

UHI | **NORTH, WEST AND HEBRIDES** **A TUATH, AN IAR IS INNSE GALL**

NWH Learning, Teaching & Research Committee Meeting

Chair – Willie Macdonald

Wednesday 19th November 2025 at 16:15 - 18:00 via MS Teams

Present

Abby Teague, HISA Board Member
Alasdair Macleod, HISA Board Member (via mobile phone)
Ally Macleod, EIS Board Member
Debbie Miller, VP Strategic Developments
Derek Lewis, Chairman of the Board of Management
Diana MacLeod, Head of Curriculum & Student Services
Ellen Campbell, Board Secretary
Fiona Hamilton, Head of Student Experience
Hannah Ritchie-Muir, Vice Principal Academic
Lydia Rohmer, Principal & Chief Executive
Rupert Marshall, Independent Non-Executive Board Member
Shaun Escott, Teaching staff member
Tracy Kerr, Head of Performance and Planning
William Macdonald, Interim LT&R Chair & Vice Chair Board of Management (WM)

Apologies

Michael Foxley, Independent Board Member
Stuart Gibb, Director of Research & Knowledge Exchange

Quorum, Welcome and Apologies (WM)

The meeting was quorate

2. Declarations of Interest and Connection (WM)

None

3. Minutes 10th September 2025 (WM)

Approved

4. Action Tracker

Talks were ongoing re the GME BA Honours Courses

5. Requests to star unstarred items

6. HISA report – Abby Teague (AT)

AT presented the HISA report. There had been good attendance at recent student meetings. Student and rural centres felt that they were being overlooked. Class visits and drop-in sessions were ongoing, and Alasdair had been working with the Student Voice Reps (SVRs). Open and more informal dialogue with students had been successful, student housing issues were being reported as being their primary concern.

The Principal thanked AT for a great report and welcomed SVR numbers being on the increase, she asked how more SVRs could be encouraged. AT advised that visiting centres, dropping in to classes and raising the profile through being visible had proven to be very effective. The Principal asked if there were any specific themes that the College could work on with HISA to address the rural centre students who had concerns of being overlooked. AT advised that this had been voiced on one specific campus., notes had been made to take forward, and it may be worth contacting Caroline Macpherson for further information.

The Chair asked if digital communities were being utilised to encourage students to come forward? AT confirmed that HISA had been trying online events, clubs and societies, though new ideas would be welcome.

It was recognised that potential reasons for SVRs being lower than Perth or Inverness could be attributed to the volume of part time students and because of the nature of the student population, apprentices in for block release may not normally think about SVRs while out on site. A similar situation may occur for night study students. Shaun Escott (SE) and the Principal would assist AT where possible with a view to further discussions with the full-time HISA officials.

AM HISA had asked if there were issues in the funding application process for students, as he had been passed information that some students were not receiving their grant timeously. HRM acknowledged the issue from the HISA report attached to this item. The Hub was the UHI records system, an auditable process. Student Engagement and Wellbeing Officers would look to see where they could further support students.

AM HISA was experiencing poor / unreadable communications via mobile phone at Glasgow airport. AT agreed the question had been responded to sufficiently with the option to come back to the Team with any further questions.

Noted

Action: Contact Caroline MacPherson, HISA Officer for further information on rural centre student(s) who felt they were being overlooked.

Action: SE & Principal to liaise with full time HISA Officers to raise the profile for SVRs where possible.

7. Research and Knowledge Exchange (R&KE) Report – Debbie Miller (DM) for Stuart Gibb

DM introduced the new style report with dashboard which was described as a work in progress. The R&KE team were still awaiting guidance for REF. There had been 54 R&KE projects secured and 17 published articles to date. Recently, there had been a very successful peatlands conference, bringing an increase in international attendance numbers.

The Principal commended the move to KPI dashboard reporting and asked the Committee for feedback as to whether they agreed this format of reporting was a good way to move forward. The report also showed how extensive the UHI footprint was in R&KE.

The archaeology team based in South Uist may not be included in the last page listings due to consideration for inclusion in next quarterly report.

RM advised that the NWH Cnoc Soilleir archaeologists had recently published their book, he voiced his disappointment that there had been no representation from the NWH Board or the ELT at the launch event in South Uist. The Principal extended her congratulations to Emily and Rebecca on the publication of their book, neither the Board nor ELT had been aware of the launch party until after the event.

RM questioned the archaeologists working contract. HRM advised that they had an academic teaching contract, alongside a separate contract which was about project delivery and offered to clarify further after this meeting directly with RM if required.

Noted

8. Confidential item - withheld

9. Curriculum and student experience (C&SE) report – Hannah Ritchie-Muir (HRM), Tracy Kerr (TK), Fiona Hamilton (FH)

HRM introduced the newly formatted C&SE report which had adapted a style of KPI reporting used by UHI Court. Key strategies were hi-lighted, with the GLP and corporate parenting plan sitting alongside these. A

three-year trend analysis with future projections were included within the data. Benchmark data would be used when it became available. The team were attempting to avoid duplication in this report. Enrolment numbers were included and there had been collaboration with HISA to produce the student experience data. Revisions requested by BnG had also been included.

FH asked for feedback from the committee on the new reporting format, she added that NWH had received a further year's funding for student counselling. TK – advised that the team had been working closely with colleagues and had identified a few errors in the system which had affected the numbers, NWH student satisfaction rates were quite high.

The Committee questioned why FE enrolments were down from last year. HRM advised that credits were being maximised in an effort to make NWH more sustainable. NWH did not have a growth in credits and were therefore constrained.

The SFC's credit guidance dictated what the College could achieve in relation to individually enrolled students. Students were not being turned away. If there were no places on a particular course, alternatives were offered.

The Principal added that NWH wanted to maximise the funding return on FE credits delivered by maximising FE credit delivery in the highest funded credit categories.

Sector wide there had been a significant drop in students attending colleges. School leaver numbers had declined, however NWH still had robust numbers enrolling in the college. New reports were emerging on the progression from school – HE – FE (UHI Wide).

The Committee asked what the comparison was in where NWH intend to be v UHI expectations regarding HE recruitment. HRM advised that there had been a common issue throughout UHI. NWH would probably not have growth this year, the 700 target for this year would be difficult to achieve.

It was suggested that this semester would be the best time to enrol the FE students rather than semester two and that marketing and targeting timeframes could be adjusted for the following year.

SE asked what process should be followed to develop courses in maritime and aquaculture in conjunction with businesses and local employers wishing to fund these courses. HRM advised that this would feed into the NWH income growth strategy and curriculum planning. She encouraged SE to speak to his curriculum lead, engagement manager or herself. It was recognised that maritime / aquaculture was a key strategic growth area.

The Chair asked that the Committee be given the opportunity to look into this subject further.

Noted

Action: comparison analysis UHI v NWH requested for recruitment expectation/ reality.

9.1 Curriculum developments – Diana Macleod (DM) and Tracy Kerr (TK)

This paper was introduced as an output from the NWH curriculum review which was a work in progress. Curriculum development costs would be identified taking into account financial viability v demand. A three year snapshot of the growth plan was included. Some of the courses were awaiting approval as the SQA had changed some of the frameworks. The curriculum, which was under review should be visible by January 2026.

Answers to questions presented by Michael Foxley via email.

1. Locations of course delivery will be given on the spreadsheet.
2. NWH offered place-based delivery where numbers were viable. A lot of the forward look was to online through digital delivery.

The Chair thanked the officers for their reports.

10. Strategy day in relation to this committee

The Principal advised that the strategy session would be an opportunity for the board to reflect where NWH had reached and the direction of travel. There would be a short update on the financial situation and the cost of maintaining a broad, dispersed curriculum would be discussed. There would be a presentation from DM and her colleagues on strategic developments. There would be a theme on strategic priorities going forward.

Noted

11. Health & Safety report

Noted

12. A.O.B.

Diana Macleod had been appointed as the new Director of Curriculum.

Meeting closed 1800