

Committee	Learning Teaching and Research		
Date paper prepared	05/08/2025	Date of committee meeting	05/09/2023
Subject	Understanding Scholarship, Research and REF at UHI-NWH		
Author	Prof Stuart Gibb, Director of Research and KE		
Action requested	I. For noting		
Purpose of the paper	<p>Purpose of this Guide</p> <p>Research is a core function of Scottish universities, integral to their mission alongside teaching and knowledge exchange. This brief guide aims to help staff understand some of the distinctions between research, scholarship and advanced scholarship. It outlines what it means to be research active and provides a summary of the REF (Research Excellence Framework).</p>		
Summary of the paper	<p>This guide emphasises the importance of research as a core function of Scottish universities, integral to their mission alongside teaching and knowledge exchange.</p> <p>It provides staff with clear explanations of the distinctions between research, scholarship and advanced scholarship, supporting greater understanding of the different forms of academic contribution.</p> <p>The guide also clarifies what it means to be research active, setting out the expectations for academic engagement in research and the value this brings to institutions, students, and wider society. In addition, it includes an accessible summary of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the national assessment exercise used to evaluate the quality, reach and impact of UK university research, and to inform research funding allocations. Together, these elements are designed to help staff better situate their work within the broader research and knowledge exchange landscape.</p> <p>The paper was endorsed by ELT 19/08/25</p>		
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select Research and teaching staff • UHI Dean of Research (now former) • Research and KE Management Group • ELT (endorsed 19/08/25) 		

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Prep 20/08/25
Meeting 10/09/ 25

Resource implications	No direct resource implication.
Risk implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of roles: If staff do not fully understand the distinctions between research, scholarship and advanced scholarship, there is a risk of inconsistent practice and misalignment with institutional priorities. Research activity: Without clear expectations of what it means to be research active, staff engagement in research may be uneven, reducing institutional research capacity and reputation. REF preparedness: Limited awareness of the REF and its requirements could weaken the institution's performance in future assessments, with financial and reputational consequences. Knowledge exchange and teaching impact: Lack of integration between research, teaching, and KE could diminish the quality of student learning and reduce external engagement opportunities.
Link with strategy	This guide is linked to the 2022-5 UHI Research, Impact and Knowledge Exchange Strategic Plan and 2025-8 UHI NWH Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy. The number of staff designated as being 'Research Active' and eligible and / or entered into the REF are KPIs for UHI NWH. They will be monitored by Research and KE Management Group and reported to the Executive and Board of Management on an annual basis.
<u>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion</u>	
Island Community Impact	Equally relevant to all NWH staff regardless of location
Paper status	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open – The paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted – The paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting.</p> <p><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].</p>
<u>Freedom of information</u>	Choose an item. FOISA exemptions Scottish Information Commissioner (itspublicknowledge.info)

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