Item	Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit Report (draft)
Committee	Learning, Teaching and Research Committee
Date paper prepared	25/08/2024 **Date of committee** 04/09/2024
Subject	Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit Report (draft)
Author	Fiona Grant
Action requested	☒ **For Information** ☒ **For Discussion** ☐ **For recommendation** ☐ **For Endorsement** ☐ **For Approval**
Purpose of the paper	To share Education Scotland findings.
Brief summary of the paper	The report summarises Education Scotland team findings during their Annual Engagement Visit on the 11th of June 2024. Findings are summarised in a standardised format including positive practice and areas for development. Each college in Scotland will have had similar visits and will have received reports in the same format. This helps with benchmarking The committee is asked to consider the findings and to draw attention to areas for development that they would consider a priority. It would be useful if the the committee could highlight best practice that in their view is worthy for further dissemination.
Consultation How has consultation with partners been conducted?	The report has only been scrutinised by senior managers and the executive team for the accuracy check. On receiving the final report, it will be published and shared with the whole college and the student association – HISA.
Resource implications What are the risks with this proposal?	Implications are outlined within the areas for development.
Risk implications	Discussed within paper
Link with strategy	Curriculum draft strategy, college strategy, curriculum delivery plan, curriculum review, student engagement draft strategy.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	The report covers inclusion, diversity and equality.
Island Community Impact	N/A
Paper status	Highlight the paper status in the list below: ==Open== – the paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction. **Restricted** – the paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting. **Confidential** - the paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online.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].
Freedom of information (FOI)	Highlight the FOI status in the list below. Refer to **NWH Freedom of Information Site** for more information: ==Open== ☐**Closed –** disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research. ☐**Closed –** disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. ☐**Closed -** Disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation. ☐**Closed -** Disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court. ☐**Closed -** Disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act. ☐**Closed -** Other, please specify.
Freedom of information (FOI) disclosure date	If closed/ withheld is selected above, enter the date when this will become 'open': Click or tap to enter a date.

Learning, Teaching and Research Committee

Wednesday 4th September 2024

Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit Report

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Introduction

2023/24 was the last year of the Education Scotland round of Annual Engagement Visits across all colleges in Scotland. The UHI North, West and Hebrides visit happened in June with the lead inspector visiting our Stornoway campus. It was largely carried out online through Microsoft Teams. Meetings were held between the Education Scotland team with both students and staff including an exclusive student association (HISA) meeting.

Report

This is the draft Annual Engagement report. The college returned the draft report to Education Scotland for two minor wording edits which are highlighted in yellow on page 7.

This Annual Engagement report outlines the findings from Education Scotland during their dialogue with staff, students and HISA. The data used within section 3.1 Learner progress and outcomes, was based on academic year (AY) 2022-23 performance within each of the three legacy colleges. Visits like these are extremely helpful. Not only do staff have an opportunity to shine and showcase their best practice, but by taking part, they learn from each other and from the team of inspectors. Education Scotland provides a sector wide view and the team often sign post staff to other leading practitioners. They act as our critical friend, providing a different perspective on what we do and how we perform.

The board is asked to note that the visit was very well organised by the Quality team into 14 different meeting groups including a good turnout of students from across the college. Teaching staff, curriculum management, student support and engagement staff, senior management and executive leadership team all engaged in discussions with the three inspectors.

Next steps

Once Education Scotland return our amended report, the final version will be circulated and the college Education Scotland HMI will be invited to attend the main board meeting. The report will be published internally and shared with all staff. It will be used as a basis for quality enhancement themed meetings within groups of staff, with HISA and within the college interim senior management team.

Along with the rest of the college sector, we are transitioning into a new tertiary quality enhancement framework (TQEF) over the next few years. We are forming our new enhancement plan based on the areas for development within the Annual Engagement Visit report. The new enhancement plan will also include development areas that have yet to be achieved from legacy enhancement plans. The enhancement plan is college wide, it will have a timeline and it will be monitored for progress through a revised self-evaluation approach in line with TQEF. Failure to sufficiently address areas for development could result in a decline in student performance, student satisfaction and poor attainment. It could put the credibility of the college at risk and reduce stakeholder confidence in the college.

Appendix 1 Education Scotland Report

Annual Engagement Visit Report

UHI North, West and Hebrides college

Click or tap to enter a date.

College Principal	**Lydia Rhomer**
Annual Engagement Visit Date	**11 June 2024**
College Nominee	**Tracy Kerr**
Lead HMI	**Karen Stevenson**

1.   Background

Annual Engagement Visits (AEVs) are planned collaboratively between the college, HM Inspectors, and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). During the AEV, the team focussed on the progress made on improvement priorities and the outcomes of previous engagement with HM Inspectors. HM Inspectors met with staff, learners, and other stakeholders. This report outlines the findings from the visit, and includes aspects of positive practice, aspects for improvement, and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the college Principal, college Board of Management, and/or Regional Strategic Body. An accompanying short report will be published on Education Scotland's website.

During the AEV the team explored the following overarching themes: learner progress and outcomes, approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating, and learner engagement.

The team also reviewed progress against actions identified during our engagement in academic year (AY) 2022-23.

2.   The college and its context

UHI North, West and Hebrides is one of the largest partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and delivers further education (FE) and higher education (HE) provision from its campuses in Thurso, Halkirk, Dornoch, Alness, Portree, Auchtertyre, Broadford, Mallaig, Fort William, Kinlochleven, Strontian, Kilchoan, Barra, Cnoc Soillier, Benbecula, North Uist, Gairloch, Ullapool and Stornoway.

The college works with a range of partners to deliver programmes that are aligned to regional and community priorities. These include Gaelic, renewable energies, engineering, advanced manufacturing and technologies, space port skill requirements, and land and sea-based industries. As well as Fe and HE provision, the college delivers senior phase programmes for S4, S5 and S6 pupils, apprenticeships, short training courses for businesses, and leisure and evening courses. Other provision includes upskilling programmes for industry and a wide range of community and leisure-based programmes.

3.   Summary of findings

3.1   Learner progress and outcomes

Summary of key performance indicator information

In August 2023, UHI North Highland, UHI Outer Hebrides and UHI West Highland merged to form UHI North, West and Hebrides. The key performance indicators will refer to each of the legacy institutions individually for annual year 2022-23.

UHI North Highland

- In AY 2022-23, the overall successful completion rate for learners on full-time FE programmes was 67.6% which was 4% above the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23, learner withdrawal rates for learners on full-time and part-time FE programmes were lower than the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23, the successful completion rates for learners with a disability on full-time and part-time FE programmes were above the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23 most of curriculum areas had successful completion rates for full-time and part-time FE programmes that were above the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-2023 the successful completion rate for learners who identify as female on FE programmes was 66.2% and for learners who identify as male was 74.0%. Both rates were above the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23 the overall successful completion rate for learners on part-time FE programmes was 72.4% which was 4.9% lower than sector norm of 77.3%

UHI Lews Castle

- In AY 2022-23 the overall successful completion rate for learners on full-time FE programmes was 76.4% which was 12.8% above the sector norm. Partial success and learner withdrawals were both lower than the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23 the overall successful completion rate for learners on part-time FE programmes was 86.3% which was 9% above the sector norm. Partial success and learner withdrawals were both lower than the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23 the successful completion rates for key groups of learners, including care-experienced learners and learners from an ethnic minority background, were above the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23 nine curriculum areas out of twelve had successful completion rates for full-time and part-time FE programmes that were above the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-2023, the successful completion rate for learners who identify as female on FE programmes was 68.1% and for learners who identify as male was 82.4%. Both rates were above the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23, on FE level programmes the successful completion rates for learners residing in the most deprived postcode areas and learners who are care-experienced learners, were below the sector norm.

UHI West Highland

- In AY 2022-23 the overall successful completion rate for learners on part-time FE programmes was 81.3% which was 4% above the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23 learner withdrawals on full-time and part-time FE level programmes were lower than the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23 the successful completion rates for care-experienced learners on full-time and part-time FE level programmes were above the sector norm.

- In AY 2022-23 the overall successful completion rate for learners on full-time FE programmes was 58.8% which is 4.8% below the sector norm. Partial success and learner withdrawals were both higher than the sector norm.

Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners (QI 3.2)

Areas of positive progress

- Staff use effective arrangements to ensure learners feel welcome and encourage them to develop early connections with their lecturers and peers. Induction programmes are informative and help learners to settle in quickly to college environment.

- Across college campuses, learners feel secure and are well-informed about the procedures for reporting safety or well-being concerns.

- Learners and staff use weekly guidance classes to discuss and explore opportunities for further study and future careers options. This supports learners well to make informed decisions about progression to employment or more advanced learning.

- Student services teams have responded well to the significant increase in demand for learner support. Personal learning support plans (PLSPs) are shared with curriculum teams to ensure that class teachers can adapt learning and teaching approaches to meet identified learning needs. Staff make effective use of alternative assessments to meet the needs of individual learners.

- Most curriculum teams use tracking systems to monitor learner progress and achievement and use this information well to identify learner performance and arrange additional support for learners.

- In the majority of subject areas, support staff contribute productively to curriculum team meetings and progression boards to review learners' attendance and progress and coordinate actions to provide additional support.

Areas for development

- There are no college-wide arrangements for staff to access and use data on learner attendance, retention, and attainment to support improvement.

3.2 Approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating.

Leadership for improvement of learning and teaching (QI 1.2)

Areas of positive progress

- Senior staff meet regularly with Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) office bearers to discuss strategic decisions and improvements to campus facilities.

- The ==Executive Leadership Team (ELT)== carried out a comprehensive review of the curriculum portfolio. Managers drew constructively on the findings to create a curriculum plan for 2024–25 that eases and simplifies the learner journey.

- Course committee meetings are used effectively by all staff to review learner progress and agree adjustments to improve programme design and delivery. They draw productively on feedback from stakeholders to align provision to identified needs. This has included increasing part-time, flexible learning options for working learners.

- Teaching staff engage well in professional dialogue and team-teaching activities to share and adopt effective practice, and a few participate in a peer observation process.

- Annual professional development review (PDR), aligned to General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) professional standards support lecturers well to access professional learning opportunities to improve and enhance their professional practice.

- School-age learners in the region are supported to develop digital skills through access to programmes that prepare them well for progression to work or further learning.

- Senior managers use valuable operational delivery meetings to engage staff in exchanging best practice and to identify challenges in systems and processes. As a result, staff work well together to improve operational efficiency.

- In most subject areas, curriculum teams liaise well with industry partners to inform curriculum planning. As a result, in hospitality, programme start, and end dates were adjusted to align with the requirements of the tourist season. This resulted in an increase in recruitment in hospitality programmes.

Areas for development

- The majority of teaching staff ~~do not~~ ==hold== a recognised teaching qualification, for example the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) or equivalent.

- 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).

Learning, teaching, and assessment (QI 2.3)

Areas of positive progress

- Teaching staff work well together to create a positive environment for learning. They proactively seek learners' views and make good use of feedback to continuously improve the learning experience.

- A variety of teaching methods are used effectively by staff to ensure that classes are engaging and stimulating. In almost all classes, learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning to help them to develop confidence, independence and critical thinking skills.

- Teaching staff prepare learners well for progression to employment or further study. They integrate practical skills alongside academic knowledge and work placement opportunities to provide learners with a comprehensive understanding of industry standards and practices.

- Digital technology is used effectively by curriculum teams to maintain engagement with learners off-campus. Examples include an increase in the number of senior phase learners in secondary schools undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) and completing work placements online.

- Digital templates are used well by teaching staff to produce online content, update class materials and resources, flag-up dates for assignment submissions, and create interactive learning activities. Learners value being able to access these resources quickly and easily at times that suit their individual needs and circumstances.

Areas for development

- Staff do not signpost or promote meta skills sufficiently to learners within programmes.

3.3   Learner Engagement

Learners leading learning (QI 1.2)

Areas of positive progress

- Student voice representatives (SVRs) are invited to course committee meetings and in the majority of curriculum areas. The learner voice is influencing improvements to curriculum delivery and the learner experience.

- Most learners appreciate being encouraged by teachers to take responsibility for their own learning as part of preparation for progression to employment or further study.

- The work of HISA is valued by learners and college staff. HISA representatives contribute productively to the board of management and its subcommittees to ensure that the learner voice is taken into account.

- Most learners value opportunities to develop and apply practical skills and vocational knowledge within work placements.

Areas for development

- Across most campuses, most learners do not have sufficient knowledge of the role and purpose of HISA and SVRs.

- 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.

Evaluation leading to improvement (QI 1.4)

Areas of positive progress

- The SPARQS Student Learning Experience Model is used well by a few SVRs to help identify areas of best practice and areas for improvement.

Areas for development

- The level of FE learner participation in the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey at North Highland College is very low, at 31.4%.

Learning teaching and assessment (QI 2.3)

Areas of positive progress

- 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.

- Learners are confident and comfortable about seeking help from their teachers when they need it. As a result, they feel well supported throughout their programme.

Areas for development

- None identified.

3.4   Update on previous Education Scotland evaluative activities AY 2022-23

Actions from previous AEV

The college has made appropriate progress in most areas for improvement since our last visit. Successful completion rates for full-time and part-time FE programmes have increased and the overall withdrawal rate for full-time FE programmes has decreased. The number of SVRs in the Outer Hebrides has increased.

4.   Main Points for Action

- College staff and HISA should work closely to improve learners' awareness of the role and purpose of HISA and SVRs.

- Senior managers should implement college-wide arrangements to enable staff to access data to monitor learner performance.

5.   What happens next?

We are confident that the college has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve. We will continue to monitor progress with regular contact through the link HM Inspector.

Karen Stevenson
HM Inspector

Annexe 1   Evaluative Terms

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

Annexe 2

Full-time FE – North Highland

College			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2018-19	21.1%	9.7%	69.2%
2019-20	17.2%	12.1%	70.7%
2020-21	18.9%	14.8%	66.3%
2021-22	18.9%	12.3%	68.8%
2022-23	19.7%	12.7%	67.6%
National sector performance			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2018-19	24.7%	10.1%	65.2%
2019-20	20.8%	13.2%	66.0%
2020-21	27.3%	11.7%	60.9%
2021-22	29.3%	11.7%	59.0%
2022-23	25.3%	11.1%	63.6%

Part-time - FE North Highland

College			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2020-21	17.8%	16.1%	66.1%
2021-22	13.1%	21.8%	65.0%
2022-23	11.4%	16.3%	72.4%
National sector performance			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**

2020-21	10.1%	13.7%	76.2%
2021-22	10.7%	13.0%	76.3%
2022-23	10.6%	12.2%	77.3%

Full-time FE – Lews Castle

College			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2018-19	28.4%	10.8%	60.8%
2019-20	17.4%	14.5%	68.1%
2020-21	14.8%	9.8%	75.4%
2021-22	24.5%	13.7%	61.8%
2022-23	17.1%	16.2%	66.7%
National sector performance			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2018-19	24.7%	10.1%	65.2%
2019-20	20.8%	13.2%	66.0%
2020-21	27.3%	11.7%	60.9%
2021-22	29.3%	11.7%	59.0%
2022-23	25.3%	11.1%	63.6%

Part-time FE– Lews Castle

College			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2020-21	7.7%	14.6%	77.7%
2021-22	8.0%	8.6%	83.4%
2022-23	7.5%	6.2%	86.3%
National sector performance			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2020-21	10.1%	13.7%	76.2%
2021-22	10.7%	13.0%	76.3%
2022-23	10.6%	12.2%	77.3%

Full-time FE – West Highland

College			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2018-19	22.2%	7.9%	69.8%
2019-20	15.5%	12.6%	71.8%
2020-21	13.2%	15.7%	71.1%

	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully
2021-22	20.0%	16.0%	64.0%
2022-23	22.6%	14.5%	62.9%
National sector performance			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2018-19	24.7%	10.1%	65.2%
2019-20	20.8%	13.2%	66.0%
2020-21	27.3%	11.7%	60.9%
2021-22	29.3%	11.7%	59.0%
2022-23	25.3%	11.1%	63.6%

Part-time FE– West Highland

College			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2020-21	9.5%	14.8%	75.8%
2021-22	5.4%	16.4%	78.2%
2022-23	6.5%	12.2%	81.3%
National sector performance			
	Withdrawal	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2020-21	10.1%	13.7%	76.2%
2021-22	10.7%	13.0%	76.3%
2022-23	10.6%	12.2%	77.3%