UHI | INVERNESS

MINUTES of the MEETING of the LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 21 March 2023

PRESENT:	Dee Bird, Russell Edwards, Chris O'Neil, Stephen Sheridan, Arvinder Kainth, James Millar, Matthew Millward and Kelly MacKenzie
CHAIR:	Dee Bird
APOLOGIES:	William Campbell
ATTENDING:	Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality
	Director of Research – Centre for Living Sustainability
	Director of Research – Biodiversity and Freshwater
	Professional Development Manager
	Seconded Learning and Teaching Enhancement Leads
	Information Systems Manager
	Governance Officer

The Governance Officer confirmed that this meeting was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no declarations of interests, statements of connections or transparency statements noted.

Committee Creative Space

A creative space session took place which provided the Committee with an opportunity to discuss Learning and Teaching Enhancement (Note of Session: CSS-LTR-032023).

The Professional Development Manager and Seconded Learning and Teaching Enhancement Leads left the meeting.

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

a.) Note of the Creative Space Session (CSS-LTR-122022) held on 06 December 2022

The Note of the Creative Space Session (CSS-LTR-122022) of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 06 December 2022 was **AGREED** as a correct record.

b.) Minutes of the Meeting held on 06 December 2022

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 06 December 2022 were **AGREED** and **APPROVED** for signature by the Chair.

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

- Corporate Parenting Plan – The Governance Officer advised that this would be included within the Board Development Plan which will be brought to the Board of Management for discussion.
- QAA Presentation – The Committee was advised that there was a newly appointed staff member within Executive Office and the Committee noted that the Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality would liaise with them over the Tertiary Education Framework.
- Creative Sessions – the Chair advised that she had met with the Interim HISA CEO who has confirmed that he would be happy to attend a future Committee Meeting. The Committee noted that this will be arranged for the June meeting.

3. POLICY FOR APPROVAL

UHI Student Criminal Offence Data Policy

The Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality provided the Committee with the background to this new common policy highlighting the role which we have had in developing this policy. The Committee noted that this policy compliments our existing safeguarding policy and procedure and is aligned to our Gender Based Violence Policy, Protecting Vulnerable Groups Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

The Committee acknowledged the recent high-profile cases within the news around the data which institutions hold in respect of students and noted that the development of this policy will ensure that there is a robust system in place for how we manage this type of information.

The Committee enquired as to whether the policy has been tested against case studies to ensure that it meets all known challenges. The Committee was advised that our Safeguarding Group have applied the policy to a number of scenarios.

Decision: The Committee **RECOMMENDED** this policy to the Board of Management for final approval.

4. **STUDENT RETENTION**

The Information Systems Manager joined the meeting.

The Information Systems Manager spoke to her report highlighting:
- That Early Withdrawals for FE FT is at 7.1% which is below the end of year totals for the past two years.
- The levels and trends within the different curriculum areas over the past 5 Academic Years.
- That both early and further withdrawals are monitored monthly within all schools.
- That the reasons for withdrawal continue to remain high in respect of health and financial reasons. The Committee noted that there is also an increase in withdrawals due to course expectations not being met

The Committee thanked the Information Systems Manager for her report.

The Committee enquired as to the interventions which may have led to reduced withdrawals and noted that the introduction of a number of support packages for students is thought to have been a contributing factor.

The Committee noted that target setting at programme level has been introduced and that the Tertiary Education Leaders and Depute Heads of Schools are monitoring the progress of this.

The Committee noted that steps have been taken to identify students who have only partially completed units to ensure that we support them to fully complete their course.

The Committee again gave their thanks to the Information Systems Manager for this report.

The Information Systems Manager left the meeting.

5. **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION STRATEGY 2023-27**

The Directors of Research provided the Committee with the background to the development of the Research and Innovation Strategy highlighting that the strategy incorporated the principles of collaborative leadership. The Committee noted that the strategy had been subject to a rigorous consultation process. The Directors of Research took the Committee through the strategy, highlighting:

- That in conjunction with the Tertiary Education Leaders, we had defined the research areas and identified themes within each research centre.
- The strategy defines our ambition in respect of impactful research, sustainability goals, societal changes including climate emergency and biodiversity crisis.
- The strategy will ensure that we are developing a healthy submission for the next REF.

- The key objectives, subobjectives and activities within the strategy:
- That KPI's have been developed to monitor all objectives.
- Plans to encourage more staff to enter into research and align this with improvements to teaching and practice.

The Committee welcomed the inclusion of KPI's within the strategy and the leading role which the College is playing in terms of research within the Sector.

The Committee thanked the Directors of Research for this report.

The Director of Research – Centre for Living Sustainability left the meeting.
The Director of Research – Biodiversity and Freshwater left the meeting.

6. **EDUCATION SCOTLAND – ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT VISIT**

The Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality provided the Committee with a confidential verbal update in respect of our recent Education Scotland Annual Engagement Visit. The Committee noted that Education Scotland will formally publish their report in the upcoming months.

The Committee noted that initial feedback received in respect of the visit was positive but that it is expected that the final report will highlight some areas for further development.

The Committee noted that a full discussion on the report will take place at the Board of Management in June 2023.

7. **SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

The Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality spoke to her confidential report which provided a final update in respect of the Short Life Working Group following the completion of all items within the Action Plan.

Decision: The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that this item be taken to the Board of Management on 28 March 2023 for Board Approval in respect of the dissolution of the Short Life Working Group.

8. **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

The Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality provided the Committee with a verbal update in respect of:

- NSS Survey: The Committee was advised that work is continuing to ensure eligible students complete the survey. The Committee noted that the current participation rate is lower than last year.
- SSES Survey: The Committee was advised that our Charity Partner for this year was James Support Group. The Committee noted that high targets have been set and it is hoped that we will meet 75% of this target.
- HISA Elections: The Committee noted that nominations and elections for posts are underway.

9. **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ON HISA**

Decision: The Committee **AGREED** that no discussion on HISA would take place and that we would instead wait to speak to the Interim HISA CEO at the June 2023 meeting.

10. **QUARTER 2 – COMPLAINTS REPORT**

The Committee noted the contents of the Quarter 2 – Complaints Report.

11. **MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Student Journey and Enhancement Committee Meetings held on 20 September, 25 October and 15 November 2022 and the minutes of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting held on 22 November 2022.

12.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2023 AT 4.30 P.M.

Signed by the Chair:

Date: 13 June 2023