ITEM 00

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Meeting	Human Resources Committee
Date and time	Thursday 19 November 2024 at 8.30 a.m.
Location	Virtually – via Microsoft Teams

Governance Officer
07 November 2024

AGENDA

Welcome and Apologies

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

ITEMS FOR DECISION

1. MINUTES

a) Meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 19 September 2024
b) Confidential Note of the Human Resources Committee (CN-HR01-092024) held on 19 September 2024
c) Confidential Note of the Human Resources Committee (CN-HR02-092024) held on 19 September 2024
d) Confidential Note of the Human Resources Committee (CN-HR03-092024) held on 19 September 2024
e) Confidential Note of the Human Resources Committee (CN-HR04-092024) held on 19 September 2024
f) Confidential Note of the Human Resources Committee (CN-HR05-092024) held on 19 September 2024

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action List

3. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

Report by Professional Development Manager

a.) Professional Review & Development Policy
b.) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE
Report by Professional Development Manager

5. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS (CONFIDENTIAL)
Verbal Report by Vice-Principal Operations and External Relations & by Head of HR

6. NATIONAL BARGAINING / JOB EVALUATION (CONFIDENTIAL)
Report by Head of HR

7. HUMAN RESOURCES – QUARTER 1 REPORT 2024/25 – to follow (CONFIDENTIAL)
Report by Head of HR

8. FINANCE FUNCTION RESOURCING (CONFIDENTIAL)
Verbal report by Vice-Principal Operations and External Relations & by Head of HR

9. FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE AND CHAIR EVALUATIONS
Report by Governance Officer

10. EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE
Verbal Report by Anderson & Strathern

ITEMS FOR NOTING

11. AOCB

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 13 March 2025 at 8.30 a.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.

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Outstanding Actions

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ITEM 03.

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Board of Management

Subject/Title:	Policy Approvals: - Reviewed Professional Review & Development Policy - Reviewed Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy.
Author: [Name and Job title]	Emma Baillie, Quality Officer
Meeting:	HR Board Committee
Meeting Date:	November 2024
Date Paper prepared:	06/11/24
Brief Summary of the paper:	The LTR Committee is asked to approve: 1. the reviewed **Professional Review & Development Policy** which was approved at approved at Policy & Procedure Review Panel on 11th September 2024. Staff consultation was then open for feedback on the review between 12th September – 4th October (no feedback was received). EMT Committee approved the Policy on 3rd October 2024. The Policy was presented to the first available JCC meeting on 4th November, however the meeting was not quorate so is being rescheduled. 2. 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. EMT Committee approved the Policy to come to HR Board Committee prior to staff consultation ending to ensure the Policy is published as early as possible due to the review being overdue. 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 will also go to LTR Board Committee in December. 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:	Compliance

Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change	
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 EIAs included
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	Staff and students consulted as part of policy review and development.
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

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PROFESSIONAL REVIEW & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

REFERENCE: PL/HR/2021/002

Lead Officer	Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience & Quality
Review Officer	Professional Development Manager
Date first approved by BoM	29 June 2021
First Review Date	July 2024
Date review approved by BoM	
Next Review Date	
Equality impact assessment	March 2021
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact
Professional Development Manager	29.06.21	New Policy created and approved by BoM.

Contents

1. Policy Statement

Definition of Professional Review & Development (PRD)
A process of self-evaluation against relevant standards followed by professional dialogue with a line manager to provide support and challenge and to plan further development. The process will include a recognition of how prior professional learning has impacted on practice and how future learning will enhance practice.

All staff
The purpose of the Professional Review & Development policy is to support and enhance the continued professional learning of all UHI Inverness staff with the aim of attracting, retaining, and developing high-quality and creative staff to meet the changing requirements of our students, our institutions and our communities.

This will be achieved by the provision of ongoing opportunities for staff to

- reflect on their practice and professional learning through self-assessment against relevant standards
- engage in supportive and challenging professional dialogue with their line manager in an atmosphere of trust and collegiality

Lecturing staff
As an institution within the University partnership, UHI Inverness is committed to supporting lecturers to comply with GTCS requirements for lecturer registration. Therefore, the policy includes the Professional Update process for lecturers which has two key purposes:

i. To maintain and improve the quality of our lecturers as outlined in the Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges and to enhance the impact they have on student learning.
ii. To support, maintain and enhance lecturers' continued professionalism and the reputation of the lecturing profession in Scotland.

The detailed procedures and guidance notes set out the process to be followed – PRD Procedure & Guidance

Definitions

- **Institution:** Any part of the University or twelve academic partners
- **University partnership:** The University of the Highlands and Islands and the twelve academic partners

- **Lecturing staff:** Any member of staff employed under lecturing terms and conditions as set by the National Joint Negotiating Committee and National Recognition and Procedure Agreement
- **General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS):** This is the professional body given statutory responsibility to promote, support and develop the professional learning of teaching and lecturing staff.
- **Registration:** All 'in scope' lecturing staff employed by University of the Highlands and Islands and the twelve academic partners are required to maintain registration with GTCS.
- **Professional Update:** An annual process of engagement in the PRD scheme, ongoing professional learning including reflection on own learning and the relevant Professional Standards, as well as an annual update of registration details on MyGTCS. Then on a 5-yearly basis, a signoff process between the member of staff and line manager confirmed to GTCS through the MyPL recording system.
- **Relevant standards:** These will vary depending on staff role. For lecturing staff these will be the Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges. For other staff the relevant standards may include those established by professional bodies or other organisations e.g. COSCA.

2. Legislative framework / related policies

2.1. Link to National Agreements https://njncscotlandscolleges.ac.uk/
2.2. Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy
2.3. Supporting and Managing Performance Policy
2.4. Professional Development Policy
2.5. Staff Code of Conduct
2.6. Staff Disciplinary
2.7. Staff Grievance
2.8. Staff Recruitment and Selection
2.9. Staff Mediation Guidance
2.10. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
2.11. UHI PRD Framework
2.12. UHI Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy
2.13. Link to GTCS registration information Professional Standards
2.14. Performance management:

2.14.1. Performance is managed separately to the PRD process, through the UHI Inverness Supporting and Managing Performance policy. However, learning and development captured in the PRD documentation may support staff to meet learning and development targets relating to performance.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all UHI Inverness employees regardless of their length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

4. Compliance

This policy is a cross college policy and all staff must work to meet the requirements outlined within the policy. Compliance with the policy will be monitored through regular audits, with outcome reports being reported to the appropriate committee. This policy should be read in conjunction with the polices listed above.
Changes to this policy or the accompanying procedures should follow the usual UHI Inverness procedure and should also be discussed with the UHI Human Resources Practitioner Group as any amendments may impact the GTCS validation of the university partnership.

5. Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and its implementation evaluated. PRDs will be included in the annual planning cycle and the number of PRDs conducted will be reported , to the Executive Management Team committee, and the Board of Management HR committee.

6. Review

This policy and related procedures will normally be reviewed every three years to ensure they continue to meet UHI Inverness requirements within the legislative framework.

University of the Highlands and Islands
Inverness College

Equality Impact Assessment Form

ITEM O3.a.1

Policy/Procedure/Strategy: Professional Review & Development

Author/Owner: Fiona Gunn

Signature: Fiona Gunn

Review Due: 18/02/2024

Department/Section: Professional Development

Date of Assessment: 18/02/2021

Date: 28/08/2024

Step 1

Aim of proposed activity/decision/new or revised policy or procedure:

This policy aims to support and enhance the continued professional learning of all Inverness College UHI staff with the aim of attracting, retaining, and developing high-quality and creative staff to meet the changing requirements of our students, our institutions and our communities. The policy also aims to support lecturing staff to comply with GTCS requirements for registration.

- (●) New
- ( ) Revised
- ( ) Existing

Who will be affected?	Who will be consulted?	Evidence available:
All staff of Inverness College	All staff of Inverness College	Evidence available of development of policy from UHI common PRD framework.

Step 2

Potential Positive/Negative/Neutral Impact Identified. **P, N, N/I**	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage/Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Eliminating Discrimination	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Advancing Equality of Opportunity	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Promoting Good Relations.	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Step 3

Action to be taken

PRDs will be included in the annual planning cycle and the number of PRDs conducted will be reported on an bi-annual basis to the EMT committee, and the Board of Management HR committee.

Changes should not be made to this policy or the accompanying procedures without prior discussion with the UHI Human Resources Practitioner Group as any amendments may impact the GTCS validation of the university partnership.

Summary of EIA Outcome – please tick

√ No further action to be carried out
☐ Amendments or changes to be made
☐ Proceed with awareness of adverse impact
☐ Abandon process – Stop and Rethink

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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:	January 2024
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, sub-contractors, 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

3.2.11.1 This policy will be applied by UHI Inverness in accordance with relevant legislation
- 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 2024-2030 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** This means people cannot treat you in a way that violates your dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment can take many forms including; spoken or written abuse, offensive emails, images and graffiti, physical gestures, facial expressions and banter that is offensive to you. Anything that is unwelcome to you is unwanted. You do not need to have previously objected to it. Please note our UHI Inverness Dignity in the Workplace Policy and Procedure.

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. 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 Form

Department/Section: University of Highlands and Islands & Academic Partners

Date of Assessment: 14/05/19

Review Due: 3 years/ with any substantive amendments

Author/Owner: Equality & Diversity Policy Ownership Group

Signature:

Date: June 2022

Step 1

Aim of proposed activity/decision/new or revised policy or procedure:

The Single Policy Environment Project is primarily a Further Education project that seeks to improve parity of experience for students across the partnership by creation of single policies and underpinning procedures to be used by all Further Education colleges. Operational risk is mitigated for partners and communities of practice are developed/reinforced by the Policy Ownership Groups that create the policy and procedures. Work duplication is reduced and a single Equality Impact Assessment is carried out by the group. Flexibility for local roles and job titles is built into the documents, whilst retaining consistency across the partnership for the activities carried out and experience students should expect.

Our previous EDI Policy will be replaced by a more detailed policy which covers partners' legislative responsibilities, definitions and signposting. This can be adapted by each partner in line with local requirements (eg. whether or not they are required to meet public sector equality duty)

New ☐
Revised ☐
Existing ☐

Who will be affected?

All staff, students of each academic partner and UHI Executive Office, as well as all persons in their engagements with the above.

Orkney College UHI is an exception to this and the policy will not affect staff as they are employed by Orkney Islands Council.

Who will be consulted?

The Policy Ownership Group contains a mix of appropriate staff from each academic partner, to ensure that each partners' circumstances are considered in formation of the policy. Input from all partners has been considered in formation of this policy.

The group includes student and staff representation through Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA), and the Equality and Diversity Advisor, who liaises regularly with other equality practitioners across Scotland/UK.

Evidence available:

- Equality Act 2010 (& Scottish Specific Duties- 2012).
- Stakeholder engagement with staff and students.
- Previous EDI Policy.
- Sector requirements.
- Policy ownership Group proceedings available from Single Policy Environment Project Manager.

Step 2

Potential Positive/Negative/Neutral Impact Identified. **P, N, N/I**	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage/Civil Partnership*	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Eliminating Discrimination	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Advancing Equality of Opportunity.	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Promoting Good Relations.	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

Step 3

Action to be taken:

Single policy equivalence between partners can be challenging: some partners are not required to meet public sector equality duty (HTC, SAMs {and currently NAFC}); others are, and some delegate these responsibilities to respective Councils (Orkney and Shetland).

As such, adopting a single policy looks to ensure that each partner meets their legislative responsibilities, and provide an equivalent and appropriate degree of support. The policy aims to explicate an equitable and supportive attitude to those with particular protected characteristics as declared under the Equality Act, regardless of whether PSED applies. As such we expect that impact will be at the least neutral, with the potential to be improved through cross-partnership input and consistent content.

We recognise that BSL is a language in its own right, with its own grammar, vocab and syntax. As such it does not infer disability, and as such we have included reference to our commitment of removing barriers to participation, and raising awareness of BSL as per Scottish Government Requirements. Similarly, as Gaelic is indigenous to Scotland, it is not directly protected under the Equality Act: we have explicated our commitment to supporting Gaelic Speakers.

Gender fluid & non-binary persons may feel excluded from legal definitions of sex, which is presented as a binary state. As such we have emphasised our recognition that gender is not necessarily binary or static, to ensure diverse gender identities are not excluded.

Given that the policy states roles and responsibilities, there is a possibility that people may feel that the policy contents relate to another role's remit: as such we explicate all staffs' responsibility in the policy.

The fact that some readers may recognise upon reading the policy that they are facing discrimination could potentially cause distress upon realising this: as such the policy will act as a driver for production of a singular guidance document on how to address discrimination, victimisation and harassment, which will be signposted from each partner's policy. This will ensure that we provide consistent support across the partnership.

The policy deals with legislation, which can be difficult to digest from a layperson's perspective. As such we have provided examples to clarify difficult concepts, and have used simple, concise English.

To ensure that the policy remains up to date with sector and cultural developments, the policy will be reviewed 3 yearly on an ongoing basis by the policy ownership group. The policy ownership group is intended to form the basis of a cross partner network who will ensure that all academic partners feed into policy and subsequent procedural developments.

TO BE ACTIONED:

Create working group to ensure practice reflects policy.

Review after 3 years, or in light of suggested amendments.

Summary of EIA Outcome – please tick

- No further action to be carried out ☑
- Amendments or changes to be made ☐
- Proceed with awareness of adverse impact ☐
- Abandon process – Stop and Rethink ☐

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

ITEM 04.

UHI | INVERNESS

Subject/Title:	Professional Development update
Author: [Name and Job title]	Fiona Gunn, Head of Professional Development
Meeting:	HR committee
Meeting Date:	19 November 2024
Date Paper prepared:	7 November 2024
Brief Summary of the paper:	This paper provides a brief update on staff professional development activities in the first semester of academic year 2024/25.
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 strategic objectives: • To ensure the professional practice of all staff is aligned to sector standards, industry best practice and our values. • To ensure that our staff have opportunities to develop and maintain their knowledge and skills to the highest industry and professional standards and are equipped for an increasingly digital world.
Resource implications:	No
Risk implications:	No **If yes, please specify:** Operational: Organisational:
Equality and Diversity implications:	**No** **If yes, please specify:**
Student Experience Impact:	Yes If yes, please specify: Staff professional development, GTCS registration and learning & teaching enhancement impact on the student experience.

Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	N/A
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 confident actionable in court (s36)	
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act (s38)		Other (Please give further details)	

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

Purpose

To provide a brief update on staff professional development activities in the first semester of academic year 2024/25.

Main body of information

1. Support for external staff training & additional qualifications

In semester 1 2024/25 we have supported staff to engage with a variety of **external training & conferences** including –
Chainsaw Assessor
Deaf & Deafblind awareness
Emily Test Conference
Excel
First Aid
Food Hygiene
Forensic Facial Reconstruction
HR legal updates
IOSH Working Safely
Responding to deaf victims of domestic abuse
Safeguarding from impacts of online pornography
Scottish Student Sport
Sustainability in Learning & Teaching

29 staff members will be supported to undertake **additional qualifications** at SCQF levels 7-12 in 2024/25.

12 lecturers are undertaking the UHI **TQFE** programme, **6 lecturers** are undertaking the **PDA** in Teaching Practice and approximately **20 staff** are enrolled on **Assessor and Verifier** qualifications.

2. Internal staff training

A range of **internal staff training courses** are offered in semester 1 including –
Assessor training day
Customer Service
Deaf Awareness training
Digital Skills support
Freedom of Information
Generative AI & UHI Policy
Learning & Teaching Induction programme
Learning & Teaching Reviewer training
Scottish Mental Health First Aid
Suicide Intervention & Prevention training

Management training continues with a further session of the **Collaborative Leaders** programme on

Managing in a hybrid working environment and HR training on **Promoting Attendance.**

3. Research schemes for staff

In September we launched the Enquiring Minds Scheme and Research Connect Scheme for 2024/25. There was strong interest from staff for both schemes and 4 Enquiring Minds Scheme projects have been approved, along with 6 two-year Research Connect Scheme projects.

We are delighted to have support from visiting Professor Charlie Hooker who will act as a mentor for the staff undertaking Research Connect Scheme projects this year.

Enquiring Minds Scheme
How can we create a supportive organisational culture to foster resilience and wellbeing of staff who are working with learners who have experienced trauma?
Exploration of communication style to ensure conversations have more meaning and positive outcomes.
Exploration of technologies that support neurodivergence.
Development of a practitioner network for Student Support staff across Scotland.
Research Connect Scheme
Investigation into the awareness of environmental and climate issues amongst the student population of UHI Inverness.
Exploration of why students continue to express a preference for print library resources over ebooks.
How can students, especially non-native speakers, avoid issues with plagiarism and academic integrity while using AI to assist them in their studies?
Implementation of a Mentoring Network Programme and/or a Staff Buddy Scheme at UHI Inverness.
The impact of a periodised strength and power training programme on club head speed with high performance golf athletes.
The changing landscape for office tools and applications to allow us to be more efficient and work together effectively at UHI Inverness.

Conclusion

There is a continued focus on the development of all staff through provision of a wide range of opportunities. These include training courses, leadership development, professional registration, and opportunities to engage in research activity.

Item 12

UHI | INVERNESS

Subject/Title:	Chair and Committee Evaluation Feedback
Author: [Name and Job title]	Ludka Orlowska-Kowal Governance Officer
Meeting:	HR Committee
Meeting Date:	19 November 2024
Date Paper prepared:	12 November 2024
Brief Summary of the paper:	Feedback on the HR Chair and Committee Evaluation
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion and Noting
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:**:** ☐ compliance ☐ partnership services ☐ risk management ☐ strategic plan ☐ new opportunity/change	Governance Compliance
Resource implications:	Yes / No **If yes, please specify**:

Risk implications:	Yes / No **If yes, please specify:** Operational: Organisational:
Equality and Diversity implications:	Yes/No **If yes, please specify:**
Student Experience Impact:	Yes/No If yes, please specify:
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	N/A
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 confident actionable in court (s36)	
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act (s38)		Other (Please give further details)	

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

Background

Following request by the Chair the Governance Officer contacted all Committee members on numerous occasions between July - October 2024 to offer support with calendar appointments and paperwork.

Chair Feedback

No responses were received in respect of the evaluation of the HR Committee Chair.

Committee Feedback

No responses were received from Committee Members in respect of the Committee Feedback exercise.

Next Steps

The feedback will be presented to the Board of Management on 17 December 2024, as part of the yearly report on Committee Evaluations.
The Governance Officer will ask fellow Governance Professionals from within the UHI for advice on how to better engage with Committee Members during next year's evaluation process. The Colleges Scotland Governance Group will also be contacted for advice and sector's examples of good practice.

New Committee members will be sought, from our existing Non-Executive Members, to ensure that the Committee has a suitable membership.