

Item	People & Culture Strategy
Committee	Human Resources Committee
Date paper prepared	27/05/2025
Date of committee meeting	03/06/2025
Subject	People & Culture Strategy Endorsement
Author	Vicky Ferguson
Action requested	<input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Endorsement <input type="checkbox"/> For Approval
Purpose of the paper	For endorsement by the Board of Management
Brief summary of the paper	The purpose of this strategy is to ensure a framework and infrastructure which will attract, retain, develop and support staff to perform well and achieve the aims of the College as well as their personal objectives. It is designed to promote a culture that reflects the College's values and behaviours and achievement of its vision and mission.
Consultation How has consultation with partners been conducted?	The strategy was presented to the transition board in June 2023 and approved the HR Committee and the Executive Leadership Team in November 2024.
Risk implications	That we will not attract, retain, develop and support staff to perform well and achieve the aims of the College as well as their personal objectives.

Item	People & Culture Strategy
Link with strategy	North, West and Hebrides Strategic Statement
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	The strategy is compliant with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
Paper status	<p>Highlight the paper status in the list below:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open – the paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Restricted – the paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Confidential - the paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online. [Please note papers may still be subject to Freedom of Information requests, as specified in the next section].</p>
Freedom of information (FOI)	<p>Highlight the FOI status in the list below. Refer to NWH Freedom of Information Site for more information:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Closed – disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Closed – disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Closed - Disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Closed - Disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Closed - Disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Closed - Other, please specify.</p>
Freedom of information (FOI) disclosure date	<p>If closed/ withheld is selected above, enter the date when this will become 'open':</p> <p>Click or tap to enter a date.</p>

People and culture strategy what's been achieved and delivered

People & Culture Strategy

An anchor institution for the region – a connected, flexible, distributed and sustainable learning organisation, opening doors to a world of opportunity.

Author	Vicky Ferguson
Executive management team sponsor	Lydia Rohmer
Date approved by Board of Management	
Review date	In 3 years or sooner if required

People & Culture Strategy 2023-26

Our Ambition

UHI North, West and Hebrides aims to be a centre of excellence for our people and our students based on an inclusive culture and framework in which our staff feel valued, supported, developed, engaged and empowered. A culture in which everyone owns, understands and embraces their role in the collective delivery of our mission and achievement of the vision and ambition of the College.

Our staff are key to the success of our students and our organisation. We want our staff to succeed – to be resilient, perform well and fulfil their career ambitions, working in a progressive, collaborative and healthy work environment. How we attract, recruit, develop, support, motivate and engage with our staff is therefore vital and we will provide an environment that attracts and retains the best staff and has in place the conditions and structures to enable all of our staff to achieve their own objectives and the objectives of the College.

We aim to be an employer of choice, supporting the economy of our region; employing locally across all our college geography as well as attracting people into our local areas to live and work. We aim to be a people organisation, run for our people by our people.

UHI North, West and Hebrides is an anchor institution of scale and impact within UHI, and the region, supporting circa 9000 students and 600 staff across 19 learning centres and campuses stretching across the North and West Highlands, Skye and Outer Hebrides.

UHI North, West and Hebrides - Strategic Goals

- To become a financially sustainable joined-up organisation.
- To grow curriculum, particularly into key areas that link with our research and commercial opportunities.
- To grow research and knowledge exchange through connecting our current specialisms and developing them alongside our region's potential.
- To have cohesive and responsive business development teams who can respond effectively and purposefully to opportunities of scale.
- To enhance the student experience through connecting our sites, resources, communities, and multi-location programmes.
- To have resilient team structures and depth of resource to address changing priorities, opportunities, and economic difficulties.

Our Vision, Mission, Values, and Behaviours

Vision	To be an anchor institution for the region – a connected, flexible, distributed and sustainable learning organisation, opening doors to a world of opportunity
Mission	We will connect rural and island Scotland, pioneering distinctive education and research opportunities to enable our students and communities to shape their futures in a changing world.
Values	Trust We take pride in what we do. We are highly trusted by our students, our staff and our partners. We are recognised for our leadership and dedication to deliver more for all whom we serve.
	Integrity We take responsibility for all we do, assuring full transparency and accountability. We ensure that people are at the heart of everything we do and that our organisation operates in collaboration and openness, with an ethos of dignity and respect for everyone.
	Excellence We are ambitious for our learners, our staff, our college and our communities. We drive innovation. We aim to be sector leaders and benchmark our performance on national and international standards.
Behaviours	Be Bold We are confident in our ability to transform tertiary education for our region, connecting individuals and communities to learning and education.
	Be Agile We encourage new ways of thinking and support our people to explore new ways of thinking and doing things. We respond and adapt quickly through innovation.
	Be collaborative People working together are at the heart of everything we do. We value our ability to collaborate through a diverse workforce, where everyone's voice matters.

Purpose of the People & Culture Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure a framework and infrastructure which will attract, retain, develop and support staff to perform well and achieve the aims of the College as well as their personal objectives. It is designed to promote a culture that reflects the College's values and behaviours and achievement of its vision and mission.

The strategy sets out 6 inter-related strategic aims, which will support the delivery of the College's overall strategic priorities and which embed our values and behaviours.

Our Aims are to:

1. Attract and retain high calibre staff to enhance the student experience.
2. Develop, support and empower our staff to fulfil their potential, perform to expectation and meet their career aspirations alongside the skill requirements of the college.
3. Motivate and engage our staff.
4. Promote excellent leadership and management.
5. Create and maintain a progressive, collaborative and healthy working environment.
6. Ensure a culture based on the values and behaviours of the College.

Six overarching themes will underpin the strategy:

Culture
Wellbeing
Attract
Develop
Motivate
Leadership

Strategic Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

Strategic Aim One

Culture

Developing a culture that brings our values to life, in which every individual feels fully engaged in the Colleges mission, knowing how they contribute to the collective endeavour and confident that they will be recognised and rewarded for their efforts.

We will achieve this by:

- We will communicate our vision and strategy effectively, creating a 'golden thread' between organisational, team and individual goals, so that everyone understands their part in the whole, is clear about their individual and team goals, and shares our focus on providing an excellent experience to our applicants, students and staff.
- We will build confidence through our generosity of spirit, celebrating our individual and collective achievements and recognising those who exemplify our guiding principles, and promote sustainability and inclusivity.
- We will demonstrate that we value the views of all our people by listening to feedback through staff and student surveys and events and communicating our actions in response.

Success criteria:

- Staff and student surveys
- Staff conference
- Staff newsletters

Strategic Aim Two

Wellbeing

Create a progressive, collaborative and healthy working environment which is conducive and beneficial to both the staff and student experience and beyond.

We will achieve this by:

- Continually engage with and listen to all staff as the College develops and pursues its aspirations.
- Actively support the health, wellbeing and safety of our staff and offer relevant interventions and services.
- Foster a continuous improvement environment to help our staff grow and develop in a diverse and inclusive culture.
- Make our staff feel valued, involved and fulfilled in the work that they do.
- Enable leaders and managers to proactively assess and manage staff wellbeing and safety within their teams and beyond.

Success criteria:

- The College is perceived as an excellent place to work (staff survey measure)
- Attendance rates (including specific measures relating to workplace wellbeing at departmental level)
- Participation in wellbeing interventions
- Employee assistance programme and Occupational Health Services utilisation rates
- Number of complaints, GDPR breaches, near misses etc.
- Benchmarking against sector data

Strategic Aim Three

Attract

Ensure that the college is an employer of choice, attracting the highest quality people locally and into the area to enhance the student experience, whilst ensuring equality of opportunity and working towards increasing the diversity of our staffing profile and that of the local community.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing our reputation, branding and strategies, including our benefits package to ensure we can attract high calibre and a diverse range of candidates to the College ensuring equality of opportunity.
- Developing systematic workforce planning clearly identifying the resource required for the future ensuring an efficient and robust workforce and understand the local recruitment market and develop partnerships to enable us to attract the best talent from local areas.
- Developing our recruitment processes and practices to ensure they are objective, innovative, flexible and meet our needs whilst providing a positive experience for applicants.
- Supporting the integration of new staff through the induction process ensuring they have the knowledge and information required to perform to their full potential.
- Assisting with the on-boarding of new staff from different locations by providing re-location guidance and support, engaging with other employers to share knowledge, resource and expertise.

Success criteria:

- Number of staff and applicants attracted to advertised positions.
- Vast majority of our posts filled first time with the right calibre of staff.
- Applicant profile demonstrating both local and inward recruitment
- Increase in the diversity profile of applicants.
- Spread of employment appointments across the college geographical area.

Strategic Aim Four

Develop

Develop, Support and Empower staff to develop their skills, knowledge and competencies and enable them to achieve their career ambitions, with each individual staff member motivated to directly contribute to the strategic goals of the College.

We will achieve this by:

- Design, develop and commission relevant development programmes that meet the needs of our staff as well as proactively responding to the College's priorities.
- Empowering staff to develop their leadership skills proactively at all levels.
- Utilising the Professional Review and Development process, ensuring each member of our staff is clear about their objectives and provide good and regular communication and feedback.
- Supporting professional and career development using various methods such as mentoring, team and project working as well as secondment opportunities where possible.
- Develop a culture and mindset of continuous improvement with all staff.
- Ensure that our staff are clear about what is expected of them and their role as advocates of our College.

Success criteria:

- Staff are clear about what is expected of them (as evidenced by our Annual Professional Review processes and staff survey)
- Continuous Professional Development.
- Increased number of staff mentoring and supporting internal colleagues
- Number of teaching staff achieving teaching qualifications, accreditation through local/national schemes or national teaching awards and progressing through the College
- Number of professional staff achieving formal qualifications

Strategic Aim Five

Motivate

Valuing, recognising and rewarding staff contributions appropriately. Ensuring effective engagement, transparency and excellent communication.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring staff are recognised and rewarded fairly and appropriately in line with the College's financial sustainability through financial and non-financial means.
- Maximising on non-financial benefits and incentives such as discount opportunities or recognition schemes which celebrate success.
- Building a strong sense of engagement ensuring a healthy, open and respectful dialogue across the College.
- Establishing family friendly, flexible and hybrid working practices to improve efficiency and work-life balance.
- Monitoring staff turnover and reasons for leaving through analysis and exit interviews and take action as appropriate.

Success criteria:

- Staff turnover measured against sector norms and exit interview analysis.
- Absence rates against sector norms.
- Staff satisfaction measured through a number of best practice activities and processes.

Strategic Aim Six

Leadership

Develop excellent leadership and management capability, ensuring line managers have the appropriate skills and are empowered to lead by example, creating an environment where staff and students feel motivated and can achieve success.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing our leadership competencies to ensure that staff understand their leadership styles and have flexibility to adapt when dealing with different situations in order to motivate and engage with their teams.
- Ensuring managers demonstrate leadership skills and their commitment to embedding best practice processes such as induction, probation, and professional reviews.
- Ensuring transparency and good communication with staff across all learning centres.

Success criteria:

- Excellent leadership is recognised internally (staff survey measure) and externally (reputation and awards)
- The College is perceived as an excellent place to work (staff survey measure)
- Number and quality of internal applications and appointments to leadership and management roles
- Overall staff engagement, involvement and advocacy scores (staff survey)

Priorities

In the first 2 years of the new college, there will be a need to focus on establishing the structure and working practices of the organisation and developing its culture. We recognise that our people will face significant change over this period, which may impact performance and morale. To this end, our priorities will take account of the need to ensure effective communication, consultation and support for staff and students.

Our focus will be on:

- Clear and regular information and communication across all parts of the new college and effective engagement of staff and students
- Effective consultation to ensure the views of staff and students are heard and taken account of in decision making
- Establishing a leadership which is visible, approachable and supports effective performance
- Developing the culture and ethos of the College aligned to its mission, vision, values and behaviours
- Provision of and engagement with training and development to support college and staff performance and student success

Our priority actions will be:

- To implement a programme of regular communication and engagement with staff
- To implement a robust and effective partnership with HISA and the student body
- To consult on proposals for organisation structure and implement the outcome within year one of the new college
- To establish and implement a staff training and development programme
- To establish effective working relationships with trade unions
- To establish a staff survey in the first 2 years of the college
- To establish a comprehensive suite of family friendly policies within the first 2 years
- To establish a robust performance management policy and practice within the first 2 years, including a system of recognition and reward
- To hold a staff conference at the end of year two

Measuring Success

Strategic Aim		Measures of Success
Culture	Developing a culture that brings our values to life, in which every individual feels fully engaged in the Colleges mission, knowing how they contribute to the collective endeavour and confident that they will be recognised and rewarded for their efforts.	Staff and student surveys Staff conference
Wellbeing	Create a progressive, collaborative and healthy working environment which is conducive and beneficial to both the staff and student experience and beyond.	The College is perceived as an excellent place to work (staff survey measure) Attendance rates (including specific measures relating to workplace wellbeing at departmental level) Occupational Health Services utilisation rates Number of complaints, GDPR breaches, near misses etc. Benchmarking against sector data
Attract	Ensure that the college is an employer of choice, attracting the highest quality people locally and into the area to enhance the student experience, whilst ensuring equality of opportunity and working towards increasing the diversity of our staffing profile and that of the local community.	Number of staff and applicants attracted to advertised positions. Applicant profile demonstrating both local and inward recruitment Increase in the diversity profile of applicants. Spread of employment appointments across the college geographical area.
Develop	Develop, Support and Empower staff to develop their skills, knowledge and competencies and enable them to achieve their career ambitions, with each individual staff member motivated to directly contribute to the strategic goals of the College.	Staff are clear about what is expected of them (as evidenced by our Annual Professional Review processes and staff survey) Continuous Professional Development. Increased number of staff mentoring and supporting internal colleagues Number of teaching staff achieving teaching qualifications, accreditation through local/national schemes or national

		<p>teaching awards and progressing through the College</p> <p>Number of professional staff achieving formal qualifications</p>
Motivate	Valuing, recognising and rewarding staff contributions appropriately. Ensuring effective engagement, transparency and excellent communication.	<p>Staff turnover measured against sector norms and exit interview analysis.</p> <p>Absence rates against sector norms.</p> <p>Staff satisfaction measured through a number of best practice activities and processes.</p>
Leadership	Develop excellent leadership and management capability, ensuring line managers have the appropriate skills and are empowered to lead by example, creating an environment where staff and students feel motivated and can achieve success.	<p>Excellent leadership is recognised internally (staff survey measure) and externally (reputation and awards)</p> <p>The College is perceived as an excellent place to work (staff survey measure)</p> <p>Number and quality of internal applications and appointments to leadership and management roles</p> <p>Overall staff engagement, involvement and advocacy scores (staff survey)</p>