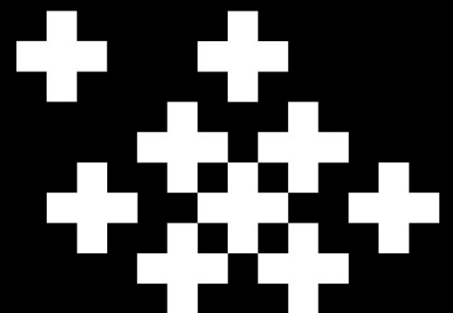
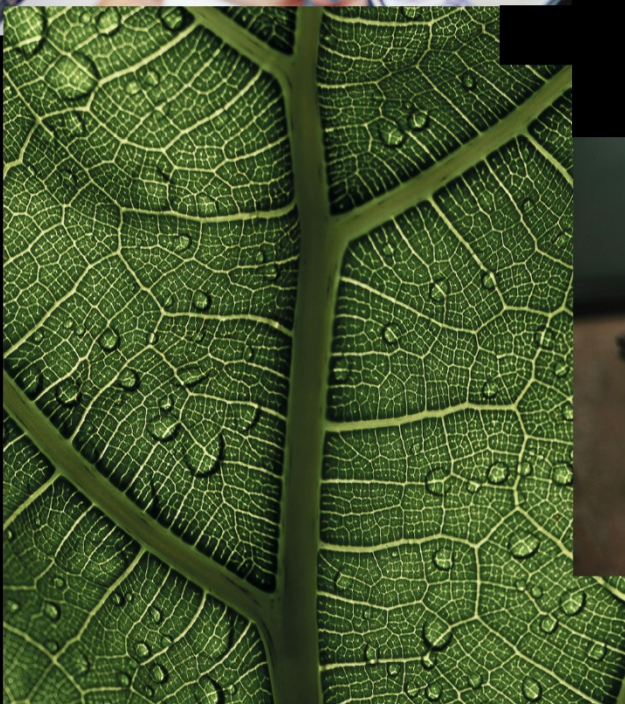




**NORTH, WEST AND HEBRIDES  
A TUATH, AN IAR IS INNSE GALL**

# **Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP) 2024**



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# 1. Institute details

## **UHI North, West and Hebrides (UHI NWH)**

UHI North Highland, UHI Outer Hebrides and UHI West Highland merged in August 2023 to form UHI North, West and Hebrides, as approved by The Scottish Government, vesting date 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.

By coming together, UHI North Highland, UHI Outer Hebrides and UHI West Highland has created an anchor institution of scale and impact within UHI, and the region, supporting 9000 students and 600 staff across 19 learning centres and campuses stretching across the North and West Highlands, Skye and Outer Hebrides.

Merger creates a more sustainable organisation with combined capacity and resource to grow the curriculum, research, and innovation; develop existing and new partnerships to support employers address skills gaps and retain, attract, and nurture talent; and become more responsive to the social, cultural, and economic opportunities in our regions.

### **Our vision**

To be an anchor institution for the region – a connected, flexible and sustainable learning organisation, opening doors to a world of opportunities.

### **Our mission**

To connect rural and island Scotland, pioneering distinctive education and research opportunities to enable our students and communities to shape their future in a changing world.

### **Our values**

+ Trust: We take pride in what we do. We are highly trusted by our students, staff and partners. We are recognised for our leadership and dedication to deliver more for all whom we serve.

+ Integrity: We take responsibility for all that we do, assuring transparency and accountability. We ensure 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, aim to be sector leaders, and benchmark our performance on national and international standards.

Academic year 2023 – 2024 has been a year of change for staff, students and stakeholders. Organisational design continues to be a strategic goal, alongside designing a sustainable curriculum offering. Bringing teams together from three legacy colleges to develop working practices and processes to create the backbone of UHI NWH.



Figure 1. Map North, West and Hebrides campus locations

## 1.1 Name of Institute

UHI North, West and Hebrides (UHI NWH)

## 1.2 Author(s)

### Editing authors

Tracy Kerr – Head of Performance and Planning

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### **1.3 Date of submission**

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 via UHI RSB

### **1.4 Accountable Officer details**

Lydia Rohmer - Principal and Chief Executive

Hannah Ritchie-Muir – Vice Principal Academic

Tracy Kerr – Head of Performance and Planning

### **1.5 Signature of accountable officer**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lydia Rohmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and a horizontal line at the end.

Lydia Rohmer - Principal and Chief Executive, UHI North, West and Hebrides

Date: 02/12/2024



## **2.2 Introduction to UHI North, West and Hebrides, Academic Partner of UHI**

UHI North, West and Hebrides (UHI NWH) is proudly rooted in the culture, location, and landscapes of the North and West Highlands, Skye, and Outer Hebrides. We are connecting our rural and island communities, delivering relevant and distinctive tertiary learning and research opportunities, shaped by our diverse communities' needs and ambitions.

The college provides a skills pipeline to support the needs of a balanced economy and inclusive society in the Highlands and Outer Hebrides, and has developed a broad range of fully tertiary pathways from access to post-graduate levels encompassing 300 courses across twelve curriculum areas aligned with UHI; however, the college also specifically supports the region's growth sectors, including net zero decarbonisation, renewable energy, engineering, advanced manufacturing and technologies, space ports, land and sea-based industries, as well as Gaelic.

As an anchor institution in the region, our aim is to have a transformative impact on our communities by encouraging people to live, work and study here by providing opportunities for people to shape their futures in a changing world.

We do this by providing courses to suit more people, at more levels, for more reasons, equipping them with the skills they need for learning, life, and work, now, and in the future. This includes:

- Senior phase courses for S4, S5 and S6 pupils
- Further education
- Apprenticeships
- Undergraduate higher education
- Postgraduate higher education
- Short training courses for businesses
- Leisure and evening courses

Through a range of courses at all levels, the college are removing barriers to learning and providing progressive pathways for our students. They can join us on a course that suits their needs, progress from one level of qualification to the next, and leave with a qualification when the time is right for them.

Our flexible delivery model is driven by digital innovation so we can make our curriculum more accessible, operating in geographic area larger than Wales and with a highly dispersed and sparse population, predominantly in remote and highly remote rural and island communities. This creates more opportunities for people to learn with us, providing options for people to study from home, or work, within our rural and island communities; students have the option to study on campus, or learn remotely from anywhere in the world. Our centres provide highly supported and safe places to study, as well as access to specialist facilities for specific place-based courses. Our centres are as diverse as the communities they are anchored in and reflect their specific needs, including employers from the public, private and third sectors, as well as the needs of small rural and island secondary schools, providing learners with a gateway to learning beyond their classroom.

## 3. Headline principles

### 3.1 Excellence in learning, teaching and assessment

#### 3.1.2 Strategic leadership of learning and teaching

##### ***Tertiary curriculum strategy outline and how it was developed***

Building on the combined expertise, self-determination and strengths from within three legacy colleges, we developed a tertiary curriculum strategy that responds to local, regional, national and international need. The strategy will create improved equity of opportunity for learning within such an expansive rural and island context. This tertiary curriculum strategy articulates our UHI NWH strategic framework (vision, mission and values), and reflects the college's contribution to regional outcome planning and the context of UHI's 2030 strategy.

Three legacy college teams under the leadership of senior management began the development of the college's strategy in 2022 by working together. We sought and gained valuable input from staff, students, schools, employers, UHI and other key stakeholders. The strategy was endorsed by the Transition Board in June 2023 ahead of vesting the merged college, and it's refreshed version is currently being presented for Board approval in 2024-25.

##### ***Tertiary curriculum review three phase approach***

Our curriculum review, planning and development is an iterative and evolving process combining input from many different people including our staff, students, employers and stakeholders. Although not in scope for this evaluation period, the recent curriculum and enterprise conference in early November 2024 marked the start of phase 3 of the review and illustrates the full scope and timeline of curriculum review at UHI NWH.

##### ***Tertiary curriculum review journey***

In the lead up to merger, the three former colleges reviewed each curriculum offer and went through a process of aligning subjects and qualifications as much as possible for the August 2023 vesting date. We agreed that to support a fully integrated tertiary curriculum, both FE and HE curriculum would be organised into the UHI faculty and cognate groupings. Grouping curriculum this way is practical for review and evaluative purposes alongside all UHI provision, but also when looking forward for planning and reporting, and to be able to enhance the student journey.

Much of the discussion detail captured during Spring 2023 between legacy curriculum staff shaped the 2023/24 curriculum offer, the inaugural year of the newly merged college. Since vesting date in August 2023, curriculum staff have further formed the design of programs to optimise delivery, taking into account demand, performance, viability and need. In academic year 2023/24 the college committed to a three-phase approach to tertiary curriculum review. Phase 2 focused on the shorter term, to create a single consolidated college delivery plan for 2024/25, bringing together the three curriculums from the legacy colleges. The college was able to retain all its combined curriculum areas and progression across SCQF levels, whilst consolidating qualification types and modes of delivery, following extensive consultation with staff, students and stakeholders. Discussion and analysis also included forward planning and further curriculum development which feeds into phase 3, longer term planning.

Phase 1 takes place every summer and is the immediate review of the current curriculum offer against student recruitment and viability. Phase 2 is the short-term review of the curriculum delivery plan for the following year. Review takes account of recent performance against trends and demand. Each year the heads of faculty will form the delivery plan for the next academic, usually endorsed in December.

Phase 3 is the review of our tertiary curriculum and is about planning for the longer term, looking 3 years ahead. It also feeds into phase 2, agreeing the curriculum delivery plan for the next academic year.

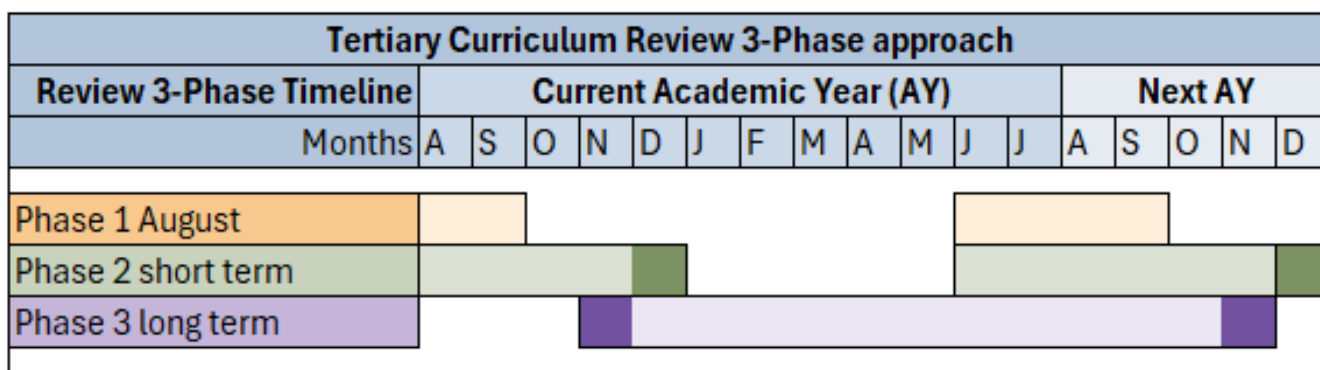


FIGURE 1 TERTIARY CURRICULUM REVIEW TIMELINE

### 3.1.3 & 4 Curriculum planning, design and delivery and Learning environment, resources and technologies

In 2023, UHI NWH curriculum managers held collaborative team meetings which were integral to the curriculum review and planning process. Managers were tasked with discussing and giving feedback for higher education (HE) and further education (FE). Managers and teams used the UHI 2024 review paper as a conversational aid. Teams were asked to feedback against each of the legacy college HE programmes identified by the UHI 2024 review. Almost all of UHI NWH review findings corroborated with the UHI 2024 curriculum review proposals.

Extract from curriculum review guide:

<b>Demand</b>	recruitment (number of students taught together as a group).
<b>Optimised delivery</b>	incorporation of digital delivery; digitisation of almost all learning resources; use of VLE; integration and teaching of several levels and part time; theory teaching across group; shared delivery.
<b>Viability</b>	measured against the financial course contribution.
<b>Performance</b>	student retention, success, student experience and positive destination over time
<b>Need</b>	the strategic fit and is measured against national, regional and local need and as outlined in the curriculum strategy.

The curriculum core review team led by the Vice Principal – Academic, with the Director of Academic Affairs and the two Heads of Faculty reviewing all the feedback and endorsing finalised proposals. Where feedback was not conclusive, further consultation was undertaken to reach a final decision.

### Planning for how we deliver and curriculum design

Managers reviewed full time and part time curriculum using a specially designed ‘course-delivery-outline-widget’, the review guide and prompt tool, a review meeting planner and other tools such as the CR2-course-tool-template with an exemplar (shared by one of the managers), the curriculum engagement plan, the UHI NWH Delivery Model and Diagram, and the current UHI NWH delivery plan.

### Emerging Themes carried into 2023/24

Several actionable themes emerged whilst reviewing three portfolios of curriculum with the aim of creating a single portfolio. Most of these actions were achieved.

### 3.1.5 Professional development

College staff have access to a plethora of resources through the UHI Learning Teaching Academy (LTA), Alpine, Aurora, Mentoring, monthly webinars. Staff are internally supported by our professional development team to attend, achieve and continuously enhance their professional practice. For details, please see

- UHI SEAP (3.1.2.1) Internal enhancement environment, (3.1.5.1) Professional Development opportunities

### **3.1.6 Currency of learning and teaching**

#### ***Refreshed and evolving UHI NWH curriculum design and delivery principles***

Establishing UHI NWH curriculum design and delivery principles is one of the success criteria of the draft curriculum strategy. The ongoing curriculum review dialogues provided the opportunity to capture best practice around the design of courses, pedagogy and how courses are delivered. Dialogue included topics such as learning, teaching and assessment approaches, use of technologies (including AI) to facilitate effective learning, how students are supported in their learning and stakeholder involvement in design of curriculum to meet local employment and employability needs. The importance of ensuring a continued physical local college centre and community presence came up and has been captured throughout the student feedback. Our curriculum design and delivery principles is likely to evolve further over the next few years, as we evaluate implementation of our curriculum planning model. Our curriculum design and delivery principles are linked to each of the draft tertiary curriculum strategy aims (**Students, Progression, Sustainability, Equity, Informed**). We have been working through enhancement actions which are mostly achieved or on track.

All staff take part in ongoing professional development, professional and sector related updating, mandatory training and legislative training. Staff have opportunity to enhance their learning and teaching approaches and pedagogy through peer review, UHI Learning and Teaching Academy, Alpine, College Development Network and JISC. Many lecturing staff ensure their currency of learning and teaching through good linkage with employers and sector groups. The college operates a professional review and development (PDR) process fully compliant with General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS).

#### **3.1.7 Peer review and evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment**

Curriculum review, innovative delivery and best practice is captured by college teams and feeds into self-evaluation. A curriculum review summary report was compiled at different stages of the review and will outline best practice, makes recommendations and outlines areas for immediate development. Relevant college teams develop action plans to take forward which are monitored through the college self-evaluation and enhancement process.

#### **3.1.8 Innovation in learning, teaching and assessment**

UHI NWH has adopted an innovative tertiary curriculum delivery model that is multi-modal to complement the tertiary nature of the college, our geographic reach and rural, island context. Modes of delivery are described in two broad groups: online both synchronous and asynchronous, and place-based learning in the form of residential, on campus, in the workplace, outdoors and on campus-hybrid. Whilst some courses are linked to place-based specialist teaching and training facilities, efforts have been made through structuring the new curriculum to ensure best practice, as well as development of mobile assets which can be used across a number of locations. The nationally recognised Highland 'Virtual School' approach that delivers an offer of over 60 qualifications into every Highland high school senior phase, is being expanded to encompass all Highland and Outer Hebrides schools, building on the existing partnership for national Gaelic delivery with e-sgoil. In 20223-24, the college provided learning opportunities to over 1000 learners in the Senior Phase across 333 High Schools. As new teams evolved over last year as a newly merged college, course teams shared and implemented best practice and integrated shared delivery and online to increase the reach and sustainability of courses. This meant that for the first time people in very remote rural and island areas of the new college could access both further and higher education, without having to leave the area. We have committed to expanding our shared delivery approach and are actively seeking partnerships with other colleges and stakeholders.

## **3.2 Supporting student success**

### ***3.2.1 Enabling student success - wellbeing, inclusion, equality, student support***

UHI NWH is committed to equality of opportunity and believes education throughout life is a right for all. We are committed to ensuring that there will be no discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion, sex, age or disability. The College believes that there is a duty for everyone associated with the College and all its activities to play their part in ensuring equality of opportunity. Positive steps will be taken to ensure that no forms of discrimination occur.

### ***3.2.2 Context and community - meeting the needs of students***

UHI NWH recognises that student engagement and support services are key to the continuous development of an effective and vibrant partnership with our students.

The unique, diverse, and dispersed nature of our student population across a range of locations and community-based delivery centres makes this even more important. Having support systems in place to ensure an equitable experience for virtual students studying in virtual classrooms or fully online has been a key priority.

Students are given the opportunity to become 'digital student ambassadors' for the college and university allowing them to gain invaluable experience whilst sharing the voices of our students. [Digital Student Ambassadors - UHI North, West and Hebrides](#). This funded programme is aimed at providing students with the opportunity to learn new digital skills whilst sharing their unique learner experience with their peers and wider online audiences.

### ***3.2.3 Effective and successful transitions***

Collaboration with UHI and the regional approaches to student services, support and delivery has been instrumental in creating effective progression routes for learners allowing them to successfully transition and achieve qualifications, progressing from school, community or workplace training settings to further education programmes, and higher education programmes. UHI's universal Articulation Agreement with SQA allows learners on HNC or HND to progress to the second or third year of degree study (in the same subject area) without having to unnecessarily repeat one or two years of study at the equivalent SQCF level. This provides an efficient learner journey for learners on the college's HN programmes, as well as widens access to HN students from out with UHI NWH to progress onto degree programmes with advanced standing.

### ***3.2.4 Support for employability, skills development and lifelong learning***

Continuous professional development is in place for the staff team and support services are accessible in person in the college's campuses and centres as well as online. The team will support the development of students as independent learners. We provide the non-academic support and guidance that students require whilst they are studying with us, from pre-entry to qualification and graduation, to post-exit. We are the first port of call for students to maximise their potential and make the most of their student experience.

### ***3.2.6 Responsiveness to concerns***

The College has a dedicated Student Services Team who are here to offer advice/provide support to all students and can help with applications, enrolment, accommodation issues, student funding, learning support, advice and guidance, mental health and wellbeing support, including accessing to Student Counselling, study skills and employability.

Students are encouraged to feedback to the college using a variety of methods. Redbutton, Complaints, Student Surveys, via their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT), all are covered by a robust induction module

hosted in the Brightspace learning environment, making it as accessible to non-campus students as those that have the ability to have a face-to-face conversation with a member of staff. For the agreed UHI-wide approach, please see

- UHI SEAP (3.2.4.1)

The college has an action plan regarding assistive technologies and further enhancements are being made for students to declare support needs which will improve their student experience at all levels. Challenges are the significantly increased number of students declaring support needs, in particular mental health support, which has significantly increased since the Covid pandemic in 2020-2022.

### **3.3 Enhancement and Quality Culture**

#### ***3.3.1 Institution wide culture of assurance, improvement and enhancement***

##### **3.3.1.1 Cross partnership quality**

UHI NWH have representation and co-chair the Quality Forum (QF), a regional UHI group set up to support Quality arrangements for assigned academic partners of UHI. QF reports into UHI's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC). Major work has been undertaken across the wider UHI partnership in the development of shared policies, procedures and systems with a focus on making them fully tertiary. Our Head of Performance and Planning sits on the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC), UHI's quality which reports into UHI's Academic Council. The TQER and SEAP collaboration has been a recent example of excellence in practice, providing a regional focus on the sharing of best practice, knowledge and work planning to create an integrated tertiary quality assurance and enhancement approach for all of UHI. For details, please see:

- UHI SEAP (3.3.1.1)

The college is a host academic partner (HAP) for almost all of UHI's degree programmes, with exception of a few subject areas which require very specialist expertise the college cannot provide. The HAP model allows learners to access UHI qualifications via their local academic college partner, even though their local college does not provide programme leadership of that qualification. This supports the significant widening of locally available learning opportunities for learners across our rural and island geographical footprint, allowing access to learning and services to support learning, assessment and achievement of qualifications locally, when those learners otherwise would have had to leave their home to access learning in other UHI college locations or leave the UHI region. This is a substantial contribution to retaining population in fragile rural and island communities.

The college shares delivery of some further education programmes with UHI Argyll. Standardisation meetings and action planning are critical to the success of these shared programmes, creating a positive student experience whilst ensuring that all quality assurance processes are adhered to in an equivalent way by staff delivering from both colleges. Students benefit from a wider range of lecturing staff delivering in their areas of expertise creating a richer learning environment. Sharing lecturing, assessment and verification activity supports students receiving feedback in a timelier manner.

#### ***3.3.2 Institution-led review / activity and action planning***

##### **3.3.2.1 Curriculum Review**

As detailed above in section 3.1, there has been a major focus both pre- and post-merger providing a diverse range of curriculum review and development opportunities.

### 3.3.2.2 Progression Boards (PB)

College progression boards are a mechanism to monitor student retention at key points in the academic year; these are usually for further education provision SCQF Levels 1 to 6. UHI organise SQA SCQF Levels 7&8 as the awarding centre, for all programmes that have a programme leader in place for the cognate area qualifications delivered by APs.

Where an AP is the sole provider of an SCQF Level 7/8, the responsibility for the PB lies with them. UHI NWH adopted the UHI PB standard template used for SCQF Level 7/8 qualifications ensuring an equivalence of experience for staff.

The monitoring of student retention data allows early interventions to be implemented supporting achievement and attainment of the qualification aim for the learner, improving performance indicators (PIs). Joint meetings are undertaken with the delivery teams for shared further education programmes, with a cyclical approach taken to organising these between UHW NWH and UHI Argyll.

### 3.3.2.3 Internal Cross College Team Meetings

A schedule of regular meetings from executive leadership level to operational has been implemented, to ensure a coherent and inclusive approach to developing the new and distributed teams' post-merger, linking to ongoing activity in the college calendar and departmental operational plans to contribute to the college wide action plan. Teams actively work together benefitting staff, students and stakeholders.

### 3.3.2.4 QAA/TQEF/TQER

The new quality arrangements, Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) will see change in how teams feed into self-evaluation with cohesive linkage to the high-level principles.

Collaborative working regionally with UHI and the wider academic partners ensures a greater sharing of practice including the collation of the self-evaluation action plan (SEAP) for the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

### 3.3.2.5 Self-Evaluation

The college has implemented a revised self-evaluation system and approach. Standardising processes and paperwork enabling curriculum teams to collate systematically. All information will input to the proposed college wide self-evaluation and action plan automated system feeding directly into the information gathering process linked to the high-level principles of TQEF, for submission of the 2024\_2025 SFC SEAP.

All academic partners benefit from the wider UHI enablers and resources (UHI SEAP ref)

- Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (3.3.1.2)
- UHI review processes, Subject Area Review and Subject Review (3.3.2.1)
- Standardised Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) roles (3.3.2.2)
- Quality Monitoring Dialogue and reflection (3.3.2.4)
- Self-Evaluation approaches, SEDs (3.3.2.5)

## **3.3.3 External institutional peer review**

### 3.3.3.1 Education Scotland Annual Engagement Reviews

Undertaken on the 11th of June 2024 with a satisfactory outcome. Education Scotland recognised the colleges commitment to:

- Ensuring that learners feel welcome and feel secure and are well informed

- College teams work closely with each other to ensure learners are at the heart of discussion supporting them to make informed decisions about their learning and progression opportunities
- Regular meetings are undertaken with the Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) at a strategic level
- Positive learning environments for learning seeking the views of and allowing co creation with learners
- Excellent use of digital technologies and templates supporting learners to have access to the correct resources both on and off campus quickly and easily at times that suit their needs and circumstances
- Almost all learners are very satisfied with their college experience. Learners value the positive relationships they have with their lecturers and find them approachable and supportive.

Main points for action are detailed on the action plan at section 4

### 3.3.3.2 Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Systems Verification (SV)

With agreement from SFC and SQA in 2023\_24, due to the lateness of vesting and to ensure that learners were not impacted, learners were enrolled against the three legacy SQA centre numbers. SQA undertook their systems verification of the college in January 2024. They worked with the college to undertake one verification and not those of the three legacy college systems. SQA were highly supportive in the creation of our one college systems offering excellent advice.

The SV Report confirmed 'High Confidence identified in the systems that support the maintenance of SQA standards within the centre' in all criteria of review, with many areas of good practice identified.

### 3.3.3.3 External Verification

Most verification activity is linked to SQA, annual selections are received by the college and the Quality and Curriculum teams work together to provide the required evidence to the External Verifier (EV). A major undertaking was joint external verification of subject areas across the three legacy colleges. Learners were not disadvantaged during this time; however, this was a change for a few EVs and further standardisation was identified for staff.

### 3.3.3.4 External Examiners

External Examiners provide reports to the delivery team working to UHI practices and processes. These reports allow the delivering AP to support teams in implementing recommendations to improve the experience for learners.

- UHI SEAP (3.1.7.2)

### 3.3.3.5 External and other awarding body audits

Feedback and recommendations from all external audits are used to create a college wide action plan. Moving forward these will link to the high-level principles of the TQEF informing the college TQER. The collation of all information will have a positive impact for stakeholders and learners and allow for early interventions college wide, supporting departments and teams.

## **3.3.4 Sector enhancement activity**

### 3.3.4.1 Engagement with incoming Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework

UHI NWH has full representation on the UHI groups.

- UHI SEAP (3.3.4.1) General context for student engagement and partnership in 2023/2024

### 3.3.4.2 Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)

The college STEP network lead will attend the first session of the programme on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 to ensure full engagement with this QAA and College Development Network (CDN) programme

### 3.3.4.3 CDN Groups

The college has representatives on most CDN groups ensuring current legislative knowledge is at the forefront of college business.

### **3.3.5 Impact of collaboration**

#### 3.3.5.1 Shared curriculum delivery in further education

Due to low numbers of applications on both business and computing courses an FE shared delivery model was introduced with UHI Argyll. This extended the curriculum on offer, widening participation, in very rural locations making the virtual delivery model financially viable to both APs. In 2023\_24 both subject areas ran successfully, however the business course did not recruit enough for UHI NWH to be part of the delivery this academic year. The implementation of a hosted student model was put in place at FE level ensuring that no students were disadvantaged, giving them access to facilities and resources across the college.

Internal Ref: 3.3.1.1 Cross partnership quality

### **3.3.6 External outlook – globally responsive**

UHI North, West and Hebrides, as a tertiary institution, collaborates with a broad network of international partners, primarily in the field of research. Our four key research themes—energy, pollution, peatlands, and tourism—address issues of global significance.

The urgent need for greener energy lies at the core of the climate change agenda, and at UHI NWH, we are proud to be the only provider of SQA-accredited hydrogen training in Scotland. Furthermore, by expanding our renewable energy-focused training programmes, we aim to continually enhance our educational offerings, equipping future generations with the skills needed to meet evolving global challenges of net zero and climate change.

#### 3.3.6.1 Gaelic Language Plan

UHI NWH have been working in collaboration with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to produce our first Gaelic Language Plan. This plan has been prepared within the framework of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Gaelic has been identified as a curriculum area of growth within UHI NWH.

#### 3.3.6.2 [Cnoc Soilleir](#)

One of Scotland's leading Gaelic culture, heritage and arts organisations, we have a unique joint venture with our partners [Ceolas at Cnoc Soilleir](#). This includes a new education hub in South Uist for Gaelic language, culture, and heritage, ensuring these essential aspects of island identity continue to thrive alongside technological advancement, supporting Gaelic-speaking communities in the Outer Hebrides and in the Gaeltachd beyond, in line with our Gaelic Language Plan and the College's Gaelic Strategy

#### 3.3.6.3 Strategic Collaboration with [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar](#) and partners

To be the academic partner in the Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre project at Creed Business Park puts UHI NWH at the forefront of the green energy revolution. As leaders of the industry skills workstream for the Major Developers Forum, we're ensuring our communities can seize the opportunities from multi-billion-pound investment in renewables.

#### 3.3.6.4 £2.34 million investment in our Stornoway campus creating a Technology Innovation Centre

This includes a Future Energy Lab that will deliver essential skills for renewable energy developments in planning for our islands. New mobile STEM facilities will bring cutting-edge education to young people across the Outer Hebrides.

Our leadership of major Island Growth Deal projects further demonstrates our commitment to regional transformation. Our stewardship of the TalEntEd programme and partnership in the Island Centre for Net

Zero is shaping the green energy and skills agendas, ensuring our island communities are at the forefront of this transition.

[News - Blog | Building a sustainable college for the future - reshaping island education for our communities](#)

- UHI SEAP (3.3.6.1 Sustainability Strategy 2023-2030)

### **3.4 Student engagement and partnership**

Students are at the heart of everything we do. We will strive to ensure that all students, regardless of mode of study and location, feel part of the institution, receive an equity of service, and have a voice. These will be key to enhancing the student experience and developing a sense of community and belonging wherever they choose to study with us.

#### **3.4.1 Students as partners in their learning**

The Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) is the Students' Association that represents all UHI students. It is led by students, run by students, for students. The Students' Association is a representative body, led by a full-time officer team elected every year. These officers are Cross Campus President and Cross-Campus Vice President (Education). These officers are elected from the student body and work full-time to represent all students across the Highlands and Islands.

#### **3.4.2 Students as core of review and enhancement activity**

The college has a signed unique Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that details how we work together to improve the student experience, both individually and collectively. This MoU is additional to the Regional Student Partnership Agreement and is not exhaustive of the activities which could be undertaken to improve the student experience. HISA and the College's Student Engagement and Wellbeing Officers meet fortnightly to collaborate and work together.

The group work from a shared Calendar of Events with an agreed plan for each Academic Year. They work with the wider college teams to support the promotion and recruitment of Student Voice Reps (SVRs) as well as attending, co-ordinating and supporting meetings. Students can sit on various committees across the College including Health and Safety Meetings.

Work is in progress to promote Student News/Newsletter and Events with a revised plan on how to monitor engagement/attendance which will support retention. The plan to develop/implement text from SITS will enable the support team to reach and engage with students early allowing sign posting of relevant information.

#### **3.4.3 Student Voice - Every student, every place, every level**

Students have the opportunity and are actively encouraged to join the digital student ambassador team (3.2.2). This allows them to work with the college to promote the student voice and share their experiences as students, gaining valuable life skills along the way. The programme has meta skills embedded throughout, social intelligence, self-management, innovation. The students gain knowledge and use the skills from application through to the co creation of digital materials.

[Digital Student Ambassadors - UHI North, West and Hebrides](#)

The student voice is central to the college supporting improvement and actions in a timely manner. See 3.2.6 Responsiveness to concerns for all mechanisms.

- Early Student Experience Survey (ESES) regional UHI – undertaken at the end of the first term with all students. Overall, 98% of students who responded were satisfied with their college experience.
- Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) SFC requirement – undertaken in April with all students, except those selected for the NSS survey. Overall experience remained high at 92%

- UHI SEAP (3.4.1), National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

#### **3.4.4 Effective and robust student representation**

HISA aims for every class to have at least one representative, SVRs, collect class views and present feedback to the Students' Association. There are opportunities to work with SVRs across the college to contribute to improvements and shared best practice across all campuses. SVRs through the Students' Association may be asked to represent students in college committees and to represent students at external events. Being an SVR can have a massive impact on CV's and skills development, getting to see 'behind the college curtains' of running a college is an interesting opportunity. SVR's are fully trained ahead of getting started in the role with continued support from staff within HISA and the college.

Consideration has been given to the dispersed and geographical nature of UHI NWH, considerations were approved to allow for 3 HISA Deputes to cover North, West and Islands.

- UHI SEAP (3.4.1, 3.4.3, 3.4.5)

Section 3 Word Count 4744

## 4. Action plan

Principle	Area for enhancement or development	Action(s) and planned impact/ outcomes	Milestone (s/ target date(s), continuing/ carried forward (c/f)	Responsible/ Lead
Data and Evidence	There are no college-wide arrangements for staff to access and use data on learner attendance, retention, and attainment to support improvement.	<p>Senior managers will implement college-wide arrangements to enable staff to access data to monitor learner performance.</p> <p>Outcome: readily accessible data to inform decision making, improvement and enhancement measures.</p>	<p>Recruitment of a data officer who will support staff in the use of college wide data from the METIS system</p> <p>Work with UHI to ensure that there are accurate data reports available to partners to ensure consistency of approach</p>	<p>Curriculum, Performance and Planning, Student Experience</p> <p>UHI APC &amp; MIS Team</p>
Excellence in Learning and Teaching	Most staff would benefit from increased access to professional learning on the use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI).	<p>Reaffirm with curriculum teams the wide UHI resources available to college staff. Staff will record CPD through the HR system as part of professional development reviews.</p> <p>Outcome: enhance student experience, improved student satisfaction and performance indicators.</p>	Regular news items linking to LTA resources and training sessions	<p>Marketing &amp; Communications, Professional Development</p> <p>Heads of Faculty</p> <p>UHI LTA</p>

Principle	Area for enhancement or development	Action(s) and planned impact/ outcomes	Milestone (s/ target date(s), continuing/ carried forward (c/f)	Responsible/ Lead
Excellence in Learning and Teaching	Staff do not signpost or promote meta skills sufficiently to learners within programmes.	<p>Enhance learning and teaching by ensuring consistent approaches. Develop a collective delivery approach to essential skills acquisition and attainment of metaskills,</p> <p>Outcome: career readiness, study skills, resilience and sustainability skills.</p>	<p>Partial To be c/f into 2025.</p> <p>Refresh skills plus portfolio. Embed across all full time. Refresh linkage with industry and seek employer endorsement.</p>	Curriculum & Student Experience
Student Engagement & Partnership	Across most campuses, most learners do not have sufficient knowledge of the role and purpose of HISA and SVRs.	<p>College staff and HISA will work closely to improve learners' awareness of the role and purpose of HISA and SVRs.</p> <p>Outcomes: Increase in Student Voice Reps across all areas. Student representation at key college events and other committees.</p>	Ongoing work to ensure understanding across the college of the role with a key focus of raising awareness amongst the staff teams. Sessions at All Staff Essential Updates and All Staff College Forums have already taken place this AY. Work will continue as part of Curriculum Area catch ups.	Student Experience
Student Engagement & Partnership	Almost half of SVRs have not completed training to support them to carry out their role effectively. This is reducing the impact of the learner voice.	Student Services to work with HISA to actively ensure that training is undertaken by the SVRs at an early stage	Regular meeting with key topics and agenda items	HISA & Student Engagement

Principle	Area for enhancement or development	Action(s) and planned impact/ outcomes	Milestone (s/ target date(s), continuing/ carried forward (c/f)	Responsible/ Lead
Student Engagement & Partnership	The level of FE learner participation in the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey is very low, at 31.4%.	<p>Introduction of wider professional services staff participation in encouraging supporting students to complete the survey.</p> <p>Wider marketing campaign to highlight the survey to students earlier.</p> <p>Partnership working with HISA to actively promote the survey and its benefits to students.</p> <p>Outcome: increase in participation rates (increased the rate in 2024/25)</p>	New process to involve the wider college teams	All front facing staff - led by the Quality and Student Engagement Teams
Supporting Student Success	Training in the use of assistive technologies	<p>Support staff will undergo refresher training and training for new identified technologies</p> <p>Outcome: students will benefit from well trained staff who can then share their knowledge and support students using the technologies</p>	<p>Continuing</p> <p>To be completed fully for new academic year</p> <p>01/09/2025</p>	Student Services Professional Development

[End]