked to their work and how it shaped the work of the teams generally.

Strategic vision, aims and direction
The senior management team described the university partnership-wide collaborative process that went into developing the current strategy. This strategy is now at the end of its life cycle and arrangements are being made to develop the next strategy. However, teams reported concerns that transcend the natural hiatus that organisations may have during this transitional period.

By its nature, the current strategy is at a high level, but the vast majority of teams reported to the panel that there is no clarity on the strategic aims and direction for executive office. Coupled with the detail noted later in the report, this creates difficulty and uncertainty in how best to align the work undertaken by staff and teams to maximise the impact they have.

What is the impact of this and what actions should be taken?
It was clear from the proformas and the discussions with teams that many staff and teams are at the limits of their capacity to deliver. A decade of growth and expanding responsibilities have built significant expertise into the many areas of executive office, but many functions are one person deep. As noted below, many teams spoke of a desire to shift their work from reactive to proactive but the weight of day to day work hinders this.

Clarity on the strategic aims and direction within executive office would significantly support teams to deliver. It would provide a clear framework within which they could plan, provide greater co-ordination between different functions as they delivered on shared aims and reduce some of the burden on teams to undertake this work individually. It would allow teams greater certainty over what to prioritise allowing them to focus on tasks that will ultimately be the most beneficial.

Recommendation
Executive office should expand the process that is being used to create a new strategic plan to agree a clear strategic vision, with specific aims and a focused direction to provide the framework within which executive office staff are asked to operate.

3. Operational planning

What was the issue identified?

The differences in the proforma responses from teams highlighted the different approaches that some teams take to core corporate arrangements and how they establish their priorities. The discussions with teams emphasised the impact that this can have on the effectiveness of executive office to deliver.

Priority setting

Some teams and staff reported that executive office had not always clearly identified the priorities that its teams should focus on delivering. Many teams reported that they set their own priorities for delivery, but it was not clear how these were aligned across executive office as a whole.

This problem is compounded by the challenges that teams have in clearly identifying the strategic aims and direction and also that there are so many teams, often small, appearing to be performing similar functions and/or functions that should be aligned.

For teams that had been assigned priority areas by senior management, they found that these were sometimes not adequately resourced, and other teams did not recognise their priority status as this had not been effectively communicated.

A number of teams reflected that initiatives were identified, whether within the university partnership or executive office itself, but many, although started, were not taken through to full delivery. It was not clear to the panel why these activities had not been progressed to completion, whether the cultural issues noted below, the challenges of requiring partnership agreement to progress activity or legitimate deprioritising of activity. However, it is clear that it is a difficult environment to deliver within, and a lack of clarity about priorities will only exacerbate these challenges.

Performance management and targets

The proformas highlighted that different teams have different approaches and arrangements for establishing KPIs or targets for their work. Some teams have no KPIs/targets, others set their own, and others are given them by senior management. The discussions confirmed that, for the majority of teams, there are no formal structures for agreeing these, or reporting upon them.

Some teams noted that they provided their KPIs to senior management but did not receive feedback on the results they were delivering whereas others did. In effect, KPIs and targets are generally used internally by teams – sometimes very well – to benchmark their own performance and to provide a context for the delivery of their own work, rather than being connected into an organisational performance management arrangement focused on delivering corporate goals.

It was noted by the panel when discussing performance management and target arrangements with teams, that some are entirely within the gift of executive office to deliver, whilst others require input and co-ordination from academic partners. However, there seemed to be no sense of how these joint efforts were to be formally prioritised, organised, overseen, and reported upon.

Annual reviews for staff

The annual review arrangements for staff were not something that the panel asked teams and individuals to reflect upon within their proformas. However, the panel did hear that the annual review process within executive office is not always consistently used in the way it was conceived. In some areas teams noted the proactive arrangements they have in place to use the annual review process to link individual work plans to team goals and priorities. By contrast, for others it was seen as a 'tick box' exercise. As noted below, the issues with staff development opportunities within many teams mean that the review process cannot be meaningfully used to identify and coordinate development requirements across executive office teams.

Operational plan

It was evident from the discussions with teams that executive office does not have a functioning operational plan for the work it undertakes within the confines of executive office or within the university partnership at large. While there are a set of operational priorities – at a relatively high level – which have been agreed at the partnership council, these do not constitute a comprehensive operational plan and, it was evident from what the panel heard from staff, that these were not widely disseminated and were not guiding their work. In addition, the operational priorities, as agreed, do not identify the priorities and KPIs that would support delivery.

What is the impact of this and what actions should be taken?

The panel are not in a position to quantify in terms of effort, resource or finance the cost of executive office employees and teams not working to a central plan, with clear priorities and deliverables. However, these standard management arrangements and practices exist because an organisation cannot maximise the impact and effectiveness of hundreds of staff, particularly when they are separated into over thirty different teams, some very small, working across a range of activities, without having such arrangements in place.

It is more than likely that some of the considerable effort put in by teams is ultimately wasted as it will be duplicated by other people in other teams. This will lead to a failure to prioritise work to be taken forward by the organisation and create the likelihood that teams will be pulling in different strategic directions.

Any lack of operational clarity will also have an impact on the lack of operational planning with functions that span both executive office and academic partner teams. Clear roles, responsibilities, priorities, and goals across teams in the different organisations that make up the university partnership are needed to ensure that regional and local priorities marry up.

Executive office must develop fit for purpose corporate arrangements to provide the framework within which teams can operate and performance can be monitored and measured. Senior management must ensure that these new arrangements are not overly bureaucratic or lead to teams being constrained in what they do, but rather the reverse. The teams, both within executive office and across the university partnership should be empowered to take forward the work they do, with clarity as to the priorities that the university partnership is seeking to deliver and the expected contribution to those aims by teams and individuals.

Executive office and the university partnership need to develop a core set of KPIs / targets / metrics that link to the delivery of the priorities that are set. Teams and individuals can then align their work to support the delivery of these and their impact can be measured and monitored in a transparent way. The university partnership will then be in a position to invest and coordinate activities that are of the greatest value and are the most effective in delivering its aims.

Recommendation
Executive office should develop fit for purpose and transparent operational planning, monitoring and performance arrangements to implement the University's new strategic plan. These arrangements should cover both work internal to executive office and joint endeavours with academic partners.

4. Culture and behaviour

What was the issue identified?

The discussions with teams highlighted both positive and negative cultural and behavioural issues within executive office that need to be recognised and built upon or addressed.

As noted at the beginning of the report, the panel made a commitment that the input to this process would be anonymous, so the panel cannot and will not set out the teams that described or exhibited these behaviours, either positive or negative.

In the feedback from staff, a number of comments received indicated non- recognition of the negative behaviours described below within the organisation. That is of course positive for these individuals and teams. However, the culture and behaviour noted below is included because it was a theme that emerged more than once from different teams.

Positivity, engagement and pride

The panel were struck by the positive way that the majority of teams embraced and engaged with panel members and this process. There was considerable positivity about the day to day activity that teams take forward and evident pride and passion in working for the university.

Many teams spoke of the challenges they faced in their day to day work, the lack of capacity within teams, the challenges of operating across such a diverse and sometimes difficult partnership. Nonetheless, they saw these challenges as positive things to be overcome, as opportunities to improve and collaborate with colleagues, to improve arrangements for students and their colleagues, both within executive office and the university partnership rather than hurdles they could not overcome.

There was considerable professional pride of what has been achieved in the past, but more importantly, what teams deliver in the here and now. The panel noted a number of high performing teams within executive office with significant and demonstrable skills and expertise that add significant value to the university partnership.

A culture of improvement and self-reflection

The proformas that the teams presented to the panel were a wealth of information and set out a raft of ideas to improve the effectiveness of not only executive office but also the university partnership. The ideas are set out in Annex 5 and should provide the starting point for many of the discussions that the university partnership has as it responds to the current circumstances.

Many of the teams said that they had found this opportunity to stop and reflect on how they work, on why they do what they do, on how they might improve to be a positive experience, even on top of the pressures of the day to day. The teams identified specialisms that could be added to the university partnership to enhance the collective ability of the partnership to deliver. These are set out in Annex 6.

Having a staff-led culture of improvement is of significant value and if executive office is able to prioritise and empower staff to take forward the changes that they need to make to improve how they work the university partnership as a whole will benefit. The response that the university partnership will need to make to the current circumstances provides the perfect opportunity to undertake this.

Decision making

Numerous teams reported to the panel difficulties in getting clear and timely decisions on a range of issues. Sometimes this was related to the layers of internal committees, often with unclear remits. In other cases staff could identify clear examples where a request for a decision had been put to senior management, but nothing was received in response, even where the same issue had been repeatedly raised.

The senior team recognised this issue but put it in a different form: they felt there was a culture of upward delegation where people sometimes unnecessarily referred decision upwards. It is not possible to judge why, but there is a disconnect between senior management who wish their staff to feel empowered to take the necessary decisions to drive business forward, and some staff who do not feel that this empowerment has been granted.

The panel observed that within this environment some teams and individuals had developed a range of behaviours and cultures that do not support executive office to deliver effectively. The staff who do not feel empowered to take decisions themselves were not confident they would have the backing of their managers. Sometimes this contributed to lack of progress on projects and other developments.

Negative behaviours

The panel heard from some individuals and teams that the challenges around decision making and direction had led to some negative behaviours. In some areas, the following issues were highlighted to the panel by individuals or teams.

Whilst evidence-based decision making is to be encouraged, it would appear that some teams have over-engineered and over-complicated their decision-making processes. This has resulted in bureaucratic and slow decision-making processes in some key areas. It restricts the ability of the university partnership to empower other teams to make decisions within these functional areas as the processes and procedures are controlled at a central point which can become overburdened.

Some individuals seem to have become used to a culture in which there is no response to requests for decisions or action. In the absence of clear direction and decision making by senior management, a pattern of non-response and non-decision making has developed in some areas. This is compounded by a failure in some areas to hold individuals to account for their performance effectively.

Some individuals reported that they felt that they were operating in a blame culture. They had asked for a decision from senior management on a particular matter that had not been forthcoming. They had therefore made the decision themselves, but where this proved to be wrong, or to have unforeseen consequences, they were then blamed for the consequences. This could increase the extent to which people refer decisions upwards or avoid making or implementing a decision at all.

In the absence of clear priorities and performance management arrangements it is difficult to hold people, teams and the organisation to account. However, with these in place linked to formal operational planning and performance management, executive office would be better placed to empower staff to make positive changes and chase out some of the more negative behaviours and cultures that exist in some places.

Disconnect between management levels

The panel noted that the lack of clear decision making within executive office has been compounded by a disconnect between senior and middle management. It was not clear to the panel whether there was an effective forum for the senior management team to come together to make decisions, understand each other's areas of business and to support and hold each other to account and how this then connected to middle management.

The panel members heard that decision making was often therefore siloed in nature, linked to individual senior managers, rather than being based on an organisational wide set of priorities. The channels for decisions from senior management through to middle management were siloed to their individual teams. Middle management were therefore not party to the discussions and decisions in other areas, that may well have a consequential impact on their areas of operation and misses the opportunity to build on the improvement driven and proactive staff that executive office has.

In discussions with the senior management team, they described several versions of the 'senior management team' including a small team of four of the most senior managers which met frequently and a wider team of executive office staff that met less frequently.

What is the impact of this and what actions should be taken?

The panel observed that the impact of deficits in how senior leadership make decisions, test, communicate and cascade these across executive office teams has a differing impact on different teams. Some teams are able to get on and deliver what they see as their core aims and objectives, have developed mechanisms for prioritising their work and ensuring that projects are delivered. This work is sometimes undertaken without a full understanding of the connection across other executive office teams but ensures progress.

For other teams, this lack of decision making or structures for decision making can be more paralysing. As noted, where staff do not feel empowered to make decisions it can embed and/or encourage behaviours that are counter-productive to the efficient and effective

management of the business. Without strong leadership, teams can end up working at full capacity, but not actually moving the business forward as effectively as their efforts should have provided. Teams can end up working hard to deliver little in terms of tangible outcomes.

It is clear, however, that a significant proportion of the staff within executive office wish to drive positive change and solve the issues that impact on the ability of the university partnership to organise and deliver for students and communities. As executive office moves forward from this report, empowering staff, building upon their ideas for change and working with academic partners will be key.

The senior management need to develop the structured ways to consider and make decisions as a team spanning executive office business. They need to involve middle management within these decision-making forums so cross cutting elements of what executive office undertakes can be discussed and decided, but most important, so there is clarity in the decisions that are made. Middle management should be empowered to take forward work to progress the strategic aims of the university partnership.

There needs to be clarity about the roles and responsibilities, and necessity, of the different senior management groupings that were described. How they interact together, how and where decisions are taken, and how they are communicated across these different groups.

Recommendation
Executive office need to establish clear and transparent decision-making arrangements involving middle management across all aspects of the business and consider how the senior teams within executive office operate so that the risk of siloed working is reduced and staff feel empowered to take decisions.

5. Structure

What was the issue identified?

The panel agreed that the current departmental structure of executive office is not fit for purpose.

University departmental structure

The proformas and discussions with teams highlighted to the panel several issues with the way that the structure of executive office has evolved to accommodate the rapid growth in activity and responsibility. The panel found that some functional areas were split across different teams, without the necessary clarity on roles and responsibilities, or the need for the split. Whilst single person team arrangements are sometimes optimal and required, the panel felt that there were too many single person teams without there always being clarity on why these staff were not included within a wider team structure. This creates risks of duplication of work but also, more importantly, significant risks to resilience.

In some areas of operation, teams who delivered complementary functions, which are traditionally sited together in other academic institutions, were split up within the executive office departmental arrangements with little connection between them.

The discussions highlighted that many staff did not understand why executive office was configured in the way they were and identified frustrations at not having oversight or control of particular functions that linked to their work directly. The senior management team members of the panel confirmed that many of the structural decisions had been taken for personnel reasons or had grown organically over time. They confirmed that a full departmental structural review had not taken place within the last decade, notwithstanding several reorganisations within key areas such as bringing research and knowledge exchange together and the major changes for the grants and contracts team.

The panel also noted from the information provided to it, that there is a significant unevenness with the number of staff and teams reporting to some members of the senior management team as opposed to others.

What is the impact of this and what actions should be taken?
It is not possible for the panel to quantify the impact of having a suboptimal departmental structure. However, the panel could not always clearly identify the lead teams for a particular function from the proformas and the discussions did not elicit how the teams themselves linked their activity.

Whilst single person teams are sometimes necessary and appropriate, they carry risks in terms of the robustness of a function and succession planning. They often represent a pinch point in process terms and the alignment to other areas can be more difficult to manage. By having so many discrete teams the risk of silo working is also increased.

Siloed arrangements also decrease the flexibility that an organisation needs to deploy staff to deliver on priority areas, as individuals are fully burdened with work with no way of delegating work to aligned colleagues.

The imbalance of the number of teams and functions that report to different members of the senior management team creates weaknesses in the levels of senior support and oversight that can be offered to each team. As we have noted, some staff told us about delays in decision making and a lack of strategic direction. In some cases this might be related to the sheer number of teams reporting into some members of the senior team. Other members of the senior team had fewer reports or, in some cases none. A more balanced spread would allow greater interaction between each team and its lead senior executive and help create a different dynamic in the senior team.

The panel observed that it will be for senior management and Court to determine the structural departmental arrangements for executive office and lines of reporting to senior management. However, they saw benefit from, creating a smaller number of departments with larger teams performing cognate tasks and considering the reporting arrangements for these teams to balance the load on the senior team.

The court is seeking to recruit a permanent Vice Chancellor and panel members recognise that there may be good reasons not to conclude a full restructure prior to that appointment, particularly if the timescales for the appointment are short. However, given the appetite for change, and the urgency required in addressing some of these issues, a rebalancing of the responsibilities within the senior team should be considered as a priority.

Recommendation
Executive office should restructure its teams to reduce the complexity of its structural arrangements and ensure a better balance of responsibilities across its senior management team as soon as possible.

6. Partnership

What was the issue identified?

The panel evaluation focused on the running and operation of executive office itself, but in some parts, this is indistinguishable from wider university partnership activity as teams often deliver services on behalf of the university partnership as a whole and its students. Teams spoke of different roles and relationships that they held with academic partners. Broadly speaking, these fell into three categories:

- ensuring compliance;
- providing support or services to academic partners;
- negotiating agreements across and between partners and the university.

The majority of teams reported that they were required to do all three of these activities in the course of undertaking their responsibilities. What was clear was that there were differing levels of success between teams in how this was undertaken and a different attitude and experience between that of senior management and the rest of executive office.

Senior management

The panel met with the senior management team as part of the review process. Much of the discussion revolved around the challenges that exist in working with and leading the university partnership and the difficulty that the complexity of the university partnership added to their work. Many of the factors that teams have raised about executive office operation were repeated by the senior management team in respect of partnership operation. In particular:

- There is a lack of clarity in the decision-making structures, and a lack of activity or implementation when a decision has been made;
- That they felt disempowered to take the necessary decisions required that impact across the partnership;
- Non-compliance was not effectively challenged and resolved;
- That too much time was spent reacting to problems within the partnership, than proactively planning and developing the future.

Partnership working

The majority of teams reported that they had positive working relationships with their colleagues within the university partnership, though communication and coordination of effort could be better planned to improve the effectiveness. A number of teams spoke of the necessity to operate as a single team to deliver most effectively, ensuring, for example, that interaction with stakeholders, such as schools and businesses, needed to be better managed to ensure a coordinated approach.

Where teams reported good working relationships, they had managed to balance the support and compliance aspects of their roles with partner teams and organisations. They had developed strong practitioner groups and joint working by being supportive and taking a benefits led approach, to build relationships and trust between the groups. This allows for the compliance aspects of the role to be delivered in a supportive team-based way.

For other teams, the compliance arrangements had developed with more process and formality retaining a clear distinction between the teams within executive office and within the academic partners. For some areas of business, this formalisation is required, but for some this had led to difficulties within the relationships and the sense that executive office staff felt they were seen as a burden rather than a support.

Some teams noted that there was a lack of clarity of where the boundary lay between their responsibilities and those within academic partners delivering the same function. Some felt that this was not clear and that this led to a duplication of effort, divergent approaches or views to the same issue with no clear leadership and in some cases the feeling that work was dumped on executive office teams once the problem had escalated to an unmanageable level at an academic partner.

Common services

A number of teams spoke of the benefit of much closer working relationships, the use of single systems, policies and procedures to ensure that the effectiveness of what the university partnership does is maximised. This coordination, noted above and within the operational planning section, of a common partnership approach, linked or shared goals and priorities, were described as keys to improving our effectiveness by the majority of teams.

A few teams considered that there would be benefits from merging with university partnership teams to deliver a common service across the whole partnership for their particular function. These were seen as single services, serving partners equally, in a dispersed and fully integrated way.

Regional and partnership structures

A number of teams are required to work through the regional structures that have been established to provide a basis for partnership discussion and decision making. Teams commented that in some cases these were no longer effective decision-making fora. Teams reported that some of these groups were not empowered to make decisions, with any decision taken having to be confirmed by Principals or senior executives, and consequently they were sometimes poorly attended or had the wrong people at them. In some cases the remit and decision making powers of groups were unclear.

Some teams were persevering with these arrangements, trying to deliver work through negotiation across all parties, whereas other teams sought to avoid regional and partnership structures by going straight to key senior people within academic partners to agree the outcome of a decision. What was clear to the panel was that these partnership arrangements

absorb significant amounts of time and energy from staff across executive office and academic partners. Unless they are empowered, effective and deliver the required outcomes, they may well be more of a hindrance to the effective running of the university partnership and need to be refreshed and reformed.

What is the impact of this and what actions should be taken?
If one considers the impact of the partnership working and the different relationships that executive office teams have built with their colleagues in academic partners, then it depends where one looks. The panel were struck by the positive approach that some teams take, the joint working that they have instilled with their colleagues, the support-based arrangements that drive improvements for the whole university partnership, arrangements where the sum is greater than the parts.

For other teams, the requirement to work alongside and within the partnership arrangements has created real difficulty and drives tensions and creates divides with their colleagues in academic partners that are counter-productive, that slow the progress and improvement of the whole and drive the negative behaviours and culture that the wider assembly programme has identified.

Some individuals will always be more suited to working in partnership arrangements than others, but the impact of working in and across the diversity of the university partnership should enhance and improve the offering that is made. Supporting staff to do this, through clarity of expectation, promoting and building upon good practice and highlighting instances where teams are making it work well is essential.

Deciding and implementing a transparent and clear balance between local and regional, between academic partner and executive office roles and responsibilities is perhaps the most significant opportunity that executive office and the university partnership has to improve its effectiveness.

In some areas, this might be through the development of a single common team to cover a particular function. In others aligned teams working to the same policies, procedures and systems with clear delineation between roles and responsibilities would be more effective. In other areas, clear separate functions that are delivered in different ways locally and regionally will be required. The approach already taken by many executive office teams in how they work with academic partners in a consultative, and supportive way needs to become the norm.

What is clear, is that these things need to be agreed in a transparent way so that executive office teams and academic partners understand their relative roles and how they should interact together. This needs to be built into the operational plans and performance arrangements so there is clarity of where impact is assessed.

Executive office should draw on the considerable good practice that exists within their teams of how to proactively and positively work with academic partners to support the needs and requirements of both local and regional agendas.

Recommendation
Executive office should agree with academic partners the shape of partnership corporate services and the relative roles and responsibilities that are held within executive office teams, local teams and joint teams. In implementing this executive office needs to proceed with an approach that balances leadership with an open, consultative approach and ensure cost effectiveness of the resulting arrangements.

7. Committees

What was the issue identified?

The majority of teams highlighted issues with the current executive committee arrangements of the university partnership. These concerns covered committees internal to executive office and regional or partnership committees and groups.

Lack of empowerment

Many staff and teams highlighted that the committee structure was not sufficiently empowered to make decisions. Staff reported that agreements made at some committees would need to be referred back to senior leadership within each academic partner for confirmation. Teams approached this reality in different ways, some avoided these committees to work directly with senior management, others use the committee structures whilst recognising that they are sub-optimal.

Many staff commented that some committees have become 'talking shops', reducing their contribution to progressing university work, with colleagues reporting that attendance has also decreased at some committees.

Reporting to multiple committees

A number of teams reported that the same papers were presented at multiple committees for discussion rather than for a decision. It was not clear to the panel whether this was because staff were seeking the approval of multiple committees to better the chances of pushing forward their work, or as a means of communicating what they were doing to different stakeholder groups. Some colleagues, however, spoke of committee fatigue as they spent a considerable amount of their time in committees, significantly cutting the amount of time they have to progress work.

What is the impact of this and what actions should be taken?
The way the current committee structure functions absorbs a significant amount of staff time, without appearing to deliver the requisite outcomes. This reduces the capacity of the university partnership to deliver and increases the frustration of staff, who are stuck reporting to committees that do not have the power to approve the decisions that they seek.

These arrangements can also compound some of the negative behaviours described above, as the committee structure allows for considerable discussion on pieces of work and strategies, without coming to conclusions and decisions.

The senior management team said that much of the committee structure had been established at the behest of academic partners to facilitate joint decision making and a consultative approach to ensure widespread engagement and involvement. The panel recognised that the unique arrangements of the university partnership will always require a greater level of consultative arrangements, which will include additional committee structures.

However, executive office and academic partners need to review the committee structures that it has in place and ensure that there is clarity to the remit of different committees, that they have meaningful decision making powers and they cover the necessary business of executive office and the university partnership.

Whilst it is important for committees to note and understand work that is progressing with their areas of interest, or connected areas, consultation, engagement and communication of topics, endeavours, initiatives can be undertaken in far more effective ways than presenting the same paper at numerous committees. The university partnership is built upon its innovative approaches to serving a dispersed constituency, and it should seek to use that innovative ability to shift away from using committees to communicate news.

Recommendation
The university partnership should undertake an audit of current committee arrangements to ensure that each committee or group has a clear purpose, remit, membership and delegated authority, which does not overlap with other committees or groups.

8. Staff development

What was the issue identified?

A number of teams highlighted concerns about the arrangements for staff development for professional staff within executive office.

Inequity in opportunity

Executive office has no central budget for staff development for professional staff. Teams told the panel that they were able to provide staff development directly from their own budgets. However, the majority of teams are too small to have latitude within their budgets to fund staff development. The larger departments within executive office do have this flexibility so opportunities are linked to the area that people work in, rather than individual need or organisational priorities across executive office and the university partnership as a whole.

Staff reported that these arrangements were in stark contrast to the much more effective and extensive staff development opportunities that executive office provides for academic colleagues.

Strategic fit

The panel noted that given the lack of clarity on either the strategic direction or organisational priorities, even where teams had the opportunity to provide staff development, it was not clearly understood how they would identify priority areas for staff development. There was no sense from the discussions about how staff development was considered or prioritised by senior management as these decisions had been devolved to budget holders.

Partnership opportunities

Some teams within executive office provide staff development and training for academic staff across the partnership. They raised concerns that in some cases pan-partnership training and development opportunities were organised, but then academic partner staff were withdrawn at the last moment, for a variety of reasons, or that an academic partner then decided that the agreed and arranged training was no longer a priority for them.

What is the impact of this and what actions should be taken?

At an organisational level, executive office is not systematically investing in developing the skills of its corporate staff to enhance the delivery of the core functions that it must deliver. The staff development opportunities that there are, whilst undoubtably beneficial for those staff who receive these opportunities, are not clearly linked to the priority areas that executive office requires.

As noted above the panel found that both the system for staff appraisals and the performance management arrangements more generally need consideration. Staff development should be part and parcel of these arrangements to ensure that performance, appraisal and development are all properly interlinked and considered together.

On an individual level, the inequity in how development opportunities are organised is likely to lead to resentment between colleagues in different departments, as some areas can access development opportunities whilst others cannot, regardless of need or value. Investing in staff and career development is a key way that an organisation shows that it values the staff it employs and invest in the future. It benefits both individuals and the organisation as a whole.

Where training and staff development is being organised and arranged in-house and across the partnership, the systems are not robust enough to ensure that it is seen as a shared priority and attendance therefore can slip. This wastes staff time, effort and resources and may result in staff not having the development opportunities that they require.

The panel is mindful that the financial environment will be even more challenging as public finances adjust to the post-pandemic world. Executive office will need to understand what proportion of its expenditure can be put towards staff development and must ensure that all staff are given equitable access to these opportunities.

If a clear strategic vision and set of aims, with clear operational priorities are developed, then staff development can be linked to support the delivery of these aims, both within executive office and the partnership. Whilst this was not specifically mentioned, there is no reason why corporate staff development opportunities cannot be delivered pan-partnership, to increase the effectiveness and improve efficiency.

Recommendation
Executive office should create equitable and effective arrangements for its professional staff to access opportunities for development which can be linked and prioritised in line with the strategic priorities of the university partnership and form part of the annual appraisal arrangements.

Next Steps

This report is based on the views expressed by executive office staff and teams in their proformas and meetings with panel members. The panel believes it accurately captures the feedback they received and draws out the substantive themes that were raised during the process.

As noted at the beginning of this paper, there is a lack of belief amongst staff and stakeholders that executive office senior management will take this opportunity to make the substantive change required. To do so will require the senior management team to confront some very real and difficult challenges, to work with staff and stakeholders to build new arrangement and behaviours to deliver a more effective and connected organisation.

The Interim Vice Chancellor described to the panel how the work to address these recommendations are already being embedded within a university partnership wide change implementation plan. This will ensure that executive office progress the necessary actions and does so with academic partner involvement. The annexes to this paper set out a raft of improvement ideas and opportunities from staff that can be built into this plan to make positive change.

The Interim Vice-Chancellor advised that he wanted the panel, with its partly external membership, to remain committed and involved in the process, to provide some oversight of how changes to address the recommendations are being implemented. This was an invitation that was welcomed by the panel as it demonstrates the real commitment that exists to make the necessary changes within the university and the partnership more broadly.

As such, the panel will hold two meetings over the next academic year to consider the progress that is being made. They will seek input from the senior management team, the wider staff cohort within executive office and academic partners at these meeting to understand how effective implementation and change has been based on these recommendations. The dates for these meetings will be arranged by the end of this academic year.

Annex 1 – Membership of the evaluation panel

Kenny Miller	Independent Chair
Andrew Bowie	HISA Vice President Higher Education
Bev Clubley	Chair of Orkney College
Alistair Dodds	University court member
Janet Hackel	Chair of the university staff committee
Martin Jones	Principal of Argyll College
John Kemp	Senior Advisor; change implementation
Crichton Lang	Interim Vice Chancellor and Principal
Neil Simco	Vice Principal (research and impact)

Diane Rawlinson, Vice Principal (Further Education), kindly agreed to cover some of the interview slots and so also attended and contributed to the panel's deliberations.

Annex 2 - Evaluation of 'executive office' – guidance and proforma

NB: The document as appears here for the report <u>has been reformatted simply for ease of</u> <u>presentation</u>.

Guidance

Completing the proforma

Teams are asked to keep their submissions as short as possible. The panel is made up of senior professionals, with experience in education, and teams can assume a reasonable level of understanding of what delivering different functions and activities entails. Teams will get an opportunity to discuss and expand on what they have written when they meet panel members.

The first and second sections of the proforma, 'context' and 'baseline and budget', should be largely restricted to three or four bullet points for each question. The finance detail will be completed centrally. The third and fourth sections, 'future and partnership considerations' and 'reflective analysis', may well require free text and teams should try and limit their submissions to 200 words per question. The fifth section gives teams the opportunity to reflect anything that they wish to the panel.

Please do not use acronyms as the majority of the panel will not understand them. The completed proformas will not be shared beyond the panel membership and the project team.

Submitting the proforma
Please submit your complete proforma to elaine.sutherland@uhi.ac.uk by 5pm on Wednesday 19 February. Submissions earlier than this would be appreciated.

Support and questions
If you have questions or are looking for support, please contact max.brown@uhi.ac.uk or elaine.sutherland@uhi.ac.uk

Proforma

Evaluation panel – departmental proforma

Department:

Report author:

Job title:

1. Context and baseline information (please use bullet points where possible)	
1.1 Department description To include a brief description of the main responsibilities of the department	
1.2 Engagement Who does your department regularly engage with to inform your work? Internally, within the partnership and externally.	
1.3 Drivers What are the major drivers for your department? For example: • Compliance • Quality • Income generation • Improvement • Frontline support • Student enhancement • Staff engagement	
1.4 Performance measures What are the main performance indicators for your department and how are they used?	
1.5 Reporting What are the primary committees you report to?	

1.6 Statutory requirements Are there any elements of what you do that are required by statute or regulatory bodies?	
1.7 Partnership How does your department interact with the university partnership? How does your department interact with other departments within the university?	
1.8 Staffing and configuration How many full-time equivalent staff do you have? How is your department deployed? Is it centrally based, within a partner or dispersed?	THE NUMBER OF STAFF WILL BE COMPLETED BY CORPORATE SERVICES

2. Budget

2.1 Total 19/20 Budget Departmental Analysis.	

	Income £000s	Pay £000s	Non Pay £000s	Pyts to APs £000s	Depreciation £000s	Total £000s
General Running Costs						
Strategic Investments						
Investment from Reserves						

THIS TABLE WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT

2.2 Non-recurring funding Source of non-recurring funding	
2.3 Budget fluctuation How has the budget changed over the last three years? Are there planned or anticipated changes to the level of budget over the next three years?	

3. Partnership considerations (maximum of 200 words per question)	
3.1 Barriers to effective working What are the barriers, if any, to more effective working? What change should be made that would allow you to work more effectively?	
3.2 Integrated arrangements Could the services you provide be delivered in a more integrated and efficient way within the university itself or across the university partnership?	
3.3 Systems and processes Could any of the activities you undertake be made more effective and/or efficient through better technology systems or processes?	
3.4 Specialisms Are there areas of specialism that could be added that would be of significant value to the university and the university partnership?	
4. Reflective analysis (maximum of 200 words per question)	
4.1 Strengths and areas for development What are the strengths of your current arrangements and what are the areas for development?	
4.2 Contribution What contribution does your team make to the university and/or the university partnership? What things should you be doing less of and what things should you be doing more of, to maximise the contribution made?	
4.3 Non-contributary areas Are there areas of your team's activities that you think do not contribute to the effectiveness of the university or the partnership?	
4.4 Overlap Is your department's function, or parts of it, also undertaken by academic partners locally and/or other parts of the university? If part which ones? To what extent is this necessary or helpful?	
5. Additional information (please limit to 200-300 words)	
5.1 Additional information Is there anything else you would like to add to the information stated above?	

Annex 3 – Key milestones of the University of the Highlands and Islands

1991	Highland Regional Council sets up a steering group to explore the case for a University of the Highlands and Islands.
1992	Sir Graham Hills produces a report for the Highlands and Islands University advisory group which recommended a federal institution, building on existing FE and HE provision in the region.
1993	UHI Limited is incorporated, developing out of the University of the Highlands and Islands Project.
1996	Millennium Commission awards development grant to UHI Project.
1997	Curriculum framework for degrees and academic regulations agreed; Scottish Telecom contracted to build the Wider Area Network; First Director appointed – Professor Brian Duffield.
1998	UHI is accredited by Open University Validation Services (OUVS) to offer degrees and our first degrees are validated.
1999	QAA audit recommends designation as higher education institution (HEI); First students graduate with computing and social science degrees; First PhD students registered with OU as validating body; First Masters programme, MA Professional Development, validated by OUVS; Second Director appointed – Professor (later Sir) Alistair Macfarlane.
2001	Following designation as an HEI, University of the Highlands and Islands Project becomes UHI Millennium Institute, with 5,610 students, generating 3,557 FTEs in the 2001/02 academic year; Entering 2001 Research Assessment exercise (RAE) in one unit of assessment (Environmental and Marine Sciences) UHIMI is awarded a '4'; Third Director appointed – re-titled to Principal – Professor Robert J Cormack; New team of senior managers formed in the executive office; OUVS interim visit, which confirms continuing accreditation.

2002	First Masters students graduate; Undergraduate degrees offered include Applied Environmental Science, Business Administration, Computing, Electrical Engineering, Environment and Heritage Studies, Fine Art, Forestry and Conservation, Gaelic Language and Culture, Mechanical Engineering, Music Performance, and Rural Development Studies.
2003	QAA Academic Quality audit, which has a positive outcome with a number of commendations and points for further consideration.
2004	OUVS institutional review, which confirmed continuing accreditation; Accreditation agreement between UHI and University of Aberdeen.
2005	University of Aberdeen institutional visit to validate UHI for PhDs; four academic areas validated to offer research degrees; There are now 6,748 students, 43% of them full time, generating 3,857 FTEs in the 2005/06 academic year.
2006	Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) grants maximum devolved authority to UHI as an SQA centre following series of audits; Sponsorship agreement between UHI and the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Strathclyde; Taught Degree Awarding Powers (tDAP) scrutiny by QAA; Completion of QAA subject review cycle 2001/06, with eighteen reviews covering all subject areas; confirmed confidence in academic standards in all areas offering degrees, with all other aspects (teaching and learning, student progression, learning resources) commendable or approved.
2007	QAA Enhancement-led institutional review (ELIR), 1st cycle; judgement that broad confidence could be placed in our management of the quality of our provision and the academic standards of the awards we offer, and broad confidence can be placed in our likely future management of quality and academic standards with proviso about use of data; Revised sponsorship agreement between UHI and the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Strathclyde.
2008	Entering the 2008 RAE, quality profile received in eight units of assessment, and involving 74 members of staff; 51% 'internationally-recognised' and above; Taught Degree Awarding Powers (tDAP) granted, with effect from 01 August 2008; First UHI degrees awarded in Aircraft Engineering: Maintenance, Business and Management, Child and Youth Studies, Computing, Contemporary Textiles, Electrical and Electronic

	Engineering, Environment and Heritage Studies, Fine Art, Gaelic and Development, Gaelic Language and Culture, Golf Management, Health Studies, Marine Science, Mechanical Engineering, Natural and Environmental Sciences, Popular Music Performance, Scottish Cultural Studies, Social Sciences, Sustainable Forest Management, and Theological Studies; Highland Diabetes Institute (a partnership between the university, the NHS and LifeScan Scotland) established.
2009	Second Principal appointed – James M Fraser; University of Aberdeen re-accreditation visit for research degrees, re-accreditation approved for five years.
2010	Application for university title lodged; There are 7,653 students, 47% of them full time, generating 4,484 FTEs in the 2010/11 academic year. Nearly 3,000 awards were earned by students, including ten PhDs.
2011	University of the Highlands and Islands established on 01 February following the award of university title by the Privy Council.
2012	QAA Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR), 2nd cycle; outcome of confidence in the institution's current, and likely future, management of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the student learning experience it provides; Investiture of HRH Princess Royal as first Chancellor of the University of the Highlands and Islands.
2013	Completed submission to 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF); quality threshold for staff inclusion higher than previous research exercises; 68.1 FTE staff included in submission across six units of assessment; Accreditation secured from the General Teaching Council for Scotland for the University to run its first programme of initial teacher education.
2014	University of Aberdeen re-accreditation visit for research degrees approved for five years; Third Principal and Vice Chancellor appointed – Professor Clive Mulholland; Implementation of Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013; The university becomes the regional strategic body for the delivery of further education; REF results announced, achieved overall 2.76 GPA, ranked 63rd in UK; rDAP application submitted to Privy Council.

2015	School of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences established with £4m grant from Highland and Islands Enterprise; rDAP scrutiny process begins; There are 8,618 students, 64% of them full time, generating 6,329 FTEs in the 2015/16 academic year. Over 90% were Scottish based students, and 52% were on undergraduate degree programmes.
2016	QAA Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR), 3rd cycle; achieved the best possible overall judgement, confirming effective and robust arrangements for managing academic standards and for enhancing the student experience.
2017	Research degree awarding powers granted; First cohort of undergraduate nursing students begin with 123 first year students learning at the UHI Centre for Health Science.
2018	City Regional Deal awarded UHI £9m; In 2018/19 there are nearly 10,000 UHI students and 3,800 awards are conferred including over 1,700 SQA validated awards.
2019	First UHI PhD awarded to a student from Scottish Association for Marine Science UHI (SAMS), on Microplastic Pollution in the Deep Sea Ecosystem; First cohort of eighteen postgraduate midwifery students begin; The university buys the Centre for Health Science.
2020	Optometry BSc Hons degree to begin in Autumn term; First undergraduate nursing students will graduate in November.

Annex 4 – Departmental descriptions (May 2020)

	Dept/Section title	Overview of department
1	**Academic development**	The Academic Development section's key responsibilities are problem analysis across academic partner-wide working groups, undertaking staff and student consultation, gap analysis, resolving issues (often at short notice with tight turnarounds), writing policy and guidance. They represent the university on and respond to various reviews, committees and surveys (e.g. NSS, ELIR) and monitor and respond to legislation that has an impact on learning and teaching throughout the partnership. They also work with academic partner teams during the development of new degree programmes or new modules to ensure that technology is appropriate and available, that learning, teaching and enhancement strategic values are embedded in delivery to enhance the student experience and an appropriate programme of staff development is developed and implemented to ensure policy compliance. The section often creates short-life working groups, drawing on academic partner staff and students as and when required. They provide a flexible, location-independent capacity to resolve a wide range of academic, technical and legal issues whilst ensuring compliance with university and legal policies.
2	**Academic registry and FAST team**	The Academic Registry and FAST team are responsible for the effective management and implementation of the university's quality framework. This underpins the maintenance of academic standards and quality of the student learning experience across the partnership, and includes academic regulations, policies, procedures and guidance. The team are responsible for external quality-related reporting as a degree-awarding body, in line with the requirements of the UK Quality Code, the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Qualifications Authority as an awarding body. The team manage the quality assurance processes relating to curriculum development, approval, monitoring and review; the quality enhancement processes in relation to periodic institution-led review (ILR) for academic areas and professional student support services; and the management of exam boards and progression boards including mitigating circumstances and recognition of prior learning. They provide ongoing support and guidance to staff across the partnership for these activities, as well as for faculties and subject networks.

		The team also provide secretariat support for academic committees, oversight of collaborative partnership agreements and support for special projects and senior level institutional meetings.
3	**Admissions**	The Admissions department enhances university student recruitment through the facilitation of the enquiry and higher education (HE) applicant journey. This includes responsibility for the operation of the course information line, first point of contact information service on HE courses, and 'how to apply' for prospective students of the university. Their responsibilities include encouraging continuous improvement and streamlining of the application process, including provision of expert HE admissions advice to the partnership. The department also works to ensure consistency and equity of applicant experience, in accordance with the university's admissions policy, including managing the university's Tier 4 sponsorship licence, which allows the partnership to recruit international students requiring a visa to study in the UK. Admissions also operate full admissions service for all undergraduate and postgraduate nursing and midwifery degrees. In co-operation with academic partner admissions, some other undergraduate degrees are serviced by UHI's admission department.
4	**Business improvement**	The Business Improvement team's goal is to help teams and individuals across the partnership improve what they do. We aim to create a culture and environment where staff and students can thrive. The team does this by providing a range of services, resources and training to colleagues to help improve their services, processes, projects and performance. With its broad range of experience from inside and outside the education sector, the team provide a different perspective to look at ways of working and professional analysis/problem-solving. Some of the skills and services offered include process improvement; service design; change management; solution design and implementation; developing and implementing new or enhanced operating models; project/programme management resource; workshop planning and facilitation; and strategy development.
5	**Centre for History**	The Centre for History is a key component of the university, internationally renowned for its teaching and research in Highland, Scottish and wider-world history. Established in 2005, the centre has attracted external funding of more than £2 million, which has been invested in both teaching and research. In 2007 UHI's BA (Hons) Scottish History was launched. Since then the Centre's lecturers have

		created further courses which are offered at all UHI partner colleges from Perth to Shetland and at learning centres in many Highlands and Islands communities.
		In addition to the undergraduate degrees, a fully online MLitt History of the Highlands and Islands was successfully launched in September 2011 and has attracted students in Australia, Canada, Kenya and Romania as well as across the Highlands and Islands, Scotland and the UK.
		Centre staff also supervise postgraduate students researching various aspects of Scottish, Irish, British and wider-world History.
6	**Communications and external relations**	The communications and external relations team works with colleagues across the university partnership and in the university itself. The team is responsible for the development and implementation of a public relations strategy to reflect the requirements of the university's strategic plan. They operate from a tertiary and regional perspective to promote and protect the university's reputation in close collaboration with colleagues based in the academic partners, as well as supporting these colleagues to deliver their own strategies alongside executive office's, but from a local perspective.
		The team's expertise and responsibilities include supporting the development and implementation of the Gaelic Language plan, as well as promoting Gaelic language development opportunities for university partnership staff.
		The remit of the communications and external relations is wide ranging, and includes areas such as providing digital communication, including social media, blogs and web content; disseminating key messages, internal and emergency communications; establishing, collating and communicating the facts in a range of situations and making these available; media relations and public affairs; corporate publications; and providing guidance to university partnership staff in all the above.
7	**Development office**	The Development Office are responsible for the university's development and fundraising strategy: securing and managing donated funds that make a difference to the ongoing and future development of the university, students, researchers and various academic, strategic and capital projects, working closely with a range of colleagues at all levels right across the university partnership.
		They help develop the case for funding for a range of needs, as well as identifying, developing and maintaining long-term relationships and ongoing communication with individual and business supporters, donors and their beneficiaries. The development team are also responsible for all fund management ranging from scholarships, prizes and awards as well as legacy, trust and foundation funds including the university's US foundation. A further key, interlinked role of the team is

		the management and engagement of the university's alumni community, currently over 25,000 former students, who we hope may become supporters over time.
8	**Educational development unit**	The Educational Development unit (EDU) provides a high-quality curriculum design and development service to build core learning and teaching products and provide staff guidance for the whole university academic partnership. The curriculum produced is at the core of university programmes and meets the requirements of regional employers. EDU's work is underpinned by technology and evidence-based models of curriculum design. It reflects the core values of the Learning, teaching and enhancement strategy. The EDU helps build resilience by equipping staff with the skills to design, develop and refresh units, modules and entire programmes. It undertakes a range of strategic projects, both internal and external, related to learning and teaching. EDU is also responsible for the delivery of new curriculum development targets funded by European Structural and Investment funds.
9	**Employer engagement and key accounts**	Employer engagement and key accounts provides strategic oversight of employer engagement activity for the university. It leads engagement activities for the institution and are responsible for identifying and managing relationships with employers and external key accounts who are valuable to the university. They co-ordinate and interact with academic partners, as well as liaising with other relevant internal and external stakeholders. Responsible for the Business Development Practitioners Group, they bring together counterparts in other executive office and partner departments to help form university strategy.
10	**European and international development**	The European and International development department's main duties include strategy and tactics for accessing maximum EU funds (particularly European Regional Development, European Social Fund and European Territorial Cooperation programmes) and development opportunities in support of UHI strategic aims; strategy and tactics for accessing Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes and funding; developing strategic links with transnational networks and partners – including RETI (global network of island universities) and the University of the Arctic initiative; and representing UHI at regional, national and international levels to promote UHI's external profile and secure involvement in relevant policy development. Since the EU referendum in 2016, the focus has been primarily on the impact of Brexit on the university, mitigating risks, analysing financial exposure, scenario planning, responding to consultations, etc. This includes analysis of any future

		access to EU programmes as well as potential replacement domestic funding streams, feeding in specific concerns and impact on UHI to the debate where possible.
11	**Facilities and procurement**	The Facilities and procurement team manages all building services and maintenance in executive office owned or leased premises. Some roles and activities are undertaken in-house by executive office staff and others contracted out to service providers. They also input to estates projects such as new builds and major refurbishments and lease and property management.
		In addition, the team provides guidance and advice to executive office departments relating to procurement activity; undertaking procurement exercises on behalf of executive office departments and reporting on university spend and compliance with procurement legislation and university policy. They provide guidance and advice to assist with the university's compliance with procurement and health and safety legislation.
		The team also assist some other executive office departments by raising purchase orders, carrying out procurement activity, providing health and safety support, and making travel arrangements on their behalf.
12	**Faculty and subject networks**	The main responsibility of the deans and subject network leaders (SNL) is to support the delivery of the curriculum elements of the university strategic plan, which is the basis of faculty plans and subject network operational plans. They design, develop, and support the delivery of the curriculum, taking responsibility in liaison with academic partners and in line with corporate strategic plans and priorities which address regional and local needs.
		There are two faculties: Arts, Humanities and Business (AHB) and Science, Health and Engineering (SHE). Each faculty has three subject networks, headed by subject network leaders, who report to the deans. SHE also includes the department of Nursing and Midwifery. Deans and SNLs are located around the network and represent a neutral whole-network perspective and are a 'level playing field' for partners, creating connections to facilitate a regional perspective across the partnership.
		The deans and SNLs lead and undertake a wide range of operational functions including chairing and taking part in approval panels, advisory groups, subject reviews, faculty boards, subject network committees, joint faculty executive, quality forums, examination boards (Tier and Tier 2), mitigating circumstances panels, repeat year panels, recognition of prior learning (RPL) claims, academic misconduct panels, ethics applications, programme leader and module leader appointments, quality monitoring and other quality assurance processes in annual reporting through subject network

		evaluation reports, meetings to progress new curriculum proposals, appointing and working with external examiners, evaluating and responding to external examiner reports, a variety of short life working groups, and university committees. SNLs are also members of various university groups e.g. NSS strategy group, student engagement group, non-continuation group, Research Ethics committee etc. Deans chair faculty boards of studies and are members of the Academic Council and Partnership Planning forum and attend Partnership Council and Senior Management team, External Partnership Steering committee, and one attends Academic Title Review board. Deans also recommend programme approval or closure to PPF. The Faculties work extensively with colleagues from all of the academic partners of the university and with numerous teams within executive office and external stakeholders.
13	**Finance**	Finance at the university consist of three teams: Grants and contracts, Financial accounts, and Management Accounts. Grants and contracts principle role is to provide expert support and advice to the university at all stages of the grant application and award lifecycle. The team work closely with applicants to maximise the chances of success and minimise the risk to the university. Once a grant has been awarded, the team monitor delivery and compliance with the management accounts team and reporting issues and risks. Financial accounts are responsible for a broad swathe of university finance activities, including accounts payable and receivable; banking, payroll and pensions; statutory accounts and returns; VAT and other tax; and the finance system administration. Management accounts provides expert advice, support and management information on the financial performance and position of the university and the wider partnership. The team focuses on customer service and continuous improvement. They are responsible for all financial management, reporting and analysis across the board, timeous and accurate distribution of funding to the university and wider partnership and statutory and regulatory reporting.
14	**Governance and records management**	The Governance team are responsible for ensuring that internal and regulatory requirements are adhered to and that the university court and executive committees receive a high level of professional, comprehensive and flexible corporate services and administrative support. The team protects the university from risks associated with non-compliance,

		governance failures and reputational damage and help ensure that decisions are appropriately recorded and actioned. They facilitate a fair, equitable and ethical work and study environment.
		The team are also responsible for areas such as complaints, freedom of information, data protection, archive and record management, company administration, appointments/induction of non-executive directors, corporate secretariat functions (committee servicing/support), policy management, equality and diversity, management of student residences and development and management of customer relationship management (CRM) software.
15	**Graduate School office**	The Graduate School office (GSO) provides the main professional services and academic support for the university's growing postgraduate research (PGR) student population (MRes and PhD) and the supervisory staff who guide them through their studies. The team works to provide the best possible experience for PGR students and staff, and to ensure effective procedures are in place to facilitate this aim all practices are mapped to the framework of QAA Scotland. The GSO provides an integrated service, representing the interests and supporting all the university's PGR community by ensuring governance and procedures are relevant, compliant and in line with good practice across the UK sector. The team also hold responsibility for the management of committees that support the PGR administrative functions. These are the Research Degree committee, which oversees the registration, support, progression and examination of research students and recommends the final degree award to Academic Council; and the Graduate School committee, which ensures the satisfactory progression of PGRs through the review of the student's progress reports, identifies trends, general needs and training requirements and reports these to Research Degree committee.
16	**Health, Social Care and Life Sciences**	The School of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences provides strategic leadership and drives co-ordination with other stakeholders, including regional health boards, in delivering on the regional strategic priorities in health. The school embraces the totality of health education as the leading provider in the region for health, care and wellbeing education, and employer engagement in addition to collaborative applied research and knowledge exchange across the partnership founded in our unique environment. The school comprises the Institute of Heath Research and Innovation (HRI) and the Applied Life Studies subject network. Within the HRI are the department of Nursing and Midwifery, the division of Biomedical Sciences, the division of Rural Health and Wellbeing, and Healthcare Innovation. The School also hosts the Scottish Rural Health Partnership and is a key partner in the Scottish Graduate Entry Medical School programme (ScotGEM).

17	**Human resources**	The Human Resources Department provides an operational HR service to the management and staff of the university. The team provides strategic and operational leadership on HR issues, including the provision of HR expertise and advice to senior management, as well as undertaking a range of administrative duties in relation to the employee lifecycle. This focuses on the recruitment process and on the maintenance and development of HR Systems and HR improvement projects which can range from talent acquisition, retention to offboarding and all associated activities that come with those. The team also provides a support and advice service to staff and managers and ensures the consistent application of personnel policies and procedures with regard to the employee lifecycle within the university.
18	**Internal audit**	The University Internal Audit Service is responsible for providing an objective, independent appraisal of all the University of the Highlands and Islands activities, financial and otherwise. It provides a service to the whole organisation. The Internal Audit Service is responsible for evaluating and reporting to the University of the Highlands and Islands Court and the university principal, through the Audit Committee, thereby providing them with assurance on the arrangements for risk management, control, governance and value for money. In the course of its work the department identifies scope to improve business processes and controls and makes recommendations to management. These actions drive a widespread process of business improvement across the university and its partners.
19	**International**	The International team seeks to develop and co-ordinate the UHI international portfolio of activity, with a current focus on recruitment. They provide enhanced opportunities for international mobility for staff and students; develop increased opportunities for international student recruitment, both into Scotland and in the students' home countries, and are developing international reach which will both require and facilitate an increase in the international relevance and context of our curriculum. They seek to work collegiately to grow numbers of fee-paying students studying with the university; grow income from student fees, and reduce reliance on SFC income; embed internationalism across the university's activities; promote UHI's credibility and reputation internationally and domestically, and provide international opportunities for UHI students

		Activities include increasing an 'internationalised' curriculum; marketing, recruitment and admissions; promoting student satisfaction; embedding internationalisation beyond recruitment; and continuing international strategy development.
20	**Knowledge exchange**	The Knowledge Exchange (KE) team's responsibilities include supporting staff and businesses (including social enterprises and other external clients) to develop collaborative, innovative new products, processes and business systems that will not only benefit the companies involved but also the local and regional economy. The KE team have a related overarching target to increase income across UHI's academic partners through greater knowledge exchange activity including: collaborative research, contract research, consultancy services, CPD, entrepreneurship and research commercialisation (intellectual property, patenting, licencing, spin out companies, etc.). The team challenges the university's culture to be more outward looking and collaborative with local businesses - driving innovation and fuelling regional economic impact.
21	**Learning and information services**	LIS provides an overarching IT and library service and technical advice and support to the academic partnership to underpin the needs of the business and ensure that there is an equality of student and staff experience, regardless of study level or location. The department delivers common university-wide services which by their nature must be delivered just once, such as the student record system. The team are responsible for a complex range of functions including Libraries, ServiceDesk, Applications, Infrastructure and security, and Integrated Technologies and Resources. The team also deliver "academic partner" style ICT support to executive office, including the teaching and research activities which executive office undertakes directly.
22	**Learning and teaching academy**	The Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) exists to support and enable the enhancement and strategic development of learning and teaching within the university, working with and across executive office and the academic partners. The team do this through activities and initiatives that support continued professional development, the sharing and recognition of good practice, peer support and networking, leadership development, and enabling colleagues to progress their own educational scholarship and research. Responsibilities include the development of strategies and frameworks (e.g. the university's Learning and Teaching Enhancement strategy), professional development schemes (ALPINE, the university mentoring scheme), funding opportunities (e.g. to support staff to undertake PhDs or educational research), analysis and dissemination of information (student surveys), strategic leadership and development of educational research (key to REF submission),

		and leading and contributing to key transformational projects including the university's work for Quality Assurance Agency Scotland's Enhancement themes.
23	**Libraries**	The Libraries team provides strategic leadership, operation and management of the cross-partnership elements of the university's library service. Responsibilities include managing all aspects of the library systems and electronic resources, HE copyright compliance support to the partnership, obtaining value for money and efficiencies by having one contract for each supplier, an enhanced set of skills for the negotiating and procurement of these services, and a single voice with which to speak for the university within the HE Library sector. In addition, the team provides library support and guidance in cross partnership matters across the university and academic partners. They provide leadership of the Library Practitioners Group and are involved in the university's quality control, assurance and enhancement processes (validation/re-validation of higher education teaching and learning). They develop policies, procedures and service improvements as well as statistics and benchmarking evidence for cross partnership decision making. Externally the team provides front facing services to NHS staff, nursing students and researchers and are a partner in a shared library system between UHI and SRUC.
24	**Marketing**	The marketing team exist to raise awareness of the university and position the brand across a range of audiences to support core areas of business. Its primary focus is higher education (HE) student recruitment, driven by the university's strategic plan. Key areas of responsibly include brand championship and governance internally and externally; professional support, advice and guidance on marketing to university departments and across the partnership; collation and updating of all HE course information on behalf of the partnership to ensure accuracy and consistency of information to prospective students; targeted HE recruitment campaigns, activities, key promotional materials; engagement with schools in the region and across Scotland, complementing local academic partner contact; and graphic design to support recruitment activities, with design advice, and where applicable, service to other university departments and academic partners.
25	**Planning**	The planning team supports delivery of institutional strategies and statutory and funding requirements of the university. Responsibilities include co-ordination and monitoring of the strategic and operational plan, and the regional outcome agreement with the Scottish Funding council (SFC) and managing the higher education student numbers planning processes.

		Through its work it also supports HE curriculum development processes to meet funding requirements and strategic ambitions, as well as all functions of the Partnership Planning forum (PPF); manages the Graduate Outcomes (GO) survey; and is responsible for co-ordinating tuition fee policy and non-regulated fees setting. The team provide market and competitor analysis and insights and engages with and represents the university in the HE sector through various external fora.
26	**Research office**	The Research office (RO) remit is to develop, promote, lead and support effective and ethical research strategies, culture and researcher development across the university. The office is responsible for oversight, management, support and administration of the university's core research management system (PURE), as well as aspects of staff development and training opportunities (e.g. sabbaticals, staff travel and conference fund etc). The office is responsible for co-ordination and development of the university research web area and social media, close liaison with libraries staff in regard to publishing, licencing and data protection compliance, policy and support, as well as management and reporting on partnership-wide research activity and data. The office plays a core co-ordination and management role in the partnership-wide Research Excellence Framework (REF) process, including communications, reporting and policy requirement developments to ensure compliance and support a favourable result. RO activities also cover horizon scanning for new areas of research and research opportunities as well as supporting elements of preparations of bids for external research grants and contracts. The RO contributes to the university's broader learning and teaching and knowledge transfer activities and interests. They provide a level of expertise in critically important areas that is not widely available in the partnership.
27	**Single policy environment**	The Single Policy Environment Project was established to develop a partnership-wide policy infrastructure for further education, mirroring the frameworks in place for higher education. The project has three key aims: to reduce duplication of effort and streamline processes; to reduce risk; and to enhance the quality and consistency of the student experience. As the project has developed it has become increasingly tertiary in scope, working in areas that include all academic partners and executive office.
28	**STEM**	The STEM team aim to inspire young people to engage with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects, in line with the Scottish Government STEM strategy. The team raise the profile of the university, by engaging schools and by enabling staff and students to showcase their research to the general public. We facilitate a network for

		Academic Partner STEM practitioners within the UHI to engage with the regional Highlands and Islands STEM Partnership and to support Academic Partners with their own STEM outreach activity.
29	**Student records office**	The Student Records Office (SRO) facilitates the creation, maintenance and quality assurance of all HE student and curricular data. This includes the management of data and records as well as onward use, returns and reporting. SRO manage the underpinning cross-university business processes and procedures from enrolment through to assessment and exam, and onwards to award and graduation. It also acts as a lead centre for registry and student data functions and processes, providing leadership, training and guidance across the partnership to a range of staff and departments. SRO have close working relationships with both academic and support staff and registry teams across the partnership, as well as the academic registry and FAST team, the planning team, and LIS staff in EO.
30	**Student services team**	The Student Services team delivers strategic initiatives that support and enhance student experience, success and wellbeing in a wide range of key areas, including student support, engagement, communication and development, mental health and well-being, and student funding; student careers and employability, employer engagement in curriculum development, sourcing placements, internships and voluntary opportunities; student feedback, complaints and surveys; and student misconduct and appeals. The team do this through the direct delivery of services to students in some areas and through the support and development of AP staff capabilities in others. With a strong and deliberate customer-service ethos and student-centred approach, they work through highly effective horizontal and tertiary networks to ensure compliance with external benchmarks, legislative and regulatory requirements and key sector reporting requirements, enhancement of the student experience and development of academic partner staff capabilities.
31	**Webteam**	The webteam is responsible for running the shared service for all the university's academic partner websites other than Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. They also provide digital consultancy and training across the whole partnership, run the primary university social media accounts to raise awareness of the university, and source both photography/video and manage the partnership-wide online image library. The webteam is responsible for running the 'One-Web', a shared service for many of the university's academic partners. They also provide digital consultancy and training across the whole partnership, run the primary university social media

		accounts to raise awareness of the university, and source photography and manage the partnership-wide online image library.
32	**Work-based learning hub**	The Work-based learning hub (WBL) supports the development and delivery of the university partnership's programme of work-based learning. The team is responsible for co-ordinating and facilitating the development of a regionally coherent and effective programme of work-based learning across senior phase, further education, and higher education provision in response to the recommendations of Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DYW) and Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy. The team manages SDS apprenticeship programmes on behalf of the university partnership including Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships, and SCQF Level 4/5 pilots.
		The team also develops and facilitates WBL communities of practice and programme enhancement work; develops and coordinates regional marketing and communications activity for WBL programmes; leads, coordinates and facilitates regional level industry and stakeholder engagement and responses to market opportunities;and provides a regionally representative voice for WBL across university partnership.

Table created	*May 2020*
To be revised	*May 2022 or earlier*

Annex 5 - Suggestions for change and barriers and solutions noted in staff proformas

The proformas submitted by staff as part of the evaluation contain a wealth of information about the barriers that they face in undertaking their work, solutions to some of these and change ideas. It is a huge amount of data that will need to be considered in fora across operational areas of the partnership. It provides a wealth of detail to inform how the partnership can evolve to become more effective, efficient, and coherent to maximise the impact we have.

The information set out below is broken into two tables:
Table 1 - Systems and processes and Table 2 -Barriers, solutions and change ideas.
The themes they draw out are:;

Table 1 - Systems and processes	Table 2 - Barriers, solutions and change ideas
• SITS • Data dashboards • Internal and external engagement • Additional and enhanced systems across the partnership • Internal University systems • Staff training and development • Internal university processes • Partnership processes • Single service ideas • Other	• Data • Single team / Partnership services • Timetabling • Communications • Compliance • Professional development • Structure • Funding • Capacity • Staff terms and conditions • Empowerment and support of staff • Culture and behaviour • Co-ordination • Reporting, escalation and accountability • Curriculum • Strategy and tertiariness • Students • HE / FE split • IT systems

Table 1 - Systems and processes

Student Records System (SITS)	• SITS to communicate with the university records management system, SharePoint, this would have many advantages. • Curriculum management and planning tool – to enable all curriculum to be proposed, approved and modified directly in SITS, at module / unit and programme level. • Genuinely embed all non-degree requirements within the equivalent degree process in SITS and UHI Records • Development of International Tier 4 admissions and student monitoring processes within SITS to make the management of Tier 4 applicants and students more scalable. • The system is not the most modern in its approaches to web/database integration. In place is a usable workaround, but upgrades/updates/ consideration of how the product is used may offer efficiency gains. • Completion and full implementation of 'paperless admissions' (through the SITS student records system) will help to standardise business processes, particularly across the partnership. • Consistent use of this system using a uniform coding framework would be useful. • A review of automation possibilities, opposed to manual data pulling, may result in smarter and more efficient working practises for all cross-partner SITS processes. One area that would most certainly benefit from attention is the module splits data collection process that informs the microRam. This is currently a manual process that is costly in terms of staff resource. • A better method of HE course information collection and updating would be beneficial. The current database is driven from SITS, which ensures a link to approved curriculum but is not an optimised solution especially for updating course information (avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring accuracy) and sharing changes with other teams. • Graduate School office has liaised with LIS/SRO over the past two years to build upon postgraduate research (PGR) record reporting through SITS. This, along with the development of specific Bridge reports, removes the need to manually maintain spreadsheets and thereby enables the team to operate in a more accurate and efficient way.
Data dashboards	• Increased reporting options are required with Data dashboards to provide accessible and consistent self-service reports to support quality monitoring and enhancement. • The consistent use of one reporting system to eliminate local reports being maintained at AP level and ensure a consistent standard of data is available across all sites. • More robust use of and dissemination of consistent market intelligence and data through better technology and systems to improve the analysis service that can be provided to the partnership and feed into the dashboard project (reference in relation to marketing and planning). • Enable staff to submit returns of performance against targets to a shared 'dashboard' (some tentative exploration underway with that in the Aquaculture Hub)

	• Improved Academic Management Information (including dashboards, data analytics, planning tools).
Internal and external engagement	• Partnership wide intranet • Improved software solution for enquiries management, holding a shared knowledge base, CRM functionality, better marketing intelligence reporting. • New software specification underway with LIS for Microsoft Dynamics to replace current system for logging enquiries – will this be consistent throughout the partnership? • The course information line (admissions team) is also exploring Microsoft Dynamics for enquiry management • ERP Solution Transformation Project underway • Raiser's Edge is the key database used by the development office in the main for both fundraising and alumni management (and by the majority of other universities for these functions). Feedback as to the usability of Raiser's Edge and the value of its reporting function is extremely positive. • Online payment system development is a key area of interest (reference from the Development Office) • Single engagement platform is needed • Effectiveness could be enhanced with a customer relationship management system/functionality to aid conversion/student journey and positively impact on recruitment. • Partnership wide cost savings could be made and allow everyone to share content if the following were procured on a partnership basis: newsletter software, news distribution software, clippings agencies, comprehensive managed and tailored customer relationship management system. • The University needs to find more efficient and effective ways to communicate research-related activities/successes. • Better use of social media and other communication channels to get our message across through an ongoing routine (drip feed) strategic communications programme • A project is underway that aims to use Video Conferencing (in schools) to provide teacher training to more remote schools. Potential to expand. • STEM collect data on outreach activity across the university partnership to create a baseline of activity as part of a requirement by the Scottish Funding Councils Regional STEM Partnerships. A Geographical Information System (GIS) could be used to collate the information and highlight any gaps in the STEM pipeline. • Exploring the idea of common branding through the Highlands and Islands STEM Partnership. Common branding would enable us to more easily showcase good practise both internally and externally across Scotland. • Practitioners across the partnership should have access to good quality mobile phones. • Need dedicated time from the IT and marketing team to develop a strong online KE presence and resources • Enable online enrolment for Further Education courses, allowing Brightspace to be populated in time for teaching. • The aquaculture KE Hub is trialling Yammer as some members gave positive feedback about the platform

Additional and enhanced systems across the partnership	• UniDesk is good but all partners would benefit from a Computer Aided Facilities Management (CAFM) system which registers all plant and major equipment and schedules maintenance and asset lifecycle reporting. Would aid reporting on statutory inspections and testing as well as providing forecasting for major asset replacement.
	• Leverage better buying power and Ts and Cs if we combine our requirements when purchasing services e.g. APUC is a good example where there is done (point made by Facilities).
	• In the Health and Safety Practitioners Group, supported by the project, the group is working with APUC on the joint procurement of a new health and safety software system.
	• Improved collaboration tools for distributed team working.
	• Improved communications toolset (enhanced VC)
	• Availability of self-service IT tool sets.
	• The online ethics applications is not working as well and the time taken on this is unproductive. Currently exploring alternative procured products.
	• Development of improved technical solution to support the ethical review process, for use across the University at all academic levels is required.
	• Having effective systems which are used by all Academic Partners across the university would help efficiency e.g. Sharepoint and Customer Relationship Management system (CRM).
	• Unified HR Information System (and role of HRPG as a group)
	• Unified Applicant Tracking System
	• Common data platforms, ditto finance
	• Better Sharepoint functionality
	• More stable video conferencing environment.
	• An institutional digital learning object repository would enable EDU to share a link to the latest versions of developed resources and teaching staff could share the resources they are developing in the EDU's Forge resource builder. The repository would integrate with Brightspace and provide a platform for the LTA Open Education work. These are currently discoverable in the UHI Toolkit (developed by EDU), however this system is limited both in functionality and potential for further development.
	• Look at ways in which existing systems (e.g. CELCAT and SITS) can be better leveraged in order to help facilitate regional change.
	• The introduction of a centralised student support system which collects data for disabilities, mental health and generic student support would increase consistency of data collected and help with service development and reporting requirements.
	• Investment in the Big White Wall – implemented with COVID-19
	• The purchase of Data Management modules connected to Future Me (the online careers management system) to produce engagement data and improve service to students.

	• A universal system to pull together online and f2f opportunities for CPD would help share resources. • A single point of contact could be used for all telephone enquiries which could then be correctly and professionally routed to the correct person/AP. • Need to move labour-intensive, inefficient paper-based processes to an on-line provision • A PGR system will be procured in 2020/21 and its eventual roll-out will provide more compliance, transparency and process efficiencies and will greatly enhance the experience of the entire PGR community. • Make more complete use of the extensive capabilities of PURE
Internal university systems	• Room booking software currently being considered • Document storage systems for key documentation (CUR02, CUR03s) needs to work better to manage version control and workflows to facilitate change.
Staff training and development	• Online health and safety training resources would help enormously with compliance. • Academic partner professional development and training sessions could be synchronised, enabling sessions to be delivered once by video conference to all academic partners, take advantage of expertise throughout the partnership and record for future reference. • Corporate induction – follow up of dedicated time/training matrix for key activities, such as health and safety, SharePoint, PECOS, general office IT systems etc. • Staff training/development in MS office/word/adobe etc to utilise marketing templates • Information literacy/online induction and service guides
Internal university processes	• Adherence to following process is important to aid compliance (e.g. procurement policy, travel policy). • Some HR and financial processes are paper based and time consuming. • Review university processes, many out of date versions on the website/sharepoint. • The AD1 has been replaced by an online curriculum planning process - some teething troubles. • Templates for various marketing materials would be helpful • Better forward planning by EO departments to manage workloads more effectively and allocate to plan strategically rather than "urgent" exercises to deliver on time or else budget/grant etc.
Partnership processes	• Service could be delivered more effectively and efficiently if working to a common and clear partnership-wide strategy. • The current central co-ordination of meeting dates and submission of reports is helpful. • More automated workflow processes e.g. external examiner processes, Recognition of Prior Learning approval, exam paper submission, module / programme self-evaluation documents

	- Deans and SNLs having a greater role within the APs in staff appointments would secure network curriculum provision. - Disconnect of Executive office top slice funding some core ICT services and software for learning and teaching and research and software in some academic partners but not others. - Disconnect between core LIS service provision and local point of delivery e.g. VC core service and local partner end point studios (choice and layout, equipment, timetabling). - Shared business practices throughout partnership would allow development in systems to be done in a more cost-efficient manner. - Extra development time often required as some partners do not take on developments due to clashes with business processes or fail to see their benefits. It would also mean that there were greater avenues for support as partners could support each other with critical business processes. - Integration of FE timetabling of VC provision with that of HE managed by the VCTT. - Windows desktops are deployed locally in a variety of version levels, different builds and local preferences for how items are configured (e.g. printers, drive mappings, rights). - Financial processes and the existence of different processes within the partnership leads to an excess of administration over the claiming and awarding of even small amounts of funding and expenses to support staff engagement in various activities. - Separate HR processes across the university results in difficulties in gathering data to monitor and evaluate initiatives reports. - Exploration of a print on demand service - For print copies of Core Texts and Recommended Reading on HE networked modules a cross-partnership approach would be both better for students and working practices in terms of availability, equivalency and effectiveness. This does not preclude each AP Library purchasing print books for FE taught locally, and to build research collections at the most appropriate location. - Greater acceptance of standardisation and shared polices and procedural frameworks across the partnership would make the internal audit process easier. - A more regionally consistent approach to e-portfolio, use of VLE, and associated resources - Improvements in networked operation (academic delivery and professional services)
Single service ideas	- Most activities could be enhanced by development of integrated single services/team approach facilitated by better use of technology. - For management of print book stock for Core and Recommended reading on networked HE courses. The Library management system (Sierra) already has the functionality to order and distribute print stock in this way but cannot be implemented at present because of differences in financial systems, budgets and funding levels. A single service for

	this would enable subject librarians to become budget holders and allow more effective integration with purchase of eResources and the content of reading lists.
Other	• A dedicated project management team within the university. • Extend the successful Quality Monitoring Group pilot process (2019) • The Quality Assurance Harmonisation sub-group of Quality Forum, supported by this project, are utilising SharePoint as a way of streamlining FE quality assurance processes. • Develop further on single policy environment, alignment of FE/HE quality frameworks. • Engage greater with, and support, the University-wide Research-Teaching Linkage project, which is being led by the DoR and the Professor of Pedagogy. • Faculty Board membership is appropriate but the internal Subject Network Committee structure could be reformed. Engage AP curriculum managers more, new internal-SN structures, evolve and enhance Scheme Committees.

Table 2 - Barriers, solutions and change ideas

Data	• A standard approach to analysis and contextualising data would provide richer, more consistent and powerful data sets and information for the university, particularly in performance terms. • Keeping data in line with national HE measures would enable more use across the board of the data comparing and measuring. • Unify where data on engagement with prospects and potential donors across the partnership is held. • More users of Raiser's Edge, including potentially all FE alumni data • More informed statistics and metrics relating to running costs of UHI buildings • Think about UHI's estates/property strategy at least 10 years ahead. Important to listen to the students using our facilities now - find time/suitable forum for this. • Lack of FE student regional level data.

	- Areas to strengthen university data and processes:
	   - Further streamlining of HE SQA and FE processes and data
	   - The exam centre
	   - Recognition of prior learning (RPL processes)
	   - Management of student placements
	   - Post-graduate research student data
	   - Admissions and registry functions
	   - EO fees generation and invoicing
	   - Haste ye Back and student number planning
	   - Nursing student data and processes

Single team / Partnership services	- Ideal is for a SRO to be one unit, have a formalised lead role of FE and HE data and records, managing this at all levels with colleagues – to ensure every site would have an equivalent standard and approach to processes and enhance quality of data and experience of our students. - Dedicated administrative support in the partnership for programme administration, particularly for networked programmes - Staff outwith 'executive office' contributing more actively or leading on cross-partnership activity eg development of policy and procedures - Create a regional tertiary communications team which also has a local remit. Employed by one employer but servicing the whole partnership to compliment marketing and develop specialisms in internal communications, student communications, press office etc as a result. - A single university partnership design print and audio-visual service which other departments can buy into for these services. Business critical services such as graphic design should be a standalone service for the benefit of all on a managed basis. - Consider redeploying staff to academic partners to make the most of joint facilities and encourage team working. Alternatively, move teams to an open plan working environment. - Harnessing resource and shared knowledge from across the partnership – unlike other functions there is not currently a development/fundraising/alumni practitioner's group. - Likewise with with commercial income generation and business development across the partnership. A UHI wide business development function with pure income generation targets should help address this. - Effectiveness could be enhanced with a customer relationship management system/functionality to aid conversion/student journey and positively impact on recruitment.

	- FM/Estates (and incorporating H and S) requires access to specialist advice and services frequently. This is common to all AP's and a shared service would allow consistent and competent advice to be available across the network. - Procurement, need to consider this across both EO and the partnership. There is a feed in to APUC but not the support that being part of that organisation would offer. Currently all other APs within our partnership have APUC employed Procurement specialists. - Having a single records management and archive service not least to consolidate and reinforce compliance. - Establish a corporate secretariat consisting of University and academic partner staff with responsibility for the coordination and delivery of various functions across the partnership. - Align operational processes/procedures without an integrated HR function. - Establish a single team to manage the talent acquisition process for the Partnership which would enhance the branding, reputation and candidate experience of the university. - Build more resilience into the libraries roles by allowing easier cross-team working, ideally a single service team. Many of the library services would benefit from this approach. - Clearer reporting lines for AP library staff. - Closer alignment would improve consistency of induction materials across the partnership. - To facilitate more partnership planning and integrated campaigns, which arguably should come from the University team need to either recruit more staff and/or more clearly define cross-partner responsibilities (eg service level agreements).
Timetabling	- The VC timetabling process is currently managed at an AP level
Communications	- Difficult to effect change as communications are a major barrier - Helpful if a live cross-Partnership list of academic staff and their line managers could be maintained and made available for those needing to communicate with such staff. - Use open and transparent communications channels, prioritising a partnership-wide intranet. - Route to market: our services are often mediated by academic partner ICT staff. Even in the larger partners, it is impossible for those staff – whose real job is to do all the partner- specific IT – to also understand and pass on everything that LIS does. - Development of the brand to bring better cross-partner alignment (currently in process) - Need for expanded support for research specific communications both across the Academic Partnership within the University and also externally. - Lack of structure and expertise around student communications.

Compliance	• Implement GDPR compliance in learning and teaching technologies, and risk was agreed across the Partnership • Support for some quality assurance responsibilities currently provided on 'goodwill' basis, therefore subject to withdrawal eg progression boards. • Better compliance across the partnership with processes and deadlines, and having more effective mechanisms for addressing non-compliance • Better compliance with common agreed admissions processes across the partnership through more collective approaches to recruitment and selection at course team/subject network level. • A greater level of centralised processing and/or reporting to ensure stricter compliance to Tier 4 license would be beneficial. • Clear and strong senior management backing for guidelines and policies to ensure compliance across all departments. • Need for consistent adherence to university processes • Resource requirement to enforce compliance with institutional policy and external requirements.
Professional development	• Timetable at least a day a year for internal professional development relating to policy, compliance and technology changes. • Involvement in the Academic Partner professional development and training planning process could be beneficial for obtaining agreement for mandatory compliance training for academic staff. • Dedicated, knowledgeable and professional trainers to support staff in consistent use of university systems and processes eg Sharepoint, SITS (student records system) etc • Ability for staff to move around the partnership to encourage staff development opportunities, particularly at smaller partners. Help staff to specialise and have time to focus on particular areas, especially for academic partners who may not have inhouse expertise. • CPD and PDR aims are assigned locally. No consistent training for staff across the network. • Change of focus to employing suitably qualified staff at APs, providing CPD support to all AP Library staff, and building clearer, devolved reporting lines where appropriate. A centralised training resource for staff. • Make communication a valued and incentivised part of every member of staff's performance plan. Mandatory training for line managers. Communication representative present at senior management team and partnership council in an advisory capacity. • More HESA/KE knowledge – HESA training is minimal. • Staff training day delivery – academic and support staff. • Learning and Development opportunities, specifically for the development of line managers. • KE being seen as valuable career enhancing activities recognised (among other things) as a route to promotion within the university

	• Digital literacy (LIS do not have a training function – this is notably different from other UK universities) • Staff development across the whole partnership is fragmented and not necessarily aligned to the evolution of ICT services • De-professionalisation of library staff at APs has had an impact – leading to some poor practice and occasionally poor data in systems. • Investment in a staff development officer to help identify and lead staff training and development opportunities for colleagues across the Partnership who wish to engage with research and advanced scholarship. This could be provided on a secondment basis from within the Partnership. • Need for more staff development across the network on career and employability support. • Increased resource and capacity to develop staff expertise and confidence in the use of digital pedagogy across the breadth of FE and HE provision.
Structure	• Decision-making on resource allocation and staff deployment devolved to horizontal discipline-based structure eg "Schools" • A network Higher National Programme Leader for all programmes delivered in more than one academic partner • A clear organisational structure including roles and responsibilities. All departments should be reformed to reflect the university's tertiary operations. • Published organisation charts detailing job roles, networking at an operational level to share knowledge and experience. • Clear strategic guidance, objectives and priorities with strong leadership • Cross-team collaboration based on strategic objectives should be the norm and should be encouraged. • Clear internal communication and there needs to be an imperative set at strategic level for this. • A more formal strategic sharing of this important corporate interface, which is as much a function of communications as marketing • Employer engagement - an effective pan partnership structure already exists – it just needs better buy in from the leadership teams across the wider partnership to make it more effective and to avoid duplication • Buildings management/services/estates should all come under the same department to make best use of skillsets and contractual efficiencies • Partnership structure – not being a single institution without question adds an incredible amount of 'transactional' type tasks • The nature and structure of the Partnership places an unnecessary drain on time and resources when dealing with issues (joint procurement, mis-branding by partners) that would be negated under a single or more aligned organisational structure.

	- LIS currently engages separately with every academic partner – because the size and structure of partners is very diverse. Without management guidance it is easy to end up with a dozen solutions to the same university-wide problem, with no added benefit from the diversity and plenty of complications arising. - Structure limits the impact of some of the LTA activities - Do less complex negotiations with research APs and less time negotiating complex governance arrangements which seem to be at odds with good partnership working.
Funding	- Revised and transparent resource allocation mechanism for higher education teaching and support - to disincentivise internal competition - Staffing resource model to take account of increases in volume of business - Should be university partnership wide funding to ensure there is equitable service provided by university departments to the partnership wherever they are. - Level of resource available to service donors, seek and attract new and continued giving, and to work with colleagues across academic partners who come to the development office seeking help with, or for the team to lead on identifying and securing philanthropic support for projects and developments that require funding - EU investment has been critical for UHI's development and Brexit poses an existential threat. - Most important is to track future funding streams (domestic alternatives or some continued access to EU programmes – and influence future arrangements wherever possible.) - Future engagement with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund must be top of the list. - Develop and embed transparent financial models - Rewarding KE activity such as bringing in income from consultancy and CPD by some form of income sharing policy/scheme - Subject network librarians – the current model is still non-recurring funding. It involves Funds to Partnership which incurs VAT. Making the posts substantive within a cross-partnership library service would be more efficient and cheaper. - If further external funding could be sourced the STEM Team could better support these STEM contacts to enable them to maximise impact in their local communities. It would allow opportunities to share best practise, avoid duplication and promote collaboration between partners. - New credit guidance means Academic Partners will now be able to access funding for STEM activities at all school levels. Moving forward beyond the end of the SSE grant, the STEM Team could be used to better support academic partners and act as more of a traditional outreach team, better supporting researchers with public outreach.

Capacity	- To achieve potential efficiencies envisaged, the partnership will have to accept that it will need to invest in its HR infrastructure and ensure that the new single HR lead is given the power to deliver the changes required. - More time (or be able to lead a small team of Academic Partner staff) to develop our Open Education Resource university (OERu) offering as I feel that this could generate income for the Partnership. - Team fully committed to business-critical and time-sensitive activity, leaving little space for process enhancement, strategic planning, horizon scanning - Only 'one person-deep' for specific areas of expertise and many functional areas resulting in fragile working practices, lacking resilience and robustness of operation. - An individual leaving or unexpected absence can cause significant issues to an area's operation. - The siloed nature of departments means that it is difficult to flex and adapt to changing demands. - The partnership does not necessarily need additional staff but a reassignment of the existing staff in a new more productive structure and environment. - Additional investment in development and alumni functions. - Support EDUs with resource for business development and marketing to generate more income. - Focus resources on new policies and funding streams, more effective dissemination of information as it becomes available and improved planning for engagement in new opportunities – both leveraging in additional funding and ensuring that it can be targeted towards UHI priorities. - Large amount of activity undertaken by governance and records management staff is focussed on assisting under resourced colleagues within academic partners. - Inability to resource potential future developments (studentships and increased PGR numbers/new doctoral programmes) with current staffing provision - Areas of the Partnership with reduced internal stakeholder engagement and buy in for GSO processes/activity. - Opportunities in the international arena are significant, beyond just international recruitment. However, 1.2 dedicated FTE working within and across the partnership can only mean 'incremental change' is achievable and not sustainable. Through the 'International Recruitment Project' options for more extensive change, and for balancing aspiration with requisite investment are being developed. - Across the partnership there are is a lot of busy work doing fairly low-level standard ICT tasks e.g. desktop management. This over resourcing contrasts with the lack of depth, or in some cases no provision at all, in key highly skilled roles. - Educational research requires time to conduct, publish and disseminate. One member of staff (seconded to the LTA for REF) is employed within multiple part-time contracts within the university meaning that research and teaching are fragmented activities and this applies elsewhere too. - The team's time could be better spent on externally focused initiatives, horizon scanning and seizing opportunities for growth and diversity instead of the wealth that is spent on internal issues.

	- More development and delivery of strategic initiatives. - More strategic investment on key initiatives that are required for the university to be sustainable - Less daily firefighting and management of PR where partners have taken internal disputes to an external audience. - Less allowing initiatives to stall due to lack of unanimity regarding investment need. - Less unnecessary upwards delegation (although this may reflect lack of empowerment of staff at an operational level) - Less overly bureaucratic processes occupying senior management time, not being able to focus on key priorities rather than juggling many things at once - too many e-mails (do we need a tighter policy about that?) - need to collectively try to operate as a single business wherever this would be of benefit • Struggle to get commitment for meaningful feedback and engagement from APs to help progress key areas of work due to a lack of resources. • An ever-increasing number of Scottish Government priorities regarding vulnerable groups which require us to demonstrate activities being undertaken but with *no increase in resource* to meet this demand e.g. Corporate Parenting, BSL, GBV, Carers, Veterans etc. Similarly, an increasing demand from APs to help with their work priorities, but with no additional resources. • ESIF's restricting boundaries in remit and the lack of future focus for the excellent and highly impactful CDEEO team. • Ever-increasing workloads also mean it is difficult to get to the depth of issues with such a wide range of responsibilities and limited resources. • An increase in available human resource would allow for more development. With greater staff resource, more time would be available to upskill, train and focus on digital activities. • Increased level of priority and resource given to WBL programmes, and the contracting requirements associated with them
Staff terms and conditions	• Higher education teaching staff with terms and conditions appropriate to higher education sector • More rewards and accolades for staff to take part in KE activities including: • Changing FE, and in some cases, HE contracts to include time for and a remit to undertake KE/ innovation projects • Contractual arrangements in Academic Partners such as the use of 'bank' / zero hours contracts limits the opportunity to undertake professional development as these are outwith contractual arrangements.

Empowerment and support of staff	• Postholders being empowered to make decisions • Leadership recognition that those delivering professional support services are as valuable to the student experience as those delivering academic services. • Audit technology platforms to establish which are best suited to the needs of all roles across the university partnership. • Clear strategic direction will enable the university to identify training and development needs for all staff and ensure appropriately trained staff for what we need to deliver. • Organised and resourced provision for professional development for non-teaching roles. • Quicker/easier decision making – better delegated authority. • Too often LIS end up engaged with IT Technician leads in APs who do not have authority over the things discussed with them. Regional ICT Committee needs to be attended by a business manager responsible for determining policy and capable of taking decisions back for implementation. • The University's existing operational systems (e.g. 'one person deep') can be vulnerable to the effects of (longer term) staff absence, but also increases the likelihood of staff absence as a result of stress-related illness. Evident in parts of EO and the broader Academic Partnership. • Dominance of learning and teaching, particularly at undergraduate and FE levels, which leaves little room for the development of advanced scholarship and research for staff who would like to engage and also for many new staff appointees.
Culture and behaviour	• Greater commonality of organisational ethos, structures and practices across the partnership • Build and maintain positive relationships based on trust, respect, joint working, compromise and ongoing dialogue with senior colleagues across the partnership. • Professional behaviours and observing courtesy in communication protocols eg attendance at meetings, participation in events, staff delivering outputs when they have taken on a commitment • Greater awareness of higher education culture and sector norms, standard reference points • Clear senior management commitment to Gaelic - it should be embedded in our culture • Executive Office Departments to financial management – 'silo' mentality – failure to recognise the need to 'work better together' • Acknowledgment from senior Academic Partner staff that the Learning and Teaching Academy is a valuable team and service to increase awareness of and engagement with LTA to the benefit of Academic Partner staff. • While there is a Research Strategy at University level, there is still some uncertainty over the place of research within Academic Partnership as a whole

	• Recognise and empower the extent of the collaborative work being undertaken with 2nd tier staff and the ability at this level to amicably manage difficult negotiations to a positive outcome. Move to a similar culture in Partnership Council
Co-ordination	• Huge opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness across the partnership. Note there are functional areas and processes across the partnership that are very efficiently run, and these should be held as exemplars. • More coordinated approach between the nursing department and academic partners offering routes into nursing to improve recruitment and efficiency in dealing with internal students. • Option for greater co-ordination of enquiries - from better sharing of information to wider use across the partnership of the CIL enquires management system/processes. • More focus on the benefits of engaging with the CIL; wider use of chat over Skype for Business reducing reliance on email/phone. • More easily accessible, detailed course information. • Better alignment of course approval and change processes with the admissions cycle, particularly for full-time recruitment/UCAS applications. • Build on the existing good working relationships with outward facing colleagues such as the Curriculum Development and Employer Engagement Officers who can identify prospects and existing on-the-ground working relationships with additional philanthropic potential. • EDU to work alongside colleagues (EDU) doing similar roles across the partnership to afford efficiency, consistency and improve quality and compliance to help reverse the trend which sees student number targets decreasing year on year, with reduced targets not being met. • Sharing of expertise and knowledge for providing information for internal reporting across the partnership would improve efficiency and foster good working relationships. • Lack of clarity of who to contact or network with for specific information could be addressed by published organisation charts detailing job roles. • Opportunity to meet other teams (partner finance teams and other EO teams) would help in relationship building. • Facilities – accommodation steering group or equivalent to make operational decisions about space allocation based on business need; to provide input to decisions on the estate (expansion, new buildings, disposal etc • Forums to share best practice – both management accounts and grants and contracts. • Joint partnership approach to explore improvement initiatives eg new software, business processes etc • Policies/procedures which directly affect PGR students are prepared and agreed without GSO consultation • Finance/HR process alignment • Develop best practice techniques that would help imbed 'ownership' in the KE sectoral groups for members and ways that would best foster inter-partner working relationships • Create a new cross partnership consultancy post focused on cross partnership project development

	• Relationships between KE staff and AP business development managers could be enhanced through better communication/understanding and by exploring developing more strategic collaborative working • Include sectoral group chairs and Sectoral KE teams in more joint best practice development workshops • Response to cross-partnership issues can be hampered by differing priorities at AP management levels. • Cross-partner 'key' activity planning in advance of the next recruitment cycle with real 'deliverables'. Some progress already made with the integrated Clearing campaign. • To improve cross-partnership effectiveness, short life project teams to coordinate shared marketing activities. • Only relatively modest engagement from UHI libraries in research-specific support. • There are very strong connections with key members of staff in APs (predominantly the FE colleges) and there are high levels of trust which has made it progressively easier to secure buy-in as more policies and workstreams have been added. • Specialist research partners: See themselves as unique and autonomous, and at times seem to lack the same willingness to take part as the FE APs. With the full support of senior management and boards these APs could benefit in the same way as the other APs from the project outputs. • Governance: A 'fast-track' approval for nationally dictated policy would be helpful e.g. student carers and ensure this is maintained through collaborative activity. • As the project moves into the sphere of professional services, HR, Health and Safety, there is less demonstrable commitment to and understanding of the expectation that standard regional policies will be developed and implemented. • Business relations captured in two different systems by the CDEEO team and the Development Office: these databases are separate from each other (CRM and Raiser's Edge) leading to duplication of effort and difficulties to monitor impact and academic partners are widely using either of these systems. • The webteam do not yet offer shop or modern online payment functionality. There are several instances where this would add value.
Reporting, escalation and accountability	• More clearly defined reporting/escalation route for progressing issues with International admissions and student monitoring from practitioner group to a decision-making 'committee'. • Clear lines of accountability and responsibility to make decisions, more entrepreneurial approach is required. • There is no shortage of great ideas and innovation from our staff, but we must create an environment where these ideas are nurtured and supported. • The environment must allow staff to fail but to fail fast and be encouraged to move onto the next idea. • A significant issue the team regularly come up against is the lack of end-to-end process ownership accountability and measurement. e.g. Admissions EO v AP. It is the opinion of the team that key core processes need to be redesigned to ensure the student experience is at their core.

	• Lack of a finance presence at key governance and management committee's impacting the team's ability to influence or advise on decision-making with financial implications. Eg. PPF – student number planning, funding distribution models and new curriculum development; Senior Management Team – strategic investments, business development initiatives, financial reviews. • More KPIs, aligned with research/graduate school strategy, will identify good practice/areas to address e.g. data surrounding Postgraduate Structures Monitoring Framework report submission. • Lack of strategic engagement within SMT on HR issues • Clarity over line management responsibilities across the university. • Lack of ability of the DoR to engage first-hand with the work of the SMT, Partnership Council and other senior forums in which the Faculty Deans have a locus • Lack of accountability and compliance: it is often difficult to get decisions made and hold people to account.
Curriculum	• The rapid growth has led to a wide and varied offering which is now unsustainable. • Offering should be more demand-led and curriculum should reflect this • Need to better understand our customer's (learners, partners, industry etc.) needs and refocus on our strengths. • Have the authority to work with academic partner staff who have been given ring-fenced time to design and develop new curriculum. • EDU to advise on all new curriculum design at its very early stages through representation on PPF and have input to address quality issues resulting from the quality monitoring process. • Use the Curriculum Development fund for one or two strategic projects which are properly funded and under the control of the EDU rather than lots of small projects with no quality standards applied to and have limited impact. • Closer alignment of planning team's work with faculty deans/subject network leaders to better inform curriculum development. • Lack of joined-up, faculty-led, curriculum review processes – reviews currently take place at local level, which impact on curriculum provision, recruitment and student numbers planning. Identified lack of high-level curriculum strategy (by PPF members).
Strategy and tertiariness	• The UHI partnership is at a critical juncture, after a period of rapid growth and development the organisation like any business now needs to set out a comprehensive, cohesive and unambiguous vision and strategy that will be planned and implemented to overcome the challenges ahead and take advantage of the many opportunities available across the region and beyond. • A common, university partnership strategic direction which is regularly reviewed and communicated. • Barriers are different strategic/operational priorities across the partnership being decided at partner level • A more regionally coherent and market orientated approach across the university partnership

	- All departments must have a tertiary focus and should be required to plan on a tertiary and regional basis with departmental and local plans complementing the university partnership's overarching aims and objectives. - All departmental priorities should flow from a single set of organisational objectives and be measured against those. This must be a transparent process. - Imperative that UHI works together to present a strong case for continued investment for policy engagement and accessing new funding streams. - United front is required across UHI but also with key external stakeholders – particularly the enterprise agencies and local authorities. - Two key issues that need to be addressed to be more effective: financial sustainability and cross partner communications. - Recognition by the University of the importance of PGR (and growth of research) in the balance of the institution's portfolio, is required. - Clarity in the form of a University-level strategy for PGR student number growth and how this will be accomplished and supported/facilitated. - Collaborative project delivery have been disjointed because of the inability to strategically prioritise the resource needed or adoption at a local level. - Reinstate a proactive partnership positioning group for regional schools with clear strategies and alignment with post-school recruitment and senior phase priorities. - Of particular relevance to WBL is the need for the university to align itself more effectively with market opportunities, employer demand, and both the learner and employer 'customer' groups across curriculum planning, marketing and communications, employer engagement, recruitment and admissions. - An enhanced and appropriately resourced approach to market research and intelligence across the university would support the development of programmes, including WBL, that is more aligned with market opportunities and demand.
Students	- The student experience should be continually reviewed and enhanced from the first engagement to graduation and Alumni. - Recruitment of international students must also be looked in a new light as climate change issues rise on the agenda, together with targets for 'net zero' emissions etc. UHI experiences may present an opportunity to convert areas of low performance into attributes while still widening access to UK HE education.
HE / FE split	Develop our work in FE (EDU) to encourage seamless transition and break down some of the other barriers that exist.

IT systems	- Stable and reliable IT systems - Investment is currently being made in a new finance system and grant management system which will help alleviate many of the current blocks. - An automated student enquiries and admissions system

Annex 6a - Overview of suggested specialisms required with the university

- Data and business analysts and developers, data and learning analytics and contextualisation
- Market intelligence service
- Copyright and copywriting
- Proposal writing (to generate income)
- Business improvement: service design, product design, behavioural science, Influencing and persuasion skills (to improve stakeholder management)
- Public affairs professional or consultant (UHI's visibility and profile at national, funding, political level)
- Intranet team
- Web designer skillset
- Learning and development, staff professional and academic development (enhance staff digital skills - raised a few time)
- Business development and employer engagement function
- Project and programme management
- A UHI programme/project office
- Change management support
- Travel and accommodation booking team
- European expertise
- International development expertise including international marketing, engagement and recruitment
- Health and safety resource, including J&S training, surveyor, CAD Technician, M&E Technician/Engineer, Environmental/energy advisor
- Contract and supplier management
- Peer review resource in-house
- Data protection (not just one officer)
- Extended university archive safeguarding and digital preservation service
- Single records management and archive service
- Information security
- HESA/Research excellence framework (REF) specialist
- Research ICT support and research data management
- University intellectual property (IP)
- Educational research, including the development of specialisms in careers and employment education in rural and geographically distributed contexts

- Ethical review and approval process
- Research librarian
- Student related:
  - Sexual violence liaison officers: trained front-line staff to deal with reports of sexual violence.
  - Complex case/hate crime investigators: we are currently exposed to significant risk.
  - Enhanced safeguarding expertise: institutional lead has recently left Perth College UHI.
  - Student communications
  - Placement management resource: to manage risk and compliance with policy.

Annex 6b - Departmental specialism submissions

Responses to the question on the proforma:

Are there areas of specialism that could be added that would be of significant value to the university and the university partnership?

Academic registry and FAST team	- Data analysts - Extended planning team - Extended MIS report development capacity - Expertise in management and quality assurance of collaborative partnerships - SharePoint expertise - Extended marketing team - Travel and accommodation bookings team
Admissions	Support to produce engaging online training materials e.g. by the Educational Development Unit (EDU) to increase the awareness and understanding of all relevant staff in the partnership dealing with international students.
Business improvement	- service design - product design - behavioural science - Influencing and persuasion skills to improve stakeholder management - Additional analysis and test experience

	• Additional Financial expertise • General increase in members of team to allow the projects to scale
Communications and external relations	We believe that there are several services we do not currently provide, as well as some services we provide that could be enhanced for the benefit of the university and the university partnership: • Student communications does not currently sit within our responsibility. We believe, with the correct training, we could provide this service and work with practitioners across the university partnership to ensure this service is coherent and strategic. • We monitor, advise and carry out some public affairs activities, as do many of the academic partners at a senior management level. If we enhanced this service by delivering it on a common local level across the partnership and engaged a public affairs professional or consultant to work on our behalf, based in Edinburgh, we would have a far higher profile in the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government and the civil service. It would also improve our profile out-with Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland, who, although lobbying on our behalf, do not account for or emphasise our tertiary capabilities. • We believe an intranet team would be invaluable to ensuring we can provide a good internal communications service across the university partnership. • We believe an enhanced Gaelic team serving the university partnership would allow for day to day translation services but also help develop Gaelic learning and development opportunities for staff and students across the university partnership.
Development office	• Fundraising • External relationship building • Donor management • Event management • Proposal writing • Raiser's Edge and data management • Alumni engagement

Educational development unit	The team has a range of skills and specialisms related to curriculum design and development in a project environment. A significant challenge for the team is finding the time to engage in professional development or indeed, scholarly activity which result in improvements in our service. Specialisms need to evolve to keep up with changing technologies and educational practice. Our projects need to permit enough scope for these to be discovered and nurtured so that future projects may benefit. A specialism which the team does not have at the moment is business development including marketing. Our external projects and consultancy work generate commercial income or external project funding. They also provide the team with an opportunity to develop specialisms and new approaches which are then rolled out across our internal projects. Having that resource in place would strengthen the team and positively impact the service we offer the University.
Employer engagement and key accounts	A UHI wide business development function with pure income generation targets should help address this. As already noted, though, there are significant legal and institutional barriers in place that would make this difficult but if there was cross partnership buy in to making this work, it would benefit the entire partnership. Please note, however, that the initial steps towards this are currently being addressed via the UHI for Work and Enterprise Programme Board.
European office	Of necessity, I am developing specialised expertise in future regional and HE policy post Brexit and share information where I can. However, it is important that expertise is developed on a wider scale. If we want to continue to draw down significant sums from access to new EU programmes as a Third Country, or from domestic alternative programmes, we need to have sufficient engagement across the partnership. Again, there is potential for greater benefit from wider international development opportunities, if approached in the same way, through long-term, strategic planning. This could also help to mitigate against the potential financial hit from Brexit.
Facilities and procurement	All as shared support resources, as institutions need to have access to the expertise but not frequently enough to justify engaging themselves. More affordable as a shared service: • H&S resource, including J&S training • Surveyor • CAD Technician • M&E Technician/Engineer • Environmental/energy advisor

Faculty and subject networks	• We would benefit from a strong Market Intelligence service. Every curriculum development needs this and we effectively operate a DIY system. • The ESIF-funded *Curriculum Development Employment Engagement Officer* (CDEEO) posts have been very successful. We need to continue these posts and extend them to cover all Subject Networks (currently they do not). • There is a considerable expertise in the evolving curriculum portfolio amongst the Deans and Subject Network Leaders as individuals. This could be contributing more strongly to leading the direction of travel in the curriculum for all network aspects of the curriculum. We need a forum where we can be more directive and not just reactive in terms of curriculum futures.
Finance Incorporating Financial accounts AND Financial planning and compliance AND Grants and contracts	Financial accounts • HESA/Research Excellence Framework (REF) specialist to coordinate and validate various returns and provide training across the partnership • Currently individuals have many "specialities" but do not have enough time to be fully effective. Coordination across the partnership could make this more effective. Grants and Contracts Team • project and programme management skills and accountability; • peer review resource in-house; • partnership-wide Grants and Contracts forum. Management Accounts Team • partnership-wide management reporting forum; • drive for improved management information and reporting. The team also provide specialisms not normally associated with financial planning and compliance teams – procurement advice, legal agreement preparation and review, regulatory policy advice and development, ethical compliance advice, programme and project delivery coordination and management; funder rules and regulations, VAT rules, records management, GDPR.
Governance and records management	Yes. The recent appointment of a University Data protection Officer has significantly improved data protection compliance and access to advice and expertise throughout the partnership. Risks associated with a data breach are very significant however and there would be a benefit in strengthening capacity in terms of employing additional staff with specialist knowledge of information governance/data protection. Data protection compliance should be the responsibility of departmental teams and Academic Partners, however much of the work done to date has been undertaken by our shared DPO resource. Similarly, the addition/deployment of additional systems specialists to train

	staff and enhance digital skills would also be beneficial and would be likely to have a positive impact on the student experience. The recently introduced University Archive safeguarding and digital preservation service offers a regulated, secure, compliant and internationally recognised environment that allows academic, administrative, corporate and research records and datasets related to HE activity across the partnership to be stored safely and securely, and accessed in line with funder and regulatory requirements. Extending this service to provide individual academic partner areas within the University Archive will allow a standardised safeguarding and digital preservation service for academic, administrative, corporate and research records and datasets for each individual academic partner. Providing a single records management and archive service would significantly improve the effectiveness and efficacy of decision making, processes, procedures, operations and statutory compliance across the academic partnership, leading to innovative, shared, inclusive and dynamic best practice for all.
Graduate office	• Engagement in direct International Student Recruitment at the PGR level. • More communications and marketing provision. • Studentships funding expansion, through increased alumni activity to secure external gifts/donations. • More opportunities for students to secure PhD-relevant placements. • It is highly important that the University makes plans to offer post-Doctoral level opportunities, not only for some of its own PhD graduates but also for PhD graduates from further afield.
Human resources	Learning and Development. There is no coherent approach to L&D provision across the partnership apart from the focus on pedagogy and the work of the LTA. The requisite skills needed to effectively and efficiently run a large organisation of this size can be developed and could be done for a significantly lower cost than that charged by Advance HE. Organisational design and development needs to be integrated into SMT to ensure that these issues are considered at the highest level.
Internal audit	• No this is already provided for within the current University Internal Audit Service arrangements. The University operates a co-sourced internal audit service model. This consist of one full time equivalent Head of Internal Audit,

	employed by the University, based at Ness Walk and an annual budget of £25K to purchase Internal Audit Services from an external provider.
	• The provision of internal audit services by an external provider is subject to competition through a tender process overseen by the Audit Committee. The benefits of this model enable the skills mix of the service to be varied in order to meet the differing needs of the internal audit plan e.g. specialist qualified internal audit expertise can be called upon to look at Information Technology Audits.
International	• Marketing priorities are presently focussed on domestic markets. Capacity and expertise in International Marketing would be of significant value to the wider university partnership in its promoting its international aspirations, and would promote institutional coherence in a competitive environment. For example, the ability to develop marketing plans and materials for specific regions and curriculum with International focus would be of value.
	• Resource within the International Department to take forward training and development dedicated to International Engagement and Recruitment would be significant value partnership wide and help mitigate risks (e.g. UKVI, funding etc).
Knowledge exchange	• An expert in university IP would be a valuable addition that would not only improve in-house IP management across the partnership but also be a resource for raising awareness and promoting research commercialisation that would no doubt lead to more patenting, licencing as well as spin-outs and start-up company formation.
	• The areas of specialism and options for interaction are growing
	• However, insufficient capacity (staff time) is, reflected by many, as a major barrier to being able to do and respond more to sectoral needs
	• There is a need for more business and project development/management training/expertise
	• Some specialisms could be further expanded, for example by including heritage in the tourism sector group's remit has allowed the extension of activities into the museums and heritage centres at all levels from local authority to small independent institutions
	• expansions into specialisms in other sectors could also be considered
Learning and information services	• Information security is a constant threat that is developing daily in its complexity. There is also a significant resource impact when dealing with the investigation and aftermath of security incidents. This requires greater attention and resource.
	• Staff digital skills training: there is an extreme lack of resource to provide coherent training and support across a range of services and technologies. This would increase overall staff digital skills and support more consistent adoption of those services and technologies.

	• Business analysis to work with the business to understand their objectives and translate these into requirements for service provision. They can also work with service teams to leverage the service catalogue that already exists but is poorly utilised e.g. breadth of data available on Bridge reports. • A UHI programme/project office which understands the strategic goals/aims for the university partnership. We are often asked to develop solutions for partners/university at last minute notice and are constantly told that these activities are high priority activities. How do we verify what is of strategic importance for the university and who prioritises these? • Poor use of data for operational and strategic decision making. Under resourcing of data and reporting service (analysts and developers) and parallel activities happening in some APs. • Research ICT support and research data management to better serve the needs of research teams and ensure the university is fulfilling the funders' obligations for availability and long-term archiving of research outputs. Contract and supplier management, over and above procurement of services, which even with APUC support takes a considerable amount of resource.
Learning and teaching academy	There are existing areas of specialism and expertise within the Learning and Teaching Academy which could be more effectively utilised on behalf of the university given more time and better joined up working within and across Academic Partners and EO. For example: • Data and learning analytics • Open education, linked to new approaches to widening access and participation • Educational research, including the development of specialisms in careers and employment education in rural and geographically distributed contexts, digital education practices, and development of networks to support innovative, research and evidence-based educational approaches in digitally distributed, rural, distance and islands contexts. • Academic development which could link with staff development initiatives including leadership
Libraries	Full-time research support librarian. We are currently providing 10 hours per week of Research Librarian support to the partnership, specifically for Open Access support. This is jointly funded from EO Libraries and the Research Officer. The further specialist support is much needed for the areas of research data management and storage, use of analytics, streamlining of scholarly communication processes, training in research practices relating to published materials (systematic review, etc.) and engagement with the wider research support community.

	Although there are currently subject network librarians and a copyright officer, much of their limited time is spent on administrative tasks as part of the university's validation processes. Substantive, cross-partnership roles would greatly improve liaison in these areas and help publicise resources, training and services throughout the partnership.
Marketing	Copywriting skills to assist in honing course content, messages and stories.
Planning	HE data and planning expertise recently added to the team, allowing a shift in focus to data analysis; however, the team is small so this may be at the expense of other developments around SharePoint processes and supporting wider PPF activity such as short life working groups.
Research office	A dedicated resource is required to initiate and coordinate a range of additional staff development and training opportunities, not least for Early Career Researchers but also for the development and implementation of nascent plans for training in respect of bids preparation and research grant capture. Further development of the use of PURE, for example in respect of acting as a repository of information relating to equipment that could be used by colleagues across the Partnership for research purposes. It is worth noting that a good deal of time and effort is already being spent on improving the University's systems for managing the ethical review and approval processes. Many of these are being supported or led by the REO, who is working closely with colleagues in a range of EO departments and with colleagues in academic areas across the Partnership. While a number of improvements have already been made, further success in this area will bring considerable benefits to the Academic Partnership as a whole.
Senior management team	Yes - most areas of professional services across the Partnership have collectively enough resource but there is huge waste of effort by so many people doing the same thing using different systems, processes etc. However, we need to get greater impact in some key areas urgently to support development and growth, Marketing, Branding and Recruitment, Data and Planning, Internationalisation Better sharing and use of Finance Director expertise in: Staff development Significant time investment needed in raising and maintaining UHI's visibility and profile at national, funding, political level. We need to recognise that we are in a much more competitive environment now. Should we have a permanent,

	on the ground presence engaging with ministers in Edinburgh for example (now that our investment of time with Scotland Europa/Brussels is less critical?)
Single policy environment	If there is change to come, having people in place to provide specialist change management support to staff would be very valuable. Just because change is planned doesn't mean it is going to be effective.
STEM	The STEM Team have developed a number of successful outreach projects, that overcome some of the challenges of working in a remote and rural setting. These projects have mainly been run in the Highland Council region but could be adopted by partners and "rolled out" across the UHI region. This biggest barriers to STEM learning and teaching are confidence, capacity and culture (the three Cs). Abundant research now shows that one off interactions have little to no effect on a pupils career pathway. The key is instead to focus on teachers and influencers who can interact with pupils throughout their learner journey.
	The STEM Team are working with Early Year and Childcare students and PGDE students to improve confidence towards STEM learning and teaching while the students are still studying with UHI. It is hoped that by tackling confidence and gender stereotyping issues, before they qualify as practitioners, we can change the culture towards STEM learning and teaching in schools. In addition, the STEM Team have developed the Lend-a-Lab project, an innovative new way of tackling the three Cs. The project involves co-delivery so school practitioners can see lessons being delivered, followed by in school CPD and an equipment and resource loan. Other Universities across the UK have contacted the team to ask more about these models and how they could replicate them in their areas.
	The STEM Team have a specialised Science Communication skill set. The team are able to provide science communication training to staff and students. Many grants now have an outreach component and we are able to provide support to researchers who wish to communicate their research with the general public or into schools. We are also experienced in developing and running outreach events or showcase events for school pupils or practitioners.
Student records office	There is sporadic use of data and an inconsistent understanding of data that may or not reflect accuracy when different staff are using data to report on. Were all HE and FE data held and processed within one system (or linked systems) with one coding framework this would be reduced. In addition, a standard approach to analysis and contextualising data would provide richer, more consistent and powerful data sets and information for the university. Keeping data in line with national HE measures would enable more use across the board of the data comparing and measuring us with other universities or HEIs of a similar nature.

	Additional opportunities to strengthen university data and processes may include: • Further streamlining of HE SQA and FE processes and data • The VC timetabling process is currently managed at an AP • The exam centre • Recognition of prior learning (RPL processes) • Management of student placements • Post-graduate research student data • Admissions and registry functions • EO fees generation and invoicing • Haste ye Back and student number planning • Nursing student data and processes
Student services team	• The permanent appointment of the CDEEOs: these posts have made an extraordinary impact in a very short-time and are sector-leading examples of innovation and enhancement. • Enhancement of capacity to support Additional Support Needs students, particularly in term of needs assessment and career and employability support. • Sexual Violence Liaison Officers: trained front-line staff to deal with reports of sexual violence. • Complex case/hate crime investigators: we are currently exposed to significant risk. • Enhanced Safeguarding expertise: the institutional lead has recently left Perth College UHI. • Student communications: additional resource in the EO Comms team. • Placement management resource: to manage risk and compliance with policy.
Webteam	Increased digital literacy is a skill which will add value to any digital activity. This should not be confused with detailed technical knowledge and being a 'techie' rather digital literacy is about being able to fluently use the technology of the day to be able to quickly and easily gather content and then reuse that content appropriately on various media with a strong sympathy for how the end user consumes that media. Specifically, in terms of the webteam, and indeed the partnership, we are missing a web designer skillset. That role blends the skill/talent of a designer with a familiarity with how humans use digital devices. Crucially, they must also understand the requirements and constraints of enterprise websites and of accessibility legislation.
Work-based learning hub	• An enhanced and appropriately resourced approach to market research and intelligence across the university would support the development of programmes, including WBL, that is more aligned with market opportunities and demand

	• Increased resource and capacity to develop staff expertise and confidence in the use of digital pedagogy across the breadth of FE and HE provision would enhance the learner experience, particularly for WBL programmes • Pockets of isolated expertise and best practice exist across the partnership – more should be done to facilitate the expansion of these models across provision

Background to the Change Plan

Partnership Council agreed that a consolidated plan should be drawn together that encompasses the assembly actions, the required response to the pandemic and some existing workstreams already underway. This is reflected in the spreadsheet.

This has now been to the University Court meeting on 17th June.

This plan covers the next two years. During that period a strategic plan for the university will be developed for the university that will define the actions over the longer term.

The objectives of the plan are to prioritise the key tasks and change the way we work to:

- Give students across the partnership the best and safest possible educational experience in 2020-21 and beyond.
- Develop the way that we work as a partnership so that we are able to respond to the current pandemic and are resilient in dealing with future challenges.
- Improve the way we plan and use our resources so that we are sustainable and able to focus our resources – financial and human – on the education, research and knowledge that serves our region.
- Position our partnership so that we are able to work with our key partners to contribute what our region needs – to leave this period as a stronger, more effective university supporting our region.
- To lay the foundations for our future strategic plan.

The plan contains five strategic themes and 17 workstreams and outline descriptions of these are set out in Annex 1.

Annex 1 – Outline descriptions of the work

1. **Curriculum planning, delivery and review**	The University Partnership is undertaking work to ensure that we can safely open our campuses for staff and students and adapt our curriculum to the new learning environment over the next few academic years.
1: Campus operations 2020/21 Lead: Susan Berry	This workstreams brings together Health and Safety and Estates colleagues to ensure that we draw on our expertise in a single forum to help coordinate the local preparation of our campuses and offices. It will provide an opportunity to share good practice, coordinate joint procurement, assess total cost to the partnership and take account of the networked elements of what we provide.
2: Curriculum preparation 2020/21 Lead: Gary Campbell / Sue MacFarlane	Teaching staff will require differing levels of support to adapt their teaching materials and course requirements to comply with the regulations in respect of the pandemic for the AY 20/21. This workstream will assess support needs across the university partnership, for both FE and HE. The Educational Development Unit (EDU) and the Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) alongside academic partner colleagues will develop support packages for staff to help them adapt their materials to the current circumstances.
3: Curriculum reviewed and (re)development 2021/22 onwards Lead: Gary Campbell / Donald MacBeath / David Patterson	Partnership Council identified the need for a curriculum review at the beginning of this calendar year and the pandemic has heightened the requirement to undertake this work. Building on the significant work to prepare the curriculum for 20/21 further adjustment will be made for the 21/22 academic year with significant changes to what we offer from 22/23 onwards.
4: Operational arrangements of regional curriculum delivery and planning Lead: John Kemp	This workstream will consider the decision-making structures and arrangements we have in place and seek to ensure that they are effective and empowered as possible. In particular considering where a tertiary approach can be taken and how best to balance local and regional requirements.
2: Positioning the partnership	The university partnership committed last year to implementing aligned branding and marketing to maximise our ability to recruit students. We are building and amplifying this work to help address the additional challenges that the pandemic has thrown up.

5: Strategic positioning Lead: Eddie Abbot-Halpin / Lydia Rohmer	To ensure that the university partnership is at the forefront of the pandemic response for the region ensuring we maximise our involvement in any opportunities that may present and the support we can offer our strategic partners.
6: Branding and positioning Lead: Lydia Rohmer	There is further work to fully implement the branding and positioning work agreed last year with some adaptation to account of the current circumstances.
7: Maximising student intake 2020/21 Lead: Lydia Rohmer	We expect that there will be even greater competition for students in 20/21 given the uncertainty in so many areas across the sector. Working closely with the curriculum preparation for 20/21 workstream we will try to maximise our intake both before and during the clearing process.
3: Financial sustainability	The financial challenges that the university and college sector are likely to face are unprecedented. A significant amount of work needs to be undertaken to understand our financial position both individually and collectively, and address this through raising income levels and reducing spend.
8: Income Generation Lead: Jane Lewis / Chris O'Neil	Considering the opportunities to increase the levels of income that we receive, prioritise and co-ordinate this work so we can develop and implement a transparent income generation strategy.
9: Resource Allocation Mechanism (RAM) Lead: John Kemp / Gary Campbell	Complete the ongoing work to develop a new transparent mechanism for allocating resources across the partnership which supports financial sustainability and an effective curriculum.
10: Financial Planning & Mitigation Lead: Fiona Larg / David Patterson / Margaret Cook	Develop a coherent regional financial plan for the university partnership, develop and understand the consequences of the mitigating actions partners are taking and how these can be best coordinated and develop a disinvestment plan to reduce costs.
11: Aligned Finance Service Lead: John Kemp	Agree the detailed model and timeline for implementation of an aligned finance service and implement the new model.
4: Partnership working	There are a number of outstanding actions, primarily from the assembly work, that seek to develop more coordinated and effective cross partnership working to build on the combined strength of the existing staff and reduce duplication. In the current circumstances these are even more important.

12: Aligned and common services Lead: John Kemp / Max Brown / Martin Jones / Chris O'Neil	This workstream will consider how our current corporate services across the partnership are aligned and bring forward proposals about how these might be better coordinated to deliver benefits to all partners.
13: Development of partnership priorities Lead: Crichton Lang	A key action within the assembly work was to identify partnership priorities that staff can seek to collectively deliver. The development and signoff of this plan will fulfil this action.
14: HR and staff Lead: Neil Simco / Margaret Cook	The work to develop a job description and person specification for a strategic HR lead is almost complete. Amongst other things, this role will provide professional HR leadership for the workstreams set out in this table and coordinate work to consider the impact of the circumstances on staff and any longer term changes to align the various terms and conditions of staff in the context of national bargaining.
5: Specific future strategies	The pandemic will significantly change the landscape for several key areas of business, creating new opportunities and challenges. A strategic refresh is therefore required to take into account the current circumstances, the impact of the pandemic in AY20/21 across the sector as a whole.
15: EO Evaluation Lead: Crichton Lang	The EO evaluation report was started before the pandemic but will now need to be delivered within this context. The recommendations will be discussed with the partnership in July and then built into the workstreams above for items that have a partnership crossover or assigned to the EO SMT where they are purely internal.
16: Research Lead: Neil Simco / Nick Owens	The research environment has changed with restrictions on current funding, challenges for students in undertaking their work but with potential and significant opportunities for new and different areas of research. This work will ensure that our research agenda is adapted to the new context and research partners are supported through this transition.
17: International, European and rest of UK Lead: Stuart Gibb	The cap on rUK students, Brexit and the pandemic presents significant challenges to our ability to recruit students and funding from out with Scotland, but potentially opportunities as well. This work will consider our strategic options for these areas of work.

PROGRAMME PLAN
Workstreams, tasks and timelines

		Priority	Start date	Deadline for completion	Suggested Lead(s)	Supporting 'Practitioner Group(s)'	Reference group(s)	Reporting to
Theme 1: Curriculum planning, delivery and review	**Workstream 1: Campus operations 2020/21**							
	a Agree start date(s) FE and HE b Planning for impacts of social distancing (one-way systems, effective reduction in class size, catering and other logistics) c Deliniation of network courses for partnership consideration d Staff resource aligned to operational requirements and vice cersa e Other elements to be put forward by lead(s)	**HIGH** Immediate	Underway	1st August 2020; semesters 1 and 2	Susan Berry	PPF SMCT Faculties	Tertiary reference group H&S PG, Estates PG	Partnership Council
	Workstream 2: Curriculum preparation 2020/21							
	a Online survey of academic readiness (HE and FE) use to prioritise and target (2j) and inform (1a) b Analysis of survey results and recommendations c Proposed status and outline action plan for each programme in relation to readiness for delivery in 2020/21. d Agree outcome for any remaining programmes including SQA programmes (awaiting national agreement on delivery) e Staff support plan including an audit of support requirements and co-ordination of resource available across the university f Material preparation - specific and generic g Shared longitudinal induction (enhanced for school-leavers and to account for no, or limited F2F induction) h Bridging programmes e.g. for March school leavers i Optimising digital access (skills, laptops with course, Wi-Fi dongles etc) j Working through Faculties and SNs with input from EDU, LTA and champions network etc support teams to be able to offer suitable provision in LA conditions - rearranging order, alternative approaches use of digital etc	**HIGH** Immediate	Underway	1st August 2020 (semester 1)	Gary Campbell Sue McFarlane (FE) assisted by Susan Berry	Faculties and SNs Curriculum managers Curriculum review group EDU LTA LIS Brightspace steering group PLs	Tertiary reference group QAEC PPF	Partnership Council Academic Council
	Workstream 3: Curriculum reviewed and (re)development 2021/22 onwards							
	a Segment curriculum for (i) planning, (ii) resourcing, (iii) delivery and (iv) reviewing b Use strategy definitions, market analysis, performance data and PCW evolutions to plan each segment via a transparent integrated process c Model for RAM reform, ensure RAM supports rather than dictates curriculum. d Sense check resulting revised curriculum for financial sustainability & complaince with 1 e (Re)develop curriculum, deliver and monitor f Develop revised curriculum planning system for ongoing management	**HIGH** Short term	Underway	First iteration late autum 2020 (a - d) April 2021 (e)	Gary Campbell Donald MacBeath/David Patterson (FE)	Faculties and SNs Curriculum managers Curriculum review group EDU LTA LIS	Tertiary reference group QAEC PPF	Partnership Council Academic Council
	Workstream 4: Operational arrangements of regional curriculum delivery and planning							
	a Agree the operational arrangements through which regional curriculum will be managed and delivered e.g. where and how decisions are made b Collate and reflect on relevant outputs from the EO evaluation that relate to barriers in the operational environment c Prioritise and allocate this work to teams to resolve	**MEDIUM** Medium term	Sep-20	Dec-20	John Kemp	TBC	Tertiary reference group	Partnership Council
	Workstream 5: Strategic positioning							
	a Agreeing common messaging for interaction with external stakeholders		Underway	Ongoing but up and running by	Eddie Abbot-Halpin working with Lydia Rohmer	Communications & Marketing Alumni		Partnership Council

PROGRAMME PLAN
Workstreams, tasks and timelines

		Priority	Start date	Deadline for completion	Suggested Lead(s)	Supporting 'Practitioner Group(s)'	Reference group(s)	Reporting to
Theme 2: Positioning the partnership	b stakeholder mapping	MEDIUM Short term		June	supported by Alison Lochhead	Business Practitioners Faculties Student support HISA		
	c Communications and PR plan; internal and external focus: students, staff and external stakeholders							
	Workstream 6: Branding and positioning							
	a Proceed as outlined in agreed stategy	MEDIUM Medium term	Underway	As outlined in B&P strategy	Lydia Rohmer	Marketing group Consultants	Staff Students Key stakeholders	Partnership Council
	b Modify as 1 and 2 develop							
	c Significant two-way interaction with 5, 6, 1 and 2							
	d Other elements to be developed by lead(s)							
	Workstream 7: maximising student intake 2020/21							
	a Proceed as outlined in agreed tertiary recruitment and engagement plan	HIGH Immediate	Underway	Sep-21	Lydia Rohmer supported by Margaret Antonson, Alison Lochhead	Marketing and comms practitioners, admissions, student support, careers and employability, business development, faculty and SNLs, LIS	Tertiary reference group QAEC PPF	Partnership Council
	b Communicated opening dates and offers							
	c Development of partnership wide sub-groups to deliver							
	d Specific promotion of big impact programmes, those might attract regional remainers, CPD etc							
	e Steamlined admissions processes to accelerate student recruitment							
	f Development of a 'clearing' plan to capitalise on maximising student intake in a timely manner			Aug-20				
	g Other elements to be developed by lead(s)							
Theme 3: Financial sustainability	**Workstream 8: Income Generation**							
	a Identify prority areas for income generation	HIGH Immediate	Underway	Ongoing	Jane Scott and Chris O'Neil			Partnership Council
	b Non curriculum based							
	c Optimising income from, and curriculum/research links to, growth deals, AMCF, FFC, ESIF etc							
	Workstream 9: RAM							
	a Continued iteration with 3	HIGH Short term	Underway	Shadow model 2020/21 with implementation for 2021/22	John Kemp, Gary Campbell	RAM Reform group SRO Finance Teams Faculties	Tertiary reference group	Partnership Council
	b Model agreed options using existing curriculm position							
	c Model agreed options using revised curriculm position							
	d Get agreement on revised RAM							
	e Monitor and modify as required by operational environment							
	f Develop a system that captures cost and value of delivery							
	Workstream 10: Financial Planning & Mitigation							
	a Understanding the financial challenge; identify savings targets	HIGH Immediate	Underway	Ongoing with annual review	Fiona Larg, David Patterson, Margaret Cook	FPG SRO Marketing Practitioner	F&GPC	Partnership Council
	b Develop regional financial profile							
	c Agree distribution of unallocated RAM							
	d Reduce the deficit on residencies							
	e Develop and implement a disinvestment plan							
	f Other elements to be developed by lead(s)							
	g Coordinating the mitigation of the current financial impact across the partnership					Partnership Council	Various	Court Academic partner boards
	h Developing regional mitigation / impact plans and analysis							
	Workstream 11: Aligned Finance Service							
	a Develop and implment an aligned model for a common finance service for the partnership	HIGH Short term	Underway	Model confirmed Jul-20 Implementation from beginning	John Kemp	Partnership Council	Various	Court Academic partner boards
	b Monitor techOne progress and develop a systems convergence plan							
	Workstream 12: Aligned and common services							

PROGRAMME PLAN
Workstreams, tasks and timelines

		Priority	Start date	Deadline for completion	Suggested Lead(s)	Supporting 'Practitioner Group(s)'	Reference group(s)	Reporting to
Theme 4: Partnership working	a Draw out the common service areas highlighted within the EO review as a starting point	**MEDIUM** Medium term	Jul-20	Jul-21	JK/MB assisted by Chris O'Neil and Martin Jones	TBC	TBC	Partnership Council
	b Develop a comprehenisve resource map of common services across the partnership							
	c Agree areas that a common approach may be beneficial - those that require separation							
	e Task groups to develop the detail of common/aligned services							
	NB Existing staff and HR systems work in action 16/17							
	Workstream 13: Development of partnership priorities							
	a Plan to be developed	**HIGH** Immediate		May-20	Crichton Lang			Partnership Council
	Workstream 14: HR and staff							
	a Develop a JD and PS for HR lead	**MEDIUM** Medium term	Underway	15th August 2020	Neil Simco and Margaret Cook	HRPG HR Consultant		Parternship Council
	b Agree with PC the JD and PS							
	c Appointing a partnership HR lead							
	d Responding to current situation re. staff: return to work, home working, t&cs etc							
	e exploring the contractual framework							
Theme 5: Specific future strategies	**Workstream 15: EO Evaluation**							
	a Deliver current actions until end of July any recommendations from the EO evaluation not otherwise linked to above actions.	**HIGH** Immediate			Crichton Lang			Court
	Workstream 16: Research							
	a Use of additional SG/SFC funding for strategic research priority areas	**MEDIUM** Medium term			Neil Simco and Nick Owens			
	b Adapt research and knowledge exchange for the post Covid-19 reality							
	c Promote position, uniqueness and diversity of the research across the partnership							
	d Maximise associated grants and other income							
	Workstream 17: International, European, RUK							
	a Strategy development including online Optomising continuity and potential growth of existing international infrastrutre	**LOW** Medium Term	Underway	04-Nov-20 2021 delivery	Stuart Gibb	*International Practitioners *Faculties *EPSC *Marketing and comms practitioners *PRE	International Steering Group	Partnership Council
	b (Hunan)							
	c Pilot project in Iceland							

Sign off by	Sign off date	Key milestones	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
			21st																			
		Survey complete	27th																			
		Complete HE analysis		15th																		
		Complete FE analysis		17th																		
		Outline plan																				
				15th																		
		Outline support programme published		5th																		
		First interaction Finalise offering for 21/22						7th														
		These tasks need to be split out with proper milestones for delivery but all aim towards March 21 for implementation for AY 22/23											3rd									
													3rd									
													3rd									

Sign off by	Sign off date	Key milestones	2020								2021											
			May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
		Clearing strategy																				
		Identify savings target		4th																		
		Consult on model, service level agreement			1st																	

Sign off by	Sign off date	Key milestones	2020								2021											
			May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
		detail from EO evalaution documents		26th																		
		Develop as part of EO evalation discussions				28th																
		Present findings paper to PC						7th														
Court		Approval of plan at PC	21st	09th																		
		Approval of plan by Court		17th																		
		Develop draft		5th																		
		Discuss with HRPG		18th																		
		To PC for decision			10th																	
		Timeline to be added if confirmed by PC																				
		Discuss at joint meeting between Court, AP Chairs and Principals		15th																		
		Develop implementation plan				28th																
		Internal intelligence gathering				28th																
		Market and sectorial intelligence gathering					25th															
		Development of strategy					30th															
		Presentation to PC						15th														

Argyll College UHI Academic Calendar 2020/21

Semester dates:

All full time FE courses and HNC/D programmes

Semester 1:   Monday 7 September 2020 - Friday 22 January 2021

Semester 2:   Monday 25 January 2021 - Friday 4 June 2021

All Undergraduate degree programmes

Semester 1:   Monday 7 September 2020 - Friday 18 December 2020

Semester 2:   Monday 25 January 2021 - Friday 14 May 2021

	Mondays			0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
		24-Aug-20	31-Aug-20	07-Sep-20	14-Sep-20	21-Sep-20	28-Sep-20	05-Oct-20	12-Oct-20	19-Oct-20	26-Oct-20	02-Nov-20	09-Nov-20	16-Nov-20	23-Nov-20	30-Nov-20	07-Dec-20	14-Dec-20	21-Dec-20	28-Dec-20	04-Jan-21	11-Jan-21	18-Jan-21	25-Jan-21	01-Feb-21	08-Feb-21	15-Feb-21	22-Feb-21	01-Mar-21	08-Mar-21	15-Mar-21	22-Mar-21	29-Mar-21	05-Apr-21	12-Apr-21	19-Apr-21	26-Apr-21	03-May-21	10-May-21	17-May-21	24-May-21	31-May-21	07-Jun-21	14-Jun-21	21-Jun-21	28-Jun-21	05-Jul-21	12-Jul-21
Full time FE courses		Course team meetings	Induction	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Holiday	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Christmas Holiday - College Closed		Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Easter holiday. Easter Sunday is 4th April		Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17					
HN courses		Course team meetings	Induction	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Holiday	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Christmas Holiday - College Closed		Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Easter holiday. Easter Sunday is 4th April		Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17					
UG/PGT degree courses			Induction	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Holiday	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	**Degree Exams**		Christmas Holiday - College Closed		Marking			Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Easter holiday. Easter Sunday is 4th April		Week 11	Week 12	**Degree Exams**	Marking								

	University of the Highlands and Islands Argyll College	Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean Colaiste Earra-Ghàidheil

FINAL VERSION Minutes of the Argyll College Management Board
Human Resources & Remuneration Committee
held at 1.30pm on Friday 12th June 2020
via Webex Teams

Present: Jennifer Swanson (JS) Chair; Andrew Campbell (AMC); Martin Jones (MJ); Billie Kirkham (BK); Maggie Tierney (MT)
Apologies: No apologies
In Attendance: Elaine Munro (EM); Ailsa Close (AEC); Vicky Daveney (VD)(Board Secretary)

No	Item	Action
20.2.1	**Welcome & apologies for absence**. The chair welcomed members and welcomed Billie Kirkham and Maggie Tierney to their first committee meeting.	
20.2.2	**Declaration of interest & to identify if any items deemed to be confidential.** 20.2.5 is a confidential item. 20.2.7 is a confidential item.	
20.2.3	**Minute of previous meeting** The minutes to be signed by Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.	JS/VD
20.2.4	**Matters arising** • **Awayday/Induction** MJ confirmed that this will take place dependent on lockdown. If possible it will be held over the summer. **ACTION:** Discuss away day/induction and make arrangements	AC/MJ/VD
20.2.5	**Summary of Recruitment and HR in last quarter** Confidential item	
20.2.6	**Summary of HR and staffing actions taken to adhere to Scottish Government Guidance re COVID** EM stated that the aim of the summary was to give reassurance that communication has been regular and effective regarding actions taken during lockdown. MT asked about the 30th March and the volunteering. EM confirmed that some staff wanted to take part in local community operations carried out during the Covdi-19 pandemic. JS asked if the nursery staff were reaching the end of their notice period. MJ confirmed that they are and that they are currently on furlough. MT asked if the cleaning staff on furlough are full-time salaried staff and whether there are enough of them once lockdown ends. AEC confirmed that they are part-time and all based in different centres. Cleaning after lockdown will probably require external cleaners and it is dependent on whether it is a one off deep clean or on an ongoing basis. MJ verified that, from an HR perspective, all processes had been followed in relation to furloughing staff and guidance on employment law and furlough had been provided by the solicitors. EM also noted that the college had made up the furloughed staff's salaries to 100%.	

20.2.7	**Confidential item**	
20.2.8	**Amendments to policies** **Revised Redundancy Policy & Procedure –** MJ stated that the new paragraph articulates how the college will support staff if they go through redundancy. MT asked whether in 5.4 Selection Criteria, location should be added as it may have implications, ie is it reasonable to be asked to move? **ACTION:** MJ to give this some thought and come back to MT at next meeting. MT pointed out that there are some typos in the document and asked how staff are feeling at the moment. MJ has asked the SMT to gauge the feelings of the staff they deal with, managers speak regularly to their staff and the Employee Assistance Programme has been flagged up. A telephone survey was carried out with students at the beginning of lockdown which provides a good overview of how students are coping.	
20.2.9	**AOCB**	
20.2.10	**Date of next meeting** Committee Meetings – Friday 11th September, Location TBC Board Meeting – Friday 2nd October, Location TBC	
	Signed by …………………………………………………………………….. **Date** ……………………………………….. **Chair of Human Resources & Remuneration Committee**	

NRPA Update

For the benefit of new members NRPA (National Recognition & Procedure Agreement) is a system of national bargaining introduced into Scotland's colleges which has harmonised pay for teaching staff across the country. This was an incremental process which began in 2015. It has amongst other things harmonised pay scales for teaching staff, standardised holidays, set maximum teaching hours and created processes whereby casual staff with two years' service can move to a permanent contract.

Argyll College UHI (along with a small number of other colleges) were not original signatories to the agreement and have been shadowing it. Therefore it is not strictly binding on us.

The Scottish Funding Council has to date provided extra funding to the sector for the extra costs involved and there is an expectation that all colleges will sign up. We have received such funding. The threat being that ultimately, signing up is a condition for our receipt of future funding.

We have implemented most aspects of this. Our permanent unpromoted staff receive up to £41.5k, on a 35 hour week, 62 days holiday, maximum 23 hours teaching per week and access to the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

There are two main outstanding areas and work is well underway to complete these:

1. Transfer of hourly paid casual staff (who meet the requirements) to permanent full time or fractional contracts.
2. The structure for promoted lecturers.

The advantages to the College in the longer term is that with harmonisation, we are (in pay and conditions terms) just as attractive a place to work as anywhere and therefore we will have access to a wider pool of talent.

In addition, one effect of national bargaining is that it seeks to professionalise the teaching staff as registration with the General Teaching Council of Scotland becomes a requirement. The College is to be involved in a pilot scheme on this with GTCS.

Given also that this is essentially a non-negotiable situation as far as the SFC is concerned as a condition of funding, I would like to ask the Board to delegate the power to sign up to NRPA at a point when we have completed the outstanding issues highlighted above.

More background details can be found here:

https://njncscotlandscolleges.ac.uk/about-us/about-us-njnc.html

Trade Union Recognition

The associated letter was received by the Chair.

The Board is asked to consider whether to grant voluntary recognition to the EIS trade union. If we refuse then this could go to a ballot which may force the outcome.

If the Board agrees to this request then a local recognition agreement would need to be put in place to govern the relationship within the college.

FINAL VERSION
MINUTES OF MEETING OF ARGYLL COLLEGE BOARD
Held on Friday 13 March 2020 at 1 pm
at CERC and by VC

Present: Andrew Campbell (AMC) Chair, John Colston (JC) Vice Chair, Martin Jones (MJ), Jim Findlay (JF), Jennifer Swanson (JS), Gillian McCready (GMcC), Faye Tudor (FT)

Apologies: Tony Dalgaty (TD), Scott Matheson (SM)

In attendance: Elaine Munro (EM), Ailsa Close (AEC), Vicky Daveney (VD) Board Secretary

No	Minute	Who	Action	Date
20.1.1	**Welcome and apologies for absence.** The Chair welcomed all governors to the meeting and welcomed Faye Tudor to her first board meeting as staff representative. Apologies received from Tony Dalgaty and Scott Matheson.			
20.1.2	**Declarations of interest & to determine any items as confidential.** JF declared his position as a local authority councillor. 20.1.17 and 20.1.18i were deemed to be confidential items.			
20.1.3	**Minutes of the last meeting.** These were approved by the board and signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.			
20.1.4	**Matters arising**. (i) Helensburgh Centre – MJ was at Executive Office in Inverness last week and discussed Helensburgh's funding with Crichton Lang, however, he was unable to give an answer as Chief Operating Officer of UHI was on leave. There is another meeting due to be held Friday 20th March with senior EO officials where MJ intends to discuss it again. **ACTION:** MJ to provide details to JC with a view to JC emailing Exec Office. (ii) Nursery – MJ confirmed that the nursery will be closing at the end of the school year. MJ has engaged fully with staff and some have agreed to stay until closure. Some children have been moved to new providers already. Maintaining staffing ratios is key. JF asked about impact of COVID19 and policy to close. MJ confirmed that government guidelines will be followed. It is an ongoing challenge but the college has a strong social conscience and continuity of education, particularly	MJ/JC	Provide deta	

		for those children moving on to primary school, is important. AMC thanked EM for her work with the nursery. EM confirmed that the care inspectorate will not be carrying out any more inspections.			il /
	(iii)	Oban – MJ confirmed that the relocation of staff from WHHA back to the Oban Centre has taken place. EM confirmed that staff who have moved back to centre are happy to be able to engage with colleagues. MJ stated that there are economic and operational rewards from this move and that is important to concentrate on having only one footprint in each town in which the college is located.		email	

20.1.5	**Chair's report.** The chair provided a report on his recent activity: • Board recruitment – recruited 6 new members with a range of experience. Very pleased with the outcome. • GAWG (Governance and Accountability Working Group) – has attended several meetings and it is heading in the right direction. AMC explained, for the benefit of new board member, that the aim is to reform UHI to encourage more involvement from partner bodies.			
	RESOURCES			
20.1.6	**Draft Joint Audit and Finance & General Purposes Committee Minute of 29 November 2019** Minute approved, to be signed at next committee meeting.	JC/VD	To sign	
20.1.7	**Management accounts for period to 31 January 2020**		Noted	
20.1.8	**Internal Auditors Discussion with Board on 2019/20 Audit Plan by VC** AEC confirmed that the auditors had VC'd to the Audit Committee and are meeting with SM w/c 16 March to bring together the audit plan for the next 3 years.			
20.1.9	**Health and Safety (Standing item) : H&S issue** a) Lone Worker Policy – new policy for staff working in centres alone or driving alone. b) Health & Safety Policy – H&S Consultant reviews on annual basis, very few changes from previous year. c) Fire Policy & Arrangements – new policy d) Driving Policy – new policy MJ confirmed that CCTV is being rolled out to all centres. JF asked whether H&S should be moved up the agenda to reinforce its importance? AMC confirmed he is happy for it to be moved regularly within the agenda. JC asked how the college monitors whether staff and students are aware of policies. AEC said HR are looking at ways of capturing this information electronically. Currently staff complete and sign a list to confirm they have read them. MJ confirmed that there is an opportunity to do this during staff development week.		Approved Approved Approved Approved	
	STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE			
20.1.10	**Principal's Report for Period ended 29 February 2020**			

	MJ updated the board on recent activity. - MJ was at UHI EO as part of a larger group from the partnership, each functional element within EO provided pro-forma of how it viewed its contribution, looking at staffing and budgets. Discussions were had about whether they are structured correctly and are transparent. MJ found it useful and expects to have a report with recommendations for the next board. - Royal Navy – MJ and FT met with Jodie Friels recently. MJ pushing to get new materials online for April, to pilot in the next academic year. FT stated that there is still a good relationship there and if everything is in place it should be a success. - Marine Training Centre – engaging with employers, positive meeting with Calmac who need ongoing training and the location is an advantage for them as currently have to use Glasgow based suppliers. Accommodation is going to be a key requirement.			
20.1.11	**Draft Minutes of Learning, Teaching and Engagement Committee held on 28 February 2020** Minute approved, to be signed at next committee meeting.	AMC/VD	To sign	
20.1.12	**Education Scotland progress visit** EM informed the board that HMIE will attend the June board meeting.		Noted	
20.1.13	**Early & Further withdrawal KPIs for full time FE courses to date 2019/20** EM confirmed that KPIs are better than last academic year, although there have been further withdrawals since report was produced. If anyone does leave now everything possible will have been done to help them to stay. EM stated that the numbers will be analysed and as a small college we have the advantage of being able to look at each individual.		Noted	
20.1.14	**Update on progress towards targets – 2019/20** a) **FE Credits –** EM confirmed that the core credit target has been achieved already and we are likely to overachieve again this year. MJ stated that national bargaining may have an impact and unions have put in another request for more money, EM confirmed that increased student numbers will be required to make courses financially viable if this is the case. JF said the population numbers are a problem and if students do move away there are fewer people for the local workforce. b) **HE FTEs** c) **HE FTE predictions for 2020/21**		Noted Noted Noted	
20.1.15	**Update on learning, teaching and enhancement items in last quarter:** EM pointed out the typo in e) it should read 'Social Services' not Sciences.	VD	Noted To amend	
	PEOPLE			
20.1.16	**Draft HR & R Committee Minute 28 January 2020** Minute approved, to be signed at next committee meeting.	JS/VD	To sign	
20.1.17	**Confidential item**			

20.1.18	i) **Confidential item** ii) **Terms of Reference –** AMC noted that SM wanted to make the board aware of point 1.4v, due to external events SM was unable to attend this meeting. **ACTION** MJ to incorporate into redundancy policy.	MJ	Revise policy
20.1.19	**Employee Assistance Programme** MJ confirmed this has been rolled out to all staff. Usage will be monitored confidentially, particularly the volume and types of engagement. Staff have the opportunity to complete a survey after using the service. This balances out the funding that has been provided for student mental health support activity.		
20.1.20	**Coronavirus update** MJ stated that this is continuously changing but staff and students are being provided with information and updates. Dedicated web pages for students and Sharepoint areas for staff have been developed as well as ongoing email updates to both groups.		
	BOARD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT		
20.1.21	**Update on recruitment of board members** AMC reported on this during his Chair's report earlier in the meeting but stated that an Away Day/Induction Day is to be arranged for May/June. Dates to be discussed and a poll will be sent out to gauge preference for early May or June (to coincide with board meeting). **ACTION** AMC and VD to discuss options		
20.1.22	**AOCB** a) Business Continuity Plan – AEC stated that this was written 2 years ago and in light of Coronavirus it needs reviewing. b) Fraud Policy – AEC confirmed that this hasn't changed other than job titles. 1.7 should read Board Secretary. c) Accounting Procedures – AEC stated that these were written for 'Assigned Status' and drew the boards attention to some updates due to changes in practice since these were first written. The procurement side has improved with the employment of the procurement assistant. d) Fees Policy – AEC confirmed this is reviewed each year and the instalment plan changes in line with SFC guidance. e) Code of Conduct – MJ asked the board if they want to review '3.2.2 Remuneration' the board confirmed they would like to leave as is. JC asked where we are in the strategic planning cycle and whether it can be part of the Away Day. MJ confirmed that it will be included. AMC thanked GMcC for her time on the board.	AEC AEC	To review Approved + Amend Approved Approved Approved
20.1.23	**Date of next meeting.** Committee meetings – Friday 22nd May, Location TBC		

		Board meeting – Friday 5th June, Location TBC			
		……………………………………………………………………………………… **Date**…………………………………………. **Signed by Chair of meeting**			

Draft Minutes of the
Finance & General Purpose Committee
held at 2.00pm on Friday 12th June 2020
via Webex

Present:	John Colston (JC), Chair, Jim Findlay (JF), Martin Jones (MJ), Bettina Sizeland (BS), Maggie Tierney (MT)
Apologies:	Andrew Campbell (AC)
In Attendance:	Elaine Munro (EM), Ailsa Close (AEC), Vicky Daveney (VD) (Board Secretary)

No	Item	Action
20.2.1	**Welcome –** JC welcomed all committee members to the meeting and welcomed Bettina Sizeland and Maggie Tierney to their first committee meeting.	
20.2.2	**Apologies & declarations of interest**. Apologies were received from Andrew Campbell. JF declared his position as a local authority councillor.	
20.2.3	**Minutes of previous meetings.** Minutes of F&GP meeting held on 28 February 2020 were approved. The minutes to be signed by Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.	JC/VD
20.2.4	**Matters arising.** **i) Update on nursery** MJ provided background for the benefit of the new members and confirmed that the nursery will shut down on 26th June. The nursery closed prior to lockdown due to a number of staff self-isolating. Remaining staff are currently furloughed. JC asked if there had been any renewal of interest from any parties. MJ confirmed that there has not and Covid-19 may have stopped any further interest. MJ stated that after closure the college will own the lease on building, the lease restricts the use of the building to a nursery. BS was unclear why it cannot be re-developed and asked what the ongoing cost of the building is expected to be. AEC stated that funding was received for the nursery and a change of purpose would require permission from the funders. JF suggested that social distancing may increase the requirement for the space for education or childcare needs, and suggested the terms with the grant funders should be checked. JC invited MJ and AEC to look into the terms of the grant and thanked the management team for their work on the nursery closure. **ACTION:** Check terms of funding for nursery	MJ/AEC
	ii) Update on Helensburgh funding draw down MJ provided background information relating to the strategic investment funding which had been won when the centre opened in 2017, but not yet received from UHI. One of the aims of the centre being to maximise engagement with Faslane and facilitate the delivery of UHI's engineering	

		programme to submariners. The funding has now been confirmed and is expected to be received within the next week. JC thanked MJ for his efforts in following-up on this and asked AEC if it will help the management accounts. AEC confirmed that it will, but it has not been incorporated as yet.	
20.2.5		**Internal audit plan** AEC confirmed that new internal auditors have been appointed, previously they were the external auditors, so they already have a good knowledge of the organisation and have a proactive approach. The 3 key areas they will focus on this year are: payroll, staff development and Health & Safety. MT asked whether a staff recruitment and retention audit had been carried out recently as it is listed as a high priority on the audit plan but not scheduled. AEC explained that areas for focus had been prioritised based on time, systems and staffing availability.	
20.2.6		**Update on appointment of external auditor** AEC explained that a joint tender with Sabhal Mor Ostaig and West Highland College went through APUC but only one bid received at double the cost of last year. The tender went back out as an individual tender and 2 bids were received. Armstrong Watson Ltd have been appointed, the other 2 colleges are also appointing them so there is a further 5% discount on tender price.	
20.2.7		**SFC Mid Year Return 2019/20** AEC explained that every year SFC ask for a 5 year forecast (Financial Forecast Return, FFR) in June or September and the MYR is requested mid way through the financial year for a comparison of revised outcome against FFR projections. Due to Covid-19 they requested a further update. AEC has projected a breakeven position for 20/21.	
20.2.8		**Management Accounts to 30 April 2020** AEC stated that although the accounts show a deficit there will be a surplus once the Helensburgh funding is taken into account, all else being equal. In addition, there may be further funding from UHI from the distribution of underspent 20/21 HE teaching grants (RAM). A request has been made for it to be distributed to the colleges, figures are currently unknown. JC asked about national bargaining funding. MJ confirmed that continued receipt of this is dependent on signing up to NRPA, which we are currently shadowing. There is a lot of work required before this can be done and steps are being taken to move the process along, including moving hourly paid staff to fractional contracts. MT asked if it allows enough flexibility to meet the needs of the business and what the timeframe is until we have to commit to joining. MJ stated that the way Argyll College was set up initially is not necessarily conducive to a national model, but we will be seeking to sign up once we have taken the required steps. It is difficult for the college to increase income due to rural locations. MT asked if a collection agency will be used for the expected bad debts on the nursery. AEC explained that due to sensitivities around the closure and Covid-19 debts are not currently being pursued but it may be a requirement to bring in an agency in the future. JC asked if the nursery income and redundancy figures are best estimates for year. AEC confirmed they are. **ACTION:** MT to provide AEC details of a collection agency.	MT/AEC
20.2.9		**Draft Budget 2020/21** AEC explained that there are many unknowns due to the current climate but believes the budget to be reasonable. An increase in staffing costs has been estimated at 1.5%. UHI have confirmed income for 2020/21 but expenditure is more	

	difficult to predict. Capital expenditure budget has not been included but AEC will provide a plan for next year at the board meeting on 26th June. MJ stated that SFC have confirmed there will be no clawback this year and no penalties next year if targets are not met due to Covid-19, eg can only fit 50% of students in classrooms. JC was pleased there was a degree of reassurance from SFC. JF asked if the college is getting all the funding it should, particularly in relation to the nursery. **ACTION:** AEC to produce Capital Expenditure Plan for the next year. **ACTION:** AEC investigate funding options	 AEC AEC
20.2.10	**AOCB**	
20.2.11	**Date of next meeting** Committee Meetings – Friday 11th September, Location TBC Board Meeting – Friday 2nd October, Location TBC	
20.2.12	**Signed by** ………………………………………… **Chair of Finance & General Purpose Committee** **Date ………………………**	

University of the
Highlands and Islands
Argyll College

Management accounts to 30 April 2020

The accounts to date are showing a surplus of £75k. There has been an increase in our creditors of around £200k since the year end.   A breakdown is attached of deferred grants and sundry creditors.

Our HE numbers for the year are confirmed at 199, so we have reduced the income from that budgeted. We had reforecast a figure of £160k for Microram for the year which was based on previous years, but the final figure has been confirmed at £209k. We have verified this figure against the taught and hosted students for the year.

National Bargaining funding appears to be included in our Credit payments from UHI, other than the cumulative payments for increases in previous years, which is why the expected Credit figure is higher than budget.   Continued receipt of this is dependent on the College signing up to NRPA at some point in the near future. Job evaluation process for support staff is commencing in other colleges, but until we are formally signed up for NRPA, the College will not be able to progress with this.   There appears to be some dispute with Unison at present over the payrise which was applied to Support staff salaries in April, and they are also looking for fairly significant changes to terms and conditions (shorter working week, increased annual leave,etc) but these discussions are ongoing with the Employers Association and we will watch with interest.

The decision has been taken, for well documented reasons, to close the nursery at the end of June.   We will incur redundancy costs and the recovery of some fee income debts may be difficult

The Balance Sheet shows unrestricted reserves at the period end of £1.78m, but this is before any adjustment for pension liability, which for 2018/19 was £815k.

Ailsa E Close
25/06/20

Argyll College UHI Ltd

INCOME	Actual 2019/20	Budget 2019/20	Expected Outturn 2019/20	
SFC Credits (FE) Income	2,358,606	2,697,403	3,343,100	Incls NB
UHI Income - RAM	420,576	633,235	530,909	
UHI Income - PGDE	34,011	67,000	47,238	Per UHI
UHI Income - Other	92,906	130,000	128,550	Flatrate £20k, SSC£108550
SAAS Income	258,704	309,000	259,000	Lower HE numbers
ILA Income	5,716	11,000	5,716	No more expected
DYW income	71,898	180,000	140,000	2 qtrs still to be received
MITC funding	21,667		21,667	5 months year 1
Modern/Foundation Apprenticeships	21,642		30,000	
Bursary Income/Student support	27,665	50,000	30,000	
Other PPE reimbursement/CITB	0	10,000	0	
Maintenance/Capital Grant income	62,027	80,000	62,027	
ESF	54,389		54,389	ESIF income for previous years
Bank Interest Received	96	3,000	3,000	
FE Student Fees	104,540	105,000	104,540	
HE Student Fees - Taught	33,743	20,000	33,743	
Commercial Training Activity	24,382	40,000	24,382	
Commercial Training Activity - CSCS Income	3,690	8,000	3,690	Lower because we had to stop tests in all but 1 centre
Nursery Income - Fees	91,454	0	105,000	Closure from March - bad debts very likely
Property Lease Income	3,959	0	3,959	Leased building delay in sale
Room/Facility Hire - With Own Insurance	1,104	1,500	1,104	
Room/Facility Hire - Without Own Insurance	1,210	500	1,210	
Vending Machine Income	896	3,000	896	
Hairdressing Income - General	6,143	9,100	6,143	
Hairdressing Income - Retail	0	0	0	
Hairdressing Income - Other	0	0	0	
Catering Income	5,149	11,500	5,149	
Feed-In Tariff	2,336	6,500	2,336	
Other income	64,564	0	65,430	Greenfleet grants
National Bargaining Grant funding	367,033	860,000	403,604	Incls £64k for Superann
Income from Staff	321	700	321	
Graduation Income	375	550	375	
Branded clothing income	1,017	700	1,017	
	4,141,819	5,236,988	5,418,495	
LESS: EXPENDITURE				
MicroRam	208,894	150,000	208,894	
Staffing Costs - Salaries	1,052,903	1,200,000	1,417,333	staff costs not included in original budget, backfill for MITC post from Apr 20
Staffing Costs - Employer's NI	85,287	108,000	125,560	
Staffing Costs - Employer's Pension	130,604	168,000	181,744	
Staffing Costs - Maternity Pay	(14,493)	1,000	(15,000)	
Staffing Costs - Sick Pay	0	10,000	0	Costs still to be analysed
Staffing Costs - Travel and Subsistence	7,022	20,000	8,000	
Staffing Costs - Training	1,370	6,000	1,500	
Staffing Costs - Disclosure	385	1,000	400	
Staffing Costs - Recruitment	360	15,000	360	
Staffing Costs - Other	13,062	0	53,000	Other & Redundancy costs
Teaching Staff Costs - Salaries	1,303,435	1,677,040	1,737,000	
Teaching Staff Costs - Employer's NI	101,761	150,934	134,000	
Teaching Staff Costs - Employer's Pension	241,488	335,408	322,000	
Teaching Staff Costs - Maternity Pay	0	1,000	0	
Teaching Staff Costs - Sick Pay	0	10,000	0	Costs still to be analysed
Teaching Staff Costs - Travel and Subsistence	6,994	12,000	7,500	
Teaching Staff Costs - Training Other	4,317	12,000	6,000	
Teaching Staff Costs - Disclosure	403	1,300	500	
Teaching Staff Costs - Recruitment	0	3,000	0	

Teaching Staff Costs - Other	25,097		12,000		30,000	Predominantly cost of subcontractors for Maritime courses
Payments to Subcontractors	59,643		65,000		65,000	Additional costs for Nursery secondment and external contractors
Learning Resources/Matls	41,934		60,000		44,000	
Student PPE/Kit	8,890		20,000		10,000	
Payments to Awarding Bodies - SQA	63,497		60,000		65,000	
Payments to Awarding Bodies - CITB	2,703		5,000		3,000	
Payments to Awarding Bodies - BCS	5,285		8,000		6,000	
Payments to Awarding Bodies - Activ Training	1,741		3,500		1,800	
Apprenticeship levy	11,724		16,000		16,000	
Marketing and Promotion	18,966		50,000		50,000	
Health and Safety Costs	27,660		25,000		35,000	
Non Chargeable Catering Costs	2,380		5,000		2,400	
Property Costs - General maintenance	44,149		70,000		50,000	
Property Costs - Lease Costs	36,952		72,000		57,500	Move from WHHA back to Centre in Dec
Property Costs - Venue Costs	3,371		10,000		3,500	
Property Costs - Rates and Water Charges	4,246		17,000		17,000	
Property Costs - Utilities	72,835		80,000		85,000	
Property Costs - Cleaning	24,882		30,000		26,000	
Property Costs - Other Property Costs	3,342		4,000		4,000	
Insurance	27,664		31,000		31,000	
ICT Maintenance and Support	93,627		117,000		117,000	
Equipment repairs	4,374		5,000		5,000	
Equipment Lease Costs	33,975		40,000		45,000	
Company Vehicle Costs - Fuel	1,647		5,000		2,500	
Company Vehicle Costs - Repairs and Maintenance	2,992		3,000		3,000	
Company Vehicle Costs - Road Tax	30		300		300	
Company Vehicle Costs - Other	36,153		40,000		40,000	
Supplies and Copying	13,015		10,000		15,000	
Postage	3,592		7,000		4,000	
Telecoms	6,785		18,000		8,000	
Other expenses	3,248		4,000		4,000	
Donations	277		0		500	
Subscriptions	31,841		27,000		35,000	
Professional Fees - Audit and Accountancy	12,210		20,000		25,000	
Professional Fees - Legal	17,556		12,000		16,000	
Professional Fees - Other	1,399		5,000		5,000	
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Travel & Subsiste	15,076		20,000		20,000	
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Hardship	2,643		10,000		10,000	
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Disclosure	147		3,000		3,000	
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Graduation	5,522		5,000		7,000	
Payments To/On Behalf of Students - Other	190		3,500		300	
Governance Costs - Travel & Subsistence	80		1,500		500	
Governance Costs - Other	300		500		500	
Bank Charges	480		550		550	
Loan Interest - BoS Fixed Rate	2,979		2,000		2,979	
Bad debts	0		1,500		1,500	
Vending Machine Costs	1,610		5,000		1,700	
Hairdressing Supplies - General	300		8,500		500	
Hairdressing Supplies - Retail	0		0		0	
Hairdressing Costs - Other	36		400		36	
Food Purchases	8,805		15,000		10,000	
	3,931,641		4,914,932		5,174,856	
Operating surplus	210,178		322,056		243,639	
Non Capital Fixed Assets	8,726		40,000		60,000	New laptops to replace the PCs
Depreciation	126,368		185,000		185,000	
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year	75,084		97,056		(1,361)	

Argyll College UHI Ltd
Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the period ended 30 Apr 2020

	Actual 2019/20 £	Reforecast 2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Income			
SFC grants	2,725,639	3,746,704	3,616,214
UHI grants	455,015	614,219	630,334
Tuition fees and education contracts	424,345	432,999	872,390
Other operating income	299,758	384,607	340,250
Commercial training activity	28,072	28,072	51,534
Release of deferred capital grant	0	0	126,188
Investment income	96	3,000	7,145
Total income	3,932,925	5,209,601	5,644,055
Expenditure			
Staff costs	2,959,995	4,009,897	4,236,833
Other operating expenses	768,019	1,011,036	1,250,050
Depreciation	126,368	185,000	184,842
Interest and other finance costs	3,459	5,029	9,720
Total expenditure	3,857,841	5,210,962	5,681,445
Income/(Deficit) before other gains and losses	75,084	(1,361)	(37,390)
Impairment loss	0	0	(122,639)
Total comprehensive income for the period	75,084	(1,361)	(160,029)

Argyll College UHI Ltd
Balance Sheet
As at 30 Apr 2020

	30/04/2020	2018/19
Tangible fixed assets	3,685,585	3,836,896
Debtors		
Trade debtors	44,605	18,282
Other debtors	123,913	130,635
	168,517	148,917
Cash at bank	2,467,582	1,701,517
	2,636,099	1,850,434
Creditors <1yr		
Trade Creditors	98,259	115,704
Bank Loans	0	15,105
Accruals	757,593	553,633
Deferred Grants	3,560,313	3,171,082
Tax & Social Security creditor	61,949	67,017
Other creditors	61,016	57,319
	4,539,130	3,979,860
Net current assets	(1,903,031)	(2,129,426)
Net Assets	1,782,553	1,707,470
Reserves		
Unrestricted funds	1,707,470	1,707,470
Comprehensive income for the period	75,084	0
	1,782,554	1,707,470

Argyll College UHI Ltd
Deferred grants
For the period ended 30 Apr 2020

	Balance at 1 August 2019 £	Recd in year £	Expenditure in year	Balance at 30 Apr 2020 £	
Deferred grants					
Capital Reserve	3,125,665	104,305	(126,368)	3,103,602	Capital grants recd by the college since its inception being w/o, needs adj for Lochgilphead building sold
Proceeds from sale of Riverside		89,000		89,000	
Scottish Govt Car Chargers		73,882	(5,541)	68,341	Chargers in Dunoon, Helensburgh and Campbeltown
Islay alterations		56,514	0	56,514	Backlog maintenance grant, work not commenced as yet
Lochgilphead alterations		76,455	0	76,455	Maintenance grant, work not commenced as yet
Muir of Laurieston Trust (Tractor)	11,682	0	(1,460)	10,222	Funding for tractor for agriculture courses in Campbeltown, w/o in line with depreciation
Beam Suntory (Laphroaig Fund)	7,289	0	(7,289)	0	Funds rec'd from Laphroaig Distillery for courses in Islay
Princes Trust	10,000	0		10,000	Dates back to Fraser Durie's first year
A & B Council MITC funding	0	52,000	(21,667)	30,333	Funding for Maritime Industry Training Centre for 1 year
Scottish Govt Greenfleet	14,446	98,014	(49,560)	62,900	Funding for lease of 9 electric vehicles
Foundation Scotland	2,000	0	(2,000)	0	Funding for courses in Islay
Campbeltown Legacy		46,590		46,590	New fund for educational activities in Campbeltown area, legacy bequest
Hardy PL Society Bursary		6,356		6,356	Funding for horticulture vists
	3,171,082	603,116	(213,885)	3,560,313	
Sundry Creditors					
Microram				208,894	
Audit fees				35,000	
Utilities, software				24,330	
Salary accruals - holiday pay, redundancies, other				100,000	
Accruals - other per SFC				389,369	
				757,593	

**Draft Minutes of the Audit Committee
held at 12pm on Friday 12ᵗʰ June 2020
via Webex Teams**

Present: Scott Matheson (SM) Chair, Tony Dalgaty (TD), Elodie Nowinski (EN), Billie Kirkham (BK)
Apologies:
In Attendance: Martin Jones (MJ), Ailsa Close (AEC), Elaine Munro (EM), Vicky Daveney (VD)(Secretary)

No	Item	Action
20.2.1	**Welcome and apologies for absence** The chair welcomed members and welcomed Elodie Nowinski and Billie Kirkham to their first committee meeting.	
20.2.2	**Declaration of interest & to identify if any items deemed to be confidential.** There were no declarations of interest. There were no confidential items.	
20.2.3	**Minutes of the meeting held on 13ᵗʰ March 2020 were approved.** The minutes to be signed by Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.	VD/SM
20.2.4	**Matters arising** (a) **Update on draw down of funding for Helensburgh** – MJ provided background information relating to the funding which had been awarded by UHI when the centre opened in 2017, but not yet received from UHI. The funding has now been confirmed and is expected to be received within the next week. (b) **Nursery update** – MJ provided background information about the nursery operation and the eventual decision to close it; having been unable to find a commercial provider to take it on. The nursery closes on 26ᵗʰ June, although Covid-19 meant the nursery shut in advance of lockdown due to a number of staff self-isolating. Staff have been furloughed and AEC confirmed there is a further furlough claim to be made. SM stated that the decision to close the nursery had involved a lot of work and board deliberation. SM asked which other positions within the college had been furloughed? AEC confirmed that cleaners, centre admin who mainly provide evening cover and the IT Modern Apprentice are furloughed. SM asked if this is all in line with SFC guidance. MJ responded that SFC had said furlough should be considered where funds are not from public money.	
20.2.5	**Risk Register** SM explained, for the benefit of the new committee members, that the Risk Register is an online UHI tool and that he will pass on to the UHI Audit Chairs meeting that it is being used successfully. SM asked for any comments from the committee and asked MJ for an overview of how the college is responding to Covid-19 from a health & safety and financial perspective and what the new semester might look like in relation to that. MJ confirmed that the difficulty is the built environment, some centres are small, retrofitted and not purpose built; Dunoon being a good example	MJ

	of this. There will be a building by building approach to how centres can best be used and what is achievable in each centre. The Estates Manager is working with her network to share common issues and approaches. All this against changing guidance from government. Argyll College's strength is that we are used to a distributed manner of delivery and can deliver courses to homes rather than centres if required. The SMT are looking through the curriculum to see where difficulties lie and aim to make early decisions about the viability of running each course, where these are insurmountable. EM confirmed that each course is being looked at closely to see where elements can be changed, eg practical work and placements. TD asked if it is too early to assess how application numbers are looking for next year. MJ said they are reasonably buoyant, childcare numbers are lower than usual but this may be due to the placement element. Marketing is continuing with a virtual open day scheduled for 24th June. EN asked if there would be extra funding or help to pay for Covid-19 related costs, such as extra PPE, screens or changes to buildings. AEC confirmed that more budget has been allocated for this but there is no specific help at present. MJ reported that SFC has been in regular contact with Principals and the Education Minister has been in attendance at some meetings. SFC have confirmed that there will be no clawback this year and next year for under-performance, if Covid-19 related. **ACTION:** SM asked that a discussion about the Risk Register takes place at the September board meeting (or, if before that date, a Board away day). VD to add to the agenda.	
20.2.6	**SFC Mid Year Return 2019/20** SM asked AEC to clarify that this is the half year return that goes to SFC to highlight any problems. AEC confirmed that SFC want to see how everything is looking against the budget submitted.	Noted
20.2.7	**Draft Budget 2020/21** AEC stated that a breakeven may be achieved but it is a difficult time to forecast due to Covid-19; the extra cleaning and health & safety costs it may require and increased EIS and UNISON involvement and the impact on salaries. SM was pleased to see a breakeven or small surplus at budget stage.	Noted
20.2.8	**Internal audit plan** SM told the committee members that the new Internal Auditors – Henderson Loggie had been appointed. They have been in touch with the SMT and SM had a call with them to help identify key areas where they would focus efforts and check progress on last year's plan. AEC stated that they were unable to start work until the external audit was signed off so they are only starting on reports for 2019/20 now. They are focussing on 3 main areas: Payroll, Staff Development and Health & Safety. TD stressed what a critical area Health & Safety is for the college and asked if the auditors have a specialist team. AEC confirmed that they deal with several colleges so are very knowledgeable. SM said that the plan has the potential to add quite a bit of value and to make a difference.	Noted
20.2.9	**Update on appointment of external auditor** AEC explained that a mini comp was issued as a joint tender for 3 colleges by APUC. Only one bid was received which was very high. The tender was re-issued individually and 2 bids were received. Armstrong Watson Ltd are the chosen supplier. The Audit will start in October.	Noted
20.2.10	**AOCD**	

	Signed by	
	…………………………………………… **Date** ……………………	
	Chair of Audit Committee	

Argyll College UHI Ltd

Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2019 to 2022 and Outline Internal Audit Annual Plan 2019/20

Internal Audit Report 2020/01

Draft Issued: 13 April 2020

Final Issued: 20 May 2020

Now, for tomorrow

mha
HENDERSON LOGGIE

Contents

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1. Introduction

1.1   We have been appointed as Internal Auditors of Argyll College UHI Ltd ('the College') for the period from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2022, with an option available to the College to extend for a further 24 months thereafter.

1.2   Internal audit primarily provides an independent and objective opinion to the Board and to the Principal on risk management, control and governance, by measuring and evaluating their effectiveness in achieving the College's agreed objectives. In addition, internal audit's findings and recommendations are beneficial to line management in the audited areas. Risk management, control and governance comprise the policies, procedures and operations established to ensure the achievement of objectives, the appropriate assessment of risk, the reliability of internal and external reporting and accountability processes, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and compliance with the behavioural and ethical standards set for the College.

1.3   Internal audit also provides an independent and objective consultancy service specifically to help line management improve the College's risk management, control and governance.

1.4   The purpose of this document is to present to the members of the Audit Committee the Strategic Plan for 2019 to 2022 and the outline annual internal audit plan for the financial year ending 31 July 2020.

1.5   We see completion of the ANA as very much a partnership process in order to ensure that the risks facing the College are fully and properly identified and therefore covered in the work cycle.

1.6   Through discussions with management and review of key documentation (including key strategies, the strategic risk register and previous internal and external audit reports) we have built up a picture of the key issues facing the College. This analysis informed discussions between the Executive Management Team and the Chair of the Audit Committee and MHA Henderson Loggie's Head of Public Sector and Internal Audit Services and Audit Manager to discuss the key risks, issues and priorities for the College over the next three years.

1.7   Undertaking this work allows us to consider the level of risk and complexity of each area of your operations and to assess the internal audit resources required to allow adequate coverage of the elements of the audit universe where it is appropriate for internal audit to focus attention. The audit universe utilised has been tailored specifically for the circumstances of the College. From this we have drawn up a three year Strategic Plan setting out proposed areas for audit over the routine internal audit cycle.

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Introduction (Continued)

1.8   The Strategic Plan places the risk based planned coverage under three main strands: Governance, Financial and Performance. The planned coverage should be reviewed annually prior to finalisation of the Annual Plan and the associated detailed audit planning for individual assignments.

1.9   There is an expectation by external auditors that some element of review is included in the internal audit programme each year in relation to core financial systems and controls. This has been taken into consideration in formulating the Strategic Plan.

1.10   Value for Money (VFM) is an integral part of all audits and has been mentioned at key points within this ANA. Specific VFM reviews will be carried out in areas agreed with management and the Audit and Risk Committee although VFM is considered as an integral part of any audit work that we are undertaking.

1.11   We will draw on the experience within our team to provide input on the use of a wide range of business improvement tools, including the use of lean systems and methodologies, where this is appropriate and relevant to the specific audit assignment.

1.12   For discussion purposes, at Section 2 we have included proposed coverage for the three years commencing in 2019/20, which has been determined from the ANA process. This considers previous internal audit coverage and other sources of assurance available to the College.

1.13   At Section 3 we have included high-level outline scopes for each of the proposed areas to be covered in the 2019/20 internal audit programme.

1.14   Separate reports will be issued for each assignment. Recommendations are graded in each report to reflect the significance of the issues raised.

1.15   We can confirm that our audit service complies with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

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2. Strategic Plan 2019 to 2022

The Strategic Plan covers the financial years 2019/20 to 2021/22. Audit days have been allocated to the categories identified from our review of key risk areas in order to produce a rolling programme of internal audit activity. Frequency of visits, the number of days allocated, and the position in the audit cycle has been determined with reference to the combined risk factors identified in the ANA, and also factors in any previous internal and external audit coverage.

Audit Methodology

In all cases the audit work involves:

- Identification of the expected controls.
- Review of systems to identify actual controls.
- Consideration of established Best Practice in the area.
- Testing of controls to ensure they are operating effectively.
- Consideration of VFM issues where appropriate on all audit assignments and conducting specific VFM reviews as agreed with College management and the Audit Committee.
- Consideration of the relevance of business improvement tools, including lean systems and methodologies, to individual audit assignments.
- Discussion of findings and our likely recommendations with the relevant managers and staff involved with the systems. Recommendations will be graded to help management prioritise their importance.
- Issue of a draft report to confirm factual accuracy and obtain official management responses for inclusion in the final report.
- Issue of a final report that summarises audit objectives, work carried out, the implications of the findings for internal control, and an action plan with areas for improvement. The action plan will allocate responsibility for the implementation and will define an agreed timeframe for completion.
- Follow-up of action plans in future years.

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Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2019 to 2022 and Internal Audit Annual Plan 2019/20

	Category	Priority	Planned 19/20 Days	Planned 20/21 Days	Planned 21/22 Days
Reputation					
Publicity and Communications	Gov	M			
Health and Safety	Gov	M	4		
Student Experience					
Curriculum planning**	Perf	M			4
Quality assurance**	Perf	M			
Student support	Perf	M			
Student recruitment and retention	Fin/Perf	H		4	
Staffing Issues					
Staff recruitment and retention	Perf	H			
Staff development	Perf	M	4		
Sickness absence	Perf	M			
Workforce planning	Perf	M			
Payroll	Fin	L/M	4		
Estates and Facilities					
Building maintenance	Fin/Perf	M/H			4
Estates strategy / capital projects	Fin/Perf	M			
Space management	Perf	M			
Asset / fleet management	Perf	M/H			
Financial Issues					
Budgetary control	Fin	L/M			
Financial planning	Fin	M			
Student fees and contracts / registry	Fin	M			
General ledger*	Fin	L/M			
Procurement and creditors / purchasing	Fin	M		4	
Debtors/ Income	Fin	L/M			
Cash & Bank / Treasury management*	Fin	M			4
Fraud prevention, detection and response	Fin	M			
Commercial Issues					
Business Development*	Fin/Perf	M		4	
Organisational Issues					
Risk Management	Perf	M			
Business Continuity	Perf	M			
Corporate Governance	Gov	L/M			
Corporate Planning	Perf	L/M			
Performance reporting / KPIs	Perf	M			
Partnership Working	Gov/Perf	L			
Equalities	Gov	M			

Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2019 to 2022 and Internal Audit Annual Plan 2019/20

	Category	Priority	Planned 19/20 Days	Planned 20/21 Days	Planned 21/22 Days
Information and IT					
Cyber Security	Perf	M			
Data protection	Gov	M			
FOI	Gov	L			
IT strategy	Perf	M			
Other Audit Activities					
Management and Planning)			2	2	2
External audit / SFC)					
Attendance at Audit & Risk Committee)					
Follow-up reviews		Various	1	1	1
ANA and Strategic Plan			1		
			_____	_____	_____
Total			16	15	15
			====	====	====

Key:

Category: Gov = Governance; Perf = Performance; Fin = Financial

*reviews to be undertaken at the same time with a single output produced
**reviews to be undertaken at the same time with a single output produced

3. Annual Plan 2019/20 - Outline Scope and Objectives

Audit Assignment:	Health & Safety
Priority:	High
Audit Committee Meeting:	TBC
Days:	4

Scope

This audit will review the arrangements in place within the College to deal with Health and Safety (H&S) issues.

Objectives

The main objective of this audit will be to review the College's overall arrangements for dealing with H&S issues and to consider whether these are adequate and operating effectively in practice at each campus site.

We will seek to obtain reasonable assurance that the College has:

- a H&S policy and documented procedures which are communicated to all staff;
- a formal risk identification and assessment process;
- a H&S training programme which includes induction training, refresher training and training for new equipment and legislation;
- regular monitoring of H&S systems to ensure that they are functioning effectively including H&S audits, carried out either internally or by external agencies such as the Health and Safety Executive;
- an incident and accident recording system with follow-up and implementation of new controls where required; and
- regular reporting of H&S to senior management and to the Board of Management.

Our audit approach will be:

From discussion with the Health and Safety Officer, and review of procedural documentation, we will identify the internal controls in place and compare these with expected controls. A walkthrough of key systems will then be undertaken to confirm our understanding, and this will be followed up with compliance testing where considered necessary. We will report on any areas where expected controls are found to be absent or where controls could be further strengthened.

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Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2019 to 2022 and Internal Audit Annual Plan 2019/20

Audit Assignment:	Staff Development
Priority:	High
Audit Committee Meeting:	TBC
Days:	4

Scope

This audit will consider whether the College is making best use of its staff and include a review of workforce planning; training; and the personal development plan system.

Objectives

The objective of our audit will be to obtain reasonable assurance that:

- the College has a systematic approach for ensuring that its staff resources match what is required in order to deliver its commitments. Where gaps are identified, timely action is taken to close these;
- the College's approach to training, including induction training, is clearly informed by an assessment of where there are skills / knowledge / performance gaps;
- the College has a systematic approach to evaluating its training to ensure that it is achieving the desired impact;
- there is a systematic approach for translating business objectives into actions / tasks for members of staff;
- a systematic approach is used for communicating objectives and performance expectations to staff; and
- a systematic process is used for providing feedback to staff on performance and agreeing action to improve performance;

Our audit approach will be:

The Depute Principal, Heads of Curriculum, and a sample of curriculum and support staff will be interviewed, and the College's policies, procedures and structure will be reviewed, to assess compliance with the above objectives.

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Audit Assignment:	HR / Payroll
Priority:	Low/Medium
Audit Committee Meeting:	TBC
Days:	4

Scope

This audit will consider the key internal controls in place over the College's spend on staff costs of approximately £1.25m per annum. Our audit will cover the procedures in place within both Human Resources and Finance.

Objectives

The objective of our audit will be to obtain reasonable assurance that systems are sufficient to ensure:

- correct calculation of gross pay and deductions;
- correct calculation of employer national insurance and superannuation contributions;
- part-time lecturers, overtime and travel & subsistence payments are properly authorised;
- approval and checking of changes to employee standing data;
- starters and leavers are properly treated and enter and leave the system at the correct dates; and
- proper authorisation, processing and recording of payments.

Our audit approach will be:

From discussion with the Finance and Human Resources staff, and review of procedures documentation, we will identify the key internal controls in place within the College's Human Resources / Payroll systems and compare these with expected controls. We will report on any areas where expected controls are found to be absent or where controls could be further strengthened.

Compliance testing will then be carried out to ensure that the controls in place are operating effectively, concentrating on starters, leavers and variations to pay.

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Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2019 to 2022 and Internal Audit Annual Plan 2019/20

Audit Assignment:	Follow-Up Reviews
Priority:	Various
Audit Committee Meeting:	TBC
Days:	1

Scope

This review will cover reports from the 2018/19 internal audit programme and reports from earlier years where previous follow-up identified recommendations outstanding.

Objectives

To establish the status of implementation of recommendations made in previous internal audit reports.

Our audit approach will be:

- for the recommendations made in previous reports ascertain by enquiry or sample testing, as appropriate, whether they have been completed or what stage they have reached in terms of completion and whether the due date needs to be revised; and

- prepare a summary of the current status of the recommendations for the Audit Committee.

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