

# UHI | INVERNESS

## MINUTES of the MEETING of the LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 10 December 2024

**PRESENT:** Dee Bird, Matthew Millward, Chris O'Neil, Holly Pearce, Arvinder Kainth, Wendy Grindle, Elizabeth Keegan

**CHAIR:** Arvinder Kainth

**APOLOGIES:** Pauline Tuthill, Quality Manager & Director of Research for Biodiversity and Freshwater

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality  
Director for Centre for Living Sustainability  
Tertiary Education Leader (TEL) for Management, Health and Creative Arts  
Tertiary Education Leader (TEL) Technology, Environment and Education  
Wellbeing & Learning Support Manager  
Quality Officer  
Governance Officer

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Governance Officer confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

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

## 1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

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

The Note of the Creative Space Session (CSS-LTR-092024) of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 24 September 2024 was **AGREED** as a correct record.

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

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 24 September 2024 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

## 2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS – none

## 3. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

The Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience & Quality spoke to her report and asked the Committee for approval of the reviewed Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy and recommendation for Board's approval. Tracked changes are not available due to UHI not sharing that version of the document with academic partners. The Policy was approved at Policy & Procedure Review Panel on 4th November 2024. Staff consultation period was 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 and recommended for Board's approval 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 Meeting, the decisions within the EIA will not change.

### a) Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy

This long-established common policy had also been presented to the Human Resource Committee on 19th November 2024, as it is a dual staff-student policy. Newly added section 5 - Neurodiversity, had been shared with other partners in recognition of the importance of neurodiversity across the sector. Parts of the policy highlighted in green had been amended since the HR Committee meeting due to staff feedback received during staff consultation period. The changes related to updated legislative frameworks, existing UHI policies and definition of harassment.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience & Quality for her detailed report.

**Decision:** The Committee **APPROVED** the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy and recommended for approval by the Board.

The Chair decided to move to agenda item 6 next.

## 6. SUPPORTING PRIORITY GROUPS

*The Wellbeing & Learning Support Manager joined the meeting.*

The Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience and Wellbeing & Learning Support Manager provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation.

The presentation highlighted following items:

- Learners and complexity of their growing support needs
- Challenges faced by UHI Inverness
- Adopted approach and its impact on student satisfaction, successful outcomes and retention rates
- Next steps

The Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience and Wellbeing & Learning Support Manager provided the Committee with insight into data gathering processes and their analysis. There has been a significant increase in students disclosing additional needs over the last 4 years; with over 800 students this academic year, period between August - December, which is a higher number than last year's total of disclosures received. It had been reported that this trend is recognised across the college sector in Scotland.

Discussion about some subject areas reporting more disclosures and the additional support provided by learning assistants took place. The Committee agreed that there is need to improve the transition of information from schools to college to better support students with additional needs but also to save duplication of work. The society and its perception of mental health and wellbeing has been changing since Covid-19 and as a result more students ask for support.

*The Principal joined the meeting.*

The Committee welcomed the report and positively commented on a number of support examples provided in the presentation.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience and Wellbeing & Learning Support Manager for their detailed report and presentation.

**Action 1:** Presentation to be shared with the Committee after the meeting.

*Dee Bird joined the meeting.*

*The Wellbeing & Learning Support Manager left the meeting.*

The Chair decided to move to agenda item 4 next.

#### **4. EARLY STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY**

*The Quality Officer joined the meeting.*

The Quality Officer spoke to his report which provided the Committee with the findings from 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 college charity partner, James Support Group.

The Committee welcomed the report and positively commented on the high response rate which has unlocked a successful charity donation.

The Chair thanked the Quality Officer for his detailed report and positively commented on the high level of student satisfaction.

*The Quality Officer left the meeting.*

## **5. QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT – SELF EVALUATION & ACTION PLAN**

The Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience spoke to her report which provided the Committee with an update on the Tertiary Enhancement Quality Framework (TEQF) and the actions taken to date. The TEQF placed a requirement on institutions in Scotland to produce and submit a Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) to Scottish Funding Council (SFC) as part of these arrangements. The report provided to the Committee was developed to meet these requirements and was submitted to UHI as the Regional Strategic Body for submission to the SFC on 29th November.

The Chair welcomed the report and congratulated the Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience on a well created action plan that allowed college to present full curriculum offer and highlight success stories. Short discussion took place about the benefits of the new framework compared to the previous Education Scotland reports. It had been confirmed that Modern Apprenticeship and school provision will stay within Education Scotland review remit.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience & Quality for her detailed report.

## **7. HISA UPDATE**

The Student's Association President provided the Committee with a verbal update in regard to HISA's ongoing activities and future engagement plans.

Following items had been highlighted:

- 50 induction sessions attended in person by HISA officers with an induction video recorded
- Successful Fresher's Fair on both campuses

- In contact with students re societies and clubs
- Stagecoach feedback gathered from students; letter will be sent out to the company with copy of feedback received
- Ongoing training for Student Voice Reps (SVRs) – higher numbers than last year
- Good attendance at the first SVRs meeting, with future meetings being separated into online and in person
- Redesigned form for network students to gather feedback
- Christmas Fair planned to take place in the atrium
- Recent move into a new office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

The Committee welcomed the report and congratulated both Officers on a busy and productive year to date. Both Officers confirmed that there is good support in place provided by HISA UHI to partner colleges.

The Chair thanked both HISA Officers for their detailed report.

## **8. RESEARCH UPDATE**

The Director – Centre for Living Sustainability provided a short verbal report to the Committee about recent research activities and an update in regard to Research and Innovation Strategy.

Following items had been discussed in more detail:

- Research Environment section to be added to UHI website
- Good cooperation with Professional Development team around schemes leading staff into research
- Good cohort of new postgraduate students – report on exact numbers to come to the next LTR Committee meeting
- Business plan for new MSc provision being finalised by the Executive Management Team
- Joint theme Nature and People making good progress

The Chair thanked the Director – Centre for Living Sustainability for her detailed verbal report and positively commented on the visible expansion and growth of the area.

**9. LEARNING AND TEACHING REVIEW**

The Chair has asked members to send any comments regarding Learning and Teaching Review to himself and the Governance Officer.

**10. QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS REPORT**

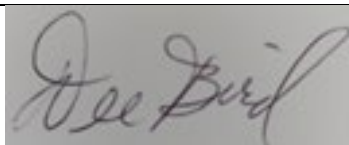
The Chair has asked members to send any comments regarding Quarterly Complaints report to himself and the Governance Officer.

**11. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES - CONFIDENTIAL**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Student Journey and Enhancement Committee Meetings held on 18 September 2024, 23 October 2024 and 20 November 2024.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2024 AT 4.30 P.M.**

**Signed by the Chair:**



**Date: 11-03-2025**