

Committee	UHI North, West and Hebrides Board of Management, Learning, Teaching and Research Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee										
Subject	NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange Quarterly Report May 2025 – Oct 2025										
Action requested	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For information only <input type="checkbox"/> For discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For recommendation <input type="checkbox"/> For endorsement <input type="checkbox"/> For approval										
Summary of the paper	<p>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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange Staff • NWH Communication team • NWH Executive • NWH Highland Board of Management • UHI Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange <p>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).</p> <p>Certain sections of the report are relevant to Committees of the NWH Highland Board of Management. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and General purposes Committee Activity Reports and Outputs • Learning Teaching and Research Committee - Research and KE funding applications <p>The report is produced on a quarterly basis according to the following schedule:</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Period covered</u></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Circulation</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <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> </tbody> </table> <p>The next report will therefore cover the period November 2025- January 2026.</p>	<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										
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	<p>In response to requested changes the following revisions have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -This Cover sheet – includes a summary / KPI dashboard (see below) and link to the full report: NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange - NWH RKE QR June-Oct 2025 Final.pdf - All Documents -An appendix indicating the location of staff cited in the report.
Resource implications	N/A
Risk implications	No
Date paper prepared	Circulated to all ELT June 2025 and shared with all staff thereafter.
Date of Board / Committee meeting	Various
Author	Prof Stuart Gibb and Barbara Bremner 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.

Recommendation – For information

Research and Knowledge Exchange

Institutional development

Regional impact

Global connection

Report: June - October 2025



NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange

Institutional development - Regional impact – Global connection

Report: June – October 2025

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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 NWH Board of Management Committees:

- Finance and General Purposes Committee (KPIs 8-10) – activity reports, outcomes, and outputs
- Learning, Teaching & Research Committee (KPIs 1-7) – research and KE 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** for Research and KE 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. The dashboard below specifies these targets and current status.

KPI	Current data	Scenario 1: Transitional / Constrained Context Targets	Scenario 2: Enabling / Growth- Oriented Context Targets
1. Number of staff recognised as being ‘research active’	Research and KE staff survey to be completed for 2024-25 by December 2025	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)	New metric	New metric
3. Number of staff submitted to REF 2029	Pending	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)	Secure funding for 15 PGRs	Secure funding for 19 PGRs
5. Number of staff involved in PGR supervision 2028	18	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	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	Maintain at 2023-4 levels (50)	Increase by 20% above 2023-4 levels (60)
8. Income from research	2024-25 £1,02M	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	Maintain at 2023-4 levels (£0.28 M)	Increase by 20% above 2023-4 levels (£0.35M)
10. Income from REF	2024-25 £0.27M	Not applicable (set until next REF cycle (£0.27 M))	Not applicable (set until next REF cycle (£0.27 M))