Item 00

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Meeting	Learning, Teaching and Research Committee
Date and time	Tuesday 10 December 2024 at 4.30 p.m.
Location	Virtually – via Microsoft Teams

Governance Officer
03 December 2024

AGENDA

Welcome and Apologies

Declaration of Interests and/or any Statement of Connections or Transparency Statements.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

1. MINUTES

a. Note of the Creative Space Session (CSS-LTR-092024) of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 24 September 2024

b. Minutes of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 24 September 2024

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS - none

3. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

Report by Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience & Quality

a.) Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4. EARLY STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Report by the Quality Manager

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT – SELF EVALUATION & ACTION PLAN
Report by Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience & Quality and Quality Manager

6. SUPPORTING PRIORITY GROUPS
Presentation by Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience & Quality & Wellbeing & Learning Support Manager

7. HISA UPDATE
Verbal Update from Student's Association President

8. RESEARCH UPDATE
Verbal Report by Director – Centre for Living Sustainability & Director of Research – Biodiversity & Freshwater

a) Research and Innovation Strategy

ITEMS FOR NOTING

9. LEARNING & TEACHING REVIEW
Report by Quality Manager

10. QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS REPORT
Report by Quality Team

11. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES - CONFIDENTIAL

a) Minutes of the Student Journey and Enhancement Committee held on 18th September 2024.
b) Minutes of the Student Journey and Enhancement Committee held on 23rd October 2024.
c) Minutes of the Student Journey and Enhancement Committee held on 20th November 2024

12. AOCB

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 11 March 2025 at 4.30 p.m.

If any member wishes to add an item of business to the Agenda, please inform the Chair and the Governance Officer as soon as possible. Additional items of business will only be considered for inclusion in the agenda in advance of the start of the meeting.

ITEM 02.

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Outstanding Actions from LT&R Committee Meetings

Item	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	ACTIONED

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Board of Management

Subject/Title:	Policy & Procedure Approval
Author: [Name and Job title]	Quality
Meeting:	LTR Board Committee
Meeting Date:	December 2024
Date Paper prepared:	03/12/2024
Brief Summary of the paper:	The LTR Committee is asked to approve the reviewed **Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy**. Tracked changes are not available due to UHI not sharing that version of the document with academic partners. The current version of the Policy can be found here. The Policy was approved at Policy & Procedure Review Panel on 4th November 2024. Staff consultation is open for feedback on the Policy between 5th – 26th November. The Policy was due to be presented at JCC on 4th November but as the meeting was not quorate this will be rescheduled. The Policy was approved at HR Board Committee in November. The attached Equality Impact Assessment is requiring update in the narrative content only and this will be completed prior to full Board Committee, the decisions within the EIA will not change.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Approval
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:**:** • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change	Compliance
Resource implications:	No **If yes, please specify**:
Risk implications:	Yes **If yes, please specify:** Operational: Organisational: Policies review and development required to ensure compliance with legislation and awarding body regulations.
Equality and Diversity implications:	Yes **If yes, please specify:** Policy EIA included
Consultation:	Staff

[staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	
Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]	Non-confidential
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in "open" business* [Yes/No]	Yes

*If a paper should **not** be included within "open" business, please highlight below the reason.

Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research (S27)		Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs (S30)	
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (S33)		Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court (S36)	
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act (S38)		Other (please give further details)	
For how long must the paper be withheld? (express either as the time which needs to pass or a condition which needs to be met.)			

Further guidance on application of the exclusions from Freedom of Information legislation is available via

http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/ScottishPublicAuthorities/ScottishPublicAuthorities.asp and

http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/web/FILES/Public_Interest_Test.pdf

University of the Highlands and Islands Inverness

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

POL/XXX

Lead Officer (Post):	Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience & Quality
Responsible Office/ Department:	Human Resources
Responsible Committee:	Learning, Teaching & Research & Human Resources committees
Review Officer (Post):	Head of HR
Date policy approved:	30/04/2020
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	20/04/2020
Date policy due for review:	June 2023
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	01/11/2024
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	

Accessible versions of this policy are available. Please contact the University Governance Team.

Policy Summary

Overview	This policy demonstrates UHI Inverness's approach and commitment to equality for our students, staff, visitors, contractors and others who engage with us through any activity across the partnership.
Purpose	This policy sets out our vision and expectation that all individuals in the universities community are treated with dignity, fairness and respect. All individuals have a legal right (Equality Act 2010) and freedom to bring their true authentic selves to work and study at UHI Inverness in a supportive and inclusive environment.
Scope	This policy applies to all current and prospective students and UHI Inverness Staff. This includes temporary staff, agency staff, consultants, Board Members, volunteers and collaborators at the University of the Highlands and Islands and Academic Partners.
Consultation	The policy will be shared via the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee for consultation to appropriate UHI Inverness Staff and Committees. Consultation was available to the UHI EDI Committee, which represents all partners, and through UHI Inverness's EDI Committee. Approval will be sought from both the Human Resources and Learning, Teaching and Research Committee.
Implementation and Monitoring	The policy is implemented by all Academic Partners and the University of the Highlands and Islands. Each Academic Partner is responsible for ensuring the policy is adhered to within their organisation. The policy will be monitored on a strategic basis by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
Risk Implications	This policy will apply to UHI and Academic Partners in compliance with the Equality Act (2010), Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and Human Rights Act (1998). Failure for UHI Inverness to comply with this policy may result in a breach of legal responsibility as set out in statutory obligations in Appendix 1. It would also have a negative impact on staff, student and communities' as well as reputational risk to UHI and Academic Partners.
Link with Strategy	Policy relates to statutory compliance and governance arrangements.
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: November 2024

	Data Protection Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Introduction and Policy Statement

1.1 UHI Inverness is a progressive and unique tertiary partnership which seeks to cultivate a more inclusive working, learning, teaching and research environment for all members of its community.

1.2 This policy sets out our vision and expectation that all individuals in the universities community are treated with dignity, fairness and respect. All individuals have a legal right (Equality Act 2010) and freedom to bring their true authentic selves to work and study at UHI Inverness in a supportive and inclusive environment.

1.3 UHI Inverness aims to enrich experiences through collaborating with our communities, staff and students to support, promote and celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion. We believe that every individual has the right to feel valued, respected and supported.

1.4 The University and all Academic Partners are committed to meeting the legislative obligations set under the Equality Act 2010, creating a positive culture which fosters good relations and advances equality of opportunity for all. UHI Inverness will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct in all aspects of work, research and study.

1.5 UHI has launched a new Strategic Plan 2030 which highlights UHI's values and mission to have a transformational impact on our people, communities and economy.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all current and prospective students and employees of UHI Inverness. This includes temporary staff, agency staff, consultants, Board Members, volunteers and collaborators.

2.2 As a provider of education and employment, UHI Inverness values diversity and is committed to encouraging everyone to realise their full potential. To this end, UHI Inverness continues to work with students, staff, external agencies and the wider community to develop a positive and enabling culture of work and study.

2.3 The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity apply to the way in which UHI Inverness staff and students, as well as visitors, contractors, subcontractors, temporary and agency staff, service providers, suppliers, former staff and students and any other persons associated with the functions of the university treat one another.

3. Legislation

3.1. This policy supports UHI to carry out its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

3.2. The Equality Act recognises the following protected characteristics

- Age

- Disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

3.3. Not all Academic Partners have a legal obligation to the Scottish Specific Duties (2012), but all Academic Partners should have **due regard** to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

3.4. UHI Inverness will conduct statutory duties under the Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, demonstrating our commitment to mainstreaming equality and diversity by:

3.2.1 Publishing and delivering equality outcomes which reflect how UHI Inverness plans to impact positively on our staff, students and communities, every four years.

3.2.2 Publishing a mainstreaming report, demonstrating our progress against our planned outcomes, showing the progress we have made to mainstream equality in our policies, practices and decision-making functions, every 2 years.

3.2.3 Monitoring the potential impact of our policies, procedures and practices on different protected groups to help tackle inequality, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

3.2.4 Collecting, analysing and reporting on and improving the quality of student and staff protected characteristic data in line with public sector equality duties/sector best practice and Data Protection legislation, every 2 years.

3.2.5 Publish gender pay gap information annually and, future reporting commencing 2025, includes disability and ethnicity pay gap information.

3.2.6 Publish equality statements on equal pay and publish board member diversity information gathered by the Scottish Ministers.

3.2.7 Publish all requirements in a manner that is accessible and available to the public on UHI Inverness and Academic Partner websites.

3.2.8 Completing where appropriate Equality Impact Assessments, removing any potential barriers to access, learning, participation, retention and achievement of students and staff by making reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

3.2.9 Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.

3.2.10 Creating inclusive and accessible learning and working environments that promote respect for all. These environments aim to prevent and challenge stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and harassment and disadvantage.

3.2.11 Legislative Framework and Related Policies

3.2.11.1 This policy will be applied by UHI Inverness in accordance with relevant legislation and related policies:

- Dignity in the Workplace policy
- Staff and Student Code of Conduct policy
- Recruitment and Selection policy
- Admissions policy
- Reasonable Adjustment guidance
- Maternity and Parenting Leave
- Tertiary Learner Support policy
- Promoting Attendance policy
- Support to Study policy
- Special Leave policy
- Supporting and Managing Performance policy
- Supporting Probation policy
- British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005
- Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016
- The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005
- Islands (Scotland) Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998

3.2.12 This policy will be reviewed to consider any new relevant legislation.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 UHI Inverness Finance and General Purposes Committee is responsible for approving the policy and for ensuring that UHI Inverness complies with its statutory and moral obligations.

4.2 UHI Inverness will promote and proactively mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion across all its functions.

4.3 The Principal and senior management team in UHI Inverness are responsible for operational compliance of the policy. They must ensure that Managers, Staff and Students operate in an environment where they can fulfil their responsibilities in relation to the policy.

4.4 Line Managers are responsible for implementing this policy, ensuring that our commitment to equality is followed through and adequately communicated both internally and externally.

4.5 Line Managers are responsible for ensuring selection for recruitment, promotion, training and work allocation is carried out in a non-discriminatory manner and in accordance with the law.

4.6 All UHI Inverness staff are responsible for ensuring that selection for admission and ongoing assessment of students is carried out in a non-discriminatory manner.

4.7 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy as well as developing and progressing our EDI legislative responsibilities and strategic goals.

4.8 Everyone at UHI Inverness has a responsibility to ensure the continuing success of this policy by:

- Treating everyone with dignity and respect irrespective of their protected characteristics.
- Bringing to the attention of management any suspected breaches of this policy.
- Working together to promote and prevent an environment that does not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Proactively seek opportunities to identify, implement, share and reflect upon potential improvements to inclusive practice.
- Seeking opportunities to include staff and students who may be or feel peripheral to UHI Inverness community.

4.9 UHI Inverness will work in conjunction with HISA (Highlands and Islands Student's Association) to take forward their work on equality and diversity and to seek student feedback relevant to equality of opportunity and experience.

4.10 All current and prospective students and employees: this includes temporary staff, agency staff, consultants, Board Members, volunteers and collaborators are responsible for adhering to the principles of this policy in the context of their engagement with UHI Inverness.

4.11 UHI Inverness will take reports and allegations of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other relevant complaints seriously and will investigate such complaints, which may result in disciplinary action. Following investigation, allegations of discrimination, harassment or victimisation may result in action being taken as specified in related policy and procedures.

4.12 This policy will be available on UHI Inverness website and the all-staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion SharePoint site.

5. Neurodiversity

5.1 Neurodiversity refers to the different ways the brain may work and interpret information. It highlights that people think about things differently. We have different interests, motivations, and natural strengths.

5.2 Most people are neurotypical, meaning that the brain functions and processes information in the way society expects – sometimes also described as allistic. Many

day-to-day tasks are designed in a 'neurotypical' way and therefore these may have an impact on someone who is 'neurodivergent'.

5.3 Neurodivergence includes (and is not limited to) Attention Deficit Disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia.

5.4 Neurodiversity encompasses all specific learning differences, many of which co-occur or overlap so individuals may experience the strengths and challenges associated with more than one of the specific types of neurodiversity.

5.5. There are many workplace adjustments and management strategies that may be considered and may be useful for a range of staff but particularly those who are neurodivergent. Staff should discuss with their line manager in the first instance.

6. Appendix: Definitions

6.1 This appendix provides definitions of key terms as well as links to guidance provided by Britain's equality and human rights regulator Equality and Human Rights Commission.

6.2 **British Sign Language (BSL):** UHI Inverness recognises that BSL is a language in its own right (with its own vocabulary and syntax). We are required to meet the requirements of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015. Our BSL Plan 20242030 sets out our commitment and improved support for BSL users.

6.3 **Discrimination** occurs when you are treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation and this treatment cannot be objectively and reasonably justified. Discrimination can also occur if you are disadvantaged by being treated the same as another person when your circumstances are different (for example if you are disabled or pregnant).

6.4. Types of Discrimination

6.4.1 **Direct Discrimination** This is when you are treated worse than another person or other people because:

- you have a protected characteristic
- someone thinks you have that protected characteristic (known as discrimination by perception)
- you are connected to someone with that protected characteristic (known as discrimination by association)

6.4.2 **Indirect discrimination** occurs when an organisation has rules or policies, conditions or requirements, that are applied to everyone but leave a person with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage.

6.4.3 **Harassment** in general terms, is unwanted conduct related to protected characteristics, which are sex, gender reassignment (i.e. transgender status),

race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, that:

- has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct

6.4.4 **Victimisation** is treating someone less favourably because of something they have done under, or in connection with, equalities legislation.

Definitions

Diversity: is recognising, respecting and celebrating differences and similarities linked to personal characteristics, cultures, values, attributes, roles and workstyles.

Equality: refers to providing equal opportunities to everyone, making sure every person can make the most of their lives and talents, while protecting people against discrimination.
Equity: ensures that everyone's needs are met through reasonable adjustments and providing fair and additional support where required.

Equality Act (2010): The Equality Act brought together more than 116 pieces of legislation, simplifying legislation and harmonising protection for all and became law in 2010. It covers everyone in Britain and protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Equality Mainstreaming Duty: means integrating equality into the day-to-day working of authority. This means taking equality into account in the way the university exercises its functions.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA): assesses the potential impact of new or revised policies, practices or services against the requirements of general public sector equality duties. Conducting an EIA is a legal requirement for public bodies in Scotland and helps to ensure that everybody's needs are taken into account before changes are implemented. This allows University to proactively identify and mitigate against barriers to participation, attainment or wellbeing, and hopefully avert potentially negative experiences.

Gaelic Language: The Gaelic language is indigenous to the Highlands and Islands, among other areas. As such it is not covered under the definition of race/nationality as defined by the Equality Act 2010. University recognises responsibilities under the Gaelic Language Scotland Act (2005) to ensure that discrimination is not incurred by Gaelic speaking individuals and communities.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: The Equality Act recognises sex as a binary characteristic (i.e. Male/ Female) and protects those who undergo or intend to undergo gender reassignment (i.e. from one gender to another). UHI Inverness recognises that gender identity and gender expression are not necessarily fixed or binary; we will treat

bullying and harassment on these grounds as seriously as if they relate to any protected characteristic as defined in the Act.

Positive Action: Anyone recruiting staff, students or volunteers can legally justify 'positive action' if a particular group is underrepresented in order to reduce inequality and promote diversity. This involves taking action to increase the likelihood of underrepresented groups participating.

Protected Characteristics: It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their protected characteristics. There are nine protected characteristics which include:

Age: This refers to a person belonging to a particular age group, which can mean people of the same age (e.g. 32-year-olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18-30 year olds, or people over 50).

Disability: A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender Reassignment: Where a person undergoes, or proposes to undergo, a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Pregnancy and Maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race: A race is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.

Religion or Belief: Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex: A man or a woman.

Sexual Orientation: Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Public Sector Equality Duty: as a publicly funded organisation, UHI Inverness has a statutory duty to fulfil both General and Specific Public Sector Equality Duties under the Equality Act (2010). The public sector equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010 is referred to as the 'general equality duty'.

General Equality Duties: refers direct the way UHI Inverness treats its staff, students and visitors and reflect all UK public bodies' responsibility to have due regard to meet the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Specific Duties: Scottish-Specific Duties relate to how public bodies carry out, evidence and present their commitment to enacting General Duties, and responds to ongoing changes identified by the Scottish Government.

Reasonable Adjustments: Where a disabled person is at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled, there is a duty to take reasonable steps to remove that disadvantage by:

- changing provisions, criteria or practices
- changing or removing a physical feature or providing a reasonable alternative way to avoid that feature
- providing auxiliary aids

An adjustment should, as far as possible, remove or reduce any disadvantage faced by a disabled worker or service user. Please contact HR if you are a staff member and require any reasonable adjustments – hr.ic@uhi.ac.uk or if you are a student, please contact our Learning Support team - additionalsupport.ic@uhi.ac.uk.

7. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0			New policy for 2019	Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy Ownership Group
1			Under review 2024	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and UHI EDI Committee
2				
3				
4				

Equality impact assessment (EIA)

Equality Impact Assessment is a legal requirement as set out in the Equality Act (2010) and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) regulations 2012 and may be used as evidence for cases referred for further investigation for compliance and governance issues.

This document has four sections. Please supply the required information for each section.

Section 1: EIA information

1. Department/section: Human Resources / Equality Diversity and Inclusion
2. Date of assessment: September 2024
3. Review date: September 2027
4. Author/Owner: Stephanie Kirkham
5. Signature: Stephanie Kirkham
6. Date: 20 September 2024

Section 2: background

1. What is the title of the proposed activity / decision / new or revised policy or procedure?

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Review 2024

2. What is the aim of proposed activity / decision / new or revised policy or procedure? Please provide as much detail as you can.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy aims to serve students and staff of UHI and Academic Partners, the policy has been revised to include up-to-date legislation and information on responsibilities across all partners. This policy sets out our vision and expectation that all individuals in the universities community are treated with dignity, fairness and respect. All individuals have a legal right (Equality Act 2010) and freedom to bring their true authentic selves to work and study at UHI in a supportive and inclusive environment.

3. Who will be affected? Please add the appropriate letters (P for Positive, N for Negative and N/I for neutral impact) to show the impact of the proposed action on each characteristic or staff and students with relation to 1. Eliminating discrimination, 2. Advancing quality of opportunity and 3. Promoting and fostering good relations.

This policy applies to all current and prospective students and employees of UHI. This includes temporary staff, agency staff, consultants, Board and Court Members, volunteers and collaborators.

Impact	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage / Civil Partnership*	Pregnancy and maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Socio-economic & Social Class
1. Eliminating discrimination	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
2. Advancing equality of opportunity	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
3. Promoting good relations	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Section 3: impact

4. What evidence do you have for the potential negative impact on the protected characteristic or staff and students? Please consider what evidence has been or will be used to inform the proposed activity/decision/new or revised policy or procedure.

There will be no negative impact on protected characteristics, should any evidence arise the appropriate measures to reduce impact will be applied.

5. What evidence do you have to show a positive impact on the protected characteristic or staff and students? Please consider what evidence has been or will be used to inform the proposed activity/decision/new or revised policy or procedure.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy demonstrates our approach and commitment to creating and upholding an equal, inclusive and diverse workplace and learning environment for staff, students, visitors' contractors and others who engage with us across the partnership. This policy will have a positive impact on all under-represented groups and protected characteristics, the aim is to ensure dignity and respect for all is upheld across the partnership.

Age: UHI is a tertiary organisation, offering a wide range of courses in further and higher education from ages under 16 to 60+. The impact of this policy on people of all ages would be positive as the policy promotes fair treatment of all ages, preventing discrimination on the grounds of age in employment, learning and other areas covered within the policy. In 2023, UHI staff age range was at its highest between the age of 40-44 and lowest between 16-24 and 65+. For HE students the age range was highest between 16-20 years in 2021 and in 2023 between 25-34 years. This policy will ensure different age groups have access to equal opportunities and challenge age-based discrimination.

Disability: This policy will have a positive impact on individuals with disabilities, it ensures that people who may require reasonable adjustments can have equal access to employment, services and education. HE enrolments by disability were highest in the form of mental health condition such as depression. Only 21 members of staff declared a disability, this EDI Policy will ensure staff are protected and feel safe to disclose to ensure appropriate support is accessed. Accessibility is fundamental to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals who may require reasonable adjustments. This policy will prevent discrimination on the grounds of disability at UHI.

Gender Reassignment: This policy would have a positive impact on gender-reassignment as it will protect individuals who are transitioning or have transitioned from discrimination in education and the workplace. Recent data from UHI confirmed that employees 'prefer not to say', this policy will ensure staff feel safe to disclose and could ensure appropriate facilities, confidentiality and address workplace discrimination.

Marriage/Civil Partnership: There would be a positive impact on Marriage and Civil Partnership as it would prevent discrimination or unfair treatment on the grounds of marital status or civil partnership, ensuring equal access to education, services and employment.

Pregnancy/Maternity: This policy would have a positive impact on pregnancy and maternity as it would ensure pregnant individuals and new mothers are protected against unfair dismissal and have access to maternity leave or related services/support without discrimination.

Race: This policy would have a positive impact on people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds as it aims to prevent racial discrimination and promote diversity in the workplace, education and UHI services. HE student enrolments by ethnicity recognises a disproportionate number of students are white compared to black, Asian and minority ethnic. Staff ethnicity in 2023 consists of a similar disproportionate number of white (Scottish/British) staff, this policy will ensure individuals are protected from racial harassment or bullying and encourage diverse hiring and recruitment practices. The EDI Policy should promote a culture shift, promoting awareness and understanding as well as promoting inclusion, respect and fairness.

Religion or Belief: This policy protects individuals from discrimination based on their religious beliefs or lack of belief. The policy will have a positive impact on this protected characteristic as it will ensure all religious practices are respected and may require flexible working, accommodation or accessible services.

Sex: This policy will have a positive impact on sex, it will also promote understanding on gender equality such as gender-neutral policies, address sexism and unfair treatment in hiring and promoting. The largest cohort of staff at EO is made up of women, this policy will ensure safeguarding against discrimination, promoting inclusive practice for all gender identities in the workplace, our services and education. Our up to date Gender Pay Gap information can be found: UHI Executive Office Gender Pay Gap

Sexual Orientation: At UHI there has been low reporting of sexual orientation, with 156 identifying as heterosexual, this is consistent with HE students. This policy would ensure all staff, students and visitors can bring their authentic selves to work and education by

protecting them from bullying and harassment as well as unfair treatment. It would, in time encourage disclosure of sexual orientation and promote inclusive practice for all sexual identities.

Socio-economic and social class: Although not a specific protected characteristic there are inequalities of access to opportunities within education, employment and other socio-economic services. This policy will protect people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and ensuring access to education, including scholarships and services which will close the attainment gap.

Further information can be found on the universities Public Sector Equality Reporting Duty Update 2023.

6. Does the evidence show neutral impact, what evidence do you have to come to this conclusion?

No, the evidence demonstrates a positive impact.

7. Who will be consulted? Please list the staff or groups involved in completing this EIA as well as any engagement with equality groups.

The policy will be shared via the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee for consultation to appropriate UHI Staff and Committees. Consultation was available to the EDI Committee which represents all partners. Approval will be sought from Partnership Council. The Equality Impact Assessment has been completed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

8. Will the proposed activity / decision / new or revised policy or procedure be accessible for all?

Yes, this document has been reviewed and will be converted to accessible format.

Section 5: summary of EIA outcome

Highlight the appropriate outcome from the 4 outcomes below:

1. No further action to be carried out.
2. Amendments or changes to be made to the proposed activity / decision / new or revised policy or procedure.
3. Proceed with awareness of adverse impact.
4. Abandon process – stop and rethink.

Please forward completed EIA form to Nicholas Oakley, Governance and Policy Officer.

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SJEC

Subject/Title:	ESES Report 2024-25
Meeting and date:	Student Journey and Enhancement Committee 23/10/2024
Author:	Stephen Wells, Quality Officer
Decision, Discussion or Noting:	Discussion
Link to Strategic Plan:	Student Engagement
Cost implications:	No *(delete as applicable)* **If yes, please specify:**
Risk assessment:	No *(delete as applicable)* **If yes, please specify:** Financial: Operational: Organisational:

Recommendation(s)

The Student Journey and Enhancement Committee are asked to discuss the results of the Early Student Experience Survey 2024-25 and to agree specific next steps with regards to areas of collective improvement needed.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the recent Early Student Experience Survey (ESES) which was conducted to assess the feedback and satisfaction levels of all aspects of student experience at UHI Inverness. The survey response rate was the second highest achieved, 2.7% lower than last year's highest score. The overall satisfaction score was also marginally lower than last year, down 0.5% but still higher than earlier years. The high response rate unlocked £1,000 which was donated to our charity partner, James Support Group.

Charity Partnership

To engage students and gather valuable feedback, we partnered with local suicide prevention and support charity, James Support Group. This is the second time this charity has been proposed and selected by our students. The Highlands has one of the highest suicide rates in the UK and James Support Group provides support services to those affected by suicide and those having suicidal thoughts. Their involvement raises awareness of the ESES survey but also boosts their profile within our student community and aligns with our broader mission of community engagement and collective responsibility.

Survey Approach

Most students were eligible to complete the ESES. ESOL students were given translated help sheets to aid online completion and Supported Education students were given paper versions of the survey including graphics and symbols. Work based students were asked additional questions to the core question set and were also able to access paper versions of the survey to enable increased response rates. School students were also given the option to identify themselves as such which aided their identification onto infill programmes. The ESES was distributed electronically to all eligible students via email with a unique survey link, taking around 5 minutes to complete.

ESES eligibility criteria was:

- Students with a current enrolment status
- Students studying a full time or part time of 160hrs or more of learning (4 credits or more)
- Students on courses at SCQF level 4 – 11.

The ESES was split into three sections:

- **Satisfaction Survey:** a set of core questions based on previous years regionally devised core questions, plus questions based on last year's feedback.
- **Satisfaction Ratings**: section where students can rate the quality of UHI Inverness services which they have used. A free text option was available to capture any extra information.
- **Physical Activity Questions:** additional questions about physical activity on campus was included this year.

The survey was open for two weeks leading up to the October break, with 43% of all responses being received in the first week.

ESES results

All staff have access to ESES 2024-25 Results and are asked to reflect upon the satisfaction rates and comments in their area to identify potential areas for improvement.

The target response rate was set at 60%, 5% higher than last year's target. This year, the ESES response rate remained high with 61% of the student sample completing the survey (*See Figure 1*). Whilst marginally down on last year (63%), it remains a positive response rate and demonstrates a willingness by students to engage with feedback. It also reflects the effort made by staff to encourage their students to participate.

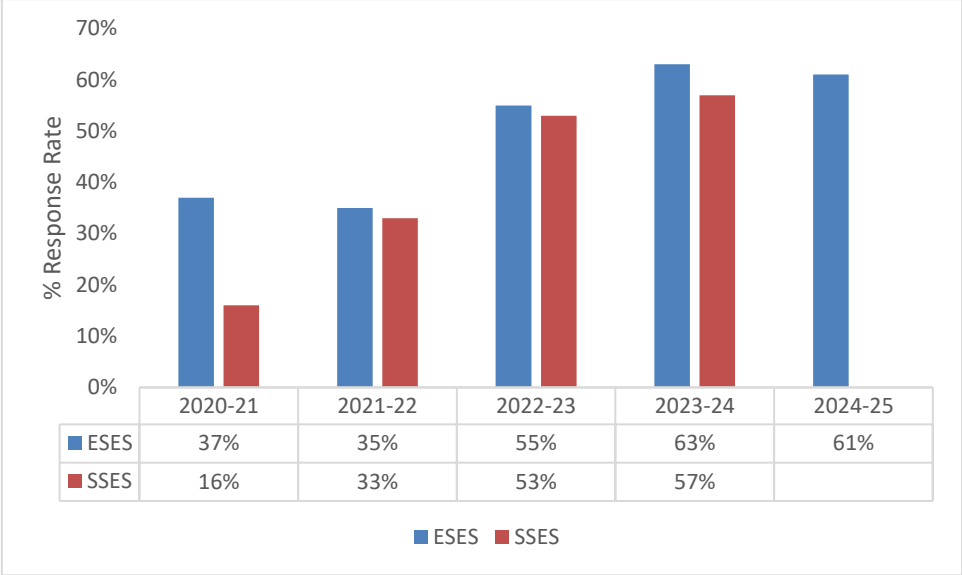


Figure 1. ESES & SSES response rates 5-year trend.

Overall satisfaction is measured by respondents selecting “strongly agree” or “agree” with their experience so far. Student satisfaction rate remains high at 95.7%, showing a marginal decrease from 2023-24. Figure 2 below displays the 5-year trend in overall satisfaction. The 2024-25 result achieved the 96% target set for overall satisfaction for the ESES this academic year.

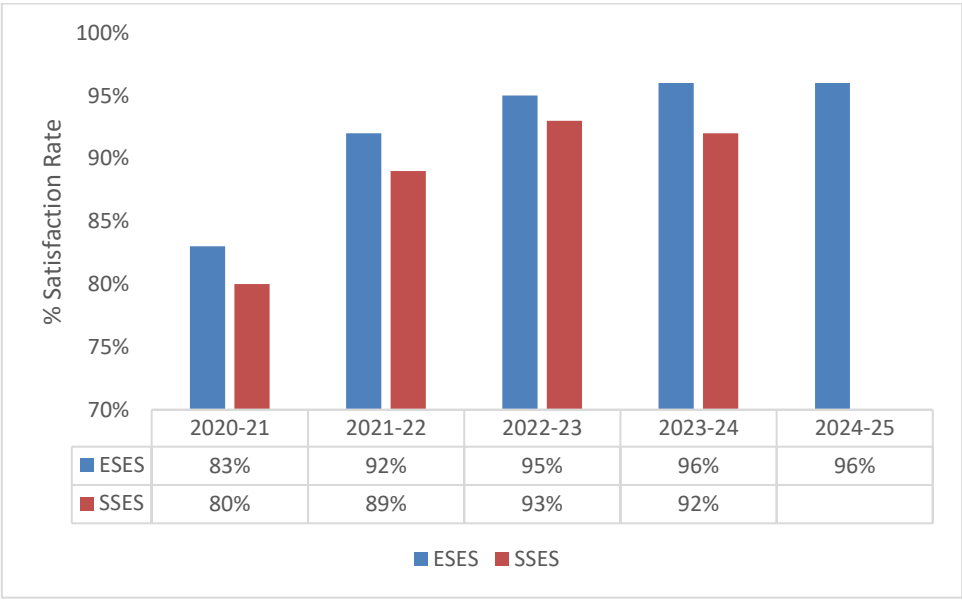


Figure 2. ESES & SSES overall satisfaction 5-year trend.

Figure 3 below shows the curriculum area response rate and satisfactions rates, along with overall UHI Inverness results. Overall, it shows a continuing trend that FE students are more satisfied (96.7%) than HE (94%). This is the same for all curriculum areas, apart from Construction & Engineering, where HE students are more satisfied than FE students.

Curriculum Area	Sample Size	No. of Responses	% Response Rate	% Overall Satisfaction	FE Satisfaction	HE Satisfaction
Business & Creative Industries	575	446	77.6%	97.1%	97.5%	95.1%
Care, Arts, Sport & Humanities	1167	655	56.1%	92.3%	95.8%	93%
Construction & Engineering	806	457	56.7%	95.8%	95.8%	96.9%
Forestry, Science, Computing & Education	619	405	65.4%	96.3%	98.1%	92.6%
Overall results	**3239**	**1963**	**60.6%**	**95.7%**	**96.7%**	**94%**

Figure 3. Curriculum Area high-level results

This academic year the ESES results dashboard includes a 4-year trend analysis which allows teams to drill down to course details or personal characteristics. Teams are encouraged to use this tool to further interpret the feedback specific to their areas.

Free text comments have been made available on the ESES Results Dashboard. Each comment has been categorised by Partnership Agreement theme. 1055 comments were received around what students like about their course and the college, and 610 comments were received about what student's dislike. Additional free text comments regarding laptop availability and usefulness, and levels of satisfaction regarding the halls of residence are included. An additional question about physical activity on campus was also included this year. These results have been made available directly to the Physical Activity Co-ordinator.

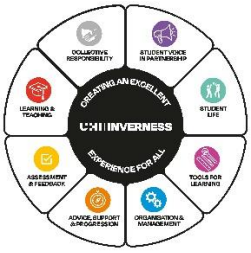
Partnership Agreement theme		No. Comments "Tell us what you like about your course and the college"	No. Comments: "Tell us what you don't like about your course and the college"
	Advice, Support & Progression	84	57
	Assessment & Feedback	11	21
	Collective Responsibility	0	16
	Learning & Teaching	419	215
	Organisation & Management	44	102
	Student Life	311	133
	Student Voice in Partnership	1	1
	Tools for Learning	168	36

Figure 4. Number of comments by partnership agreement theme.

The feedback regarding the availability of laptops to apprentices and the associated benefit that provided was overwhelming positive with approximately 90% believing it had helped their learning.

57% of respondents who gave a satisfaction rating reported they were satisfied with their stay in the halls however all the free text comments were recommendations for improvements that could be made.

Themes Emerging

Students are **dissatisfied** with:

- The level of noise in the LRC
- The bus service to and from the college
- Online learning, which can be challenging, and their lack of prior knowledge of the mode of delivery
- How busy the cafeterias are and the food prices

The following student comments reflect the themes above:

- "The LRC can be very noisy at times, which makes it hard to concentrate."

- “buses too and from college. i think they should be bigger like a normal bus or double decker bc there is so many people getting on especially at half 3”
- I'm finding the study online and self study at home harder as there are not as many opportunities to discuss questions or concerns in the same way. I would prefer to have in person lectures or tutorials.
- “I find it too busy and loud in the canteen”
- “Cafeteria is too expensive”

Students **satisfied** with:

- The building including their cleanliness and the campus environment.
- The support and friendliness of staff
- Their courses, the way they are taught and the interesting content

The following student comments reflect the themes above:

- “It's my 6th year and I absolutely love everything about the course and UHI. I definitely made the right choice all this years ago!”
- “I like the environment and lots of places to study. The tutors enjoy their subjects and are very knowledgeable. They check in and also listen to feedback and go over anything that we aren't sure of.”
- “I like how the assessments are directly related to what you learn throughout the semester and the balance of workload. The support is second to none either from your tutors, PAT, well-being etc. I feel like I can personalise my learning a lot of the time.”

Next steps

- Team level analysis of the ESES results. Please encourage staff to speak to Quality if they require support.
- Headline results to be shared with students via Course Committee Meetings (CCMs) and Student Voice Rep Council.
- Quality, HISA and EMT to investigate college level themes for improvement.
- Communicate the headline results to all students along with the actions taking forward using all media platforms.

Thank you to all teams for your continued support in all aspects of the Early Student Experience Survey. We hope the published results are useful in your evaluation and enhancement activities. We value feedback from all staff in how we can continue to improve our survey processes.

ITEM 05.

Learning, Teaching and Research Committee

Subject/Title:	Self Evaluation and Action Plan 2023-24
Author: [Name and Job title]	Lindsay Snodgrass, Vice-Principal Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality Liz Cook, Quality Manager
Meeting:	Learning, Teaching & Research Committee
Meeting Date:	10th December 2024
Date Paper prepared:	3rd December 2024
Brief Summary of the paper:	The introduction of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework placed a requirement on institutions in Scotland to produce and submit a Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) to SFC as part of these arrangements. The attached report was developed to meet these requirements, and was submitted to UHI as the RSB for submission to the SFC on 29th November.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:**:** • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change	Links to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy
Resource implications:	**If yes, please specify**:
Risk implications:	**If yes, please specify:**
Equality and Diversity implications:	If yes, please specify:
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	Members of SJEC HISA EMT

Status – [Non confidential]	Non confidential

Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in "open" business* [Yes]	Yes

*If a paper should **not** be included within "open" business, please highlight below the reason.

Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research (S27)		Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs (S30)	
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (S33)		Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court (S36)	
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act (S38)		Other (please give further details)	
For how long must the paper be withheld? (express either as the time which needs to pass or a condition which needs to be met.)			

Further guidance on application of the exclusions from Freedom of Information legislation is available via

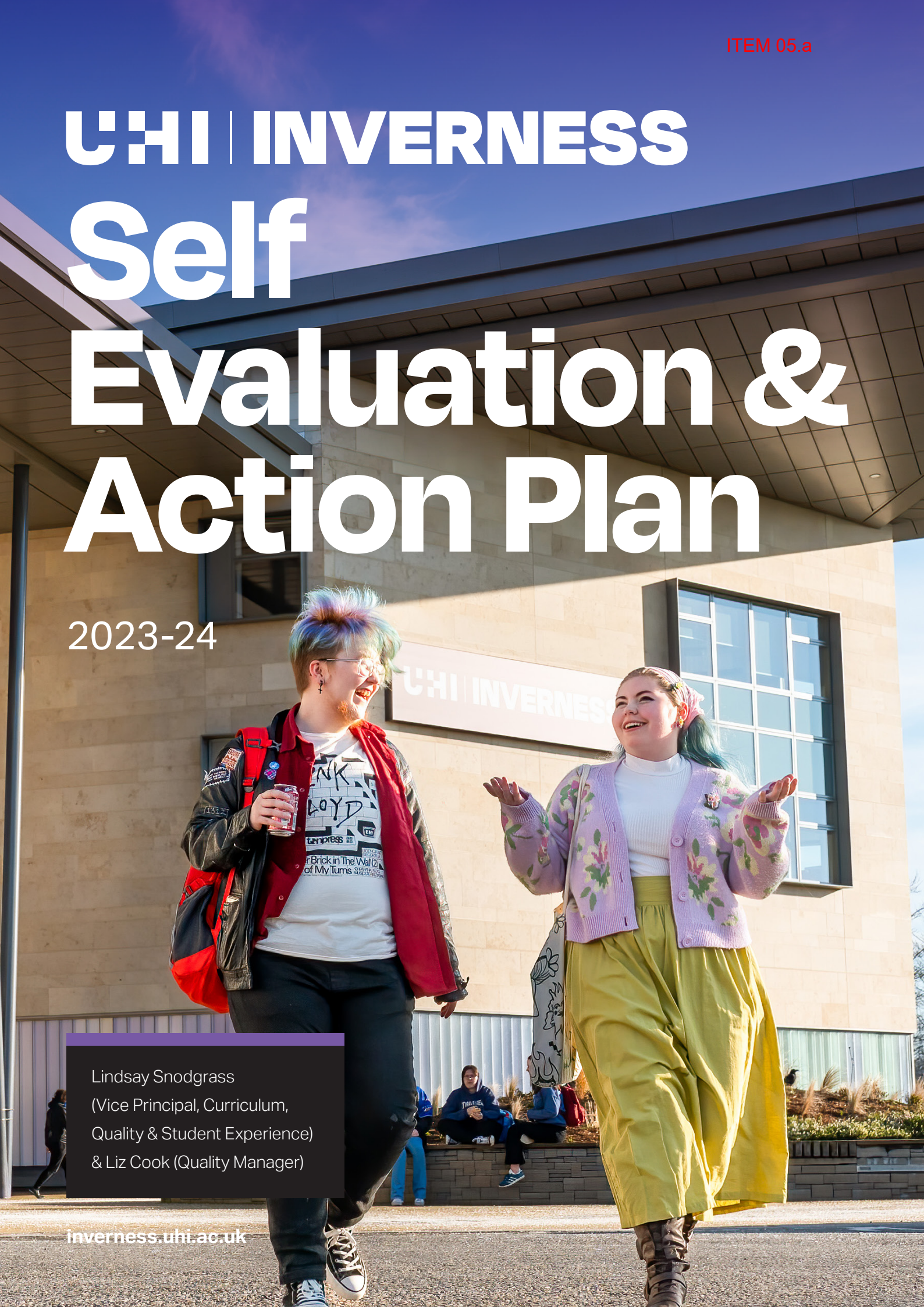
http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/ScottishPublicAuthorities/ScottishPublicAuthorities.asp and

http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/web/FILES/Public_Interest_Test.pdf

UHI | INVERNESS

Self Evaluation & Action Plan

2023-24



Lindsay Snodgrass
(Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience)
& Liz Cook (Quality Manager)

inverness.uhi.ac.uk

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Institute details

1.1 Name of Institute

UHI Inverness

1.2 Author(s)

Lindsay Snodgrass (Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience) & Liz Cook (Quality Manager)

1.3 Date of submission

29th November 2024

1.4 Statement of assurance

As the Accountable Officer for UHI Inverness (Inverness College), I confirm that I have considered the institution's arrangements for the management of academic standards and the quality of the learning experience for AY 2023/24, including the scope and impact of these. I further confirm that I am satisfied that the institution has adequate and effective arrangements to maintain standards and to assure and enhance the quality of its provision. I can therefore provide assurance to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) that the academic standards and the quality of the learning provision at this institution continue to meet the requirements set by SFC.

Signature:

Accountable Officer (Name):
Chris O'Neil Date: 25/11/2024

UHI Inverness in AY 23/24

Our Context

UHI Inverness is one of the best performing colleges in Scotland. We perform well above sector benchmarks across all key measures. Over the past 3 years, together with all our colleagues, we have transformed the performance and culture of our institution through:

- ✓ **Embedding mechanisms which put the learner voice at the centre of our work.**
- ✓ **Implementing a collaborative model of leadership.**
- ✓ **Investing in professional development as part of our Talent Management strategy.**
- ✓ **Implementing a streamlined curriculum management model.**
- ✓ **Embedding and extending our model of learner support.**
- ✓ **Introducing innovative approaches to curriculum design.**
- ✓ **Implementing a new curriculum planning and review process, including course level costing and staff deployment, informed by Sector Development Plans.**
- ✓ **Engaging curriculum managers to participate in data analysis to support continuous improvement.**
- ✓ **Further developing our quality enhancement planning and a new quality enhancement tracker.**
- ✓ **Implementing a KPI matrix, linked to our strategic plan and strategic objectives.**

These approaches are under constant review to support continuous improvement, and many have been highlighted as sector leading in successive Education Scotland reviews.

UHI Inverness is one of the largest academic partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and in AY 23/24 delivered one-quarter of UHI's further education (FE) credits and 22.4% of UHI's higher education (HE) enrolments. The UHI is the Regional Strategic Body for FE in the Highlands and Islands region and distributes SFC credit funding to the partnership. *(UHI SEAP 2024, Section 2, Institutional Context)*

Our provision spans across the entirety of the SCQF levels 1-12. In AY 23/24, the college had circa 6,076 learners, 3,774 of whom were enrolled on FE programmes, over 780 of whom were our own Modern Apprentices, with >300 more being managing agents' apprentices. 2,302 of our learners were on HE programmes, as part of the University's provision, 90 of whom were Graduate Apprentices and 20 of whom were Postgraduate research learners *(Appendix 1, Figure 1)*.

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is delivered through 4 broad Schools:

+ **Business and Creative Industries**
+ **Care, Sports, Arts, Drama and Humanities**
+ **Forestry, Applied Science, Computing and Education**
+ **Engineering & Construction**

Within the 4 Schools, our provision covers 16 subject areas and includes specialist provision within the Scottish School of Forestry and a significant and growing number of work-based learners. Circa 650 school pupils, aged 15-17, are enrolled on Senior Phase school-link programmes spanning SCQF levels 2-7. We have a growing demand for places, with applications up by 17% over the last 3 years, but are unable to meet this demand, largely due to restrictions in our SFC credit allocation *(Appendix 1, Figure 2)*.

As a partnership, UHI is now the largest college provider of work-based learning in Scotland, with UHI Inverness delivering 60% of UHI's MA provision. However, the reduction in SDS funding has meant that we are not able to meet employer demand for Modern Apprenticeship places across the region.

The labour market in the Inverness and Inner Moray Firth area poses significant economic opportunities *(Appendix 1, Diagram 1)*, not least the Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, major growth in the renewable energy sector, and an ageing demographic leading to an increase in demand for health and social care graduates. Such opportunities mean the employment rate among 16–24-year-olds is very high locally, at 69.4% compared to the Scotland average of 55.9% (2023 Scottish Government data). The demand for labour poses an ongoing challenge and the college continues to note a strong correlation between easy access to paid related employment and the challenge to our learner retention in particular curriculum areas.

Our Learners

Over 32% of our learners in AY 23/24 were between the ages of 16 and 19 and 30% of our activity was delivered to learners living in remote and rural areas; 4% being delivered to those living in the 10% most deprived postcode areas, which reflects the Highland/Inner Moray Firth area demographic; and 4% of our activity delivered to care experienced learners. Last AY, our learners were split between 49.1% female, 50.2.3% male, and 0.7% other.
A growing proportion of our learners declare a disability and in AY 23/24 this group accounted for 26% rising to 31% in AY 24/25 to date.

Learner Outcomes

Overall success for FE FT increased to 71.6% in AY 23/24, up from 68.5% in 22-23. UHI Inverness FE outcomes compare well to the latest published sector benchmarks for both AY 22/23 and 23/24; performing better for each KPI for both FT and PT programmes *(Appendix 1, Table 1).*

HE FT overall success increased from 63.9% to 66.6% in AY 23/24 but HE PT overall success saw a decrease. Whilst our success rates in HNC/Ds are below the sector benchmark, there is a 3-year improving trend in overall success rates, and a corresponding reduction in withdrawals and partial successes *(Appendix 1, Table 2)*. However, our HNC/D outcomes continue to be below sector benchmark and are therefore a continued area of development.

Learner Retention

Early withdrawals decreased in AY 23/24 for both FE and HE FT learners as compared to AY 22/23 *(Appendix 1, Figure 6)*. There has been a marginal increase in withdrawals for FE PT learners and the increase in HE PT early withdrawals represents a trend over the last 3 years *(Appendix 1, Table 6)*. Further withdrawals decreased across all levels and modes of study in AY 23-24 *(Appendix 1, Table 6).*

Targeting Our Resource

Our management structure continues to evolve in response to the on-going need for efficiency. In AY 22/23 we reviewed our EMT and curriculum management structures which has led to:

+ **A further reduced EMT consisting of Principal and two Vice Principals.**
+ **The introduction of a new curriculum leadership structure.**
+ **The introduction of a new role – *Curriculum Quality Leads* - which have a specific focus on quality enhancement, digital technology, and learner recruitment across our 4 curriculum Schools.**
+ **Commitment to additional resource in Wellbeing & Learning Support Services to meet the growing volume and complexity of learner need.**

In AY 23/24, the college employed circa 348 FTE staff (permanent and fixed but excluding variable supply staff) of which 153 FTE were teaching staff and has an annual turnover of £30 million.

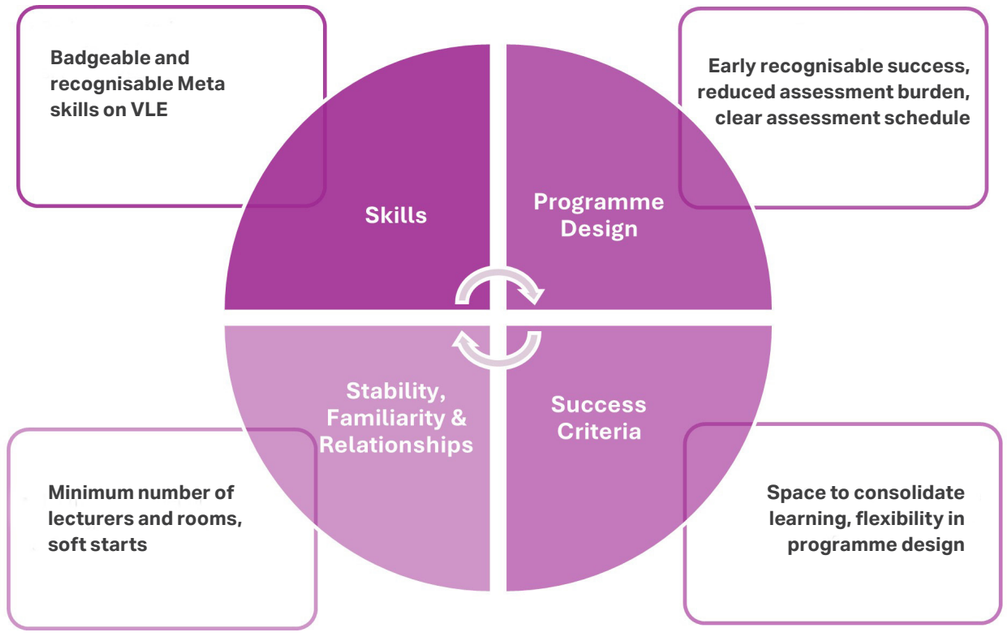
ITEM 05.a

1. Excellence in learning, teaching and assessment

Curriculum planning, design and delivery

Design Principles

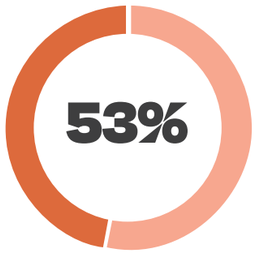
Our work around curriculum and programme design has been identified as a key strength. To support improved retention and outcomes, we have developed and embedded a set of course *Design Principles* based around structural change to programme design.



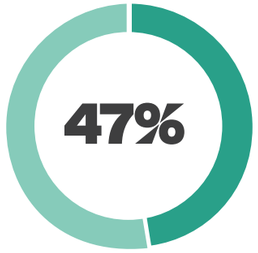
The Design Principles were piloted in AY 22/23 across a selection of Level 4/5 programmes. Across the pilot programmes, this led to an 8.9% improvement in outcomes, 6.5% reduction in withdrawals, and an improvement of 2.4% in partial success. This contributed to a 9.4% improvement in our overall FT FE successful outcomes in AY 22/23.

The pilot was extended in AY 23/24 to include all Level 4/5 programmes leading to an improvement of 8.2% across these programmes *(Appendix 1, Table 4)* and being instrumental in achieving our overall 71.6% successful outcomes in FT FE *(Appendix 1, Table 1).* The Design Principles were recognised as *Highly Effective Practice* as part of the Education Scotland Thematic Review of Care and are part of our continued work around the CDN *Trauma Informed College* programme and our focus on HN outcomes.

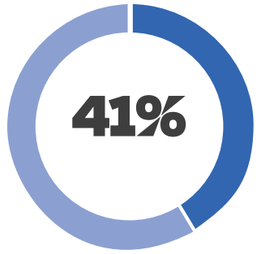
Curriculum Developments



FE Students in Care, Construction and Engineering will all other subject areas <10%



% our FE credits in STEM subjects



% of HE students in Care or in Business

Sector development plans and strong employer engagement are core to our curriculum planning, meaning our curriculum is responsive to meeting the needs of local and regional employers and addressing key sector demands:

Forestry

During AY 22/23 and 23/24, we worked with industry and key stakeholders to re-design the curriculum to address declining applications, retention and outcomes in both FE and HE programmes in the *Scottish School of Forestry (SSF).*

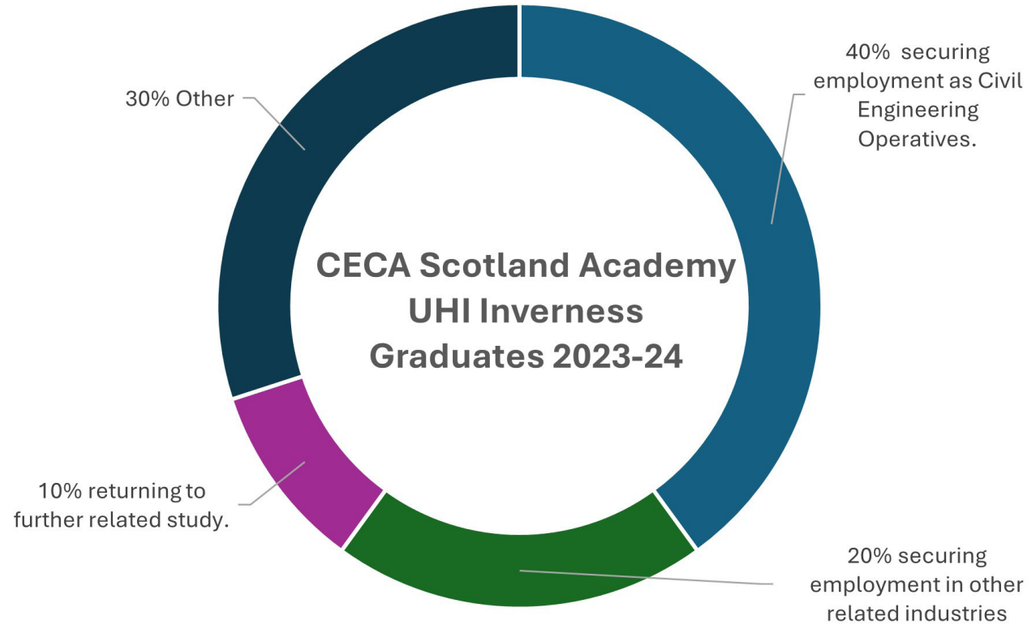
The development of a sector development plan identified the lack of currency of our qualifications. Based on feedback from key external stakeholders, changes have been made to SCQF Level 4-6 programmes giving a greater focus on the skills required to work in the industry and to support progression. Curriculum redesign is starting to have a positive impact, with a 14% increase in applications for AY 24/25. Further Withdrawals fell in 23/24, from 7.8% in AY22/23, to 4.8% due to in year changes informed by the wider curriculum redesign.

Alongside these developments, a review of HE provision identified a volume of learners transferring to part time or not completing their qualifications due to securing employment during their work placement year. Through the same process, the Forestry and Treescapes Management BScH degree has been re-designed to provide a work-based pathway for those securing employment. This has been designed to align with the Graduate Apprenticeship model and has resulted in an 8% increase in full-time year 1 Forestry applications.

CECA Scotland Academy (NPA Construction Operations)

CECA Scotland Academy is a collaborative project led by Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Scotland, supported by Energy Skills Partnership (ESP), and delivered by UHI Inverness and Fife College. In AY 23/24 both colleges delivered the first pilot programme.

With industry partners, the 18-week CECA Scotland Academy was co-designed to address the skills gap for Civil Engineering Operatives. CECA Scotland Academy culminates in a graduation and employment fair where all graduates are guaranteed an interview with a local contractor. Employers have committed to offer employment to at least 70% of graduates across the UHI Inverness and Fife cohorts. The first graduates of UHI Inverness have seen excellent success:



Modern and Graduate Apprenticeship Growth

Our responsive curriculum planning and design process has aligned our curriculum to the skills and educational needs across our region, influenced by our Sector Development Plans. This has led to growth in the development of both Graduate and Modern Apprenticeships, which are ongoing in response to employer needs and within the context of high employment locally. Our Business Solutions Team provide a single contact point to firms and act as a broker with curriculum teams to support employer-responsive delivery *(Appendix 1, Figures 3 & 4).*

Professional development

Professional Development Pathways

Through AY 23/24, we have invested in professional development to ensure a responsive pedagogical approach to further support retention and successful outcomes. The UHI Inverness *Professional Development Pathway for Lecturers (Appendix 2, Figure1)* provides a structured framework from initial learning and teaching induction through to the continued development of experienced practitioners. The framework is underpinned by the GTCS Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges and the UHI Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy.

Our investment in this professional development pathway has led to high numbers of lecturing staff holding the *Tertiary Qualification for Further Education* (Level 9 & 11) and subsequent high levels of lecturing staff holding GTCS registration *(Appendix 2, Figure 2)*. Our 2024 Education Scotland review recognised our Professional Development Pathway as *Highly Effective Practice* and our levels of TQFE qualified and GTCS registered staff are sector leading. Learner feedback also shows an improving 3-year trend around learning and teaching with 93% of learners satisfied with the way they are taught (ESES, AY 23/24).

We also recognise that the development of professional services staff, who provide services to support learners, is key to further enhancement of our learner experience. As such, a *Professional Services Staff Development Pathway* was introduced in AY 23/24 *(See Appendix 2, Figure 3).*

Embedding a Research Culture

In line with the objectives of our Tertiary Education Strategy, we enable our staff to engage in research activity to inform our curriculum and enhance our learner experience. We identified that staff who have not previously engaged in research need to be supported to do so and with this in mind we have developed our *Research Development Pathway (Appendix 2, Figure 4)*. A unique feature of the pathway is that it is open to both curriculum and professional services staff.

The pathway begins with the *Enquiring Minds Scheme*, which was introduced in AY 23/24, to support staff to engage in a small-scale project which would enhance the learner or staff experience and help to develop their research skills. Examples of *Enquiring Minds* projects include research into what motivates individuals to be invested in environmental conservation. This research has led to a further exploration of the embedding of sustainability in the curriculum and will link to staff training with Environmental Association of University and Colleges (EAUC). Another example is the development of a professional services pathway for professional services staff which is currently in the early stages of implementation, along with further research into developing a buddy system for new staff.

Our *Research Development Pathway won Highly Commended for the Research Project of the Year* category in the 2024 CDN Awards.

ITEM 05.a

Peer review and evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment

The Learning and Teaching Review (LTR)

The Learning and Teaching Review (LTR) is a key part of our quality enhancement framework, enabling lecturers to critically reflect on their practice and explore opportunities for enhancement. The LTR aligns with the UHI Learning & Teaching Enhancement Strategy and GTCS Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges, supporting high quality teaching.

The LTR involves a collaborative approach between the reviewer and reviewee, with the observation and dialogue conducted in a collegiate manner. This approach fosters mutual learning, and reviewers frequently report their own teaching practice is enhanced by participation in the LTR. Both reviewers and reviewees use their engagement with the LTR as evidence of professional learning for their annual PRDs and GTCS updates.

As the LTR has become more embedded, lecturers have increasingly recognised the benefits of participating in a review. 100% respondents to the LTR survey felt the process supported their development in learning and teaching. Examples of staff comments reflect the impact of the LTR:

+ **I fully enjoyed the whole process, the learners enjoyed asking me about it and the process. I feel I gained knowledge and confidence from the experience.**
+ **It was good to have an outside perspective on my professional practice away from others who teach the same subject or in similar ways.**

ESES results 2024 indicate that 93% of learners are satisfied with the way they are taught, underlining the programme's positive impact. The LTR has been highlighted by Education Scotland as Highly Effective Practice in our 2024 review and we will continue to embed and extend it into AY 24/25.

2. Supporting student success

Enabling student success

Supporting Diverse Learners

Our Access and Inclusion strategy sets out our strategic commitment to supporting every learner as an individual and tailoring support to their needs. We have had a significant focus on learner wellbeing to support retention and successful outcomes in the post pandemic period as part of our recovery and readjustment phase. A wide variety of measures have been introduced in recognition of the links between poverty or mental ill-health and the capacity to learn at UHI Inverness.

In recognition of the struggles faced by many of our learners due to the cost-of-living crisis, we contributed significantly to the CDN Pathways from Poverty series and have implemented a multitude of support mechanisms for all learners, but particularly for support those from SIMD10.

The positive impact of this extensive support has been recognised in successive Education Scotland reviews and through our improved learner retention and outcomes *(Appendix 1, Figure 6).* Education Scotland noted in 2024:

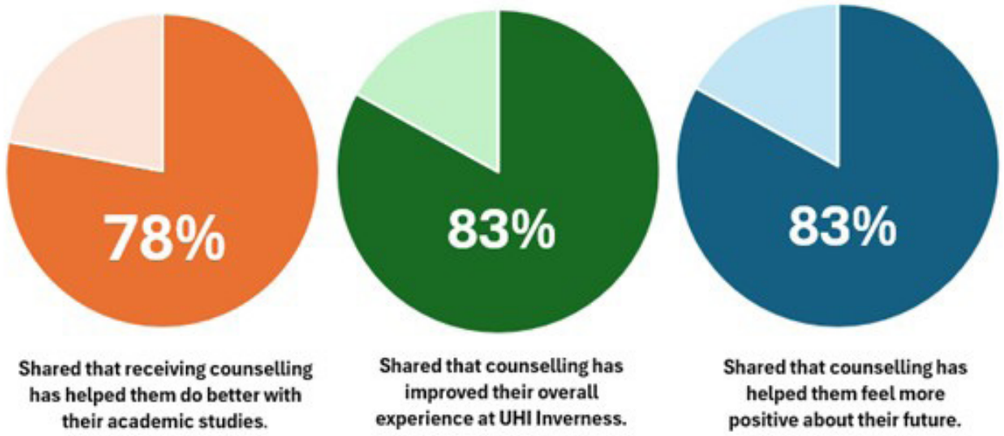
'All learners value and benefit from the support provided by the college to alleviate financial challenges. These include free breakfasts and lunches, access to a food larder and donated clothing, and free toiletries and sanitary products. These facilities are helping to support learners to stay on their programme and complete their studies'.

Supporting Wellbeing

Through the close monitoring of reasons for withdrawal, we recognise that a large volume of learners leave their course early due to 'Health Reasons' which predominantly relate to mental ill-health *(Appendix 1, Figure 5).* In AY 22/23, we conducted a service redesign of the wellbeing and mental health service. This led to the implementation of a new triage system in AY 23/24. The triage system offers an appointment within 3-10 working days and emergency cases are prioritised and seen immediately. A new *One at a Time Therapy (OAATT)* model was introduced to reduce any unnecessary sessions which learners would ordinarily engage with.

In AY 23/24, 426 learners were triaged using the new system, 87 of whom required just one session and were provided with coping strategies to support them and the remaining 339 required longer inputs of counselling support. 73% of service users reported it helped them sustain their studies.

The targeting of our resource, through the triage and OAATT model, has meant we have been able to keep on top of the growing demand placed upon this service, of critical importance given the 26% increase in learners requesting support since the previous year. Maximising our resource has also been critical when the additional funding for mental health has ceased.

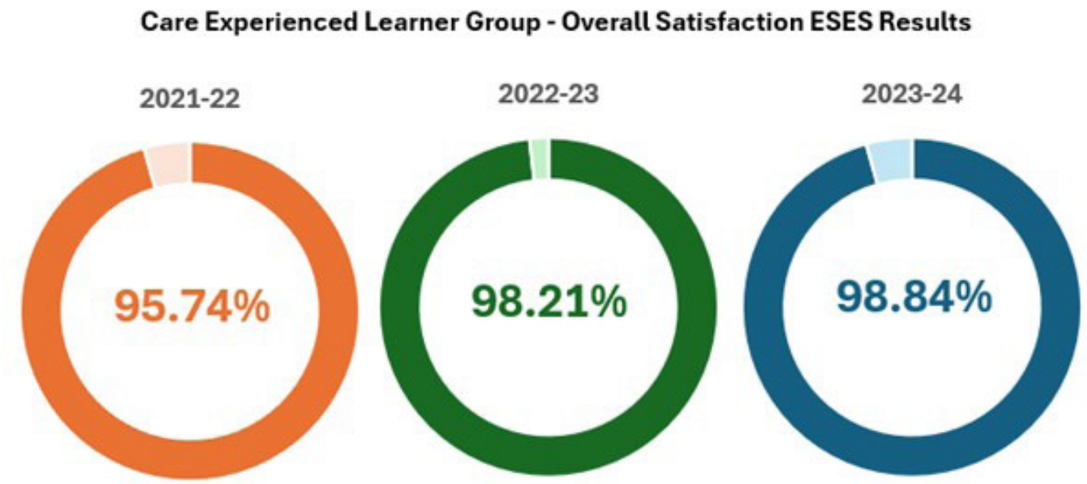


Supporting Learners with Disabilities

The level of disability disclosures in AY 23/24 was 32.25%. This was an increase of 3.69% on AY 22/23 and the volume of those learners who went on to engage with a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP) increased by 47% in AY 23/24. This increase was not reflected in enrolment data but instead through in-year disability disclosures. To support the outcomes of this growing cohort, 10 FT FE programmes were identified to participate in a pilot initiative which provided a Learning Assistant for the last 8-weeks of the course to support those with PLSPs. This had a positive impact and was contributory to a reduction in withdrawals by 2.5% for learners with a disability *(Appendix 1, Table 3a&b)*. The pilot is being extended AY 24/25 as a means of mitigating the growing complexity and volume of learning support need which we are experiencing.

Achieving Positive Outcomes for Learners with Care Experience

UHI Inverness takes pride in being committed to widening access to those who are furthest from education, and we have had a particular focus on learners with care experience. Our Corporate Parenting Plan 23-26 outlines our commitment to our care experienced community and to the extensive additional support from pre-start to completion. We are a key partner on the *Highland Promise Board* and our partnership working with other stakeholders has had a positive impact on learner outcomes. Our FE outcomes for learners with care experience in AY 23/24 were +6.3% above the latest sector benchmark *(Appendix 1, Table 3a&b).* Despite our improved outcomes for this learner group, we acknowledge that we have further work to do in closing the outcomes gap and we see our continued engagement in the *CDN Trauma Informed College* programme as being critical to this.



Supporting Transitions – Meta Skills

Across AY 22/23 we ran a pilot in one curriculum area around the visibility and delivery of meta skills (Self-management, Social Intelligence, Innovation) to support the employability of learners and their progression into employment. Meta skills were identified at a programme level and were 'badged' against specific tasks on the VLE for learners and lecturers to then assess against. This meant that learners could identify and develop their meta skills and gain a firm grasp of their competence levels. This approach was extended and embedded across our FE FT curriculum in AY 23/24 and tied into employability skills. This has had a positive impact on the confidence of learners transitioning out of FT FE and into employment. In our Education Scotland review in AY 23/24, it was noted that:

"Meta skills are embedded well within all programmes and signposted well by staff during class activities. This has increased the confidence of learners to discuss the development and application of these skills with prospective employers".

3. Enhancement and Quality Culture

Institution wide culture of assurance, improvement and enhancement

Response to last external review

In April 2024, UHI Inverness received a positive report from Education Scotland, which highlighted a number of strengths which are captured throughout this report.

One area for development highlighted was the low overall number of student voice representatives (SVR), and that most class representatives had not received sufficient training to support them in their roles. We recognised the need to improve in this area and have been actively working with the recently appointed senior management team at HISA to develop strategies for the forthcoming year.

A team day was organised in summer 2024 to strengthen working relationships between HISA and key UHI Inverness staff, fostering a shared understanding of key activities and interdependencies. The resulting operational plan, used in conjunction with the Achieved Together Tracker, provides a focus for shared objectives. The approach to SVR recruitment was prioritised, with HISA using induction sessions to promote the role, supported by UHI Inverness staff. PDAs and PATs played a crucial role in this initiative.

Despite a significant increase in the number of SVRs in AY 24/25 compared to the previous year, this still fell short of the aspirational target to recruit one SVR per programme, which we recognise as a goal more in line with pre-pandemic levels. Challenges remain for networked provision and MA cohorts. This, and the emerging pattern of recruiting more than one SVR per programme necessitates further exploration of the SVR role and purpose, to determine the most effective way to ensure learner voices are heard at every level and in each learning space, by building on existing well embedded processes, for example, the course committee meeting model.

Using Data

We recognise the way data is used across the organisation as a strength. *The Strategic Plan 2021-2025* is underpinned by a range of ten sub-strategies giving direction to various workstreams. *The KPI Matrix* is linked to strategic aims; the widespread use and visibility of the matrix supports staff and Board awareness, and continuous improvement. Learner outcomes targets are set at an institutional level, Education Scotland subject level, and programme level for FT FE and HNs. Monthly data meetings, attended by curriculum leaders and senior management, have resulted in a focussed monitoring and scrutiny of KPIs and quality standards across curriculum, identifying early interventions and sharing best practice.

Self-Evaluation – Course Committee Meetings

The ongoing approach to evaluation through the Course Committee Meeting model provides staff with the tools and opportunities to identify and implement in year changes to drive improvement. Education Scotland (May 2024) highlighted that:

'Learner representatives contribute well to programme team meetings to convey the views of their classmates and engage in evaluation of learning and teaching. They value the opportunity to suggest improvements and feel listened to.'

Organisational Enhancement Themes

Team level reflections during self-evaluation meetings give rise to both organisational and team level enhancement themes. Captured on the Quality Enhancement Tracker (QET), it provides a shared space, where both curriculum and professional service teams can identify improvement activities, track their 'in year' progress and outcomes; and connect their activities with overarching themes and strategies. This ongoing visual is used during team meeting, staff briefings and college management meetings.

Examples of organisational enhancement activities include:

Visual Feedback project – It was identified that staff and learners' perception of the extent of feedback differed. In response to this, UHI Inverness HE students explored visual ways in which to give feedback a higher profile. The aim is to effectively flag to students when feedback is taking place, thus encouraging them to take note and actively engage.

A visual feedback tool was developed that can be used in a variety of settings and ways to promote and confirm feedback. This visual feedback tool has the capacity to allow learners to understand feedback in terms of receiving, processing and responding to it, all in a simple visual process. Piloted from March to June 2024 with 8 programmes, initial feedback from staff has been positive, and learners are more aware of the type of feedback they are receiving. Full roll out is scheduled in AY 24/25.

The **Meta Skills badging project,** piloted in AY 22/23 was rolled out in AY 23/24, ensuring Meta Skills development was reflected in each programme *(see Section 2 Learner Support for full details).*

We will further build on this strength through a **Core skills project** focussing on how subject teams can further embed/signpost these skills within their subject specific delivery. As an initial output of the project, the Essential Skills team have been embedded within curriculum areas for AY 24/25 to support core skill delivery and the further development of Meta Skills.

There are many team-level Quality Enhancement Plan activities that have enhanced the learner experience and outcome. This detailed attention to improvement and enhancement has contributed to our overall satisfaction rates (96% ESES; 92% SSES; 82% NSS) and our AY 23/24 success outcomes *(Appendix 1, Figure 6).*

The visibility of the KPI Matrix, the organisational enhancement themes and the QET, and the Student Partnership Agreement annual enhancement themes *(see Section 4 Learner Partnership)* all contribute to a transparent quality culture, with a granular focus to support continuous improvement.

Sector Enhancement Activity

We contribute well to the wider sector, through involvement in a range of activities:

+ **Colleagues have taken a pro-active approach to the implementation of the new TQEF, regularly engaging in sector and regional discussions to ensure currency of approach.**
+ **Several UHI Inverness staff are engaged as Associate Assessors with Education Scotland for college annual reviews, thematic, and MA reviews.**
+ **Representation on national advisory groups.**
+ **Engagement as External Verifiers and examination markers.**
+ **Representation on sector wide practitioner groups.**

Practice is shared well within teams and across the organisation. This external engagement and sharing of practice contribute to ensuring our practice remains current and innovative, impacting positively on the learner experience and learner outcomes.

ITEM 05.a

4. Student engagement and partnership

Students as partners in their learning experience

Learners are engaged partners in their learning experience. HISA representatives are members of management and Board committees and contribute to strategic discussions. *The Student Partnership Agreement* is well embedded in the culture of the organisation in various ways including by artefacts displayed through the college campuses, staff and learner induction, on *My Day* and through the *Quality Enhancement Tracker.*

Student Partnership enhancement themes are co-selected by HISA Officers and UHI Inverness staff each year to inform the focus for the forthcoming year. A wide range of evidence is used to inform the themes chosen. In AY 23/24 the themes chosen were *Collective Responsibility, Student Life, Tools for Learning.* The *Achieved Together Tracker* is well embedded as a tool which showcases learner partnership and provides a neutral space for staff and learners to co-design activities.

Key successes in AY 23/24 included the introduction of a number of initiatives to create a sense of learner community and life, including discounts, activities for learners on campus (games cupboard, Highlife Highland schedule of classes) and a wide range of events. Attendance was varied at the events, and on reflection HISA have identified the need for more input from the wider learner body to inform any event planning for AY 24/25.

The need for a cross college *Collective Responsibility* campaign was identified following the end of year survey, and this concept will be developed and implemented in AY 24/25.

In the final survey of the academic year, most learners (85%) felt they could influence their course learning, and most (83.2%) believed their suggestions were taken seriously. The responses represent a stable trend over the past three years reflecting the embedding of our Course Committee Meeting model *(see Section 3).* This model fosters professional dialogue amongst learners, curriculum and professional service staff, and other stakeholders, including employers, supporting the identification and implementation of changes to enhance the overall learner experience.

The responses to the NSS survey showed a similar theme, with most learners feeling they had the opportunity to give feedback (83.2%), and that feedback was taken seriously (80%). A lower return for the question relating to how learner feedback is acted upon (63%) and that, coupled with the responses to the SSES, highlights the need to further build on existing dissemination tools such as *The Link* (learner newsletter), large display screens, and enhancing the level of feedback provided at CCMs. The planned revised format of SVR Committee meetings in AY 24-25 will provide a further platform to make the changes implemented in response to learner feedback more visible.

Student Voice – every learner, every place, every level

Education Scotland raised an area for development in relation to SVRs, and the response to that has been included within Section 3 *Quality and Enhancement*.

Following a review of practice across the sector which we conducted in AY 22-23, the *Student Engagement Representative* (SER) role was launched in AY 23-24. This initiative provides learners with the opportunity to develop skills and gain valuable work experience in areas of interest to their studies or personal circumstances. These opportunities are widespread across the college and include those aligned to services to support learning, digital technology and learner focus groups. Fifteen learners signed up in AY 23-24 across a range of activities. Learners who continued to engage throughout the year received a summary record of work which they can use to support future searches for employment. One of the learners engaged in SER activity won *UHI Learner of the Year (See Student Engagement Representative case study)*

Learner focus groups provide a further opportunity for learners to work in partnership with staff to affect change. Curriculum focus groups were held in AY 23-24 across our tertiary provision with actions implemented as a result. For example, changes to timetable structures have enabled Plumbing apprentices more flexibility with travel at the end of their block; and HISA convened a focus group about food provision in the canteen leading to changes in the provision of and storage locations for dairy and gluten free options.

Student Engagement Representative case study

Javier started studying at UHI Inverness in 2020/21. He became known to staff in The Bothy, the learner support venue, during his time as class representative for the Level 5 ESOL class, asking to start up a Read Aloud Group to help learners develop their reading skills in English. He is an extremely committed learner who dedicated many hours to his learning whilst also assisting and mentoring his peers in his own time. Additionally, Javier was always happy to provide learner input when asked e.g., during Education Scotland visits, and to feature in social media campaigns for the Marketing team.

During AY 23-24, Javier has been an integral part of our newly created Learner Engagement Rep initiative. The Student Engagement Rep roles were launched in AY 23-24 to give learners an opportunity to gain key work experience here at UHI Inverness.

Javier volunteered to support a range of different work experience activities: The Larder, Learning Technology, ICT Helpdesk support, The Cubby, and learner focus groups. His contributions in each have been invaluable; by ensuring learners are aware of the support available to them, providing a valuable learner perspective for learning technology initiatives, and being an active contributor at our Education Scotland review in May 2024.

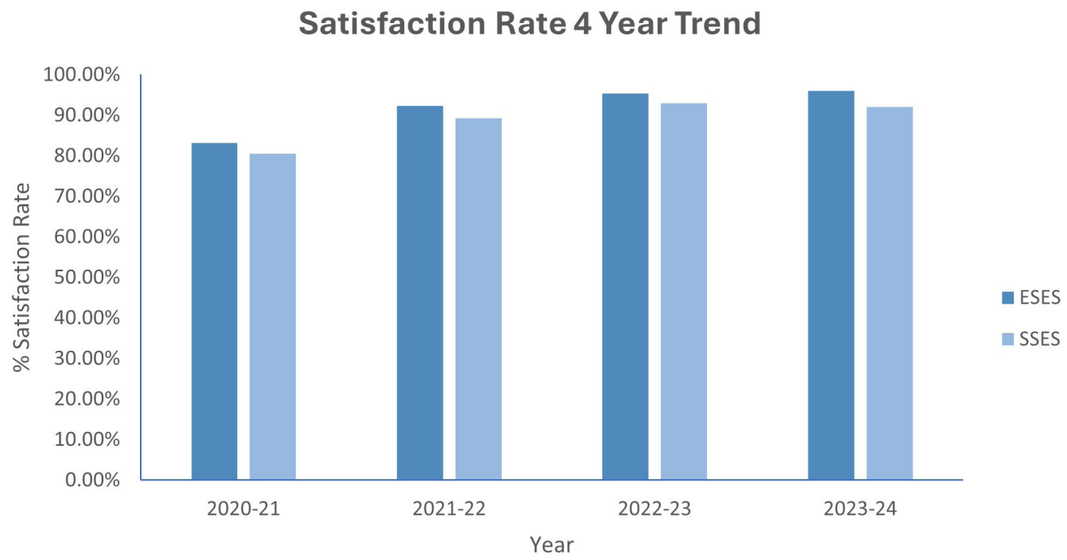
Javier spoke of his experiences "Being part of SER has given me an incredible opportunity to develop my social skills, increase my confident, gain valuable job experience, meet a lot of people and be part of an amazing team"

Javier manages to maintain the commitment to his various Learner Engagement Rep roles alongside his own full-time study and the additional volunteering positions he holds in the community. This keeps him extremely busy, but he is always reliable, focused, and looking for opportunities to be of further help to others, especially those who are disadvantaged. He has thrown himself into integrating and supporting our communities both here on campus and in Inverness more widely.

Responsiveness to learner feedback

Over the past two years, we have made significant strides in learner engagement and participation, evidenced by a positive response rate of 63.2% in our ESES and 57% in our SSES in AY 23/24. This marked improvement is largely attributable to our approach to collaborating with a learner-chosen charity partner to incentivise learners to complete the survey. This innovative approach led to UHI Inverness winning the *Marketing & Communications Award* for the *"Your Survey Counts"* campaign at the 2023 CDN Awards.

The college has seen high rates of learner satisfaction in both the ESES, at 96%, up 1pp on last year and the end of year SSES at 92% satisfaction this AY, down 1% from the previous year.



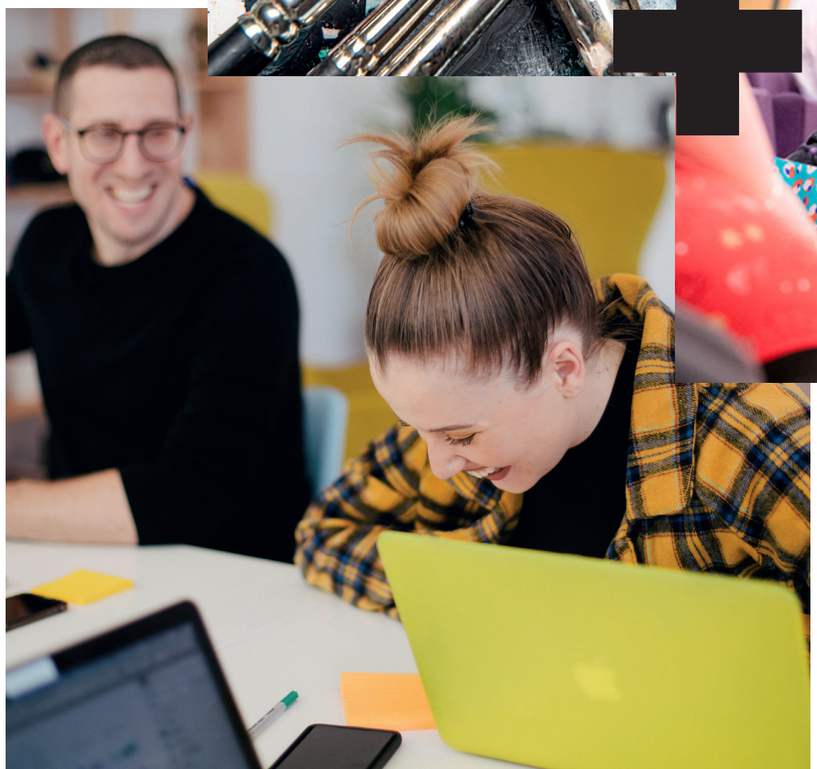
Survey satisfaction results continue to show a slight difference between FE and HE learner satisfaction, with FE learners broadly more satisfied than HE learners.

Level	Satisfaction %					
	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	ESES	SSES	ESES	SSES	ESES	SSES
FE	94.12%	91.77%	96.36%	94.21%	97.30%	94.15%
HE	90.21%	84.15%	93.55%	90.48%	94.14%	86.89%

Overall, HE learners tell us they are less likely to feel part of a learner community; and feel less able to influence their learning. This can be attributed in part to networked provision where organisation and management issues are often more complex, cutting across multiple academic partners. HISA plans to run a specific survey to networked learners coordinated which will be a further source of data for analysis to inform further change (Cross reference to UHI SEAP 3.4. 5). A strategic focus on HN provision in AY 24/25 will fully explore the learner experience, as well as the drive to improve success rates.

Timetabling and travel arrangement issues raised in AY 22/23 were resolved through soft starts and individual programme adjustments, and awareness raising about travel available through *the Link* newsletter and *My Day.*

A range of methods are used to communicate changes made as a result of learner feedback; including the course committee meeting model; *The Link* newsletter; the 'Learner Engagement' walkway on campus; SVR meetings; and through management and Board committees.



Appendix 1

Diagram 1

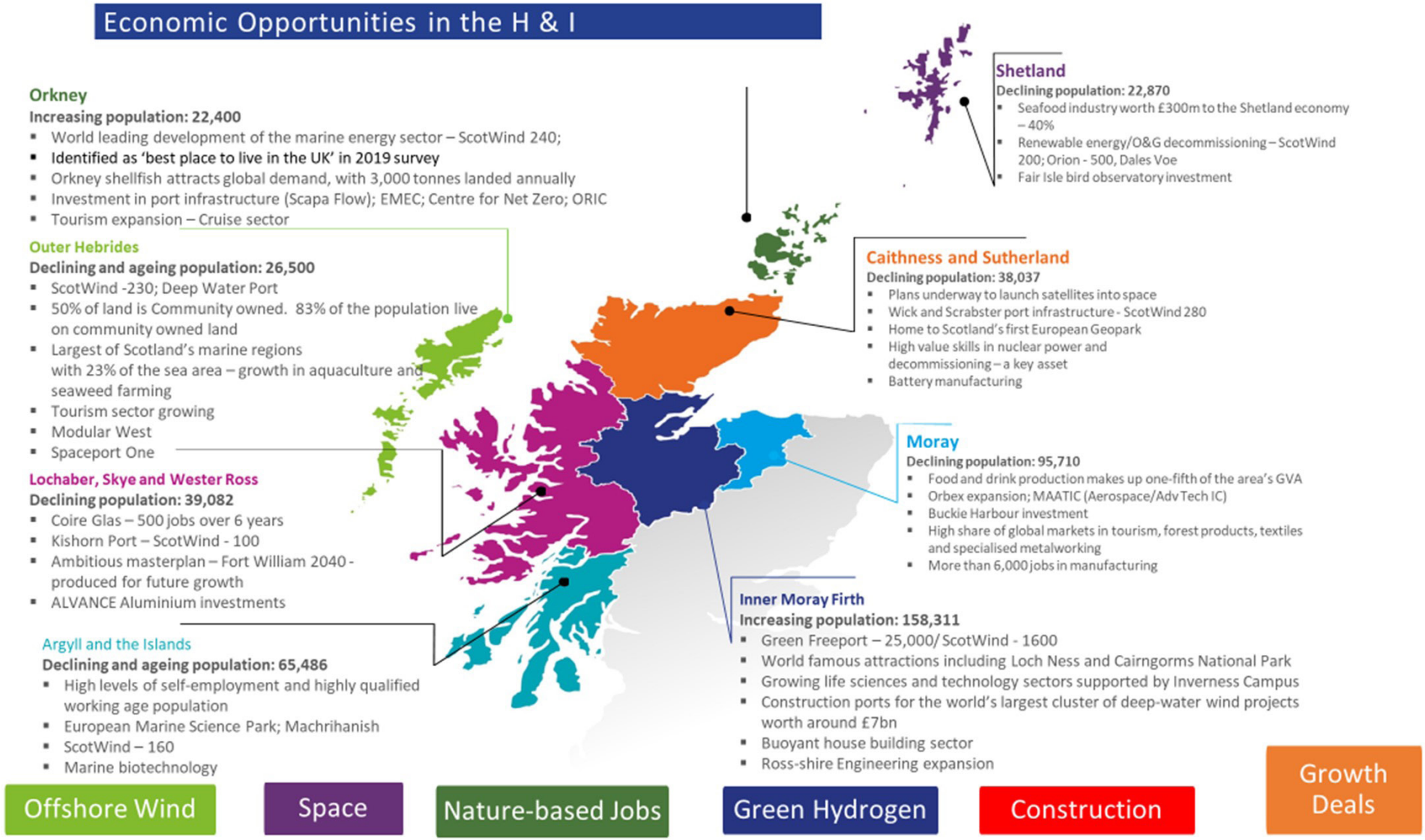

Economic Opportunities in the H & I
Orkney
Increasing population: 22,400
World leading development of the marine energy sector – ScotWind 240;
Identified as 'best place to live in the UK' in 2019 survey
Orkney shellfish attracts global demand, with 3,000 tonnes landed annually
Investment in port infrastructure (Scapa Flow); EMEC; Centre for Net Zero; ORIC
Tourism expansion – Cruise sector
Outer Hebrides
Declining and ageing population: 26,500
ScotWind -230; Deep Water Port
50% of land is Community owned. 83% of the population live on community owned land
Largest of Scotland's marine regions with 23% of the sea area – growth in aquaculture and seaweed farming
Tourism sector growing
Modular West
Spaceport One
Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross
Declining population: 39,082
Coire Glas – 500 jobs over 6 years
Kishorn Port – ScotWind - 100
Ambitious masterplan – Fort William 2040 - produced for future growth
ALVANCE Aluminium investments
Argyll and the Islands
Declining and ageing population: 65,486
High levels of self-employment and highly qualified working age population
European Marine Science Park; Machrihanish
ScotWind – 160
Marine biotechnology
Shetland
Declining population: 22,870
Seafood industry worth £300m to the Shetland economy – 40%
Renewable energy/O&G decommissioning – ScotWind 200; Orion - 500, Dales Voe
Fair Isle bird observatory investment
Caithness and Sutherland
Declining population: 38,037
Plans underway to launch satellites into space
Wick and Scrabster port infrastructure - ScotWind 280
Home to Scotland's first European Geopark
High value skills in nuclear power and decommissioning – a key asset
Battery manufacturing
Moray
Declining population: 95,710
Food and drink production makes up one-fifth of the area's GVA
Orbex expansion; MAATIC (Aerospace/Adv Tech IC)
Buckie Harbour investment
High share of global markets in tourism, forest products, textiles and specialised metalworking
More than 6,000 jobs in manufacturing
Inner Moray Firth
Increasing population: 158,311
Green Freeport – 25,000/ ScotWind - 1600
World famous attractions including Loch Ness and Cairngorms National Park
Growing life sciences and technology sectors supported by Inverness Campus
Construction ports for the world's largest cluster of deep-water wind projects worth around £7bn
Buoyant house building sector
Ross-shire Engineering expansion
Offshore Wind
Space
Nature-based Jobs
Green Hydrogen
Construction
Growth Deals

Figure 1 Enrolments by Mode of Study over time

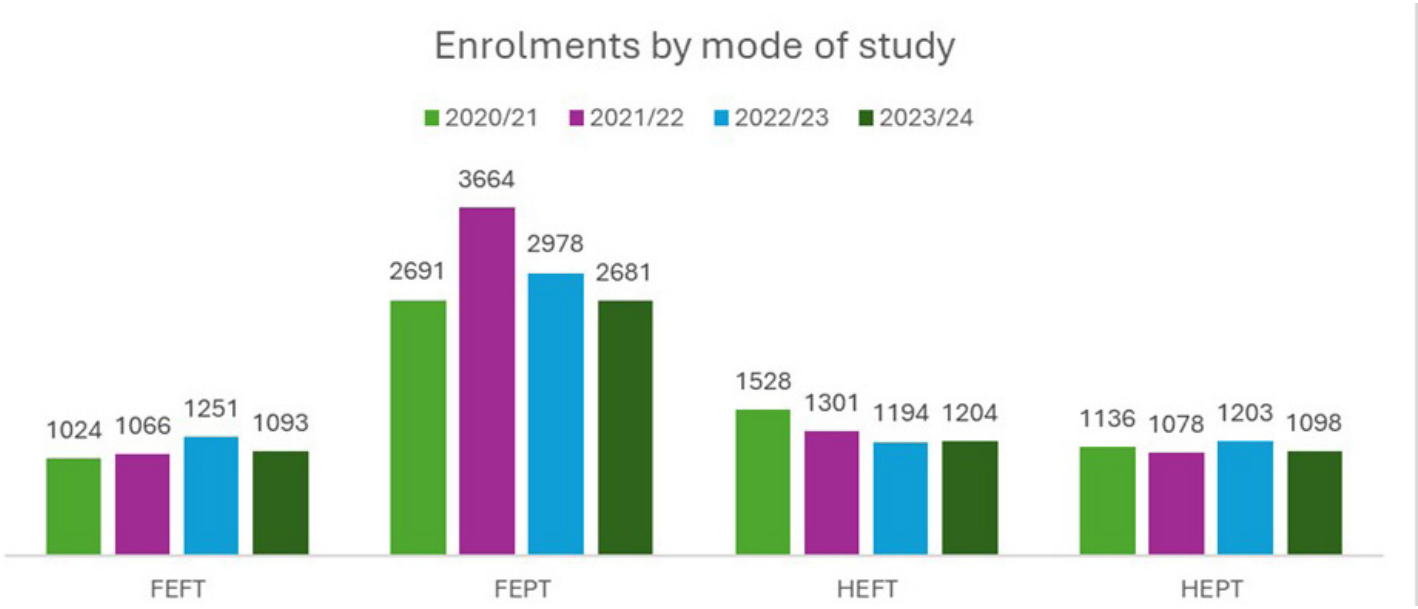
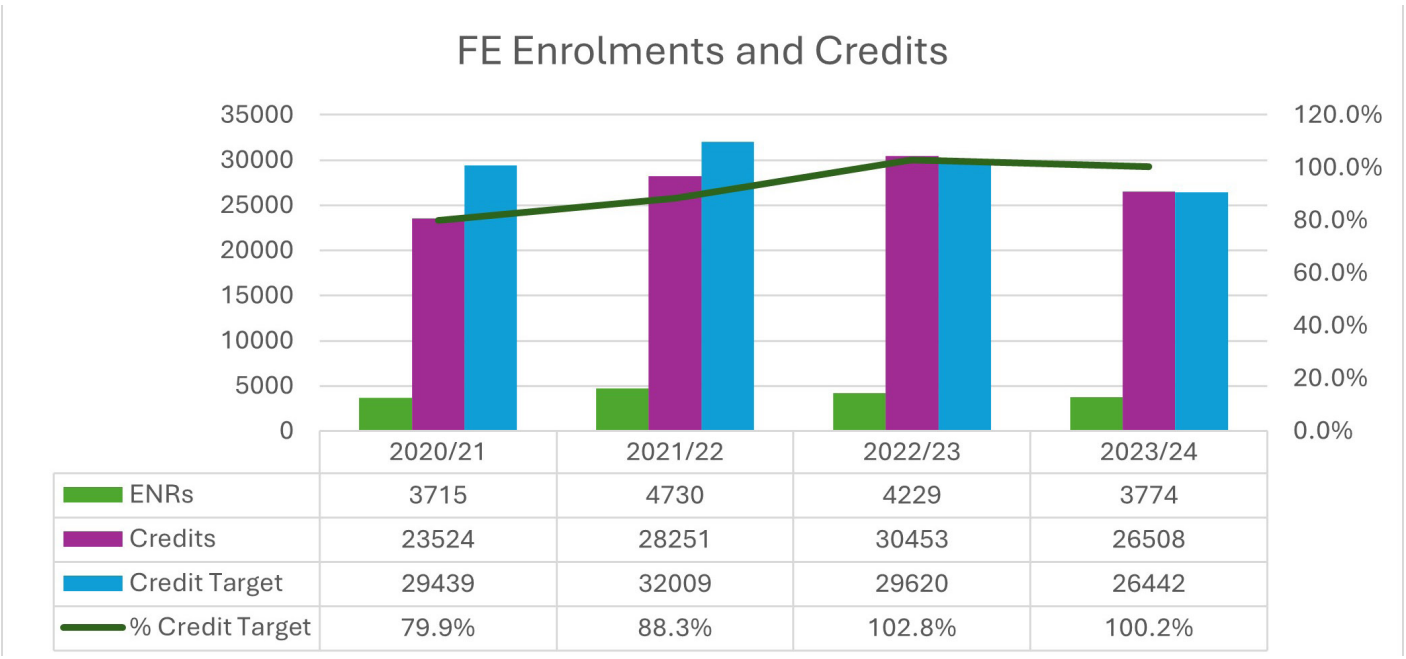


Figure 2 FE Credits delivered over time



	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
ENRs	3715	4730	4229	3774
Credits	23524	28251	30453	26508
Credit Target	29439	32009	29620	26442
% Credit Target	79.9%	88.3%	102.8%	100.2%

Figure 3 Graduate Apprenticeship growth over time

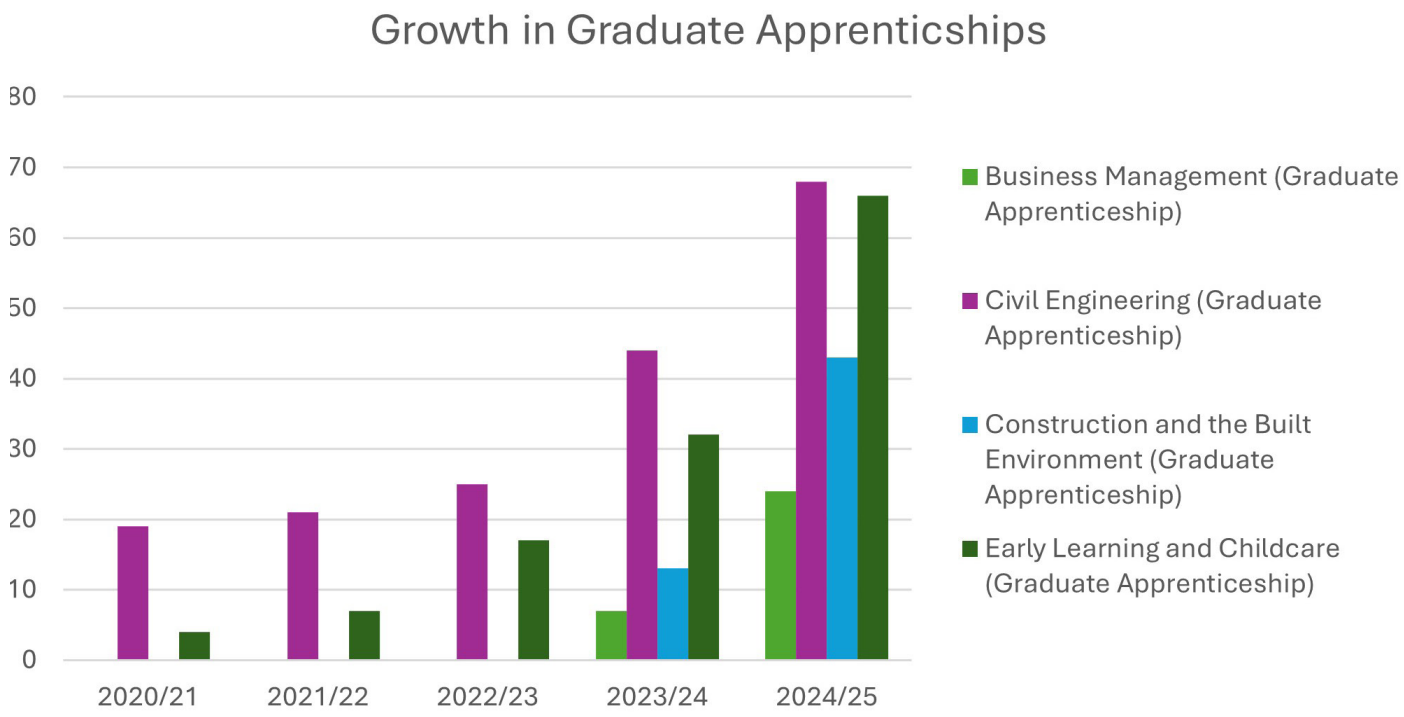


Figure 4 Modern Apprenticeship growth over time

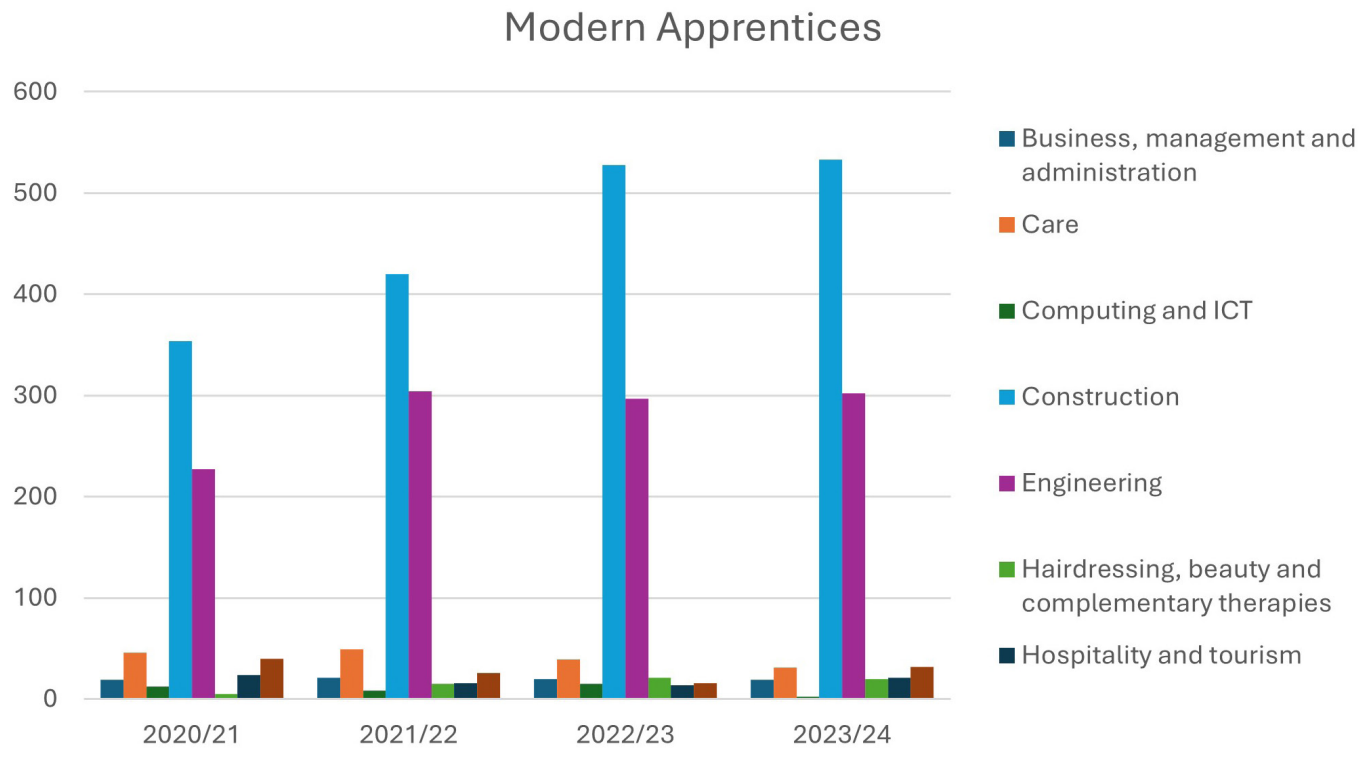
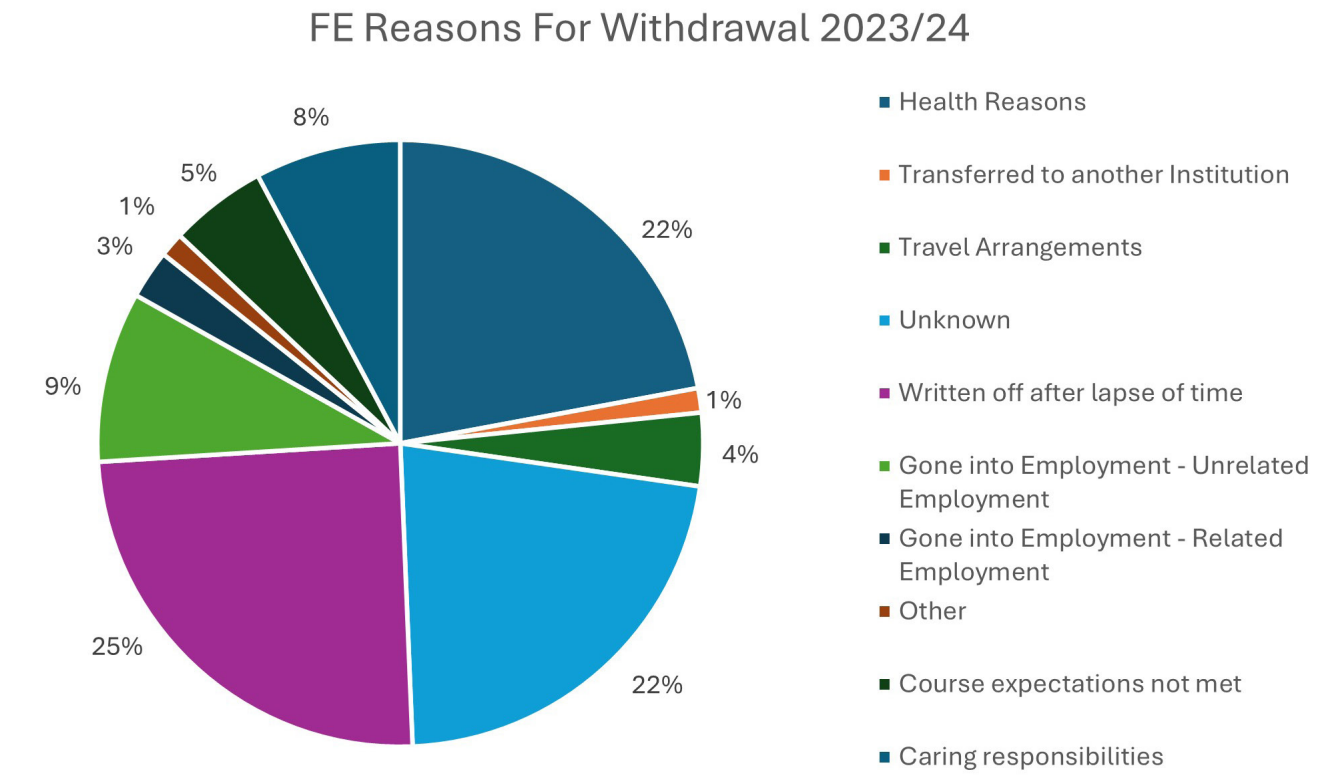


Figure 5 Reasons for Withdrawal AY 23/24



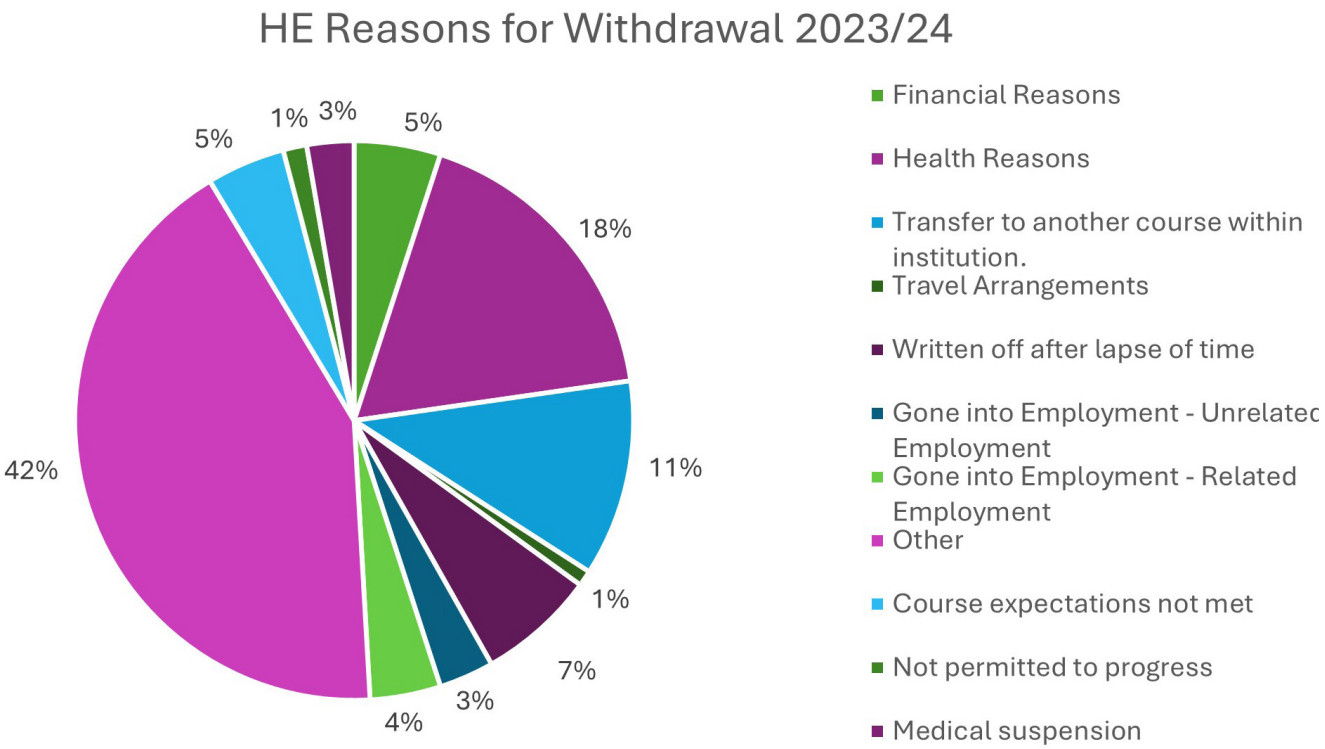
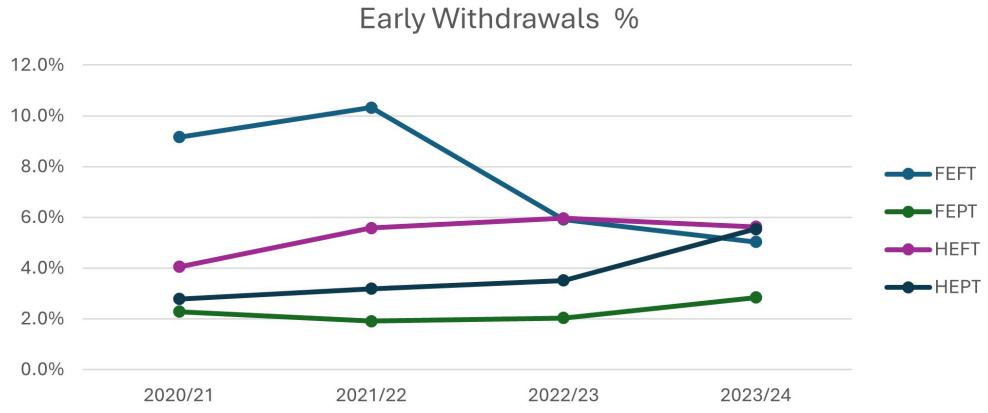
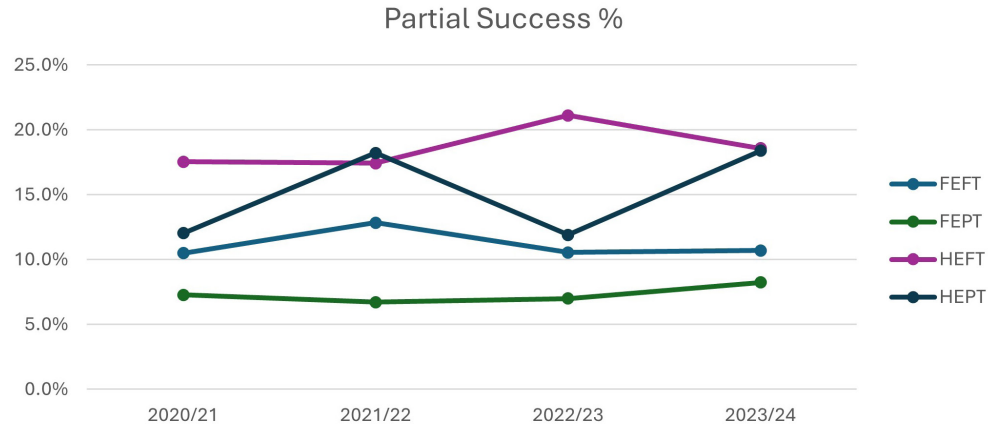
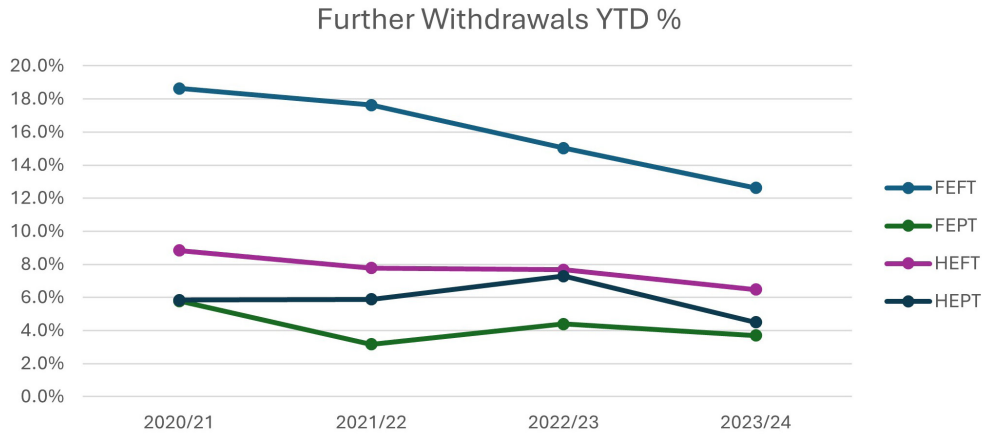


Figure 6 Retention and Achievement – all levels all modes







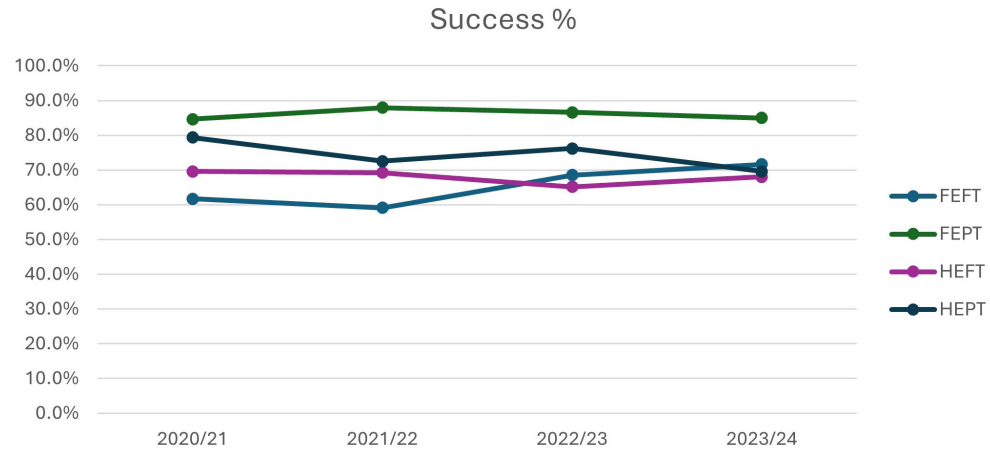


Table 1 FE FT and PT Outcomes against sector outcomes

Full-time FE UHI Inverness	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully
2020-21	30.1%	9.9%	59.9%
2021-22	29.5%	12.5%	58.0%
2022-23	20.9%	10.6%	68.5%
2023-24	17.7%	10.7%	71.6%
National sector performance	**Withdrawal**	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
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 UHI Inverness	**Withdrawal**	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2020-21	11.1%	9.1%	79.8%
2021-22	6.6%	8.4%	85.0%
2022-23	8.7%	6.5%	84.8%
2023-24	6.6%	8.2%	85.2%
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%

Table 2 HN FT Outcomes against sector outcomes

HNC and HND Full Time	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully
2020-21	23.0%	21.3%	55.7%
2021-22	21.3%	19.9%	58.8%
2022-23	19.5%	19.9%	60.6%
2023-24	18.4%	17.8%	60.8%
National sector performance	**Withdrawal**	**Partial Success**	**Completed successfully**
2020-21	17.6%	10.9%	71.6%
2021-22	23.6%	13.9%	62.5%
2022-23	20.6%	14.0%	65.5%

Table 3a Priority Groups FE Outcomes and targets

	UHI Inverness 22-23 Actual * FE Only published			UHI Inverness 23-24 Target				UHI Inverness 23-24 Actual			UHI Inverness 24-25 Target		
	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal	ENR	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal
10% Most deprived postcode areas	64.9%	11.9%	23.2%	102	65.0%	13.0%	22.0%	65.3%	14.9%	19.8%	67.0%	13.5%	19.5%
20% Most deprived postcode areas	65.6%	11.7%	22.8%	123	66.0%	12.0%	22.0%	73.8%	13.1%	13.1%	75.0%	12.0%	13.0%
Ethnic minority	63.4%	19.4%	17.2%	59	69.0%	14.0%	17.0%	67.8%	6.8%	25.4%	69.0%	7.0%	24.0%
Disability	67.5%	11.6%	20.9%	937	68.0%	11.0%	21.0%	67.4%	14.2%	18.4%	69.0%	13.0%	18.0%
Care Experienced	60.6%	9.6%	29.8%	120	62%	15%	23.05	61.7%	15.8%	22.5%	61.7%	15.8%	22.5%
All FE Learners over 160 hours	73.2%	10.3%	16.5%	2,228	73.5%	10%	16.5%	74.0%	10.7%	15.3%	76%	10%	14%

Table 3b Priority Groups Sector Benchmarks

Sector Benchmarks 2022-23	Scotland *Includes HN 22-23 published		
	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal
10% Most deprived postcode areas	62.6%	13.5%	23.9%
20% Most deprived postcode areas	63.6%	13.5%	22.9%
Ethnic minority	67.4%	14.9%	17.8%
Disability	64.1%	14.2%	21.7%
Care Experienced	55.4%	17.0%	27.6%

Table 4 Level 4/5 Outcomes

FE Full Time	WITHDRAWALS %				PARTIAL SUCCESS %				SUCCESS %			
SCQF Level	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**
04	30.9%	45.5%	20.8%	26.5%	8.1%	10.0%	7.5%	4.4%	61.1%	44.5%	71.7%	69.0%
05	30.7%	33.0%	32.6%	20.5%	14.2%	16.6%	13.2%	13.3%	55.1%	50.4%	54.2%	66.2%
Grand Total	**30.8%**	**35.9%**	**29.5%**	**22.3%**	**12.4%**	**15.1%**	**11.7%**	**10.6%**	**56.8%**	**49.0%**	**58.8%**	**67.0%**

Table 5 Enrolments by priority groups

*These figures are at point of enrolment and do not include learners who declare care experience, disability or mental health issue during their course.

Summary %	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 YTD
10% Most Deprived Area	3.54%	3.77%	4.02%	3.44%	3.48%
20% Most Deprived Area	4.64%	4.28%	4.49%	4.07%	4.43%
BME	2.37%	2.11%	3.50%	3.47%	3.59%
Care Leaver	2.88%	2.74%	3.53%	3.47%	2.45%
Declared Disability	22.43%	22.63%	26.86%	26.02%	30.49%
Mental Health Issue	8.25%	7.34%	7.14%	6.48%	6.79%

Appendix 2

Professional Development

Figure 1

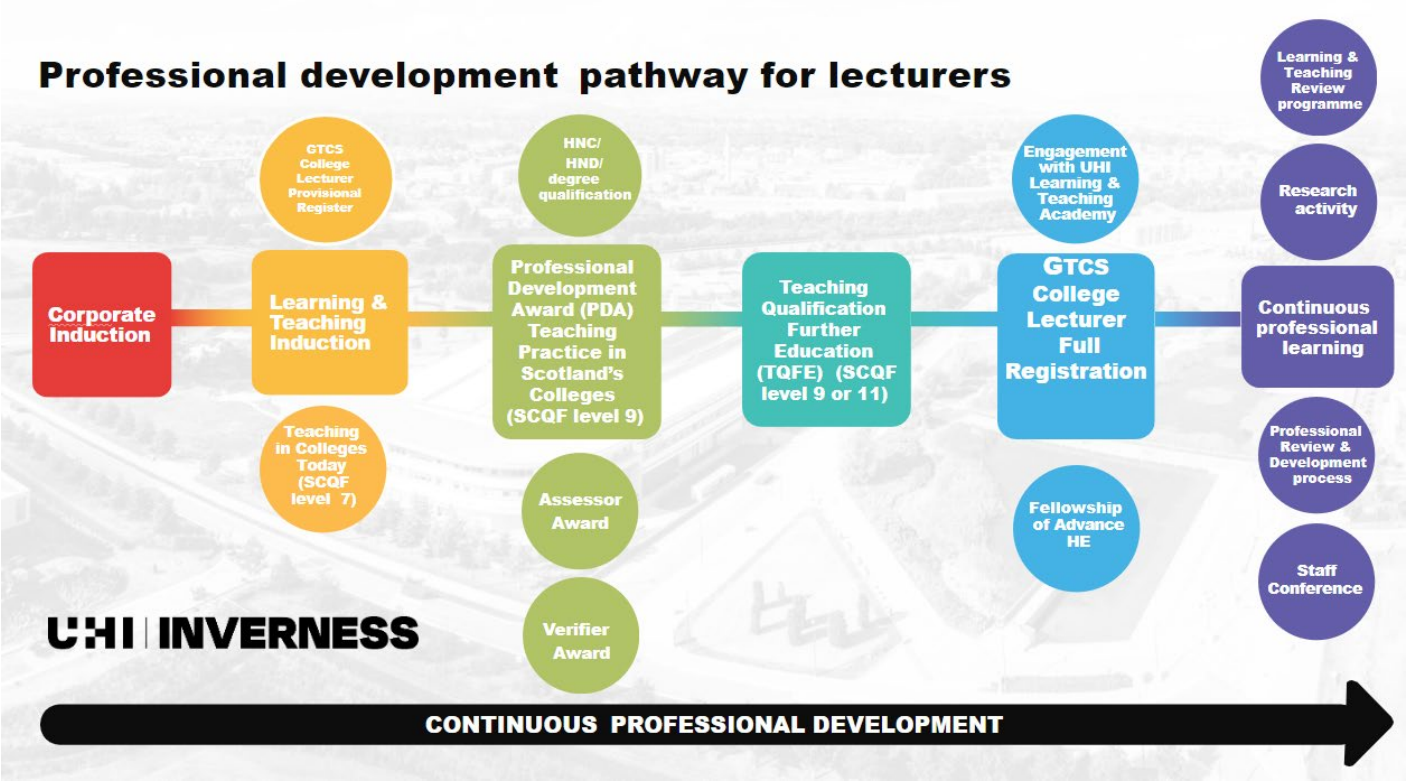


Figure 2

80%

of permanent teaching staff hold GTCS professional registration.

88%

of permanent teaching staff hold Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE) or equivalent (155 lecturers).

32

Permanent teaching staff hold the Professional Development Award - *Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges* and will progress to TQFE.

35

Staff are being supported this AY to do additional qualifications from Undergraduate level to Doctorates and PHDs.

11

Staff are being supported this AY with research projects through our Enquiring Minds Scheme.

Figure 3

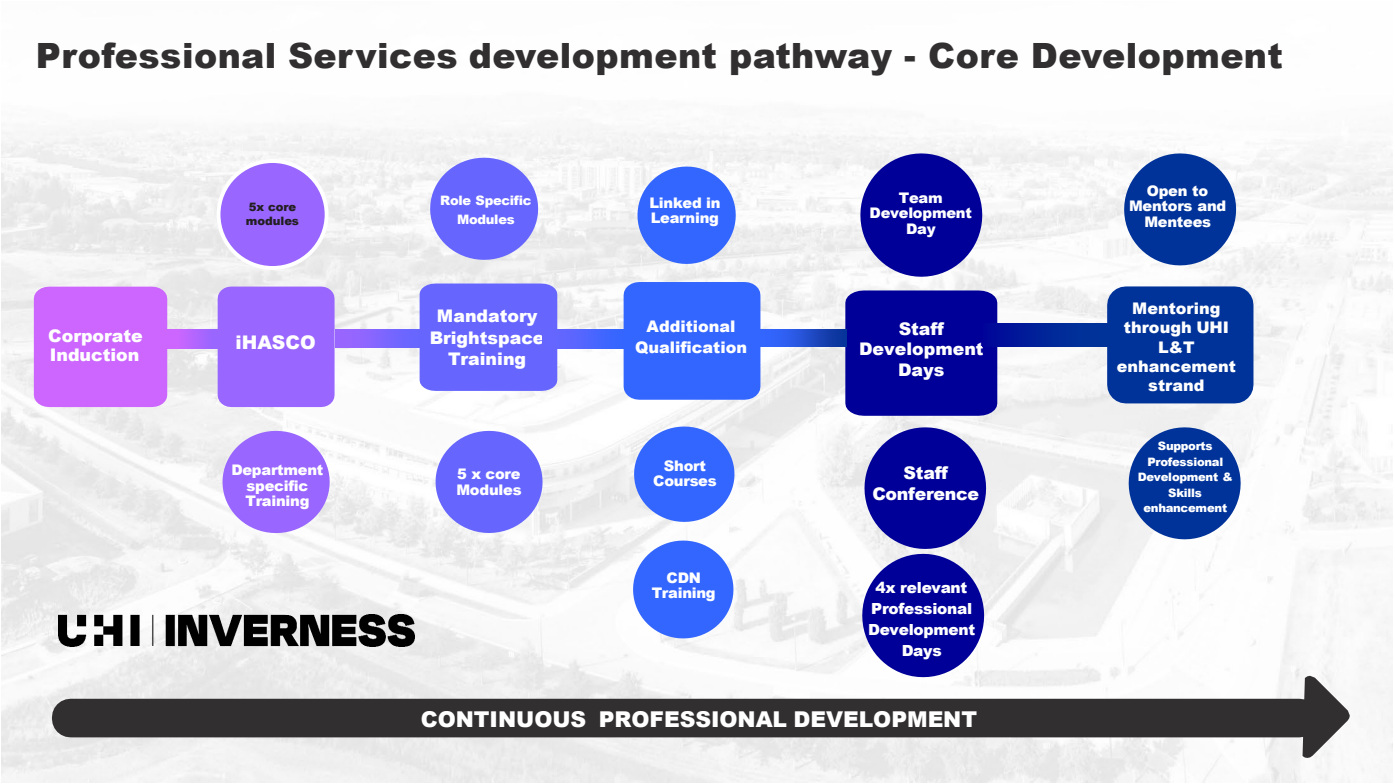
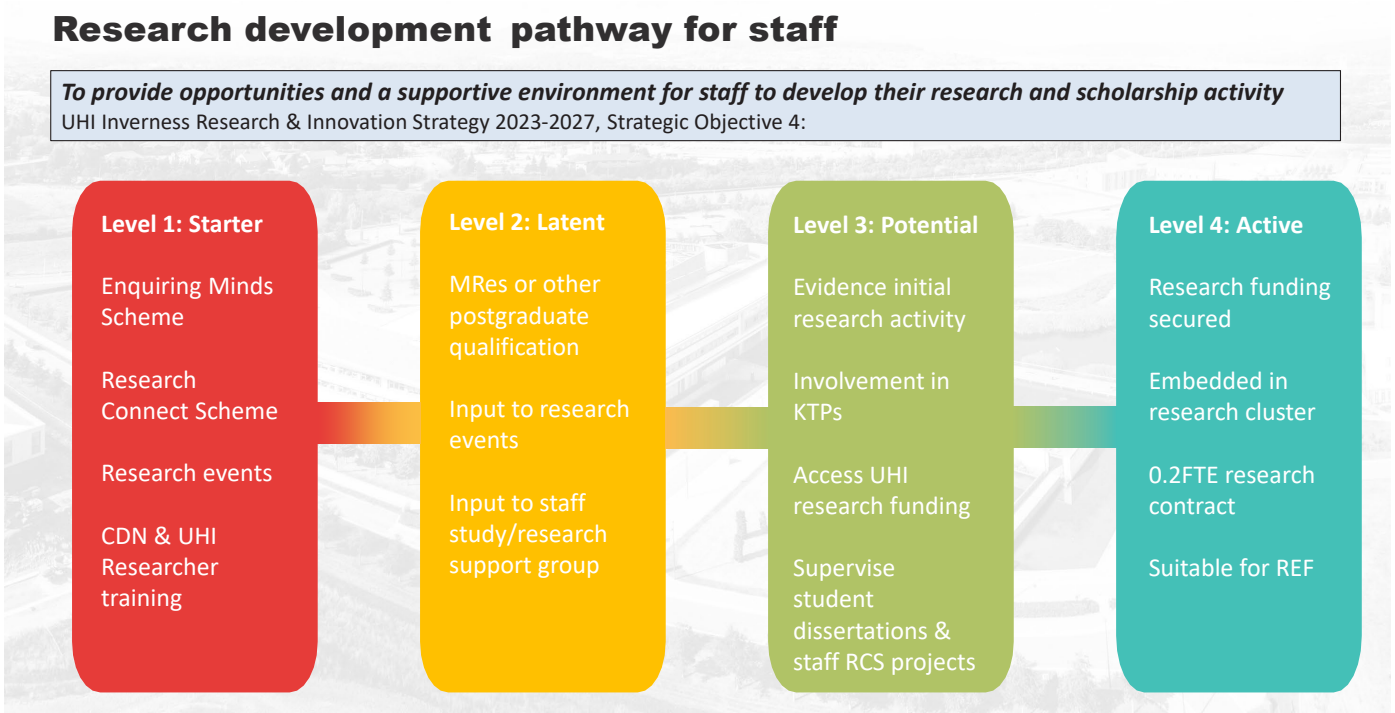


Figure 4



Action Plan

The following action plan represents the high level areas for enhancement. These are underpinned by an internal detailed action plan.

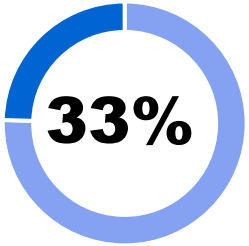
Principle and Area for enhancement or development	Action(s) and planned impact/ outcomes	Milestone (s/ target date(s), continuing/ carried forward (c/f)	Lead
Excellence in learning, teaching and assessment	Introduce and embed the principles and practices of trauma informed practice into the classroom and across campus **Outcome: Improved learner retention and achievement rates for those 'hard to reach' learners**	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee	Trauma informed College Leads (Curriculum Lead – FACT; Wellbeing and Learning Support Manager)
Supporting learner success - achieving positive outcomes for every learner	Improve learner retention for AY 24-25 across FT FE and FT HN programmes – see programme level and *Education Scotland* category targets for retention. **Outcome: reduction in early and further withdrawal rates**	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee	VP – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality
Supporting learner success - achieving positive outcomes for every learner	Improve attainment rates / successful outcomes on FT FE and FT HN programmes - see programme level and Education Scotland category targets for successful outcomes. **Outcome: Improved success rates**	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee	VP – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality

Supporting learner success - achieving positive outcomes for every learner	Further embed the 'Learning Assistant' initiative **Outcome: Improved learner retention and achievement of FT FE learners with a disability**	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee	Tertiary Education Leaders; Wellbeing and Learning Support Manager
Learner Engagement and Partnership	Work with HISA to develop the features of the Student Partnership ambition statement (TQEF) **Outcome: Further embedding of learner partnership working**	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee via the 'Achieved Together' meetings	Quality Manager
Learner Engagement and Partnership	Working in partnership with HISA, explore the future of the Student Voice Rep role **Outcome: potential implementation of framework to capture all learner voices, every place, every level**	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee via the 'Achieved Together' meetings	Quality Manager

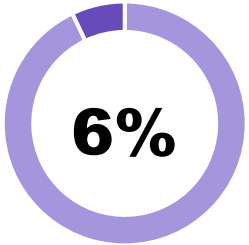
Supporting Priority Groups

December 2024

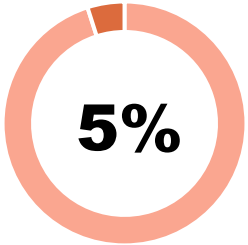
Our Learners



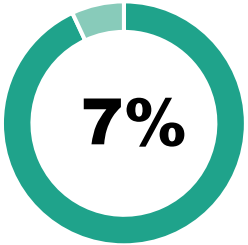
Declared Disability



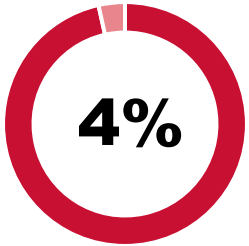
Mental Health



Caring Responsibilities



SIMD 10 or 20% postcode

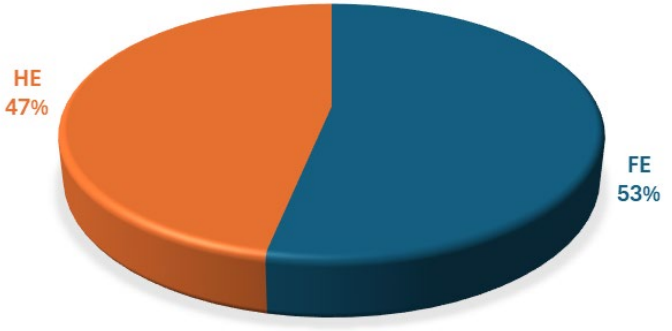


Care Experienced

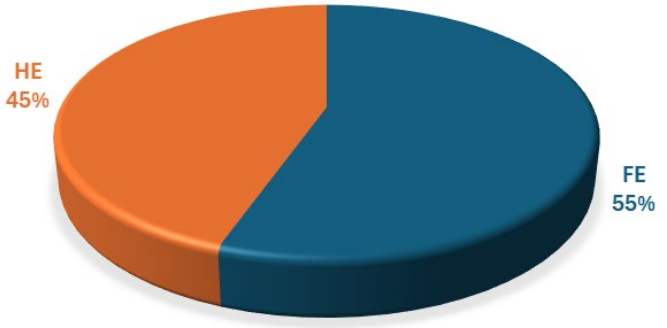
Complexity of Learner Needs

Students with completed Personal Learning Support Plans

- This AY to date >800 students have been assessed or currently going through assessment
- This AY to date, 178 students across FE and HE have a PLSP and are being supported with disclosed learning difficulties



- This AY to date, 77 students across FE and HE have a PLSP and are being supported with disclosed mental health

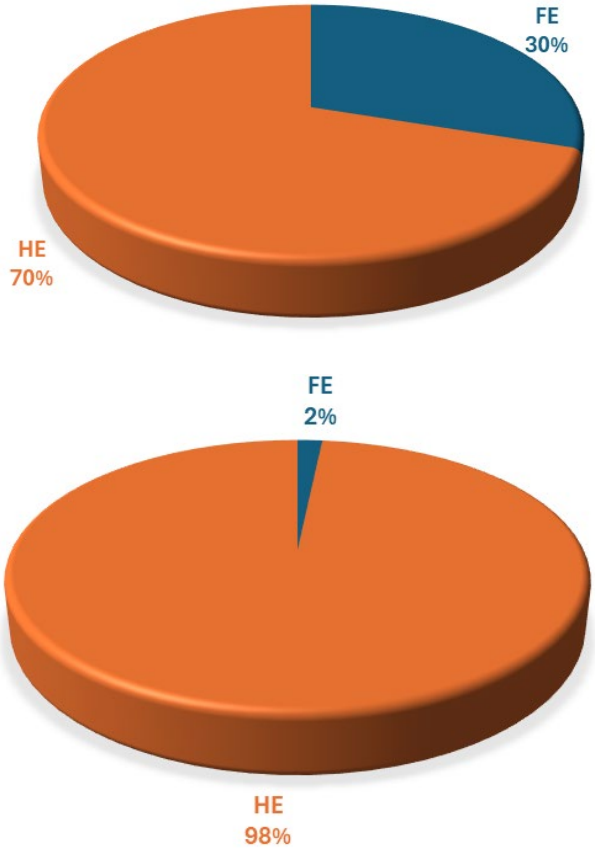


Complexity of Learner Needs

Students with completed Personal Learning Support Plans

- An additional 183 students across FE and HE are being supported with 'other' disclosed needs

- An additional 121 students across FE and HE are being supported with multiple disabilities



Growing Support Needs

Last academic year we saw a **58.59**% increase in students requiring a PLSP. This academic year have had a further increase. We have **already exceeded the numbers of referrals** for PLSPs, circa 800 students have been referred to Learning Support for a PLSP. This **number increases week on week.**

Students may indicate one support need on application but when they come to meet with the team, they then **disclose further needs** (MH and chronic pain conditions being the most prevalent).

235 students, who do not have a PLSP, are being supported with their mental health and wellbeing which is more than half of the students we supported during the whole of last academic year. **135** of these students who are being supported are high risk and in addition to these, **49** students are of the highest risk.

Challenges

- Growing extremity of mental health needs
- Growing risk of suicide ideation
- 'Holding service' due to waiting lists externally for mental health support
- GP referral to access support
- External waiting lists for diagnosis e.g. ADHD, Dyslexia
- Low resilience
- Sharing of information from Secondary to FE around learner's support needs
- High number of students don't disclose additional support needs on application or enrolment which can lead to students being initially unsupported or cause delays for support being implemented.

Holistic Approach to Support

Being responsive to the learning, wellbeing and mental health needs of our students through the provision of tailored support solutions.

Assistive technology

Educational Support Advisors

Investment in Counselling Resource

Mental Health Triage

Drop-ins

PDA/PAT model

Co-ordinated support plans for extra consideration groups

Classroom Assistants for 'high needs' classes

Trauma Informed College

The Bothy
one stop shop

New Booking System

Impact of Our Approach

Student Satisfaction

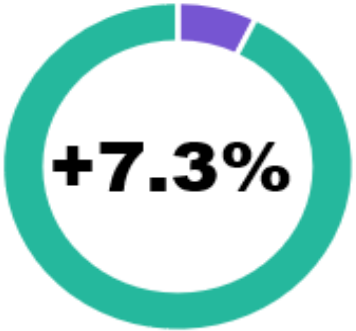
- ✓ 94.32% satisfaction in learning support services
- ✓ 95% satisfaction in wellbeing and counselling services
- ✓ 96% satisfaction in The Bothy

All staff from the Learning Support team were individually nominated by students in the *Best Personal/Academic /Learning Support* category of the 2024 HISA Awards

"The student support is great, from free food to counselling."

"I am positively surprised with the amount of support offered to students, especially thanks to my PDA and one of lecturers who supported me in difficult times."

Successful Outcomes

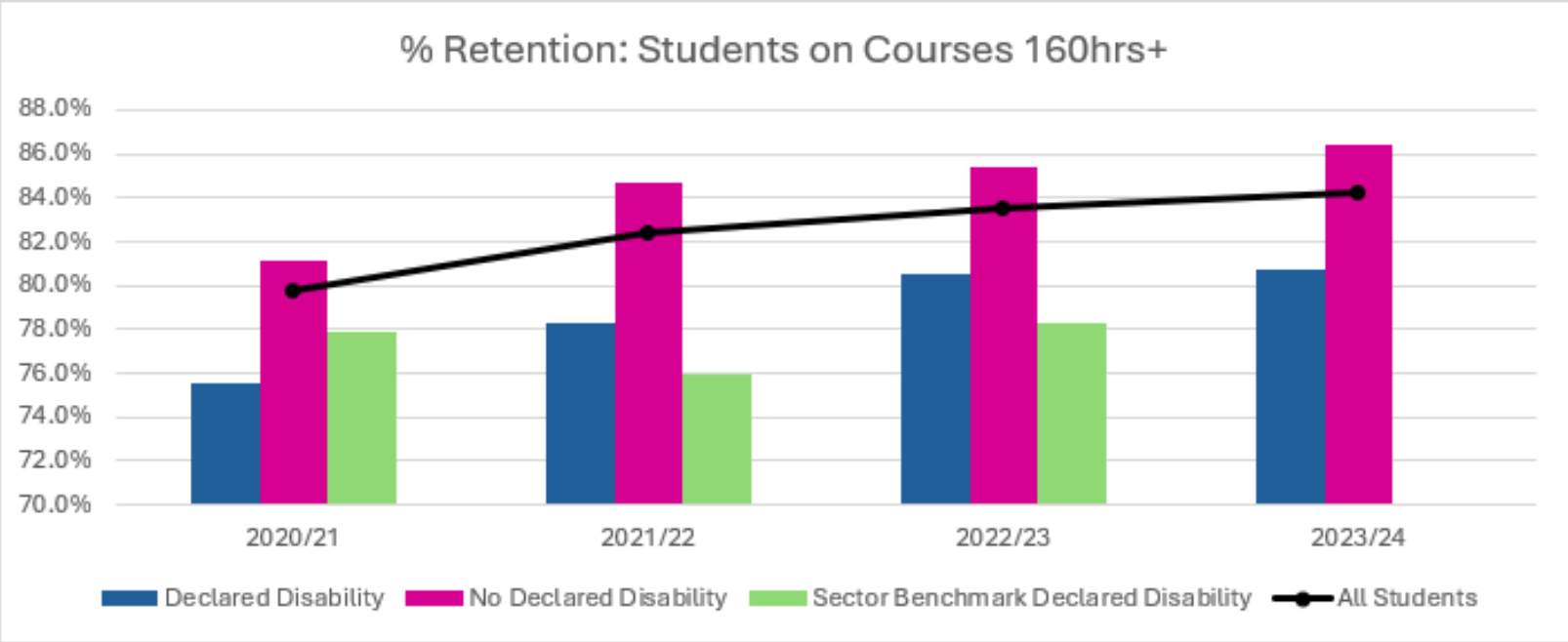


Above Sector Benchmark for FT FT Outcomes

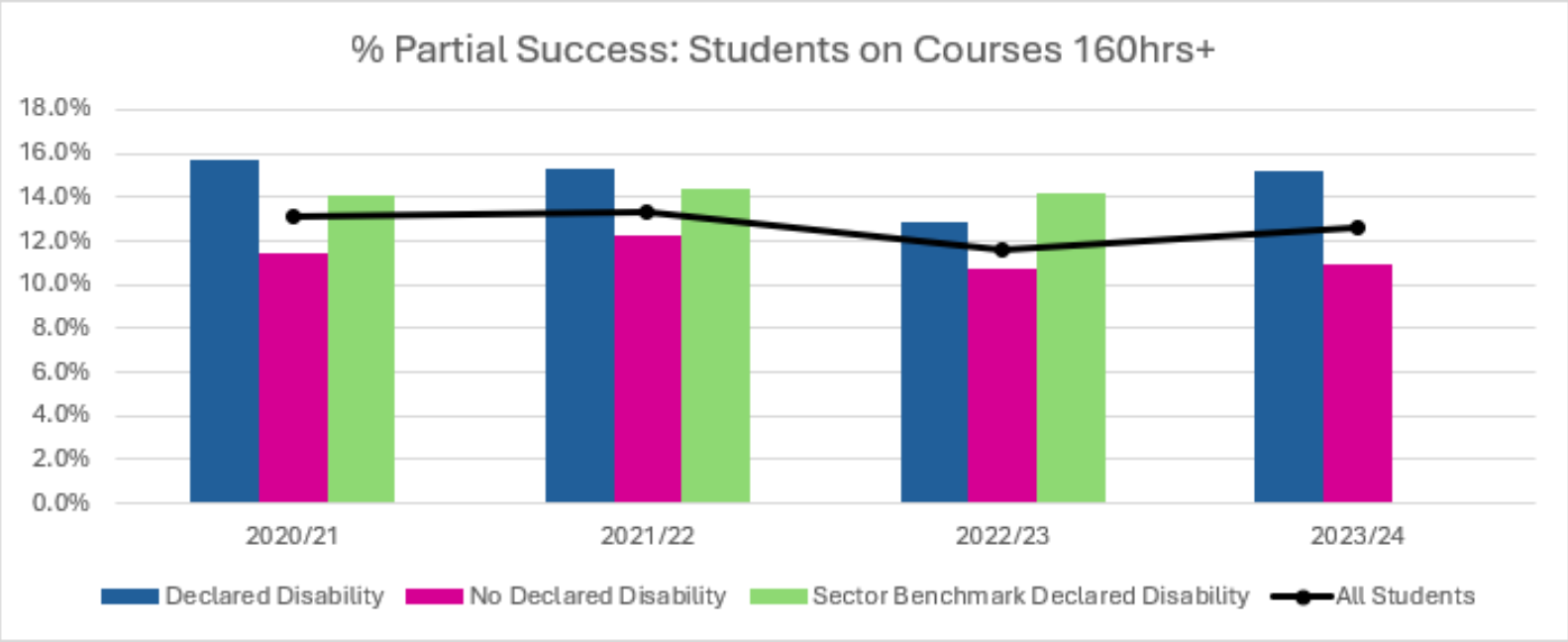
Above Sector Benchmark for Care Experienced Learner Outcomes

Above Sector Benchmark for Disabled Learner Outcomes

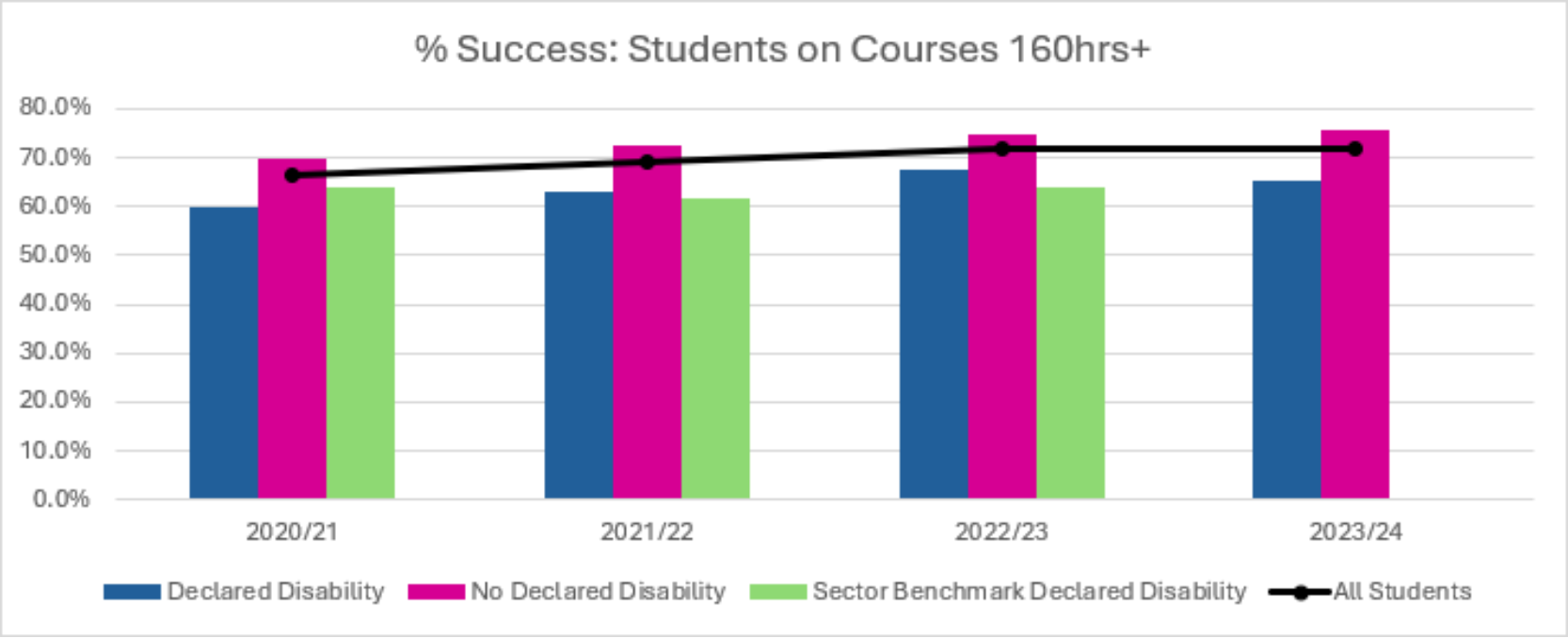
Retention


% Retention: Students on Courses 160hrs+
88.0%
86.0%
84.0%
82.0%
80.0%
78.0%
76.0%
74.0%
72.0%
70.0%
2020/21
2021/22
2022/23
2023/24
Declared Disability
No Declared Disability
Sector Benchmark Declared Disability
All Students

Partial Success



Student Successful Outcomes



Further Enhancements

- Moving PLSPs to Power BI
- Dochas Centre – early intervention and onward support and employment opportunities for HND counselling students
- INSIGHT enhancements
- *The Bothy* evening opening, targeting Apprentices
- Disability positive awareness campaign, semester 2
- Supported Education Level 4 PLSPs
- School transitions and sharing information
- QAA enhancement topic (2024-2028) – *Diverse Learner Journeys*

Learning, Teaching and Research Committee

Subject/Title:	Learning Teaching Review Report
Author: [Name and Job title]	Liz Cook, Quality Manager
Meeting:	Learning, Teaching & Research Committee
Meeting Date:	10th December 2024
Date Paper prepared:	3rd December 2024
Brief Summary of the paper:	The report outlines a summary of strengths and enhancement areas from the learning and teaching reviews.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Noting
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:**:** • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change	The report supports the Quality Assurance and Enhancement strategy.
Resource implications:	**If yes, please specify**:
Risk implications:	**If yes, please specify:**
Equality and Diversity implications:	If yes, please specify:
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	

Status – [Non confidential]	
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in "open" business* [Yes]	

*If a paper should **not** be included within "open" business, please highlight below the reason.			
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research (S27)		Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs (S30)	
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (S33)		Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court (S36)	
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act (S38)		Other (please give further details)	
For how long must the paper be withheld? (express either as the time which needs to pass or a condition which needs to be met.)			

Further guidance on application of the exclusions from Freedom of Information legislation is available via

http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/ScottishPublicAuthorities/ScottishPublicAuthorities.asp and

http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/web/FILES/Public_Interest_Test.pdf

Recommendation(s)

The Committee are asked to note the report summarising the strengths identified from the Learning Teaching Review process in 2023-24.

Learning and Teaching Review (LTR) Report 2023-24

Contents

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Areas of strength 2
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Supporting flexible and students centred learning 2
Connecting learning across communities 3
Learning for personal growth and employment 3
Authentic assessment and meaningful feedback 3
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Survey - Staff Feedback on the LTR Process 5
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Themes identified for 2024-25 7
Next steps 8

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide readers with a summary of the LTR activity that took place during academic year 2023-24.

Background and Scope

The process for the internal review of learning & teaching forms part of the quality enhancement arrangements at UHI Inverness. Closely aligned to Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES), the model aims to complement the existing mechanisms of self-reflection and student feedback to ensure a robust evaluation of learning and teaching to support practice.

The LTR approach is based on a peer support model with professional discussions taking place between the reviewer and reviewee following classroom observations. The model is not linked to the PRD process. The reviewee determines who they share the outcome of the discussions with. It may be useful to aid the PRD process and influence CPD activity, but it is up to the individual to decide if they wish to use it in this way. This process is a valuable tool to support ongoing GTCS registration and provides an evidence source for the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework.

A sample of lessons to be included in the review is identified annually, based on a wide range of information and evidence relating to KPIs, student feedback, nominations and internal and external review.

During 2023-24, 54 L&T reviews were scheduled, compared to 39 in the previous year. 39 reviews were completed, compared to 31 the previous year. A range of SCQF levels were covered by the reviews from SCQF level 3 to level 11. The review team consisted of a bank of experienced staff from across college curriculum areas, across a range of roles.

Areas of strength

The following areas of strength were identified by the team of LTR reviewers and were deemed worthy of sharing with others. The strengths have been mapped to the values within the UHI Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy: [UHI Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy - Home (sharepoint.com)]

Supporting the learner as an individual

- The relationships with the students were a key strength. There was a relaxed, fun yet informative pedagogical style which was clearly welcomed by the students.
- When speaking to individual student, this was done in a quieter supportive tone. Asked for student to reflect on their own practices and how they felt they were doing.
- When communicating to the class as a whole, highlighting key points, a louder tone was taken, indicating overall instruction.
- Clear communication and positive relationships with the students.
- Lecturer successfully listened to individual contributions while keeping overview of whole class.
  Responsive and encouraging approach to enable independence, decision-making and problem-solving
- Enthusiastic and engaging teaching style

Supporting flexible and students centred learning

- Good use of chat function in Webex to ensure relevance to topic and linking to real life experiences around the topic.
- I thoroughly enjoyed the session and was inspired by your technique in delivering the lesson remotely.
- Learning materials and task that are relevant and helpful in the learning process.

Connecting learning across communities

- Well-paced and varied delivery involving both tutor-led and small group work during the observation period. Relaxed atmosphere. Students established relationships, despite across NC/HNC. Students well-practiced and confident in presenting work to wider class.

Learning for personal growth and employment

- Students are being encouraged to develop critical reflection skills, analysis and evaluation, communication skills and Meta skills.
- Excellent learning environment created by lecturer. This facilitated maximum opportunities for learning and naturally occurring Q&A/ a partnership environment. Students highly praised the real workplace approach of this course and the high standards/ pride in work it encourages/ fosters.
- Excellent Practical demonstration throughout allowing learners to obtain professional ways of carrying out tasks. Excellent classroom management to create a relaxed and comfortable learning environment.
- Workshop provided a good replication of a typical industry setting to assist learning.
- Excellent real workplace learning environment created by lecturer. This facilitated maximum opportunities for learning and naturally occurring Q&A/ a partnership environment. Students highly praised this real workplace approach and the independent/ shaping their own learning and development of their knowledge it encourages/ fosters.
- Develops essential skills, capacities, and attributes (listening to clients, following instructions).
- Practical learning opportunity, applying knowledge to practice. Student independence was promoted throughout but with reassuring support and guidance from the tutor. Calm working atmosphere, despite levels of responsibility and students working against tight time constraints.
- Excellent prep for working environment.

Authentic assessment and meaningful feedback

- Feedback was highly praised by the learners, so this is clearly a strong area in the course.
- Linkages to next assessment and providing outline guidance, reminder of wider academic resources and the importance of robust referencing and converting data to graphical content.
- Formative peer assessment task to prepare for the closed book Graded Unit.
- Good assessment feedback/forward

Enriching learning through digital practices

- Excellent management of online class with good rapport between lecturer & learners.

- Very positive learning environment which included all learners & encouraged engagement.
- Brightspace area clearly laid out.
- Video as a pedagogical tool with supported commentary and pauses for discussion.
- Good use of Brightspace to support learning and build learners confidence in accessing learning materials and feedback.
- Learning materials are set out on Brightspace with links to further tasks and reading, this looks easy to follow for students, this was confirmed through feedback that they found this particular lecturers style within their course the best and easiest to follow.
- Clear evidence of comprehensive planning and use of Brightspace. Excellent use of Brightspace to back up learning.
- Lecturer showed awareness of importance of meeting individual learning requirements of students attending, that were enrolled on different levels and programmes in one session.
- Excellent L&T delivery method supporting application of student knowledge to practice. Effective skill progression. Effective assessment preparation. Reassuring, paced, supportive teaching style. Use of Tech/camera is an excellent live L&T resource, supporting students learning

Enhancement points

The following development points were identified by the reviewers. Student feedback repeated in this section has been removed and is covered in the 'student feedback' section.

- The use of italics in learning resources, ensure that all fonts are accessible.
- Trying to encourage more conversation from learners. Some points had a lot of one-sided conversation from lecturer.
- Two students using language and topics that could be offensive to others, consideration if this was a client about how they may feel about this. Consider future employability and wider awareness of who clientele may be.
- Perhaps standardisation with the team could help make the whole programme more user friendly.
- Although I didn't see any evidence of this, feedback from the Lecturer expressed that some tips on good online delivery would be helpful. I have included a link to some good practice from other colleagues.
- To further develop skills in use of the Smartboard in terms of sharing live diagrams enabling all students to have the same viewpoint.
- Continue to build on the development of Meta-skills within the lesson supporting learners to understand how these are being developed.
- Continue to keep working on reducing those toilet breaks interrupting the lesson flow."
- Look at possibility of allowing more time for the current unit and students have found it very valuable.
- Use of IT within the session could have enhanced some aspects of the class, including feedback (emoji). This could have personalised it for each student, rather than all being aware of each other's selection.
- Reviewee explained the use of self and peer reflection at the end of the practical sessions - what did the students feel were the challenges/how they had improved/what were next steps in skill/practice/knowledge? Peer feedback from the perspective of the client was valuable. This reflective practice is to be continued.
- Some concern from learners regarding the high room temperature of the classroom on a hot day. Lecturer had done all he could to alleviate by undoing all windows. They at times found

it difficult to focus as the morning went on/ the room became hotter. Could the department consider asking to move rooms when it is very hot or ask for PAT tested air fans to reduce the discomfort? This would meet with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

- Black and white diagram handouts difficult to decipher key areas of equipment. Consider colour photos. Lecturer explained cost of print is a consideration and photo is available on BS.
- As discussed, we considered the following, to enhance practice: Encouraging more voices and find ways to merge practical and theoretical knowledge, particularly if using the workroom, maximising the practical nature of the workroom.
- Reviewer and reviewee had a discussion on areas of development which concluded embedding some technology to capture great demonstrations would be beneficial. Lecturing team to perhaps speak with IT about obtaining a web cam to records demonstrations which could be uploaded to Brightspace. This could facilitate other modes of study such as online in addition to helping learners who miss a class.
- Department to consider purchasing iPads or Chrome Books which would enable learners to access key client information/ would mirror the digital technologies now commonly used in salons. This would meet with our UHI Inverness Digital Technology commitment.
- Assist learners to navigate Brightspace VLE

Survey - Staff Feedback on the LTR Process

Those participating in the LTR process were given an opportunity to provide feedback about the process – either through the comments section on the LTR summary or through an on-line survey.

There were 11 responses to the LTR survey, a 28% response rate:

- All respondents felt the professional discussion supported their development in learning and teaching
- All agreed with the feedback provided by the reviewer

There were a number of free text comments expressed in this year's survey:

- *I believe that the LTR is a valuable tool to help promote discussion of good practices.*
- *The reviewer was thorough and professional, she made me feel calm and my students liked her very much.*
- *It is a long time since I have been reviewed, so it was reassuring to have my teaching practice recognised as being supportive of the student learning experience.*
- *It was a very positive experience.*
- *It was a really helpful process to go through. It was helpful to have someone independent observe and provide validation that I am using effective approaches in teaching and in supporting students.*
- *I fully enjoyed the whole process, the students enjoyed asking me about it and the process. I feel that I gained knowledge and confidence from the experience.*
- *It was good to have an outside perspective on my professional practice away from others who teach the same subject or in similar ways.*

Student feedback

There was a range of student feedback, often specific to the programme of study. A number of high-level themes were evident:

- High expectations for and of themselves
- Trust – in the classroom and of lecturers and other students
- Well prepared for assessment and comprehensive feedback provided
- Well supported by lecturers – links to the workplace or real examples

The word cloud (figure 1) gives a sense of the overall student feedback. A number of illustrative examples have been included to give further colour.

(Figure 1)

"Really good use of related news topics that were current to reinforce the tutorial discussion."

"Students felt that feedback was supportive, 'He gives you pretty good feedback and it helps you progress.' Students felt prepared and supported by the activity today. They commented on the relevancy and felt this prepared them for the exam. 'The feedback given is very useful and helpful. I feel prepared to do well.'"

"Consultation forms take about an hour to fill them out. Takes up a lot of time when you have to do this for every class, and you feel you are repeating yourself. We raised this, and we were satisfied with the explanation even though we didn't like the answer!"

"When he explains something, it can be related to something found elsewhere which makes it easy to connect to learning and assessment."

"Area of challenge students gave was the HNC assessment expectations feeling out of touch from workplace expectations."

"The learners felt that feedback and feedforward was appropriate and effective especially during practical activities. When something is not right, XX is sensitive about how he shares this. He does not say 'poor workmanship', he encourages you to think why something might not be right, and how to rectify it, or work towards a solution. The learners felt he is constructive, and they learn from the experience"

Themes for 2023-24 Summary:

Brightspace

Overall the reviews highlighted Brightspace was used well by lecturers. This had added strength when qualified by feedback from students within the group rather than reviewer perception. Good examples highlighted use of video tutorials, clear layout and structure, good number of resources, using at the same time as lessons taking place, good admin support. The need for greater consistency was highlighted in several sessions.

The need to improve the Ally score was highlighted in two of the reviews. In one case the lecturer was not the module leader but committed to raising this through the SED process.

Meta Skills

Several mentions of meta-skills directly, and reference to the development of individual meta-skills. Most spoke about creating an environment suitable to develop appropriate skills. Some broader comments about wider skills ie for employment, core skills.

Feedback to Learners

Feedback through Brightspace recognised and welcomed by students. Range of feedback mechanisms noted throughout most of the reviews.

Themes identified for 2024-25

- Student voice in partnership – with the introduction of the TQEF and enhanced focus on LTA and student partnership, the wider LTR team will seek to learn how students are involved in the creation of lessons and L&T methods; and how feedback in the classroom is used to develop L&T through the course of the year
- Sustainability – with the commitment to UN Sustainability Development Goals, the wider review team will seek to understand how sustainability is embedded into L&T across the organisation.
- Brightspace and Meta skills – a highlight on Brightspace and the continued quest for consistency and ease of use. In line with the student voice in partnership, seeking to understand how students feed into the structure of Brightspace shells.

Next steps

- Disseminate report to reviewers for discussion at the annual training session in November.
- Circulate report to EMT and Learning, Teaching & Research Committee, and then for wider publication.
- Develop sharing practice activity e.g. monthly 10 minute top tip L&T examples from reviewers, submitting a LTES case study Submit an exemplar (sharepoint.com)
- Promotional work of the L&T Review process, including how reviewees are selected, the primary focus being on L&T, rather than discipline.

UHI | INVERNESS

Summary Report: Complaints 2024-25 (Q1)

Introduction

Complaints are received all year round from several different sources although the primary source tends to be from students. Complaints are received via a variety of mechanisms including direct emails, complaints forms and the Red Button. UHI Inverness uses the SPSO categories and sub-categories to classify complaints. The outcomes from complaint resolution are reported to UHI (HE) and published on the UHI Inverness website (FE).

Complaints are grouped into quarters depending on the time of year in which they are received. The quarter dates are detailed below:

- Quarter 1 (Q1): August – end of October,
- Quarter 2 (Q2): November – end of January,
- Quarter 3 (Q3): February – end of April,
- Quarter 4 (Q4): May – end of July.

This report provides an overview of the complaint categories and outcomes in Quarter 1 of 2024-25.

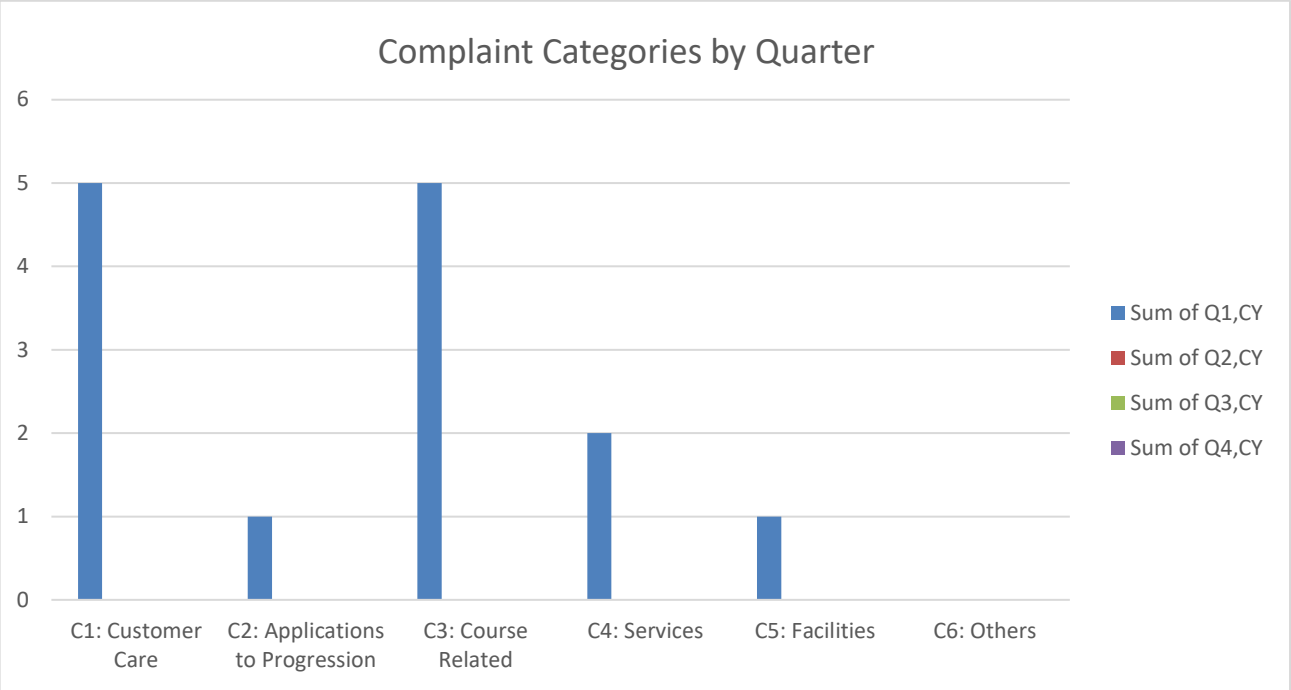
Complaints by Category

The graphs below display the sum of quarterly complaints received for each category.

Customer Category: Current Year (Quarter) 2024/25	YTD CY	Q1, CY	Q2, CY	Q3, CY	Q4, CY
C1: Customer Care	5	5			
C2: Applications to Progression	1	1			
C3: Course Related	5	5			
C4: Services	2	2			
C5: Facilities	1	1			
C6: Others	0	0			
TOTAL	14	14			

Customer Category: Previous Year (Quarter) 2023/24	YTD PY	Q1,PY	Q2,PY	Q3,PY	Q4,PY
C1: Customer Care	25	13	4	4	4
C2: Applications to Progression	3	1	1	1	0
C3: Course Related	27	9	7	6	5
C4: Services	3	2	1	0	0
C5: Facilities	0	0	0	0	0

C6: Others	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	58	25	13	11	9



A total of fourteen complaints were received in Q1, compared to twenty-five in the same quarter last year. In Q1 last year there were seven complaints concerning the impact of ASOS and withdrawal of course provision, which was not a concern raise this year and explains in part the variance between Q1 this year and last.

The category of 'Customer Care' received five complaints in Q1, compared to thirteen complaints for the same period last year. Three fell within the 'staff conduct' subcategory and related to the verbal communication used by staff towards students. One complaint related to a data protection concern and one related to student behaviour. Overall there has been a reduction in complaints citing staff conduct and student conduct compared to Q1 last year.

The 'Course Related' category received five complaints compared to nine in Q1 last year. Three complainants from the same cohort were dissatisfied with the relocation of their studio space from WASPs to the main campus. One complaint related to the lack of structure within their course and one related to classes being cancelled due to staff illness. The decrease in complaints compared to Q1 last year is largely due to the reduction in ASOS related complaints received last year.

The other four categories received between zero and two complaints.

Complaints by Mode of Delivery

In relation to the level of delivery in Q1, a high percentage (57%) of complaints were submitted by Members of the Public and Stakeholders. Four complaints were submitted by parents of FE students, two complaints related to UHI provision (student accommodation and graduate outcome survey) but were investigated by UHI Inverness

staff, one complaint was received from a prospective student and one related to a student's social media post. The nature of the complaints was varied with no overarching theme.
Four complaints (29%) relate to HE programmes, with three of these complaints (75%) related to the same issue. All of the HE complaints achieved 'Resolved' outcomes.
Two complaints (14%) relate to FE programmes, one concerned staff conduct and one concerned the cancellation of classes.

Complaints by Department

Care, Arts, Sport and Humanities received the greatest number of complaints in Q1 with five in total, three were from classmates reacting to the same issue, the relocation of their studio space to the main campus from WASPs. One complaint was from a member of public relating to a social media post and one was a staff conduct concern. No other department (curriculum area or professional service) received more than one complaint and these covered a variety of concerns.

Complaint Outcomes

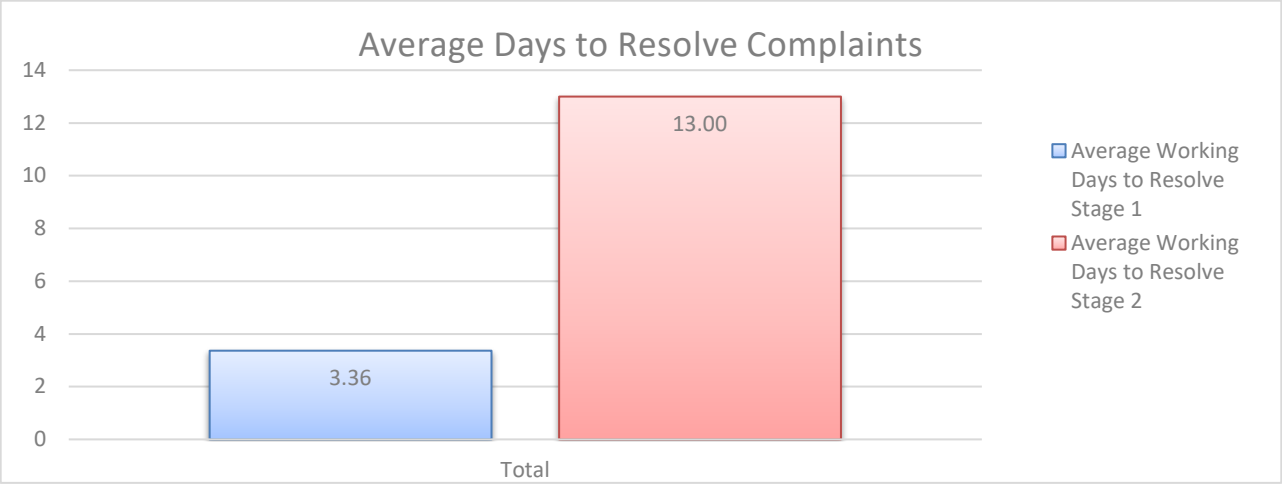
The table below shows the breakdown in stage 1 and stage 2 complaints in Q1. It identifies whether they have been resolved, upheld, partially upheld, not upheld or other outcome, and differentiates between FE, HE and Member of Public/Other.

Outcome	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Resolved	6 (60% of St 1) *FE: 1, HE: 1, MoP/Other: 4.*	4 (100% of St 2)* *HE: 4*	10 *FE: 1, HE: 5 MoP/Other: 4.*
Not upheld	0 (0% of St 1) *0*	0 (0% of St 2) *0*	0 *0.*
Partially upheld	0 (0% of St 1)* *0*	0 (0% of St 2) *0*	0 *0*
Upheld	3 (30% of St 1) *MoP/Other: 3.*	0 (0% of St 2) *0*	3 *MoP/Other: 3.*
Still under Investigation	1 (10% of St 1) *MoP/Other: 1.*	0	1 *MoP/Other: 1.*
Total	10	4	14

- 71% of complaints received in Q1 achieved 'Resolved' outcomes. In Q1 last year 44% of outcomes were 'Resolved'.
  Note* - Three HE complaints with Stage 1 outcomes of 'Partially Upheld' were escalated to Stage 2 and received 'Resolved' outcomes. The final outcome is therefore recorded as 'Resolved'.
- 30% of complaints were 'Upheld' compared to 20% in Q1 last year.

Complaint Timescales

SPSO guidelines state pre-defined timescales of a 5 working day turnaround for Stage 1. An extension of 5 working days is permissible for stage 1 complaints subject to approval from the Quality Manager to complete an investigation but where escalation to a stage 2 is not required. For a Stage 2 complaint the timeframe for completion is 20 working days. As part of the Stage 2 process, where the complaint is complex and may take longer than 20 working days, an extension can be authorised by the Quality Manager, should this happen updates must be provided to complainants.



The chart above displays the average number of days taken to determine a complaint outcome Q1.

The range of days taken to resolve Stage 1 complaints in Q1 is between 2 - 5 days.
The range of days taken to resolve Stage 2 complaints in Q1 is between 8 – 17 days.

All complaints were completed within the 5 day turnaround for Stage 1 complaints, this equates to 100% of stage 1 complaints being completed within the required timeframe.

All Stage 2 complaints were completed within the 20 day deadline, this equates to 100% of Stage 2 complaints being completed with in the required timeframe.

Three complaints were escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2. The average number of working days to resolve these complaints after escalation was 13 days. All three escalated complaints had ‘Resolved’ outcomes.

One complaint was still under investigation at the end of Q1.

Complaint Follow Up Survey

Within 6 weeks of receiving the complaint outcome, complainants (unless the complaint was received anonymously) are sent a link to a short survey asking them for feedback on their experience of the complaints process and to rate their satisfaction levels against thirteen aspects of the process. The survey is anonymous unless the complainant chooses to identify themselves.

Two responses were received in Q1. The outcomes from this small sample are summarised below:

- Both complainants felt they received prompt acknowledgement of their complaint, were treated courteously, believed it was taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and closed off satisfactorily within the appropriate timescale.
- One complainant was not aware of the complaints process prior to submitting a complaint but was able to obtain assistance and subsequently found it easy to submit their complaint.
- One complainant did not feel they received a fair and objective response to their complaint

Two (anonymous) text comments were submitted, one felt there was no clear complaint outcome initially, but this had been rectified and the final outcome was clear. The second stated the complaint was emailed directly so no complaint form was used.

Learning from Complaints

Complaints often result in reviews of processes and procedures, and they also allow us to identify opportunities for staff development. The Quality team continues to identify any learning points from each complaint in order to identify themes emerging. Programme and support teams use complaints as part of their evidence bank to inform their evaluative activities aimed at improving the student experience.

Below are examples of actions taken as a result of complaints received during Q1.

- Communications between Estates team, curriculum managers and curriculum teams regarding building renovations is to be clearer to minimise the impact of any change. This has been actioned through the Executive Management Team with regular updates on estate works progress. Earlier discussions with curriculum teams will be put in place to allow expectations and communications to be managed more effectively.
- Customer Service Training completed by selected staff.
- Document created for Staff on who to contact when incidents are taking place within the Student Support Centre (SSC). Signage created to identify staff and their roles within SSC.
- Course plan implemented and Focus Group completed.

Themes emerging from complaints in Q1

The ‘Resolved’ complaint outcome continues to enable many complaints to be dealt with swiftly and effectively when approached proactively by staff. Over 70% of complaints achieved a ‘Resolved’ outcome in Q1.