



A meeting of
Argyll College Learning, Teaching & Engagement Committee
to be held at 10.30am on Friday 24 May 2019
Lorne Street Centre, Lochgilphead PA31 8LU
Tel 01631 559560

A G E N D A

Agenda item no		Status	Papers
19.2.1	Welcome & apologies for absence.		
19.2.2	Declarations of interest & any items to be deemed confidential	To note	
19.2.3	Minute of previous meeting held on 1 March 2019	To approve	Attached
19.2.4	Matters arising - Schools Link KPIs	To note	Attached
19.2.5	Early and further withdrawal for full time FE courses to date 2018/19	To note	Attached
19.2.6	Update on progress towards targets – 2018/19 a) FE Credits b) HE FTEs	To note	Attached
19.2.7	Update on learning, teaching and enhancement items in last quarter: a) Research projects undertaken by staff b) Brightspace VLE migration – update c) Skills for Work project pilot d) MA Boatbuilding and Repair e) Teaching and learning enhancement themes	To note	Attached
19.2.8	Academic Calendar 2019/20	To approve	Attached
19.2.9	EREP action plan – update	To discuss	Attached
19.2.10	SFC student satisfaction and engagement survey (SSES) 2018/19	To discuss	Attached
19.2.11	Policies for approval: - UHI Essential Skills Policy	To Approve	Attached
19.2.12	AOCB		
19.2.13	Date of next meeting: Friday 30th August 2019		

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



**Minute of Learning, Teaching & Engagement Committee
held at 11 am on Friday, 1st March 2019 at Lorne Street, Lochgilphead**

Present: Stella Leitch (SL) Chair; Andrew Campbell (AC); Martin Jones (MJ); Amber Crowley (AmC)
In Attendance: Elaine Munro (EM); Ailsa Close (AEC)

	Item	Action
19.1.1	Welcome & apologies for absence. Apologies from LH.	
19.1.2	Declarations of interest & any items deemed to be confidential. There were no declarations of interest.	
19.1.3	Minute of previous meeting held on 22nd Nov 2018. The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair. Action: These will be taken to the Board for noting	EM
19.1.4	Matters arising. The committee noted the change in HGIOC grades. Leadership and quality changed from Satisfactory to Good by Education Scotland and SFC during the endorsement process. Committee delighted and feel this is the correct grading.	
19.1.5	FE KPIs 2017/18 comparison with rest of college sector FT KPIS we are very good compared to the rest of the sector. We were the second highest performing College in Scotland, lower only than Shetland College. At PT level, we're below the UHI average, and 4% below the national average. Further analysis of the data is required to identify the key areas of concern. One known area is high withdrawal within schools link courses. Schools will be issued with data relating to their courses and further discussions will take place to identify how we can improve this position. Engagement with A&BC education lead will also raise this as an issue. The committee wish further data on schools link KPIs to ebb rough to the next meeting. Noted we have appointed a new Schools Link person within the College and they are currently meeting with all the schools.	EM
19.1.6	Early and further withdrawal for full time FE courses to date 2018/19 Not as good a picture as last year. Early withdrawal – 10%. Further withdrawal - 9%. Noted there will be further withdrawal between now and the end of the year. Issues with VC and IT network outages due to contractors working at Dunbeg digging up the connections. Only SAMS and Argyll College are affected. Agreed an all student email will be issued to explain what has occurred.	MJ
19.1.7	Update on progress towards targets – 2018/19 a) FE Credits - currently achieving 91% of our FE target for this year, quietly confident that the target will be achieved in the year	

19.1.13	Date of next Learning, Teaching & Engagement Committee. The next meeting will be held on 24 th May 2019	
	Signed by Date Chair of Learning, Teaching & Engagement Committee	

To: Learning, Teaching and Engagement committee

Date: 24 May 2019

Status: To Note

Subject: Matters arising – School link KPIs

In the table below the overall student enrolments by school are shown for the last two years along with early and further withdrawal data, indicating both student headcount and percentage withdrawal figures. Overall data for all college schools link activity is also shown.

Points to note:

- Although student enrolments appear to have reduced this academic year, there is schools link activity in June for pupils who have moved into the new timetable year. This activity is not shown for 2018/19 but it will increase the overall student enrolments by school and as a result of increased numbers the withdrawal percentages will decrease.
- While early withdrawal in most schools is low overall and is most likely due to students changing their mind about the course or finding the course content is not what they expected, the lose of these students will, in many instances, make the running of the course financially unviable.
- The total further withdrawal for schools activity in 2018/19 is high, at over 10%.
- There are a number of schools where overall withdrawal in 2018/19 is a concern - Oban High School at 25.8% and Hermitage Academy at 16.5%
- The majority of schools link provision is delivered in schools. Depending on the school and the tutor, issues with schools pupils are not always brought to the attention of our local centre staff, who, for students studying in their centres provide pastoral support and guidance and early intervention for students identified as potentially withdrawing from their course. This disconnect from normal college support systems will be further discussed to inform improvements in the future.
- To date, schools have not been provided with withdrawal information about courses delivered to their pupils. Moving forward each school will be provided with annual data relating to overall student retention and attainment for their school as well as detail relating to each course. This will help inform discussions on areas for improvement and agreement on how we can work more collaboratively to initiate improvements and then monitor and evaluate the impact of the agreed actions.

School	Academic year	Students enrolled	Early Withdrawal		Further Withdrawal		Overall Withdrawal
			No	%	No	%	
Oban	2018-19	178	9	5%	37	20.8%	25.8%
	2017-18	226	2	0.9%	17	7.5%	8.4%
Dunoon	2018-19	148	6	4%	7	5%	8.8%
	2017-18	185	3	2%	3	2%	3%
Hermitage	2018-19	97	7	7.2%	9	9.3%	16.5%
	2017-18	172	1	0.5%	14	8%	8.7%
Islay	2018-19	31	2	6.4%	1	3.23%	9.68%
	2017-18	88	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Campbeltown	2018-19	52	0	0%	3	5.8%	5.8%
	2017-18	83	5	6%	4	5%	10.8%
Lochgilphead & Tarbert	2018-19	45	0	0%	3	6.7%	6.7%
	2017-18	88	2	2%	3	3%	5.7%
Arran	2018-19	9	1	11%	5	55.6%	66.7%
	2017-18	22	1	4.5%	0	0%	4.5%
Tobermory	2018-19	1	0	0%	0	0%	0%
	2017-18	49	2	4%	4	8%	12%
Rothesay	2018-19	42	1	2%	0	0%	2%
	2017-18	33	2	6%	1	3%	9%
Total Schools Link Activity	2018-19	603	26	4.3%	65	10.8%	15%
	2017-18	946	18	1.9%	46	4.9%	6.8%

To: Learning, Teaching and Engagement committee

Date: 24 May 2019

Status: To Note

Subject: Early withdrawal and Further Withdrawal KPIs – full time FE 2018/19

The early withdrawal statistic is any student who has withdrawn before 1st November. Further withdrawal is any student who has withdrawn from their course after 1st November and before the end date of the course.

Current withdrawal data for this academic year is the following:

- 179 Full Time FE students enrolled this academic year
- 13 students have withdrawn before 1st November, giving an early withdrawal percentage of 7.3% and an early retention figure of 92.7%
- 28 further students have withdrawn between 1st November and 17th May, given a current further withdrawal percentage of 15.6% student retention figure of 77.1%

Early and further withdrawal have increased compared to last academic year. The withdrawal data for the last 4 years is shown in the table below:

Academic year	Early w/d %	Further w/d %	Overall w/d %
2018-19	7.3%	15.6%	22.9%
2017-18	3.0%	18.0%	18.0%
2016-17	9.2%	21.2%	21.2%
2015-16	9.0%	25.1%	25.1%

There is on-going engagement with teaching teams and centre staff to assess the reasons for this increase in student withdrawal. This will help inform actions that can be put in place to reduce student withdrawals in future.

The table below provides detail of the number of students enrolled on each full time FE course, the early withdrawal figures and current further withdrawal for this academic year:

Course	Students enrolled in 2018/19	W/d before 1 st Nov 2018	Further w/d
SVQ Professional Cookery at SCQF levels 4,5,6	12	1	1
NC Computing with Digital Media	5	0	1
Access to HN Business, Admin & Computing	18	3	3
NC Social Science	11	3	5
NPA Construction	10	1	2
NC Engineering Systems	5	0	0
Art and Design	5	0	0
NC Sport and Fitness	8	1	2
SVQ Hairdressing at SCQF levels 4,5, 6	18	1	3
NC Early Education and Childcare	12	0	4
SVQ Social Services (Children & Young People) at SCQF level 6 & 7	53	3	7
Education for Life – 3 different programmes	22	0	0
TOTALS	179	13	28
Percentage withdrawal		7.3%	15.6%

To: Learning, Teaching and Engagement committee

Date: 24 May 2019

Status: To Note

Subject: FE and HE progress towards target 2018/19

FE 2018/19

The FE credit target for 2017/18 is 6682, consisting of 6582 core credits and 100 ESIF funded credits. This is the first year the college has been allocated ESIF funded credits from the region. For the last three years our credit count has been 6617, so a slight increase this year in response to over achieving our credit target last year by over 100 credits.

We have exceeded the credit count by 61, with a count at 24 May of 6743. The anticipated final credit count for the year is expected to be closer to 7000 once the school link activity in June is recorded. This places the college favourably for a potential increase in credit target for next academic year.

HE 2018/19

HE FTEs are below predicted numbers for the first time in several years. Predicted FTEs made in November 2017 were 220 FTE, the revised prediction made at ESR in December 2018 was 199 FTE and the current count is 200 FTE

The reduction is in full time student numbers: 25 fewer full time students enrolled on HE courses this year with the majority of this reduction on courses taught by the college. The following courses did not recruit sufficient students to run this year: HNC Applied Science, HNC and HND Agriculture and HNC Sport & Fitness. There has been an increase in part time students enrolling with the college this year – in total 26 more part time students. Of these, 21 have enrolled on structured part time programmes which means they plan to study a full time course over more years. Students enrolling on structured part time courses are more likely to be in employment and studying to increase and enhance their qualifications. Students who enrol on unstructured part time courses, where they study a single degree module or HN unit at a time and often only 1 per year, tend to be retired or studying for enjoyment and leisure purposes. The number of unstructured part time students has remained fairly constant at between 30 and 40 per year for the last few years.

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

	FTEs	Headcount		
		Total	Full time	part time
2018/19	200.1	280	170	110
2017/18	221.6	290	195	84
2016/17	180.5	226	165	61
2015/16	165.5	212	146	66

To: Learning, Teaching and Engagement committee

Date: 24 May 2019

Status: To Note

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

a) Research projects undertaken by staff

A number of teaching staff have recently completed or are currently undertaking research as part of their Masters study or funded via successful applications to the UHI Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA). These include

- Liz MacFarlane – is undertaking research into the transition experiences of HN students to degree study. This research will follow 10-15 students from Argyll College progressing from HN courses to degree study within UHI and to other non UHI universities and will follow them during their first 6 months of university life.
- Kyla Steele – the research, which is part of her MEd, is to explore the benefits of a trauma-informed approach to understanding and supporting students in Further Education who may have experienced childhood adversity (ACE). The research will gather student and staff opinion on becoming a trauma-informed college and explore the impact this could have on student experience and successful attainment rates.
- Susie Wilson – via funding from the UHI LTA, the research investigated how screen capture technology can be used to improve staff and student's perceptions of student-tutor interaction in a blended learning context, particularly in terms of the assessment feedback that learners receive from their tutors. Susie used screen capture software to highlight areas of student work and then provided feedback via a video recording.

b) Brightspace VLE migration - update

UHI are changing the virtual learning environment (VLE) used across the university from Blackboard to Brightspace, with effect from 1st August 2019. A training programme has been implemented in every academic partner, and is led in Argyll by our Brightspace Champions Sam Tweedlie and Liz McFarlane. They have provided early adopter training in Lochgilphead, workshops in every centre and are now offering individual training or support on request. This training is underpinned by a suite of training materials deployed on Brightspace itself.

Teaching staff are gaining access to new Brightspace unit areas, in which they need to create learning and teaching materials ready for the new academic year. Ideally they are reviewing existing Blackboard materials and the new Brightspace equivalent

will be updated and improved, but some materials are being migrated directly across due to time constraints.

Take-up of the online training materials and training sessions has been low in all UHI academic partners, although there is a lot of anecdotal evidence that staff are accessing training 'just in time', and most staff plan to carry out the migration of materials in June, after teaching year has finished. Semester 1 units will be prioritised.

Students who have assessment resits to complete by 6th August will have to submit their resit in Brightspace, as Blackboard will disappear completely on 31st July. These students will need to download learning materials from Blackboard in order to use them beyond 31st July, and this as well as submission of assessments in Brightspace requires support, at a time when teaching staff will be on holiday. A member of Oban centre staff, who is also a tutor and therefore has an understanding of requirements, has been nominated to provide signposting to such students over the summer.

Access to Brightspace teaching areas is much more restricted than in Blackboard, and each AP has nominated 2-6 members of staff who will carry out this role. For Argyll College, our Quality Officer and Timetabling Administrator have been nominated to do this and will receive training from the UHI Learning and Teaching Academy.

c) Skills for Work project pilot

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) have asked the UHI work based learning hub (WBL HUB) to tender to pilot new project based schools link programmes to school pupils in S4 or 5 in the curriculum areas of construction, hospitality or automotive. The aim of the pilots are for pupils to work on a community based project, from the initial concept and scoping through project planning, setting milestones and delivering a final project – whether that is a construction building, a conservation project or a hospitality event. Three UHI partner colleges have expressed interest in the pilot – West Highland College, Inverness College and ourselves. The invitation to tender has been submitted with successful partners expected to hear back on 24th May.

If successful we will partner with Dunoon Grammar school. A potential project has been identified with Toward Sailing club who have been raising funds to build a covered BBQ area in memory of a young sea cadet, who was also a Dunoon Grammar pupil. Early discussions have also taken place with Historic Environment Scotland to identify whether a traditional skills element could be incorporated into the project.

These projects, and others similar to it taking place across Scotland, are likely to shape future schools link provision so it would be beneficial to be involved in the pilot to provide feedback and possibly help inform the future direction of project based activity to school pupils that results in a meaningful end product and gives the pupils a wider learning experience.

d) MA Boatbuilding and Repair

The MA in Boatbuilding and Repair has very recently been approved by SQA and the sector skills council, SEMTA. We are the only college in Scotland likely to start to deliver this, this year. Delivery will be locally to Argyll based businesses. One of the Heads of Curriculum has been heavily involved in the development and approval of the qualification. We have successfully been allocated 6 MA places from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) for this contract year. The qualification is work based with elements delivered in college, initially at CERC with the expectation to transfer the delivery to the proposed new Marine Industry Training Centre (MITC) at Dunstaffnage, once built. Participants are expected to take 36-48 months to complete the MA, which comprises the following:

- SVQ Boatbuilding and Repair at SCQF level 6
- NC Engineering at SCQF level 5 or 6
- All 5 core skills certificated
- Enhancements that include industry standard training, such as Working at Height, Manual Handling, First Aid

e) Teaching and Learning Enhancement Themes

The continued aim of the college is to improve and enhance the learning and teaching practices of staff to provide a better learning experience for students, to improve student retention and attainment, and ultimately for students who leave Argyll College to have gained a wider knowledge and have acquired a range of graduate attributes in addition to the qualification they have attained. With this in mind, the following are potential areas of focus for the coming academic years:

- Embedding a culture of reflective practice within teaching teams.
- Sharing and disseminating good practice becomes commonplace and the 'norm'.
- Using technology to enhance learning and teaching, enriching the student experience and fulfilling students' expectations to be exposed to current and even cutting edge technologies and technological advancements.
- More theme based or project based learning to enable students to learn in a holistic way, rather than by individual unit subjects, making their learning more meaningful and contextualised to the industries they will work within, making students better prepared for the world of work.
- Integrating assessments to reduce the assessment burden on students.
- Change the approach from a set number of teaching hours per unit to a culture of viewing the course in its entirety, allocating more teaching time to parts of a course that are harder and need more teaching input.

To: Learning, Teaching and Engagement committee

Date: 24 May 2019

Status: To Approve

Subject: Academic Calendar 2019-20

Where local school holidays align with the UHI academic calendar, the college adopts the UHI calendar for FE as well as HE delivery. This was the case for the 2018/19 academic year.

For 2019/20 the holiday dates within the UHI HE academic calendar do not align with local Argyll school Easter holiday dates. A number of options were discussed at a recent SMT meeting and these are shown below. Option 3 was selected as the option that is the least disruptive to staff and students and best fits the business needs of Argyll College.

The LTE committee is asked to endorse this decision to allow the 2019/20 academic calendar to be issued to staff and students.

1) Align FE calendar with HE calendar

Advantages:

- Staff teaching both FE and HE have 2 weeks available as annual leave at Easter

Disadvantages:

- Students with school age children have different Easter holidays from them and therefore possible childcare issues, which will result in students being off college
- Many school buses don't run on school holidays meaning students may not be able to get to /from college at normal class times
- Teaching staff with school age children have different Easter holidays from them and possible childcare issues
- Tutors also teaching schools link courses would only have 1 week of leave available to them at Easter

2) Align FE calendar to local Easter school holiday dates

Degree and HN academic calendar remains as per UHI calendar.

Advantages:

- FE students with school aged children are on holiday at the same time
- FE teaching staff with school aged children are on holiday at the same time
- Tutors teaching schools link courses would have 2 weeks holiday available

Disadvantages:

- Tutors teaching FE and HE courses would only have 1 week of leave available to take (this is the majority of our teaching staff)

- Students studying HN or degrees who have school age children would only have 1 week of leave at the same time as their children.

3) Align FE and HN calendar dates to local school Easter holiday dates

Degree academic calendar remains as per UHI calendar.

Advantages:

- All FE and HN teaching staff would have a two week holiday period which is the same as any children they have
- All FE and HN students would have the same holiday dates, which would be the same as any children they have

Disadvantages:

- Any teaching staff teaching/supporting degree modules would only have 1 full week of leave available to take.
- Any networked delivery of HN – either from us to other partners or from other partners to us – would need to be carefully managed and communicated across the partnership

Enhancement Plan 2018 – 2021

Under each area for development is an update on progress towards achievement of the action.

QI	Area for development	Action	Outcome and Intended impact	Led by:	Completed by:
3.1	Improve the wellbeing and mental health support for students.	Introduce drop in session for students to support those who may not already have a personal learning support plan in place.	Students have an increased opportunity to meet with support staff to discuss any issues they may, resulting in an overall improvement in the support available to students.	Head of Student Services	June 2019
<p>Update – May 2019 Oban and Helensburgh centres now both have support assistants in place where students can drop in / request a meeting without necessarily having a support plan or being in receipt of learning support. These support assistants can then help to guide students to relevant resources / help them to access external agencies, or just give them a bit of a Time Out space. This has helped to relieve the pressure on centre staff who have previously covered this role to an extent but have not been so aware of the different resources that could be available and of use to students.</p>					
3.1	Improve support for students declaring disabilities and care experience	Review strategies, policy and procedures to further promote support available for disabled and care experienced students, including staff undertaking on-line corporate parenting training	Improved support provided to disabled/care experienced students, improving their college experience and positively impacting on the KPIs for these students.	Head of Student Services	August 2019
<p>Update May 2019 During this year the Head of Student Services has been part of the UHI Single Environment policy group for Learning Support, this UHI wide policy and guidance is now more or less complete and will be fully implemented in 2019/20. Care Experience students are now supported financially with the Care Experienced enhanced bursary, although this has proven to be challenging and often not actually in the student's best interest. Therefore rather than improving the KPIs initially it looks as though it has in reality impacted negatively. However two of our current SFT courses have significant numbers of care experienced students who have been intensively supported right from the initial steps, both in accessing their funding and for academic support. Helping these students to manage their enhanced bursary has been slightly more successful with these two cohorts – so far. The issue here is that suddenly these students are getting £202 per week, often without needing to pay rent as Social Work can be covering this, so these students tend to be vulnerable to exploitation by others with comparatively large sums of money often not wisely spent.</p>					

QI	Area for development	Action	Outcome and Intended impact	Led by:	Completed by:
3.2	Further Withdrawal	Review and evaluate the reasons for further withdrawal in FE full time students.	Reducing further withdrawal improves students prospects for completing their course successfully and progressing to further study or employment.	Depute Principal	August 2019
<p>Update – May 2019</p> <p>There has been on-going awareness raising of the four main teaching and learning KPIs within teaching teams in the last few years which has focussed staff thinking and improved the early intervention for students viewed as at risk of dropping out of their course and leaving college. There has been increased engagement between student services and teaching teams to provide support and guidance for students, with student services having very good links with local external agencies where students can be signposted for specialist help and support. The reasons for further withdrawal continue to be reviewed and evaluated – the reasons for students leaving college are many and varied and where possible the college endeavours to find solutions that are practical and pragmatic to enable students to stay in college and complete their studies. With high seasonal employment in Argyll the reason for students leaving around Easter can be to secure a job for the summer. Further discussions are needed within the college to determine if the timing of the delivery of some full time courses is meeting the needs of local industry, particularly in hospitality, or whether we need to adjust the delivery to complete courses before Easter to enable students to complete their qualification before securing a job.</p>					
2.2	Identifying work placements for Foundation Apprentice students	Enhanced engagement with DYW team and local employers to create a database of potential placement providers.	Placement providers identified earlier, resulting in all FA students having access to work placement leading to a more meaningful experience on the programme.	Head of Marketing and Communications	August 2020
<p>Update – May 2019</p> <p>This is on-going. There have been a number of changes in DYW Officers this academic year, which has reduced the continuity in contact and collaborative working between the college and DYW. A full time post of Schools Link and Apprenticeship Officer was appointed by the college in March 2019. It is anticipated this post, which covers all schools link activity as well as foundation and modern apprenticeships, will improve links with schools, employers, DYW and the college</p>					
2.3	Mentoring of tutors	Review and evaluate the tutor induction processes and implement a mentoring system	A more effective and consistent tutor induction process is in place. Tutors are allocated a mentor during induction who will provide on-going support and guidance enabling new staff to feel supported in their role.	Heads of Curriculum	December 2019
<p>Update – May 2019</p>					

QI	Area for development	Action	Outcome and Intended impact	Led by:	Completed by:
<p>The staff development committee has been reviewing the tutor induction processes with a view to incorporating a mentoring system. More work is required on this before a revised induction and peer mentoring programme can be implemented.</p>					
2.3	Induction for students enrolled on national courses	An on-line longitudinal induction for students studying national courses will be developed.	A co-ordinated induction will be implemented resulting in better informed and prepared students, increasing their opportunities for success	Head of Student Services	Aug 2019
<p>Update – May 2019 The longitudinal induction continues to be challenging. All full time students have a comprehensive induction which is broken into chunks for delivery at more relevant points in the student journey, however it has been difficult to keep students engaged. This is something that still requires a lot more work. The initial induction delivery has been re-developed to try to make it more engaging and relevant to students for 2019/20</p>					
2.3	Ensuring all teaching staff use a wide range of technologies in their teaching.	Support and training will be provided to all teaching staff to improve the use of digital technologies in their teaching.	All staff use digital technologies in their teaching, where appropriate, resulting in an enhanced and improved learning and teaching experience for students.	Heads of Curriculum	June 2020
<p>Update – May 2019 This is on-going.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UHI Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) is presenting a lunchtime webinar on 22/8/2019 on ‘Benchmarks for the use of technology in learning and teaching’, to which all teaching staff will be encouraged to attend. An Argyll College member of teaching staff has undertaken research into how the use of screen capture and video technology can be used to improve feedback to students, particularly students being taught in a blended learning context. The results of this research will be disseminated within Argyll College and across the UHI region. The regional Quality Forum has identified using a wide range of technologies in teaching as something that relates to most UHI academic partners and will work collaboratively to develop a regional strategy. 					
2.4	Review support staff resource	A review of support staff resource, experience and knowledge will be conducted.	Support staff knowledge is improved and sufficient resource in place to cover peak demands periods during the academic year.	Head of Student Services	June 2020
<p>Update – May 2019</p>					

QI	Area for development	Action	Outcome and Intended impact	Led by:	Completed by:
This is ongoing.					
2.4	Engagement with HISA and student representatives	Increase engagement with HISA and enhanced training for student representatives	Students and staff are more aware of the role of HISA and the engagement with HISA is more systematic. The impact of the student voice on college activities is increased.	Head of Student Services	June 2020
Update – May 2019 Ongoing. Improvements this year are mainly in the development of additional staff resource to liaise between HISA and the college staff, also the appointment of a HISA Co-ordinator who is now working with staff to help track and support class reps. The impact of this should show more clearly in 2019/20. The need to appoint a new HISA Depute in November set back class rep training and general HISA awareness when our original HISA Depute left the post in September.					
2.4	Counselling services available to students	Raise awareness and increase the promotion of the UHI Counselling services and in particular access to the on-line system.	Students have an increased access to counselling services, improving their overall college experience.	Head of Student Services	September 2019
Update – May 2019 This action is complete with more staff being aware of this service and guiding students to it. This was also covered in student inductions. However to date there has been very little take up of this service. UHI now have a Mental Health Co-ordinator in place who will be working across UHI to develop a Mental Health Strategy and help to promote counselling services in some form or other.					
1.4	Feedback to students on improvements that have been made as a result of them raising concerns or making suggestions for improvements	Implement a system to ensure students are aware of improvements that have been made that directly link to issues or suggestions raised by them	Students are more aware of improvements implemented as a direct result of their feedback, increasing the impact the student voice has within the college	Head of Student Services	July 2020
Update – May 2019 This is ongoing. The Class Rep system is seen to be key for feeding back information to students, and next academic year this is likely to be more robust					

QI	Area for development	Action	Outcome and Intended impact	Led by:	Completed by:
1.4	Peer Review	Working with partners in the UHI region implement a system of peer review that is relevant and appropriate to the needs of Argyll College	Staff learn from each other and share practice between and across teaching teams, improving the overall teaching practice and impacting positively on the student experience.	Heads of Curriculum	September 2021
<p>Update – May 2019 This is on-going</p>					

To: Learning, Teaching and Engagement committee

Date: 24 May 2019

Status: To Discuss

Subject: SFC Student satisfaction and engagement survey (SSES) 2018/19

The Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) is an annual survey designed to provide a means to evaluate and enhance college provision in Scotland. There are two sections to it: the first part comprises 10 questions set by SFC; the second part has a further bank of questions that have been agreed for use within UHI. The responses to the SFC questions will be returned to SFC to allow for benchmarking across the whole college sector, and the responses to the complete survey will be benchmarked across UHI.

Coverage, delivery and timing of survey

The survey was made available to the groups of student shown in the table below. All students were encouraged to complete the survey online although the schools link students were also given the option to complete the survey on paper as they did not always have access to the internet. The survey opened on 18th March and ran for two weeks before the Easter break, and a further three weeks afterwards with the exception on the work based SVQs who only had a two week window of opportunity

Level of study	Mode of attendance	Response rate
FE	Full time & Short full time	79.4%
	Part time, block release & schools link	61.1%
	Work based SVQs	5.5%
HE	HN full time and structured part time	64.2%
	HE degree level*	31.2%

* Final year HE students were not included as they are surveyed in the National Student Survey

Overall response rates were very high with good representation from all centres, courses and modes of study apart from the work based SVQs. This particular cohort has very little direct links with the college and the survey was not issued to them with sufficient time for the tutors to be able to encourage a greater response rate. In future years this could be improved significantly.

There has not yet been full analysis of the questions set for the UHI region, however there has been a basic analysis for the question set to be returned to SFC.

Overall satisfaction with Argyll College UHI was 95.6% for FE, and 92.1% for HE, with a combined result of 94.8%.

The final survey results will be compared to the SFC cross sector results and the UHI benchmarking figures as well as being fed back to SMT and Curriculum Leads for further discussion and action.

FE overall results for SFC questions

Questions	Strongly agree or agree	Strongly disagree or disagree (or do not know)
1. Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience.	95.6%	4.4%
2. Staff regularly discuss my progress with me.	89.5%	10.5%
3. Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.	96.8%	3.2%
4. I am able to influence learning on my course.	94.7%	5.3%

5. I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning.	93.9%	6.1%
6. The way I'm taught helps me learn.	92.1%	7.9%
7. My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.	97.1%	2.9%
8. I believe student suggestions are taken seriously.	87.9%	12.1%
9. I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff.	92.0%	8.0%
10. The college Students' Association influences change for the better.	70.3%	29.7%

HE overall results for SFC questions

Questions	Strongly agree or agree	Strongly disagree or disagree (or do not know)
1. Overall, I am satisfied with my college experience.	92.1%	7.9%
2. Staff regularly discuss my progress with me.	73.3%	26.7%
3. Staff encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.	94.1%	5.9%
4. I am able to influence learning on my course.	82.0%	18.0%
5. I receive useful feedback which informs my future learning.	91.1%	8.9%
6. The way I'm taught helps me learn.	75.0%	25.0%
7. My time at college has helped me develop knowledge and skills for the workplace.	93.1%	6.9%
8. I believe student suggestions are taken seriously.	83.2%	16.8%
9. I believe all students at the college are treated equally and fairly by staff.	87.1%	12.9%
10. The college Students' Association influences change for the better.	83.2%	16.8%

[Partner Logo]



[Partner Name], University of the Highlands and Islands

Further Education Essential Skills Policy

POL

Lead Officer (Post):	Click or tap here to enter text.
Responsible Office/ Department:	
Responsible Committee:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Review Officer (Post):	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:	n/a

For all our up-to-date policies, please visit our [website](#).

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request.

Policy Summary

Overview	This policy is required to set out a regional approach to Further Education Essential Skills for (College Name) and all academic partners in the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership.
Purpose	This policy sets out a robust and transparent framework for the delivery of Essential Skills in Further Education programmes of study, creating parity of experience for students across the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership.
Scope	This policy applies to all further education programmes of study. Certain courses are exempt, as set out in Section 4.2.
Consultation	The policy has been developed by practitioners from across all partners. The policy received feedback from Senior Management Curriculum Team, before being endorsed by Partnership Council. The policy was then sent to Boards of Management for approval.
Implementation and Monitoring	Staff in Academic Partners will be responsible for local implantation. The Policy Ownership Group will reconvene to review and monitor the policy.
Risk Implications	Risk will be mitigated by streamlining the student experience of Essential Skills across the region.
Link with Strategy	<p>The policy is aligned to the UHI Strategic Vision and Plan 2015-20 whereby the university is committed to continue to meet the needs of students within the region.</p> <p>The policy supports the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy by contributing to the development of values of Learning for Employment, Assessment and Feedback for Learning and Supporting the Learner as an Individual.</p>
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Completed – No action necessary.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The policy sets out to create a coherent and comprehensive approach to support and optimise the regional and local delivery of Essential Skills in the Academic Partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands providing further education.
- 1.2 Created to meet government policy and facilitate the improvement of outcomes for all students, the policy will raise the profile of Essential Skills amongst both the staff and students. Reinforcement of Essential Skills in the curriculum and colleges will highlight the value of these skills and their lifelong role in development and achieving positive destinations.
- 1.3 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) state in their 2013 report, *Skilled for Life*, that: 'Skills transform lives, generate prosperity and promote social inclusion. Without the right skills, people are kept at the margins of society, technological progress does not translate into economic growth, and enterprises and countries can't compete in today's globally connected and increasingly complex world'. The University of the Highlands and Islands and its partner colleges aim to be at the forefront of promoting the benefits of skills for students and staff.
- 1.4 All colleges are encouraged to be innovative in their approach to essential skill delivery, and to share successful practice with other Academic Partners. The policy recognises that no single approach or methodology is superior to another, and the optimum delivery will depend on the individual students, subject and local context.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework ("SCQF")** – SCQF is the national qualifications framework for Scotland. The SCQF helps education and training providers of all kinds to identify the level that has been studied in a particular subject and make it easier to transfer credit point between different learning programmes.
- 2.2 **Essential Skills** – as set out in *Skills for Scotland*, Essential Skills consists of the following:
 - **Personal and learning Skills** that enable individuals to become effective lifelong learners;
 - **Literacy, digital literacy and numeracy;**
 - **The five Core Skills** (see 2.4);
 - **Employability skills** that prepare individuals for employment rather than for a specific occupation;
- 2.3 **Vocational skills** are specific to a particular occupation or sector.
- 2.4 **Core Skills** – As developed by Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the five Core Skills are the skills most needed in many work environments. In addition to SQA, other awarding bodies may be used for Core Skill accreditation.

Jobs require some level of ability in some or all of these skills. The Core Skills are: Communication, Numeracy, Information & Communication Technology, Working with Others and Problem Solving. Core Skills can be awarded via qualifications between SCQF Levels 3 and 6. Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) for a diagram setting out the Core Skills in relation to the other Skills frameworks.

- 2.5 **Delivery Models** – The delivery model(s) chosen to deliver Core Skills are dependent on available resources and the vocational content of the course. Optimum delivery may involve elements of different approaches. Further details are given in [Appendix 2](#) of five example delivery models (Discrete, Contextualised, Integrated, Embedded and Cross-Assessed).

3. Purpose

- 3.1 This policy sets out a robust and transparent framework for the delivery of Essential Skills in Further Education programmes of study.
- 3.2 The policy will create a parity of experience for students across the partnership, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to develop the skills required for employment and academic progression. Essential Skills play a crucial role in the academic and holistic development of students, and complement the vocational content and technical skills developed on courses. Development of Essential Skills is priority for each college, across all curriculum areas and involving all staff and students.
- 3.3 Development of Essential Skills will be explicit in delivery across all programmes in the Further Education setting.

Academic Partners will ensure staff promote and signpost through planning and delivery ensuring students develop contextually relevant skills, knowledge and understanding to meet their specific vocational and wider skillsets.

3.4 Research and Evidence

- Skills Development Scotland, in their 2017 publication [Jobs and skills in Scotland](#), emphasise the importance of skills: ‘Where skills shortages and skills gaps occurred, these were most often caused by a lack of soft skills, for example the ability to manage tasks and people. This suggests that there is a need to place more emphasis on soft skills throughout the education and training system to ensure that it delivers workers who have sufficient hard and soft skills.’ This emphasises the importance of increasing the profile and delivery of Essential Skills alongside the vocational content of courses.
- Development of Essential Skills plays a vital role in the lives of individuals during and after their college course. [National Numeracy estimate](#) that the cost of poor numeracy to the United Kingdom economy is at least £20.2billion, equivalent to 1.3% of GDP.
- A House of Commons Science and Technology Committee report, [Digital Skills Crisis](#), stated: ‘Digital skills are becoming increasingly essential for getting access to a range of products and services. However, there is a digital divide where up to 12.6 million of the adult UK population lack basic digital skills. An estimated 5.8 million people have never used the internet at all. This digital skills gap is costing the UK economy an estimated £63 billion a year in lost additional GDP.’
- [The Open University Business Barometer 2018](#) reported that it had cost organisations across the UK £6.3 billion to plug the skills gap, with talented workers benefitting from an additional £2.16 billion due to their in-demand skills. 28% of business reported applicants lacking IT skills, and 20% reported candidates lacking soft skills (e.g. communication and problem solving); these areas are three of the five Core Skills.
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise [research](#) showed that 73% of businesses in the region anticipated difficulty in recruiting young talent with highly sought after skills such as

communication, being a good team player, a desire to continue their learning/skills development and the ability to work independently.

- 3.5 The Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work agenda set out in [Curriculum for Excellence](#) establishes the development of essential skills in our students as a priority. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has also emphasised that colleges have a significant role to play in implementing the Government's skills strategy and college performance will be assessed in this regard through the Education Scotland Quality Framework, How Good is Our College.
- 3.6 A key element of this policy is that Communication, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology will be included in and certificated in all full time Further Education programmes of study (or reflected in a student's Skills Profile). Certification can be through any awarding body or college certificate. It is expected that Problem Solving and Working with Others will be included but not necessarily certificated.
- 3.7 For part time courses, teaching staff will emphasise to students the importance of skills, identifying when skills are being taught and highlight transferability of skills. Opportunities will also be created through curriculum design to promote skills development.
- 3.8 Skills development allows students to meet entry requirements for higher level courses, facilitates pathways into employment and promotes progression in learning.
- 3.9 Diagnostic assessment activity will be carried out during the recruitment process or at the beginning of the course. It provides valuable information to ensure that students are supported appropriately in their learning by adapting materials and setting the initial pace of learning.

This diagnostic assessment information can be shared across delivery teams to provide a rounded picture of the strengths of a student and their areas for development, to ensure that the existing Communication, Numeracy and ICT skills of the student are used to inform the pedagogy of the course.

- 3.10 **Recognition of Prior Learning** – Regardless of the Core Skills requirement of the main course, students will always be encouraged to improve their Core Skills profile for Communication, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology. For example, students who require Level 5 and already have Level 5 will be supported to work towards achieving Level 6 through extension or bridging activity. Students who have already achieved Level 6 will be supported to fulfil their credit requirements with alternative modules.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all further education programmes of study, normally up to and including SCQF Level 6. 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 UHI Partnership.
- 4.2 The following courses are exempt from the requirement for certificated Core Skills set out in 3.6:
 - Short full-time courses (on a discretionary basis in Academic Partners)
 - Part-time courses
 - Commercial courses
 - Leisure courses

5. Notification

- 5.1 All staff will be notified of changes to the Essential Skills policy through a range of methods, including but not limited to staff meetings, intranet, Academic Partner websites as per normal policy update processes.
- 5.2 Academic Partners will be notified of any changes, allowing sufficient time to for updates to be made.
- 5.3 Students will be notified of changes by academic partners working with HISA.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of everyone in the college to create a positive environment for both students and staff to develop Essential Skills (including Core Skills).
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of managers of all levels within the college to enable staff to deliver this policy, where necessary directing resource or facilitating changes to curriculum and teaching. This includes ensuring all staff are appropriately skilled and qualified for their role.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of vocational teams to design courses that include Essential Skills and Core Skills as appropriate, following curriculum design principles.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of Core Skills and vocational teams to collaborate to include the three certificated Core Skills in programme design, and to adopt an appropriate delivery model for Core Skills on their course and offer support to meet internal and external verification requirements.
- 6.5 It is the responsibility of students to proactively engage in Essential Skills learning, and work with all staff to ensure new skills are developed or existing skills reinforced.
- 6.6 It is the responsibility of the Academic Partner to ensure any students in scope of the policy undertake any relevant diagnostic assessments to ascertain Core Skill levels.

7. Legislative Framework

[Further and Higher Education \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Education Scotland – Curriculum for Excellence](#)

[Skills for Learning, Skills for Life, and Skills for Work \(2009\)](#)

[Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy \(2014\)](#)

[Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy \(2007\)](#)

8. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

[College Development Network – The role of essential skills in Scottish national education policy](#)

[Education Scotland – How Good is our College?](#)

[Highlands and Islands Enterprise – Business Panel Survey: Workforce, Skills and Young Talent 2018](#)

[Scottish Funding Council - Outcome Agreement Guidance \(2016\)](#)

[Scottish Government: Costs of Learning Student Funding Guide](#)

9. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0				
1				
2				

DRAFT