

Operational Plan:

Generative AI for UHI North West and Hebrides

Lead Officer (Post):	ICT Manager
Responsible Office/ Department:	ICT
Responsible Committee:	Audit and Risk Management
Review Officer (Post):	
Date plan approved:	17.02.26
Date plan last reviewed and updated:	NA
Date plan due for review:	17.02.29
Public face / College internal facing only:	Public face
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	Not required

1 Purpose

1.1

To develop best practice use of Generative AI technologies for UHI North, West and Hebrides for the benefit of students, staff, and business development whilst ensuring that use is responsible, in line with College and ICT Strategy, including contributing positively to ecologically diligent use.

1.2

Collaborate with UHI Learning & Teaching Technology Development Group and Generative AI sub-group to develop AI use strategy, guidance and policy for Staff and Student safety, and business development. UHI NWH ICT Manager is working closely with UHI L&T and Governance to develop and progress AI use proactively and responsibly.

1.3

To establish a secure locally hosted Generative AI Sandbox developed by the ICT Services department at UHI North West and Hebrides. The sandbox will offer a safe controlled space for staff and students to explore and experiment with cutting edge generative AI tools including large language models LLMs and image generation technologies within a protected and policy aligned digital environment.

2 Positive Rationale

2.1 Educational Value

- **Experiential Learning:** Promotes hands on engagement with AI technologies across a range of disciplines
- **Curriculum Integration:** Supports modules and coursework in digital media computing education and more
- **Creative Exploration:** Encourages innovation in writing design prototyping and research projects

2.2 Skill Development

- **Digital Fluency:** Builds essential knowledge of how AI models function including prompt engineering and ethical considerations

- **Technical Experience:** Exposes users to practical aspects of generative AI system use and limitations
- **Employability Boost:** Prepares students for the workforce by simulating real world AI environments

2.3 Secure and Responsible Use

- **Local Hosting:** Keeps all experimentation within the institutions digital infrastructure ensuring privacy and data compliance
- **Content Safety:** Integrates robust content filtering and usage controls to maintain appropriate constructive outputs
- **Usage Monitoring:** Enables responsible use tracking and policy enforcement through user access tiers and logging
- UHI NWH is a substantial player in steering/shaping UHI policy and strategy on AI use.

2.4 Institutional Advancement

- **Innovation Leadership:** Positions UHI North, West and Hebrides as a leading Academic Partner in AI readiness and education
- **Collaborative Opportunity:** Enables interdepartmental projects between curriculum and staff departments
- **Research and Development:** Fosters internal projects and pilot programs involving AI assisted research or automation

3 Implementation Plan

3.1 Technical Setup

Local AI project:

- **Infrastructure:** A highspec GPU server hosted locally and maintained by the ICT Services department
- **Text Generation:** Opensource LLMs such as Mistral LLaMA Deepseek, or GPT-OSS
- **Image Generation:** Tools like Stable Diffusion or DALL-E equivalents
- **Management Layer:** Docker containers hosted in custom server environment
- **Authentication:** Linked existing UHI user accounts and email addresses.

Cloud based services (Co-Pilot, Claude AI and others):

- Collaboration and development of shared governance, best practice and practical usage examples with UHI Partnership.
- Explore economically sustainable and strategically transformative service delivery as part of wider Transformation project.
- Apply controls and restrictions where necessary to ensure data security and GDPR compliance.

3.2 Access and Governance

- Tiered Permissions: Different access levels for students, staff and admins to protect and monitor use
- Safe Use Policy: Clear documentation on acceptable use with guidance on ethics and safety
- Support Resources: ICT provided guides workshops and help channels to assist users

3.3 Safety and Oversight

- Moderation Tools: Implement filters and human-in-the-loop review systems for flagged content
- Logging and Monitoring: Secure audit trails to assess tool use and respond to misuse
- Governance Committee: An internal advisory group to guide policy updates and evaluate sandbox impact

4 Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

- Feedback Mechanisms Surveys suggestion boxes and workshops for user feedback
- Usage Analysis Monitor feature use system load and project outcomes
- Iterative Upgrades Adjust models capabilities and controls based on ongoing needs and discoveries

5 Additional Funding Projects, resources and roles.

- Apply for University Transformation Funding (UTF) for “The UHI North West and Hebrides Transformational AI Initiative”

The UTF seeks to support that transformation within the financial resources available from the under-delivery of SFC-funded student places in AY 2023-24. (This relates to funding already allocated to the sector in AY 2023-24 and is not new or additional funding. It also runs parallel with the [College Transformation Framework](#).)

The key focus of the UTF is to secure a university sector that is front and centre of innovation, aligns with the economic priorities of the country and delivers transformational change towards future financial sustainability.

We have applied for this project funding with a proposal to deliver:

- introductory and applied short courses on generative AI, including entry-level provision (“What is AI and how can I use it in life and work?”) suitable for students, UHI-wide staff and the general public;
- practical guidance, standards and exemplars to support safe, responsible and effective use of AI by staff, particularly within professional services;
- integration of AI tools and approaches into teaching practice, curriculum development and business development activity;
- a sustainable internal capability that can be mainstreamed following the funding period.

Key deliverables would include:

- the appointment and deployment of a Digital and AI Services Development Officer;
- a portfolio of AI literacy and applied AI short courses;
- published internal guidance and best-practice resources for UHI staff use;
- demonstrable improvements in confidence, capability and consistency of AI use across UHI.

Full details of the proposal are to be found in the document: UTF Application – Transformation AI Initiative

6 Conclusion

- UHI North West and Hebrides will leverage appropriate and approved Generative AI tools to improve staff productivity, foster business development, and develop staff skills to both make use of the technology and understand it’s limitations, risks, and pitfalls.

- The Generative AI Sandbox project at UHI North, West and Hebrides will empower students and staff to safely explore and understand artificial intelligence in a local, secure, and ethical environment. Developed by the ICT Services department, this initiative promotes learning, creativity, and innovation—while safeguarding users and aligning with institutional values.
- UHI NWH involvement with UHI Partnership Governance and L&T Technology Development groups will work to ensure that staff and students are able to make the most of developing AI technologies as effectively and safely as possible, and making the most of the new technologies to maximise productivity and job satisfaction.