

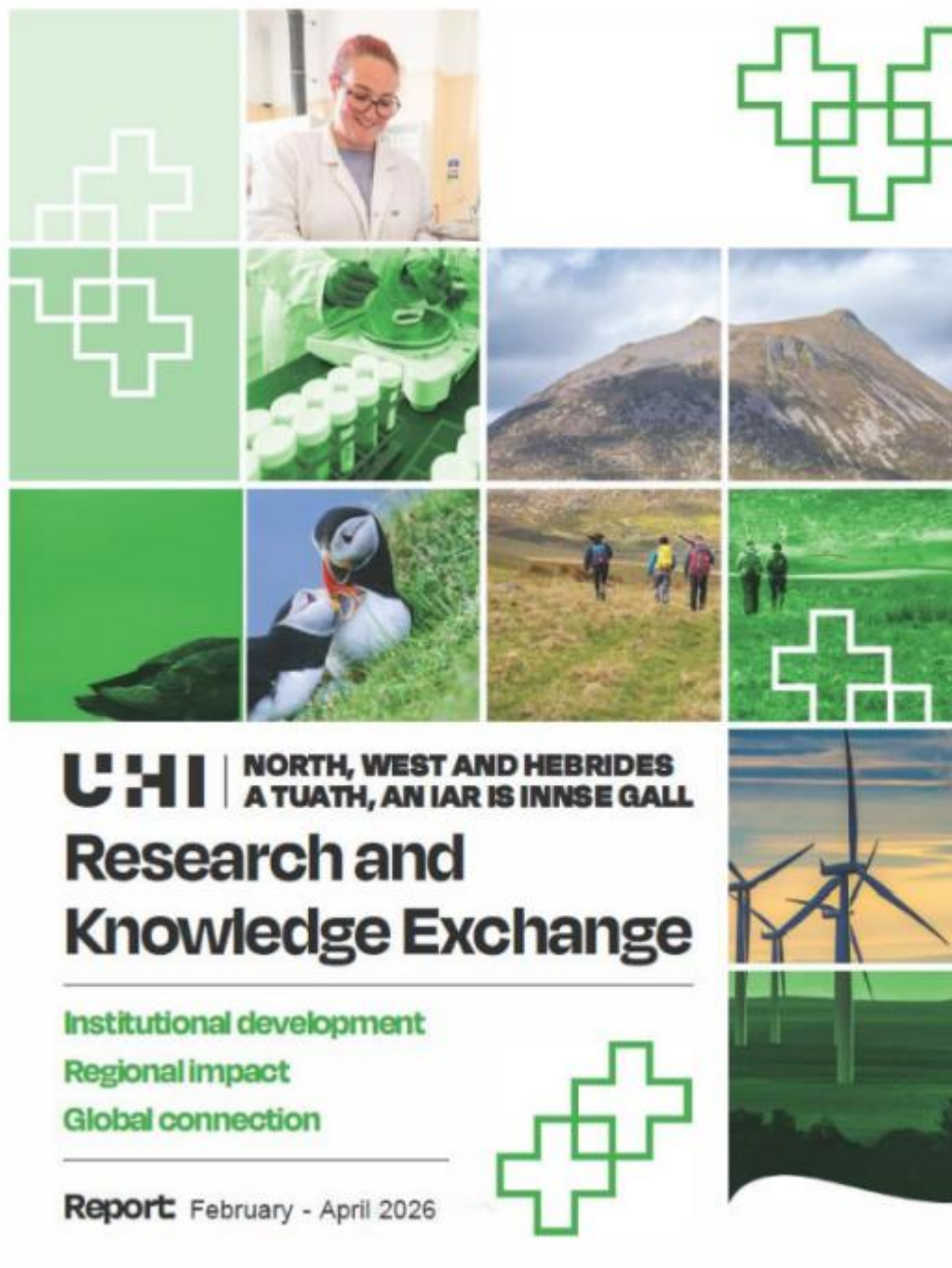
Committee	UHI North, West and Hebrides Learning, Teaching and Research Committee										
Subject	NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange Quarterly Report Feb 2025 – April 2025										
Action requested	☒ For information only ☐ For discussion ☐ For recommendation ☐ For endorsement ☐ For approval										
Summary of the paper	The NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange Quarterly Report provides an update on Research and KE activity across NWH. It is not intended to be comprehensive; but rather give a representative picture of the range and diversity of research and knowledge exchange being undertaken across the institution while highlighting initiatives, outputs and impacts where appropriate. The same report is circulated to several groups and interested parties i.e., to act as a 'single point of truth' that can be used and shared with confidence. The report is be circulated to: • NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange Staff • NWH Communication team • NWH Executive • NWH Highland Board of Management • UHI Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange This approach has been developed to ensure consistency, transparency and mitigate reporting burden (i.e. avoiding the production of several different reports for different audiences) in a manner that enables robust monitoring of metrics (for NWH, UHI and REF). Certain sections of the report are relevant to Committees of the NWH Highland Board of Management. These are as follows: • Finance and General purposes Committee Activity Reports and Outputs • Learning Teaching and Research Committee - Research and KE funding applications The report is produced on a quarterly basis according to the following schedule: <table> <tr> <th><u>Period covered</u></th><th><u>Circulation</u></th></tr> <tr> <td>August to October</td><td>November</td></tr> <tr> <td>November – January</td><td>February</td></tr> <tr> <td>February – April</td><td>May</td></tr> <tr> <td>May – July</td><td>August</td></tr> </table> This Cover sheet – includes a summary / KPI dashboard (see below) and link to the full report: NWH RKE QR Feb-Apr 2026 Final.pdf -An appendix indicating the location of staff cited in the report.	<u>Period covered</u>	<u>Circulation</u>	August to October	November	November – January	February	February – April	May	May – July	August
<u>Period covered</u>	<u>Circulation</u>										
August to October	November										
November – January	February										
February – April	May										
May – July	August										

Resource implications	N/A
Risk implications	No
Date paper prepared	17/05/26.
Date of Board / Committee meeting	3/06/26
Author	Prof Stuart Gibb and Iryna Fedorova with contributions from all NWH Research and KE team
Link with strategy Highlight how the paper links to the Strategic Plan	Research (and KE) one of the pillars of the NWH strategy
Island communities	The rural and islands college merger may have an impact on the Western Isles and islands covered by West Highland College that is different to other communities. As part of the merger process, the University will undertake an Island Communities Impact Assessment.
Status (e.g., confidential, non-confidential)	Non confidential
Freedom of information	Yes
Consultation How has consultation with partners been conducted?	Reporting format has been discussed with research and KE leads across NWH; with NWH Research and KE Committee and with the Chair of NWH LT+R Committee. Content is open to relevant contributions from any NWH staff

Recommendation – For information

Full report:

[NWH RKE QR Feb-Apr 2026 Final.pdf](#)



NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange

Institutional development - Regional impact – Global connection

Report: February – April 2026

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Key performance indicators (KPIs)	4
KPI Dashboard.....	5
Activity Reports.....	6
Energy: Sustainable energy transitions and environmental interactions	6
Pollution: Mitigating environmental contamination through innovative solutions.....	7
Peatlands: Studying peatland resilience across scales and discipline boundaries.....	8
Society: Connecting Environment, Economy and Wellbeing to environmental change.....	9
Tourism: Cultural heritage and responsible tourism; Slow adventure and well-being and Tourism innovation and rural enterprise	10
Other.....	10
Outputs	11
Peer-reviewed publications.....	11
Book chapters	11
Conference/event presentations	12
Media coverage.....	13
Research and KE funding applications	14
APPENDIX: STAFF BY LOCATION	16

INTRODUCTION

The **NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) Quarterly Report** provides a regular update on research and KE activity across the institution. It is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to present a representative overview of the range and diversity of activity being undertaken, while highlighting key initiatives, outputs, and impacts where appropriate.

To ensure consistency and minimise the reporting burden, a single version of the report is prepared and circulated. This acts as a 'single point of truth' that can be shared with confidence across a range of groups and stakeholders, including:

- NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange staff
- NWH Communications Team
- NWH Executive Team
- NWH Board of Management
- UHI Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange

In addition, specific sections of the report align with the remit of particular NWH Board of Management Committees:

- Finance and General Purposes Committee (KPIs 8-10) – activity reports, outcomes, and outputs
- Learning, Teaching and Research Committee (KPIs 1-7) – research and knowledge exchange activity, outcomes, and impacts

The report will be produced on a quarterly basis according to the following schedule:

Period covered	Circulation
August - October	November
November – January	February
February - April	May
May- July	August

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

Our **ten KPIs** will be monitored by the **NWH Research and Management Group** and reported to the **Executive and to the Board of Management** through its Learning, Teaching and Research Committee. These will also align with UHI's broader evaluation frameworks. Except for REF 2029, all targets are set for a three-year time horizon, i.e. 2028. A core objective underpinning these KPIs is to contribute to the **long-term financial sustainability** of NWH through enhanced research income, strategic partnerships, and increased impact.

Two scenarios have been identified to guide targets for research and KE:

- **Scenario 1** reflects the current post-merger context, acknowledging the challenges of embedding, initiating, and expanding research and KE activity in a transitional environment. These challenges include constrained staff capacity, evolving institutional structures; increasing financial pressures across the university sector; growing competition for research and KE funding, and declining PGR funding. In this context, maintaining key performance indicators (KPIs) at 2023–24 levels is considered a 'stretch target'.
- **Scenario 2** assumes a more enabling environment, in which institutional conditions, support mechanisms, and organisational culture are more conducive to sustained growth in research and KE. This scenario also assumes modest growth in core university funding and increased availability of external grant funding.

For each scenario, a tailored set of KPIs and targets has been developed to reflect the specific opportunities and constraints of the respective context.

KPI DASHBOARD

KPI	June – Oct 25	Nov 25 – Jan 26	Feb – Apr 26	Scenario 1: Transitional / Constrained Context Targets	Scenario 2: Enabling / Growth- Oriented Context Targets
1. Number of staff recognised as being 'research active'	To be updated following completion of staff survey for Research and KE	To be updated following completion of staff survey for Research and KE	To be updated following completion of staff survey for Research and KE	Maintain at 2023-4 staff survey levels (22)	Increase by 20% relative to 2023-4 staff survey levels (26)
2. Number of staff eligible for inclusion in REF 2029	National REF process delayed: Awaiting guidance on criteria for inclusion (Significant Responsibility for Research and Research Independence - expected Dec. 2025)	17 staff	17 staff UoA7 – 10 staff, UoA25 – 4 staff, UoA26 – 1 staff UoA15 – 2 staff	New metric	New metric
3. Number of staff submitted to REF 2029	Pending: REF 2029 submissions underdevelopment across UHI	Pending: REF 2029 submissions underdevelopment across UHI	Pending: REF 2029 submissions underdevelopment across UHI	Attain (Headcount and Full Time Equivalent) REF 2021 levels (14/12.4)	Increase by 20% above REF 2021 levels (17 / 14.9)
4. PGR student enrolment	23 (UHI Virtual Research Environment data)	21	22	Secure funding for 15 PGRs	Secure funding for 19 PGRs
5. Number of staff involved in PGR supervision	18	18	19	Maintain at 2023-4 staff survey levels (13)	Increase by 20% relative to 2023-4 staff survey levels (15)
6. Number of outputs published in international peer-reviewed journals	17 to date	13	20	Maintain 2023–24 output levels (35)	Increase by 20% above 2023–24 output levels (42)
7. Number of Research and KE projects secured with regional and national partners	54 current	12 new (from July 2025)	22	Maintain 2023-4 levels (50)	Increase by 20% above 2023-4 levels (60)
8. Income from research	2024-25 £1.02M	To be updated in May 2026 (staff recruitment underway)	To be updated in July 2026 (staff handover underway)	Maintain at 2023-4 levels (£1.55 M)	Increase by 20% above 2023-4 levels (£1.86M)
9. Income from KE	2024-25 £0.28M	To be updated in May 2026 (staff recruitment underway)	To be updated in July 2026 (staff handover underway)	Maintain 2023-4 levels (£0.28 M)	Increase by 20% above 2023-4 levels (£0.35M)
10. Income from REF	2024-25 £0.27M	£0.27	£0.27	Not applicable (set until next REF cycle (£0.27 M)	Not applicable (set until next REF cycle (£0.27 M)