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Final Version Minutes of the HR Committee Meeting

Held at 9.30am on Friday 27 February 2026

via MS Teams

Quorum: 2 members must be present

Present: H Stevenson (HS) Chair, J Wright (JW), L Neilson (LN), M Coleman (MC), M Tierney (MT), S Easton (SE)

Apologies: J Dow (JD)

In Attendance: A Blakey (AB), A Close (AEC), S Johnson (SJ)

No	Item	Action
26.1.01	Welcome and apologies for absence HS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Brief introductions followed, welcoming SE to the Committee as a new Board Member. Apologies were noted from JD, who will join the Committee for the next cycle.	
26.1.02	Declaration of interest & to identify any items deemed to be confidential. There were no declarations of interest or items deemed confidential.	
26.1.03	Minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on 28 November 2025 The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Board Secretary to publish.	AB
26.1.04	Outstanding Actions - SJ to provide an update on the Employment Rights Bill –covered in item 26.1.06 - HR Report - Absence Management – SJ to update graphs to include comparison with previous year/cycle – complete	
26.1.05	Matters Arising There were no matters arising.	
26.1.06	HR Report SJ gave an overview of some of the key items within the report. Job Evaluation	

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It was noted that the college has now joined ECC, and an announcement has been made to staff. Training has been provided for managers who will be involved in rewriting job descriptions. As it stands, work remains on schedule, though the next phase may present some challenges. At a national level, progress is currently at a standstill, pending a lessons-learned review. Staff feedback to date has been limited but generally positive, with the process appearing to be well-received.

The next stage of the process involves managers working with staff to rewrite job descriptions. Scoring is expected to be completed by the end of April, with a full report coming to the Committee in May, including the proposed pay and grading structure.

JW highlighted uncertainty around the national scheme and the unresolved eight-year period, noting that investment decisions will be required later down the line. Accurate job descriptions remain essential to minimise appeals.

AEC noted the financial constraint of the £250k annual provision to UHI, which cannot be redirected to support local implementation.

Policy Updates

The Committee received an update on three policies scheduled for review.

Probation policy – the policy has been updated to reflect the Employment Rights Act requirement for a six-month service period for full employment rights. SMT held a brief discussion on whether shorter probation periods may be appropriate for certain roles – this may be brought back to the Committee later in the year. Training for managers on probation processes appears to have been taken on board.

References policy – the updated policy reflects a cautious and standard approach to providing references.

Relocation policy – the policy sets out relocation allowances. The financial risk is considered low, as only small amounts are likely to be paid and only for key posts. Any relocation support will be clearly stated in the job advertisement where applicable.

Staff Development Week

The Committee received an update on Staff Development Week, which takes place twice a year and is scheduled during school holidays to maximise staff participation. The week also acts as a reminder for any mandatory training. Work is underway to produce staff development week reports.

Employee Relations

National matters:

Apart from job evaluation, two main national issues remain active – the final draft of the NRPA, and the lecturing staff pay claim. It was noted that the three-

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	year pay deal for support staff was accepted by UNISON and Unite at the end of last year. The Committee noted the revised NRPA which was approved at the CES meeting on 4 February 2026. HS welcomed the progress which has been made nationally. CES has also reviewed the EIS-FELA pay claim, which proposes a two-year deal totalling 8.5% across 2026/27 and 2027/28. The document is complex, and there is some concern about turnover among those handling the negotiations at CES. Further updates are awaited. Local Level Union Relationships: Local relationships remain constructive. Both lecturing and support side unions continue to work collaboratively with management across a range of issues, including disciplinaries and grievances. It was noted that the local EIS representative has no experience in disciplinary hearings, so it has been agreed that she may attend selected hearings in an observer capacity to support her ongoing skills development. EIS-FELA Regular formal and informal engagement continues with EIS on matters including UHI transformation, the local schools strategy and the EIS-FELA report on FE in Scotland. Staff consultation has concluded with only four out of the ten staff impacted by a reduction in hours, with alternative meaningful activity identified for the remaining staff. The national grievance policy remains in final draft form, with no further updates available. UNISON Activity has been limited. The national representative has been in contact but has had a period of absence. Resource Implications Staff costs continue to be monitored weekly. Only two additional posts this AY, both small fractional contracts justified by student numbers. HR remains busy with preparations for job evaluation, alongside current disciplinary and grievance activity. The team is stretched but managing. The next phase of job evaluation is expected to require additional HR capacity. HS queried the presentation of the staff turnover graphs, noting they appeared to show an increase to last year when this is not the case. SJ to amend the graphs accordingly. Absence management	
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	SJ will amend the absence management graphs to ensure they present the data accurately. The Committee agreed the need to report on the same basis as other colleges, to allow for comparative benchmarking. The Committee queried whether other colleges report SMT absences separately. SJ confirmed this had been requested nationally. However, due to the very small numbers and associated data protection risks, the Committee agreed SMT absences should be included within support staff data. SJ will amend the reporting method accordingly	SJ SJ
26.1.07	HR Risk Register The Committee reviewed each risk in turn. 01/H. UHI Transformation – risk level unchanged. An update from EO confirmed an additional six-month period for staff consultation before submission of the FBC, as recommended by SFC. This extension may help mitigate some elements of the risk. Public consultation will be delayed. A summit meeting is scheduled for 11 March, which MT and JW are attending. 02/H. Industrial relations post National Bargaining – no deterioration reported, risk level unchanged. 03/H. Inability to enact strategic planning amid high uncertainty – mitigations continue. A paper outlined proposed aims will be presented to the Board in March. UHI Argyll’s strategy is expected to be agreed and launched by summer. The Committee noted that the UHI 2030 strategy is heavily focused on HE, research, and commercial income. Further Board discussion will follow once the paper is submitted. 04/H. Long-term impact of change – risk continues to be monitored and adjusted as required. SJ and JW agreed to remove a phrase from the risk description. 05/H. Loss of key employees – risk may be increasing given potential forthcoming changes. The Nominations Committee will meet in March to consider succession planning for key SMT roles, including anticipated retirements. 06/H. Failure to attract and retain staff – no additional updates noted. 07/H. Employments Rights Act – SJ provided a verbal overview. A summary paper will be presented to the May Committee, outlining headline impacts and enabling a refreshed assessment of the risk. 08/H. Job evaluation – risk may increase depending on the outcomes of the project.	SJ/JW SJ
26.1.08	National Recognitions and Procedures Agreement for the College Sector 2025	

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	a) Summary of Revisions NRPA Covered in item 26.1.06.	
26.1.09	Probation Policy Covered in item 26.1.06.	
26.1.10	References Policy Covered in item 26.1.06.	
26.1.11	Relocation Policy Covered in item 26.1.06.	
26.1.12	AOCB There was no further business to discuss.	
26.1.13	Date of next meetings Board – Friday 13 March 2026 HR Committee – Friday 29 May 2026	

Outstanding Actions – HR

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Item	Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Outcome
26.1.03	Board Secretary to publish minutes	AB	May 26	Complete
26.1.06	Amend presentation of staff turnover graphs	SJ	May 26	Complete
26.1.06	Amend presentation of absence management graphs, and ensure reporting is done on the same basis as other colleges	SJ	May 26	Complete
26.1.06	Include SMT absences within support staff reporting	SJ	May 26	Complete
26.1.07	Remove phrase from risk 04/H.	SJ/JW	May 26	Complete
26.1.07	Produce Employment Rights Act summary paper	SJ	May 26	Complete