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| Committee | Learning Teaching and Research | | |
| Date paper prepared | 05/08/2025 | Date of committee meeting | 05/09/2023 |
| Subject | Energy Sector Course Plans 2025/26 | | |
| Author | Debbie Miller | | |
| Action requested | I. For noting | | |
| Purpose of the paper | To provide assurance to the Committee, in response to a Board member query, regarding the courses under development for 2025/26, with a particular focus on energy, engineering, and workforce development opportunities. | | |
| Summary of the paper | <p>For 2025/26 UHI North, West and Hebrides is developing new and expanded provision to align with major energy sector investments and regional workforce needs. The focus is on supporting skills pipelines for offshore/onshore wind, hydrogen, hydropower, construction, and associated engineering roles.</p> <p>Planned courses and training provision will include:</p> <p>Further Education (FE): New CECA-type construction programmes; expanded FE electrical provision.</p> <p>Higher Education (HE): Development of engineering (including potential for Graduate Apprenticeships), HNC-level environmental programmes, and potential for new project management and electrical engineering pathways.</p> <p>Short courses and workforce development: Industry-driven provision based on developers' workforce plans, including plant operations, CSCS cards, overhead crane operation, banksman/slinger, and SVQ Level 2 work-based maintenance training.</p> <p>The new provision will be co-designed with industry to ensure relevance, with bespoke programmes where required. Estimated uptake is projected to grow significantly from 2026/27 onwards as major construction phases begin.</p> <p>This curriculum expansion is supported by a dedicated inhouse project team (funded at ~£100k for 25/26), tasked with supporting the production of business cases to attract external investment and align curriculum with industry demand.</p> <p>Other subject areas: a range of other course changes (increases, revisions, removals and developments) were summarised within the paper <i>UHI NWH Curriculum Delivery Plan 2025/26</i> presented to LTRC in</p> | | |

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| | <p>March 2025. Specific developments at SCQF levels 4-6, related to construction, allied health, applied sciences and engineering/renewables.</p> <p>Most notable at the post graduate level, was development of the UHI approved MSc Digital Archaeology, and a range of related short commercial (non-core funded) courses aligned with the strategic project <i>Harris and Barra Unearthed</i>.</p> |
| Consultation | <p>The 2025 internally facilitated effectiveness reviews of the Board and senior committees both identified feedback from independent members about the quality, length and format of committee papers including poorly completed cover sheets, too much detail, a lack of clarity over required actions, decisions and authority, and no executive summaries.</p> <p>A version of this paper was originally prepared and agreed by UHI EO and Court in March 2023.</p> <p>We have recently identified a departure from agreed best practice with a number of committee papers being submitted late or without completed cover sheets and the Board members have requested that we issue this guidance and seek to encourage and enforce adherence to it so as to ensure that committee members receive good quality information and in good time to facilitate informed decisions.</p> |
| Resource implications | <p>Staffing resource for curriculum planning and business case development has been allocated within the Strategic Projects budget for 25/26. Further resource and capital requirements will be brought forward through detailed business cases to ELT, F&GP and the Board.</p> |
| Risk implications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing of energy projects remains fluid, creating uncertainty in demand forecasts. • Delivery of bespoke training may not align with core funding mechanisms. • Mitigations include close engagement with developers/contractors and phased curriculum development. |
| Link with strategy | <p>This work directly supports UHI NWH's strategic priority to position itself as a skills and innovation partner for the energy transition. It contributes to regional just transition and net zero objectives while creating pathways for local school leavers, apprentices, and reskilling opportunities.</p> |

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| <u>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion</u> | Provision will be designed to widen access, with particular attention to creating opportunities for rural and island communities often excluded from large-scale investment benefits. |
| Island Community Impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive impacts expected, particularly in the Outer Hebrides, through locally delivered training linked to energy projects. Provision will address barriers of distance and support community resilience |
| Paper status | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open – The paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction. <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted – The paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential - The paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online. Some information is considered commercially sensitive. [Please note papers may still be subject to Freedom of Information requests – see below]. |
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