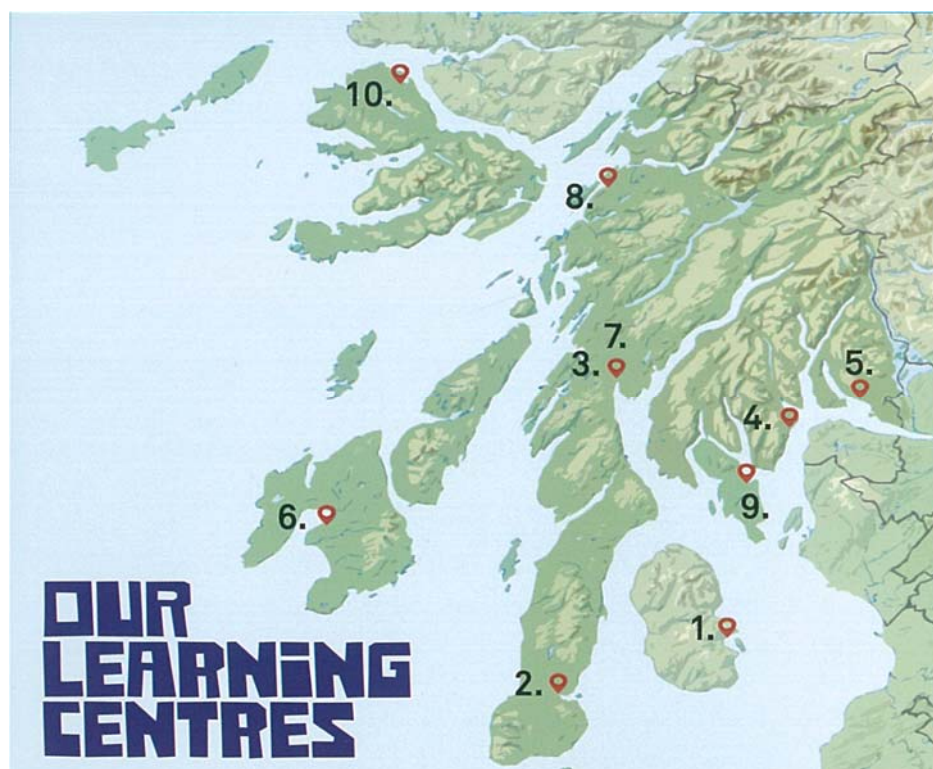


How Good is our College 2016/7– Argyll College UH Ltd

Introduction and Background

Argyll College UHI is one of the 13 partner institutions of the University of the Highlands and Islands and one of the 9 FE colleges within the Highlands and Islands Region. We are Argyll's largest provider of further and higher education. The college was established in 1997, with the first learning centres opening in 2000. Since then, the college has grown rapidly, now fulfilling the needs of more than 1600 students across a network of 10 local learning centres dispersed throughout the Argyll and the Islands area:



1	Arran	6	Islay
2	Campbeltown	7	Construction, Engineering and Renewables Centre
3	Lochgilphead	8	Oban
4	Dunoon	9	Rothesay
5	Helensburgh	10	Tobermory

Learning centres are equipped with computers, video conferencing facilities, library facilities and student study areas. Each centre is staffed with a Centre Manager who provides advice, guidance and pastoral support to students and prospective students, supports teaching staff based in their centre and liaises with local employers, schools and relevant agencies.

The largest centre is in Oban and accommodates over a third of our FE student population.

The college curriculum is designed to support the economic growth of Argyll and Arran, with subjects ranging from Hospitality and Tourism, Construction and Engineering, Horticulture, Agriculture, Sport, Maritime as well as Administration, Business, Computing, Social Sciences, Hairdressing, Performing Arts, Childcare and Health and Social Care. Within these curriculum areas a range of qualification levels area offered, from SCQF level 4 to 8.

The majority of our full time students (65%) are young people aged between 16 and 24 years old: 72% of FE students are in this age range and 58% of HE students fit this profile.

The college employs 250 staff, many of whom are part time – this equates to 40 FTE teaching staff and 48 FTE non teaching staff. All full time teaching staff hold TQFE or an equivalent teaching qualification.

During the 2016/17 academic year, the college has undergone a review and restructure. This has had greatest impact on the management of the curriculum: previously there were five Curriculum Managers responsible for the management of the curriculum, each responsible for a number of curricular areas; following the restructure there are two Heads of Curriculum and 13 Curriculum Leads. The curriculum leads are all subject specific and teach within the curriculum area they lead, resulting in the management of the curriculum becoming more closely engaged with and aligned to the delivery of the curriculum. The Heads of Curriculum have a focus on curriculum development linked to strategic objectives and will lead on improving and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning within the college

There are some significant challenges facing Argyll College in the near future: space within our centres to increase student numbers and provide further curriculum offerings; an ageing local population which will increase the pressure on employers and employment opportunities making it important that the college aligns our curriculum to current and, more importantly, future local economic need.

Methodology

The following items helped inform the content of this report:

The Education Scotland Quality Framework was disseminated to all staff, discussed with the Operational Management group and with the college board. Andrew Brawley HMIE attended the March board meeting to discussed the quality framework and the new self evaluation and reporting process with the board.

Programme self evaluation documents (SEDs) - All FE and HE programme teams complete SEDs annually to reflect and evaluate on student retention and attainment, teaching and learning practice and areas for further improvement and enhancement. HE SEDs are submitted in September each year reflecting on the previous academic year; FE SEDs are submitted by mid December.

Dissemination and discussion of KPI data – Early withdrawal KPI data for full time courses is collated in mid to late November each year and emailed to all teaching staff, Curriculum Leads and Heads of Curriculum for discussion during the second course team meeting of the year. The data is submitted to the learning, teaching and Engagement sub committee of the board at the December meeting and an update provided on further withdrawal data at each subsequent quarterly meeting. The final KPI data for all courses is collated following the final FES return and is disseminated to all staff and discussed at the December board meeting.

Student surveys – students are encouraged to participate in the Early Student Satisfaction survey that all the Highlands and Islands regional colleges complete as well as the end of year Student Satisfaction and Engagement survey submitted annually to SFC. In addition there is significant informal on-going discussion and dialogue with students during their course to seek their views and comments and identify and issues that need to be addressed. This dialogue is with teaching staff and local centre staff.

Information from student representatives who attend course committees, the college board and board sub-committees.

Regular engagement with the Highlands and Islands students association (HISA) on student views, concerns and issues.

Partnership working and regular dialogue with local schools – via Schools link officer, teaching staff and local Centre Staff.

Engagement with external bodies and agencies: The Principal engages at a strategic level with the Local Authority, Community Planning Partnership, DYW Board, UHI and Highlands and Islands regional structures, College Development Network, Scottish Funding Council. The executive team and members of the operational management group engage with local, regional and national agencies, employers, awarding bodies and are involved within UHI and Highlands and Islands regional committee structures.

Leadership and Quality Culture

1.1 Governance and Leadership of Change

Positive practice:

- The chair of the college board is the depute chair of the Highlands and Islands regional board. This provides an important and valuable connection between the local and regional position, which ensures close alignment of college and regional priorities.
- Board members have a wide range of experience within key employment and occupational sectors in Argyll as well as having excellent knowledge of the wide geographical area the college operates within. These attributes assist the board in providing strategic direction and vision for the college with a clear and direct focus on the development of the local economy.
- The student and staff representatives on the college board are both important members of the Learning, Teaching and Engagement (LTE) board sub committee, providing valuable input to help enhance other board members understanding and knowledge of student and staff views, concerns and issues.
- The Board's annual away day event focuses on the review and updating of the college strategy. Governors decide key areas they wish to discuss, which staff they wish to invite and relevant representatives from external agencies at local, regional and national level.
- All board members have an annual performance review with the chair of the board ensuring the board have the appropriate skills, knowledge and ability to continue in the role.
- College key performance indicators outlined in the college strategy align well with and effectively reflect the regional outcome agreement within a local Argyll context.
- The college board annually review and evaluate achievement of the KPIs and discuss how these contribute to the overall achievement of the UHI KPIs and regional outcome agreement.
- Key college strategic objectives reflect current and predicted future local and regional priorities well and take account of the Scotland wide educational, economic and employment context.
- All staff are continually involved in improving the service provided to students – the college has a small staff base. Every person counts and is valued. Staff suggest areas for improvement and are asked, formally and informally, for their view on what is working well and what could be improved.
- The board sub-committee structure is firmly embedded into the strategic structure of the college, providing strong strategic support, detailed questioning and challenge of operational issues and a greater understanding of the college operation for board members.

- This structure is now an integral part of the quality improvement cycle within the college and provides clear strategic direction and guidance to the executive team.

Leadership and Quality Culture

1.2 Leadership of Learning and teaching

Positive Practice:

- The college staff development committee co-ordinates two staff development weeks each year providing the opportunity for staff to attend a range of sessions that relate directly to enhancing the student's learning experience.
- Many staff use the UHI Learning and Teaching Academy, CDN, SQA and other agencies the college is connected with, to attend a range of webinars, seminars and workshops relating to teaching and learning practice. Some of these staff provide feedback to their line manager on the benefits of attending the events and how it will improve their teaching and learning and impact positively on the student experience.
- All full time teaching staff hold a teaching qualification. This provides them with a better understanding of pedagogy, allowing them to continually improve and broaden their own teaching techniques, to ensure every student can succeed.
- All other staff undertake relevant qualifications and continual professional development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and understanding and improve their teaching practice.
- A recent critical restructuring process was received well by almost all staff and has made the curriculum management more closely aligned to the delivery of the curriculum, making it more relevant and meaningful.
- In a staff survey in September 2017 almost all staff indicated that leadership and management in the college had a very clear view of the direction of travel of the college and its services. Survey results also indicated managers were very supportive and the "open door" policy was very important in resolving issues quickly and in a supportive manner.
- There is significant communication with all staff in the college, in both a formal and informal way. All of this is carried out within the challenge of a dispersed geographical network of centres and relies on many different communication methods.
- All staff are valued and the importance of each person and the role they perform, whether teaching or supporting teaching and students, is recognised by all staff. There is a culture of respect and appreciation for the work of colleagues.

Areas of Development:

- There is no formal feedback mechanism for staff to share good practice or to feedback on staff development sessions they have attended. This limits the scope of staff to learn from other colleagues and improve their practice.
- There is no peer review system in place for teaching staff. This limits the capacity of staff to learn from colleagues and share teaching practice between and across curriculum teams.

- HISA activities are very important to the college but are not currently widespread or recognised as important by students.
- The induction of teaching staff into the college and their specific curriculum area is inconsistent and in need of review to ensure it is effective and meets the needs of teaching staff across all curriculum areas.
- A Learning and Teaching strategy is in draft form. Consultation with all staff on the strategy will be essential to reflect the ethos and culture of learning and teaching within the college and to take ownership of the strategy.

Leadership and Quality Culture

1.3 Leadership of Services to support learning

Positive Practice:

- Centre staff are critical to the success of the college and are an important element in the dispersed management of the college. They manage all aspects of their centre, are the local face of the college and engage with local schools, agencies and employers. They play a key role in supporting students - providing pre-entry guidance and support to prospective students, on-going pastoral support, advice and referral to specific support functions to students who are studying at the college as well as advising students on possible progression routes and further study. In addition, they provide a valuable link between the academic and support functions of the college, engaging at a local level and supporting teaching staff. Without centre managers the college would be unable to operate the multi-site operation effectively within the significant geographical area within which it operates.
- Following the college restructure a single member of staff has been appointed as Head of Student Services, ensuring leadership and overview of the student service areas.
- The college has a range of strategies, policies and procedures to ensure a consistent approach to the quality assurance and support of learning.
- The Head of Student Services has the Facilitating Inclusive Learning Strategies (vFILS) qualification which provides the knowledge for her to complete student needs assessments at FE level, the development of Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSPs) and dyslexia screening.
- All senior managers have undergone Leadership and Management training awarded by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), ensuring they have the theoretical knowledge to lead and manage areas within the college.
- All senior managers have participated in Employment Law seminars organised by the college, covering areas such as line management, staff disciplinary and staff review and appraisal, equipping them with the theoretical knowledge and information to effectively line manage staff.
- There is regular communication and dissemination of information from the student services team to all support and teaching staff, ensuring staff have all necessary information to support students well.

- The Head of Student Services and the local HISA Depute have a close working relationship to further promote the work of HISA to staff and students as well as facilitating the feedback of student views, issues and concerns.
- The Head of Student Services is a member of the college senior management team and as such is aware of college wide plans and activities enabling early implementation of measures to support learning.
- The Head of Student Services engages with colleagues and committee structures across UHI and the Highlands and Islands Region, Colleges Development Network as well as with local agencies and schools to ensure awareness of local, regional and national developments within the student services areas.
- Centre managers engage with relevant stakeholders and partner agencies at a local level to enable appropriate and timely signposting and/or intervention measures to be implemented, to provide a high level of support to students in their centre.

Areas of Development:

- There is no formal staff review and appraisal system in place. This limits the ability of staff and managers to formally discuss and evaluate individual performance against the overall college strategic and operational aims.
- There is no formal system in place to evaluate of the impact of learning support services on positive outcomes.

Leadership and Quality Culture

1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement

Positive Practice:

- Detailed KPI data is disseminated to all staff and Board members annually to maintain a focus on the learning and teaching KPIs.
- The college works closely with senior managers in the Local Authority and the Headteachers of the ten local secondary schools to ensure the college is effectively implementing the measures within Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) to better prepare students for the world of work.
- All staff are very familiar with the four main teaching and learning KPIs and the contribution their job role has on overall college performance.
- Self-evaluation is embedded within teaching teams, leading to a focus on where improvements can be made to further enhance the student experience and learner journey.
- Almost all full time FE courses have a student representative appointed which is important to ensure student engagement in detailed discussions about the design and delivery of courses. HISA are actively engaged in this process and outline to students the benefits of becoming a student rep.

- Training is provided to all student reps by the Head of Student Services and the HISA depute. Both have received training from SPARQS in the importance of student engagement in improving the teaching and learning and student journey in the college.
- Following student surveys, feedback to students is via a 'You Said, We Did' poster campaign demonstrating changes and improvements the college has made as a direct result of student feedback.
- All full time course teams and all ten secondary schools within the college area are issued annually with KPI trend analysis reports to underpin discussion on possible changes that are required within curriculum areas, training requirements for staff, curriculum developments and to help plan for future improvements.

Areas of Development:

- The review of course self-evaluation documents (SEDs) is informal and there is insufficient feedback to course teams to help improvement measures to be implemented.

Delivery of Learning and services to support learning

2.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection

Positive Practice:

- The college has a comprehensive Safeguarding policy that all staff are aware of, which adheres to all national guidelines and legislation. The college safeguarding co-ordinator constantly informs staff and students of the importance of Safeguarding.
- There is a UHI Safeguarding practitioners network that the college safeguarding co-ordinator attends, ensuring there is agreed common practice, peer support and the sharing of information and knowledge across the UHI partnership.
- All college staff have undergone Safeguarding awareness training, linked to the college policy. This training is delivered internally by teaching staff within the Childcare team, who are all very experienced in the legislation surrounding this area and teach safeguarding and child protection within the courses they deliver.
- The college has a designated Safeguarding Officer. During the recent college restructure this duty has moved to the Student Services Manager, who already has close working relationships with a number of external agencies that are relevant to the safeguarding duty.
- All staff have undergone PREVENT awareness training to help stop young and vulnerable people from being exploited and drawn into terrorism.
- The college works closely with employers providing work placements to raise awareness of Safeguarding, ensuring the safety of students at all times.

Areas of Development:

- The college has developed, working in conjunction with UHI colleagues, a Corporate Parenting action plan. The draft action plan will be submitted to the college board in February 2018 for approval and thereafter will be communicated to all staff, training provided and the plan implemented.

Delivery of Learning and services to support learning

2.2 Curriculum

Positive Practice:

- The college is effective in developing new opportunities and extending existing career pathways - this can be seen in the extension of levels of study available to students at all levels within the college over the last five years.
- A full-time course for students with learning disabilities was introduced to provide a full college experience for students for whom there had previously only been part-time provision.
- In vocational areas such as Childcare, Hospitality and Health and Social Care, the understanding by staff of the importance of local economic and employability priorities has led to important curriculum developments.
- Many tutors continue to work in the occupational area they teach, enhancing college industry links and employability skills to students.
- There are many examples of tutors capturing feedback from learners and using this to develop and improve the curriculum. For example, the Digital Media and Computing team brought NC and HN groups together to discuss their experiences, their aspirations and career goals and their thoughts on current and future course provision. As a result an HNC in Digital Media was introduced.
- Student representatives regularly attend Curriculum team meetings and their feedback is genuinely valued by teams.
- All curriculum areas consider learning, life and work in the design of their courses. For example HNC Applied Science has been developed to give all successful students direct access to second year of the UHI BSc (Hons) Applied Science.
- The link between curriculum and the workplace is very strong, with students engaged in work placements, live projects and enterprise skills. For example a group of NC horticulture students worked together to organise a work party to clear the ground of their local 'Man Shed'. This combined their newly acquired ground management skills with customer service skills and event organisation whilst giving them a sense of the impact of their efforts on their own community.
- Speakers from local businesses are regularly invited by individual tutors. The college's videoconferencing facilities are used wherever possible to link speakers with students from other locations, thereby giving them an experience to which they would otherwise not have access.
- Every full time student studies a minimum of one credit linked to employability skills. This may include enterprise events, work based placements, volunteering opportunities, business planning or the

development of CV and interview skills. This helps students focus on progression and improves their prospects for employment.

- In response to labour market information the college is designing new curriculum in Health and Social Care as well as training new staff to ensure the needs of local employers is met.
- The college has significant experience in effectively managing engagement with employers to be able to provide work-placement opportunities to students in a dispersed remote and rural environment.
- There is on-going continuous review of the curriculum offered, to ensure the college continues to meet the needs of local employers and provides progression into employment for students successfully completing courses.

Areas of Development:

- More work needs to be done in training student representatives for their role to ensure all student representatives fully engage and participate in course team meetings and feedback to students in their course.

Delivery of Learning and services to support learning

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

Positive Practice:

- In the 2016/17 end of year Student Satisfaction and Engagement survey 93% of students were satisfied with their college experience.
- 91% of full time FE students and 92% of full time HNC/D students agree their time at college has helped them develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.
- 95% of full time FE students indicated they receive useful feedback from teaching staff which helps inform their future learning.
- The Depute Principal and Quality Officer are actively engaged in the UHI network of quality assurance and enhancement practitioners, the Quality Forum, where important issues on the learner experience are shared, agreements are reached on collaborative practices and practitioners learn from each other, resulting in a collective drive for improved services to learners across the partnership. For example, the Quality Forum ensure student surveys are planned and co-ordinated appropriately so that survey data can be meaningfully and consistently analysed. This also helps avoid over surveying of students.
- Almost all teaching staff incorporate a variety of teaching and learning approaches within their teaching to make the teaching more interesting and enjoyable.
- All teaching staff incorporate a range of appropriate resources in their teaching sessions that are relevant to the course and skill levels of the students.

- Almost all teaching staff use questioning strategies extensively in their teaching to ensure students understand the topic, to re-cap on previous lessons, to obtain students views on the relevance of the topic being discussed and to assist the teaching staff to reflect on their teaching style and make any necessary adjustments for future sessions.
- All teaching staff are engaged in the review and evaluation of learning and teaching within the college. This has been strengthened through review of the lesson planning process, implementation of a revised teaching and learning plan format, and also through provision of training in the evaluation of teaching and learning which was delivered in partnership with CDN.
- Almost all teaching staff provide constructive, relevant and timely feedback and feed-forward to students on assessments, to help students improve and achieve.
- Staff use a wide range of technologies to support learning. This is particularly valuable where students are supported remotely as it helps to provide a rich and diverse learning environment, which overcomes some of the disadvantages of remote learning and ensures consistency of experience for all students. Adoption of learning technologies is strongest in the typical curriculum areas of computing and business. In other areas staff are continually working to improve this dimension.

Areas of Development:

- In some cases there has been inconsistent practice in the communication of assessment information and feedback to students, including the format of the feedback itself and prior notification of dates when feedback will be provided.
- Mentoring of tutors, particularly at the start of their career with the college, is sporadic and informal, and some new tutors are not receiving the support they need.

Delivery of Learning and services to support learning

2.4 Services to support learning

Positive Practice:

- All teaching and centre staff record and monitor student attendance, which has resulted in early intervention to assist with any student issues that arise. This process has resulted in a positive impact on the early retention KPI.
- There is a strong culture and ethos in the college of commitment to each learner. Staff genuinely care about each student studying at the college.
- Support for learners to achieve positive destinations is one of the college's biggest strengths. Small class sizes and small centres facilitate staff working together to help students achieve a positive destination.
- All learners have many opportunities, both informally and formally, to reflect and discuss their needs and progress with support and teaching staff.
- A wide range of pre entry guidance and information is available to all prospective students. All centre staff provide relevant and timely information to students.

- There is effective pre-entry and early screening of support needs, ensuring arrangements for students are in place at a very early stage.
- Working in partnership with North Highlands College , there is a well established, easy to use on-line funding application process for students. Centre staff support students in the use of this system.
- Feedback from student surveys is disseminated to curriculum teams, which leads to the implementation of improvements to enhance the student experience and increase positive outcomes.
- Student support staff attend training on a regular basis to ensure they remain current in their knowledge of technologies and strategies to support students with additional support needs.
- The student services team and centre staff work collaboratively in partnership with local agencies such as the local authority, community learning teams, third sector organisations, Skills Development Scotland to ensure students receive the appropriate support required and can be referred to relevant local agencies.
- The college works collaboratively with all local secondary schools to provide effective transitions for senior phase students who many require additional support when progressing from school to college.

Areas of Development:

- The college is finding it difficult to adequately resource the student support staff function at the start of the academic year when demand is at its highest.
- There is insufficient formal engagement activities between student representatives and the student services team.

Delivery of Learning and services to support learning

2.5 Transitions

Positive Practice:

- There is significant engagement with the ten local secondary schools in the area, offering a wide range of Skills for Work and Higher courses. In 2016/17 the college taught 706 school pupils enrolled on 39 different Schools Link courses. This equates to 23% of the overall college credit total. A Foundation Apprentice programme in Engineering was introduced in two secondary schools this year, providing a very good transition for school pupils to local employment.
- Centre managers work very closely and effectively with the local school in their area to ensure all relevant information, support and guidance is available to pupils on schools link provision as well as progression routes to college.

- The college has a Schools Link Officer, who engages with the guidance teachers and college liaison officers in each secondary school as well as with head teachers and the local authority education officer, ensuring there is engagement and awareness at all levels about transition to college curriculum. The aim is to ensure the most appropriate schools link provision is delivered to school pupils, that there are clear progression routes to college provision and that there are straightforward processes in place to enable school pupils to transition to college courses.
- In many NC courses, as a preparation for students progressing to HNC level, referencing techniques is introduced to ensure students have experience in this skill and are better equipped for the transition from FE to HE study.
- Most teaching staff engage students with the concept of progression from the outset of delivery. Staff discuss with learners how the course content builds on and progresses to the next level, engendering a positive and natural transition.
- The college utilises the UHI approach to transition and progression by implementing the 'Intention to Progress' process for students. This has had a positive impact on earlier decision making and has resulted in an increase in students progressing to the next level of study.
- In areas of the college where the curriculum is more vocationally linked, staff work very closely with external partners to ensure effective transitions arrangements are in place eg Childcare, Hospitality, Health and Social care.
- Most courses incorporate sessions where employers are invited to speak to students, raising student awareness of working in that occupational area.
- Most college courses have clear progression routes to the next level of study.

Areas of Development:

- Within some courses the guidance provided to students on progression routes is insufficient.

Delivery of Learning and services to support learning

2.6 Partnerships

Positive Practice:

- The college works very well with guidance staff and head-teachers in all ten secondary schools in Argyll, as well as the education department within the Local Authority to ensure Schools Link provision is relevant and appropriate to the pupils, the school and the local employment market.
- The college has appointed two Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Officers to further enhance the engagement with local employers and schools.
- The college works in partnership with the local Community Planning Partnership (CPP) to ensure a shared vision and mission for Argyll.

- As a partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and the Highlands and Islands Region the college works collaboratively towards agreed aims and objectives and to achieve agreed targets set out within the regional outcome agreement.
- Local centre staff engage with employers to ensure the curriculum offered by the college meets current and future local employment opportunities. This information helps inform the curriculum planning process.
- The college has close working relationships with a range of local, regional and national agencies such as Skills Development Scotland, JobCentre Plus, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Local Authorities, Business Gateway.
- The college works collaboratively with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to deliver 56 Modern Apprentices in a wide range of occupational areas that align well to the local economy including, Catering and Hospitality, Health and Social Care, Horticulture, Engineering, Hairdressing, Business and Administration. These offer a good opportunity for school pupils to enter employment locally and continue to receive training relevant to that occupational area. The DYW Officers are key to effectively linking pupils, employers and the college.
- The introduction of the Curriculum Lead role will ensure more staff engage with our partners. Stronger links should promote curricular developments and improvements, including the sharing of good practice with our UHI partners.

Areas of Development:

- The college programme of commercial statutory training does not link fully to local employment and further work is required to develop the commercial portfolio of the college.

Outcomes and Impact

3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion

Positive Practice:

- The college has a robust Access Inclusion Strategy and Equality and Diversity Policy that all staff are aware of and know where to access.
- All college policies have had an Equality Impact Assessment, which did not raise any issues or actions required.
- The college has a mandatory staff development programme covering Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), to assist staff to assess their practices and processes within equality and diversity legislation and college policy.
- The college's ability to break down barriers to learning is a major strength. There are many examples of students who have flourished due to the attention to individual needs and culture of going 'the extra mile' for all students.
- All students are encouraged to declare a disability, support need, caring responsibility at an early stage to ensure the appropriate support and guidance can be delivered.

- The college engages with partner agencies, to run various highlighted campaigns, such as the “Healthy Happy You” and “Be Active” weeks where students are encouraged to participate in exercise, attend events focusing on mental health, healthy eating.
- Teaching staff develop their teaching materials to promote diversity within the classroom.
- All staff recognise and appreciate the diversity that is within the college population.
- There is no differentiation between FE and HE students within the college - all students are treated equally, which creates a learning community.

Areas of Development

- A Gender Action Plan for 2017-20 has been devised and is currently with staff and student groups as part of the consultation process. Once finalised the plan will be submitted to the College Board in February 2018 for approval and thereafter will be implemented.

Outcomes and Impact

3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners

Positive Practice:

- The systematic on-going review and evaluation of teaching and learning within the college and the awareness of staff of the KPIs, as well as the continuous improvement measures implemented to improve student retention and attainment, are having a significant and improving impact on the college KPIs.

The following relates to academic year 2016-17, unless otherwise stated:

Full time courses:

- Early withdrawal rates in full time courses have improved over the last three years and are now at the national benchmark.
- Further withdrawal rates have improved significantly in the last 3 years, by 6%.
- Completed successfully rates have improved by 9% over the period and are now significantly above the national benchmark.
- 31% of successful full time students entered work, which is significantly higher than the national benchmark (19.6%). This indicates how well prepared students are to enter the workplace and how college courses are aligned to local employment opportunities. This relates to academic year 2015-16. Data collection for submission to SFC occurs six months after the end of the academic year, therefore this figure will always refer to students who completed in the previous academic year.
- 27% of full time students declared a disability. 68% of these students successfully completed their course, which compared favourably with the 70% success rate of students who had no declared disability.
- The % of enrolments by gender was relatively equitable, with females accounting for 53% of full time enrolments. Females had a higher success rate with 72% completing successfully, compared to 66% of males.

Part time courses:

- Of the 1831 students who enrolled on a part time course with the college, 1.5% were early withdrawals and a further 6% withdrew before the end of their course.
- 82% of part time students completed their courses successfully.

Schools Link courses:

- Withdrawal rates in schools link courses is very low, with early withdrawal at less than 1% and further withdraw at 4%
- 88% of students enrolled on schools link courses completed their course successfully.
- Of the 38 students enrolled who were care leavers or care experienced, 88% completed their course successfully, compared to only 40% in the same category the previous year, highlighting the improved processes implemented to support this group of students.
- More than 50% of FE students progress to HE study.
- Core skills have been contextualised in most courses and made more relevant to the occupational area and employment sector, which motivates and engages learners to succeed.
- Most teaching staff encourage and provide time for students to identify, reflect and evidence their skills and personal development which has led to improvements in their outcomes.
- Almost all full time courses, and particularly those that are vocationally oriented, contain a work placement element ensuring students get to experience working in the occupational area they are studying. This engagement in the employment sector they hope to enter is extremely important to the student and to local employers who are keen to address future workforce requirements.
- Within many courses, employers come to college to speak to students, to outline the industry and explain the skills employers are looking for and needing within that industry. Many courses also take students on study visits to local employers.
- There is a culture within the college of inclusion, with all students being treated equally and having equity of opportunity and involvement.
- Centre staff provide a range of pastoral support and guidance as well as referral to internal and external support structures and agencies.
- Small class sizes help support and teaching staff to know each student very well, provide appropriate advice and guidance and encourage students to do the best work they are capable of.
- Student services and student support staff work very well alongside centre and teaching staff to provide a range of services to best meet the needs of students.

Areas of Development:

- For full time courses, partial success rates rose by 4% in the last year.

Capacity to Improve

Within the college there is a very high level of commitment, a student centred approach to all college activity, and a culture of continuous improvement. There remain areas for improvement but there is commitment at all levels to make these changes.

The new college structure needs time to embed over the next two to three academic years. With management closer to the delivery of the curriculum in the revised structure, the new Curriculum Leads will require training, support and mentoring, but it will allow the Heads of Curriculum to take a more strategic role. A staff appraisal system will be implemented, tutor induction improved and a peer mentoring and support system for teaching staff instigated.

Review and evaluation is embedded within learning and teaching. Within other areas of the college, we recognise there is only informal review and evaluation. Formal systems will be developed and incorporated into the college quality cycle.

Engagement with HISA and feedback from students is vital to the continual improvement of the college and to ensuring we provide high quality curriculum, teaching and services. We will work to improve our connection with students, putting in place effective feedback mechanisms to raise awareness of the impact of the student voice.

We will work to communicate in a more effective and timeous manner both internally and externally.

We will work more effectively with partners to align the college curriculum to local, regional and national economic drivers and employment opportunities to enhance our students' prospects for positive outcomes.