

Board of Management

Meeting	Board of Management
Date and time	Tuesday 01 December 2020 at 4.30 p.m.
Location	VC – Microsoft Teams

Board Secretary
24 November 2020

AGENDA

Welcome and Apologies

Declarations of Interest

ITEMS FOR DECISION

1. **MINUTES**
Meeting of the Board of Management – 6 October 2020
2. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**
Action List
3. **POLICIES FOR APPROVAL:**
 - a) Standing Orders
 - b) Scheme of Delegation
 - c) Code of Conduct
 - d) Rules for Election of Staff to Boards
 - e) Staff Disciplinary Policy
 - f) Email Usage and Retention Policy
 - g) Information Security Policy
 - h) University Partnership IS Acceptable Use Policy.
4. **FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE**
Report by Principal

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

5. **FINANCIAL POSITION 20-21**
Report by Director of Finance
6. **COVID-19 AND PLANNING FOR 21/22 REPORT – TO FOLLOW**
Report by Depute Principal Academic Development
7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**
Report by Principal

- 8. RAM CONSULTATION**
- 9. SFC ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**
- 10. DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF BOARD COMMITTEES (5)
(CONFIDENTIAL)**
 - a. Longman Disposal Project Board – 03 September 2020
 - b. Search and Nomination Committee – 10 September 2020
 - c. Audit Committee – 15 September 2020
 - d. HR Committee – 17 September 2020
 - e. LT&R Committee – 22 September 2020
 - f. F&GP Committee – 01 October 2020
 - g. Chairs Committee – 08 October 2020
 - h. Estates Legacy Project Board – 03 November 2020
 - i. Chairs Committee – 05 November 2020
 - j. Audit Committee – 10 November 2020

ITEMS FOR NOTING

- 11. UHI COURT – QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM UHI SMT & ACADEMIC PARTNERS**
- 12. NOTES FROM REGIONAL STRATEGIC COUNCIL MEETING**
 - a. 5th May 2020
- 13. HARDSHIP REPORT**
- 14. AOCB**
- 15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

18 February 2021 at 4.30 p.m.

If any member wishes to add an item of business to the Agenda, please inform the Chair and the Board Secretary 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.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the BOARD OF MANAGEMENT held via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday 06 October 2020

PRESENT:	Sarah Burton, Robyn Kennedy, Innis Montgomery, Chris O'Neil, John Wilson, Kelly Mackenzie, Ruth McFadyen, Vivienne Mackie, Gillian Galloway, Samantha Cribb, Andy Gray, Sally Blyth, Donald MacKenzie, Fiona Neilson
CHAIR:	Sarah Burton
APOLOGIES:	Leanne MacKenzie, Tina Stones, Director of Curriculum and Director of Research and Innovation
IN ATTENDANCE:	Depute Principal Planning and Student Experience Depute Principal Academic Development Director of Finance Director of External Relations Director of Student Experience Board Secretary
OBSERVING:	Ron Hill, External Effectiveness Facilitator

The Chair welcomed Ron Hill to the meeting and advised the Board of Management that Ron was observing this meeting as part of our External Effectiveness Review.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were noted.

1. MINUTES

a) Meeting of the Board of Management – 20 February 2020

The minutes of the Board of Management Meeting held on 20 February 2020 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were **APPROVED**.

b) Meeting of the Board of Management – 30 June 2020

The minutes of the Board of Management Meeting held on 30 June 2020 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were **APPROVED**.

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

- GDPR – The Board Secretary confirmed that all Board Members had undertaken the GDPR training. It was **AGREED** that this action could be removed from the list.
- Committee Representation – It was noted that this will be looked at in February 2021 following the completion of the External Effectiveness Review.

- Sports Pitch – this matter will be discussed further within the Agenda.
- OSCR – it was noted that the OSCR return will be completed in March 2021.

3. ESTATES LEGACY – CONFIDENTIAL

The Board Secretary provided background to the Board of Management following the review of the Terms of Reference for both the Longman Disposal and New Campus Project Boards and the subsequent agreement of both of these Committees to the establishment of a new Estates Legacy Project Board and the dissolution of the existing Committees. .

The Board of Management **AGREED** to the dissolution of the New Campus Project Board and Longman Disposal Project Board and **AGREED** the establishment of the Estates Legacy Project Board.

The Board of Management considered the Terms of Reference for the Estates Legacy Project Board and **AGREED** that these be adopted.

4. POLICIES FOR DECISION

- **Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure**
- **Special Leave Policy**
- **Staff Recruitment Policy**

The Board of Management noted that the above policies had been reviewed by the SMT, JCC, our Scrutiny Panel and had been recommended for approval by the HR Committee. The Board of Management **APPROVED** each policy.

5. SPORTS PITCH

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience advised the Board of Management that it was agreed at the 30 April 2020 Board of Management Meeting that we would postpone any decision with regards the Sports Pitch until October 2020.

A lengthy discussion ensued which focused on:

- Our improved financial position, the investment from Sports Scotland, the risk of losing secured funded if we do not progress with the pitch and the risk that we are no longer at the heart of any development.
- The importance to students of an outdoor space especially during Covid-19 as well as the importance of the pitch for the local community.
- Procurement - with the Board of Management noting that prior to Covid-19 we were almost ready to begin procurement and a brief had been designed.
- Phase 2 of the project – with the Board of Management noting the broader scope for clubs etc. within phase 2 of the project and that a full business case for funding the second phase would be sought.

- Consideration with regards equality and diversity in relation to phase 2 of the project.

The Board of Management **AGREED** the £250K allocation from the ALF for the sports pitch.

6. EVALUATIONS UPDATES

The Board Secretary took the Committee through the outcomes of the Committee Evaluations which were carried out offline during June-August 2020.

The Board of Management considered possible training requirements and it was **AGREED** that all Board Members would identify within their yearly evaluation review if they felt that they required any additional training.

Andy Gray joined the meeting.

7. ADMIN CONTROL

The Board Secretary advised the Board of Management on the move to AdminControl a digital document sharing and interaction platform. The Committee welcomed the move. The Board Secretary advised that further invitations will be sent to those who have yet to register for AdminControl and that 1-1 training sessions can be set up for those who would benefit from them.

8. FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE – CONFIDENTIAL

The Principal took the Board of Management through his confidential report.

The Board of Management discussed the impact of both the FRP and Covid-19 on students and their experience. The Board of Management noted that the Early Student Experience Survey has now been circulated.

The Board of Management was advised by the Principal that the FRP process has gone well with a high level of scrutiny being applied by both ourselves, HISA and the unions. Applicants to the VSS have been given an opportunity to take early retirement or use the alternatives to redundancy to reduce their hours – a flexibility which staff have understood and embraced.

The Board of Management noted that whilst progress has been better than expected there was still the need to ensure that we do not conclude the FRP too quickly and noted that caution was still required especially given Covid-19 and Brexit.

The Board of Management gave their thanks to the SMT for their work during both the FRP and Covid-19.

9. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Covid-19

The Board of Management discussed Covid-19 and the impact of the proposed tier system by the Scottish Government.

ELCC

A confidential discussion took place with regards the ELCC.

The Board of Management noted that we expect to incur a loss of £11k by keeping the ELCC open until December 2020. This will increase if we extend the provision. A lengthy discussion ensued with the Board of Management advising that a decision was required in order to remove the uncertainty for both staff and customers.

The Board of Management advised that whilst they were not adverse to the extension of the ELCC until Easter 2020 that they could not do this without sight of the expected costs that will be incurred due to this extension. It was **AGREED** that an estimate of additional costs will be provided to the Chairs Committee meeting being held on 8th October 2020.

Curriculum Review

The Board of Management noted that the UHI and Partnership wide review process has begun for HE.

Strategic Development

The Principal advised the Board of Management that our strategy is due for review. It had been hoped that we could define our strategy subsequent to the EO strategy however the timing of these two workstreams did not allow this given that our current strategy expires at the end of 2020.

The review of the strategy is being led by the SMT with consultation between staff, Board of Management and stakeholders.

It was **AGREED** that a timescale for the Board of Management to review the strategy would be agreed at the Chairs Committee.

Research and Knowledge Transfer

The Principal highlighted to the Board of Management the tremendous work within Research and Knowledge Transfer with 14.2 FTE compared to 1.2 FTE 7 years ago.

Staff Morale

The Principal advised the Board of Management that we have set up a Wellbeing Group who meet fortnightly. A concern which the Wellbeing

Group is looking to address is the mental health and wellbeing of staff and it has been agreed that there will be two digital detox days held on 12th and 13th October 2020. The Board of Management welcomed these detox days and shared their concerns for staff wellbeing.

The Board of Management enquired about the Employee Assistance Programme and noted that promotion of this programme to staff is crucial.

10. COVID-19 REPORT

The Depute Principal – Academic Development advised that in addition to his report there is the possibility of a circuit breaker being activated and we await Government updates.

The Board of Management were advised that we had a student test positive for Covid-19 on 25th September 2020. Five students who were present in this student's class along with two members of staff were alerted and a deep clean took place. The Board of Management noted that this was an isolated case and a debriefing session took place and lessons have been learned and we now have a much more robust plan for dealing with any other outbreaks.

The Board of Management commended the SMT for their response and handling of this matter.

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

The Board of Management noted the Internal Audit recommendation regarding reporting and managing risk and welcomed the actions which the Health and Safety Manager is implementing to combat this.

The Board of Management discussed the SHE software noting that we have extended this licence temporarily but that a solution is required through the Partnership. Whilst the Partnership Council rejected the suggested software the Health and Safety Practitioner's Group, a group which the Health and Safety Manager is a member of, have recommended that the suggested software be brought back to the Partnership Council for further discussion.

12. REPORT ON OUTCOMES AND SATISFACTION RATES 2019-20

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience took the Board of Management through the outcomes for 2019-20. The Board of Management acknowledged that performance indicators had been impacted by Covid-19 and that the 5% decrease in FT FE was not indicative of performance and that there was no indication of any significant decreases within any area. The Board of Management noted that on the whole the outcomes remain high and that this will be further discussed and explored at the LT&R Committee.

13. STUDENT ACTIVITY 2019/20 & STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2020/21

The Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience took the Board of Management through his report. The Board of Management noted that the total credit outturn, pending the FES return is 28,368 and that the shortfall is largely due to Covid-19. FT HE is significantly below target. However HE activity for this year has increased and appears to be well ahead of target.

The Board commended this anecdotal evidence and noted that the SMT were finalising how to delve into this evidence further to gain supplementary information.

The Board of Management noted that we are expected to receive all our income for HE this year even if we are over target assuming that we retain all current students.

The Board of Management noted that students are adapting to the new online way of learning with PDAs and PATs ensuring continued engagement with students. As previously noted the Early Student Experience Survey has been sent out and IT equipment is being made available for any students experiencing digital poverty.

It was highlighted to the Board of Management the potential impact online learning may have on exams but that the SMT continue to liaise with SQA regarding this.

14. RISK REGISTER ANNUAL REVIEW

The Director of Finance advised that the Risk Register is due to be reviewed and provided a confidential verbal update with regards where updates are required.

15. DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF BOARD COMMITTEES (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Board of Management noted the following draft minutes of meetings:

- a) Audit Committee – 2 June 2020
- b) HR Committee – 4 June 2020
- c) LT&R Committee – 9 June 2020
- d) F&GP Committee – 11 June 2020
- e) Chairs Committee – 25 June 2020
- f) Longman Disposal Committee – 25 June 2020
- g) New Campus Committee – 25 June 2020
- h) F&GP Committee – 30 June 2020
- i) Longman Disposal Committee – 28 July 2020
- j) New Campus Committee – 28 July 2020
- k) Chairs Committee – 30 July 2020
- l) Chairs Committee – 10 September 2020

ITEM 01

The Chair of the Board of Management highlighted that she was working with the Board Secretary to ensure that all minutes from meetings are available for inclusion with Board papers.

The Director of Student Experience left the meeting.

16. CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN

The Board of Management were advised that the LT&R Committee were content with the proposed changes to the Corporate Parenting Plan. The Board of Management commended the Director of Student Experience for her work on the updated plan.

17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Date of Next Meeting: 1 December 2020 at 4.30 p.m.

Board of Management – List of Outstanding Actions

30 April 2020				
Committee Representation	The Chair will continue discussing HISA representation on additional Committees following the conclusion of the External Effectiveness Review.	Chair of BOM	Beginning of 2021.	
OSCR Return	The OSCR return for 19/20 to be drafted in March 2021	Board Secretary	March 2021	

Board of Management

Subject/Title:	Board of Management Policies & Procedures
Author: [Name and Job title]	Lisa Ross, Board Secretary
Meeting:	BoM Committee
Meeting Date:	01 December 2020
Date Paper prepared:	30 th October 2020
Brief Summary of the paper:	<p>The Board of Management are asked to agree the following policies which have been reviewed by the Board Secretary and the Chairs Committee. The Chairs Committee have recommended these policies are taking to this meeting for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Orders – Approve policy as is after review as no updates are required. • Scheme of Delegation – Approve policy as is after review as no updates are required. • Code of Conduct – Approve changes to section 1.3 of the policy (update to Acts Revised dates). • Rules for Election of Staff to Boards – Approve policy as is after review as no updates are required.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Approval
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with::	Governance of Board of Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	
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:
Consultation: [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



Standing Orders of the Board of Management of Inverness College UHI

Lead Officer	Chair of the Board of Management
Review Officer	Secretary to the Board of Management
Date first approved by BoM	Mar 2017
First Review Date	Mar 2020
Date review approved by BoM	
Next Review Date	
Equality impact assessment	N/A
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact
Secretary to the BoM	19/12/2017	Minor change approved by BoM

Preamble

Paragraph 11 of Schedule 2 to the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 “Schedule 2”, a Board may regulate its own proceedings and those of any Committee appointed by it.

The purpose of these Standing Orders is to ensure the orderly and effective conduct of the meetings of the Board of Management (“the Board”) and of Committees of the Board (“Committees”). They shall apply to all meetings of the Board and its Committees and shall, subject to a resolution by the Board for their suspension, remain in force unless and until they are varied or revoked as hereinafter provided.

The Standing Orders were adopted by the Board on 19th December 2017 and come into effect on that date. They replace all other Standing Orders previously adopted by the Board, which are hereby revoked.

1 Meetings of the Board and Committees

- 1.1 The Board shall hold at least four Board and Committee meetings within each academic year for the performance of its functions and at such times, places and frequency as the Board determines.
- 1.2 The Board Secretary shall produce an annual programme of meetings which shall be presented to the Board for approval.
- 1.3 Extraordinary meetings of the Board and Committees may be called on the instructions of the Chair or by agreement by a majority of the members entitled to vote at such a meeting.
- 1.4 Board and Committee meetings shall be called giving no less than five working days’ notice. Where extraordinary meetings are called and, exceptionally, due to the urgency of the business five working days’ notice cannot be given, notice will be given as soon as is reasonably practicable and giving no less than 2 working days’ notice.

2 Quorum and Voting Rights

- 2.1 The quorum for a meeting of the Board shall be no less than one half of the members entitled to vote at such a meeting or for a meeting of a Committee, no less than three of the members entitled to vote at such a meeting.
- 2.2 If a meeting does not have a quorum of members present 15 minutes after its scheduled start time or falls below having a quorum of members present part way through, the Chair must either adjourn the meeting to a new date and time, or proceed with the agenda, ensuring that any decisions are taken by members at the next meeting of the Committee or Board, whichever is the sooner.
- 2.3 If the Chair of the Board or Committee is not present at any meeting, the Vice Chair (where this office exists) shall assume that role. Where a Vice Chair is

not available, members shall elect from amongst themselves a Board member who is entitled to vote as the Chair of that meeting.

- 2.5 A question on which a vote is required shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members of the Board present and voting on the question and, in the case of an equal division of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- 2.6 Only matters identified on the agenda as requiring a decision shall, if consensus is not possible, be decided by vote.
- 2.7 In exceptional circumstances, such as for matters requiring urgent attention, and when the approval of the Board or Committee is required, decisions can be taken, with the prior agreement of the Chair, by written procedure. That is, decisions can be taken without calling a physical meeting of the Board or Committee. In such circumstances for a decision to be deemed to be taken:
- the Board Secretary shall email all Board or Committee Members outlining the decision required, together with relevant briefing information
 - a quorum, as defined in 2.1 of these Standing Orders, must have replied to the email
 - the Board Secretary shall ensure that a deadline for response is clearly specified and Board members shall endeavour to respond within that timeframe
 - any decisions taken in this way shall be homologated at the next relevant meeting of the Board or Committee.
- 2.8 Where a proposal is amended, voting will take place on the amendment against the proposal, or the series of amendments, in the order of the last amendment first, until a single amendment is put against the proposal. Thereafter, voting will take place upon the proposal amended. All members have a single vote.
- 2.9 No-one shall be entitled to enter his or her dissent from any decision, except at the meeting at which it has been passed; but any member not present may at the next meeting have his or her dissent recorded.
- 2.10 No proposal nor any amendment to any such proposal, shall be moved if it involves a reconsideration of any question or proposal which has been decided or adopted by the Board at any time within the preceding six months unless:
- it is moved by the Chair
 - in addition to being signed by the mover, it is signed by at least one third of the total members of the Board.

3 Attendance at Board and Sub Committee Meetings

- 3.1 The Board Secretary shall have oversight of all Board and Committee meetings in order to ensure meetings are conducted in accordance with legislation, terms and conditions of grant (including in relation to its Financial Memorandum with UHI as the Regional Strategic Body, the Scottish Public Finance Manual, the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges), the

Board's Scheme of Delegation and these Standing Orders, and in order to ensure a record is kept of proceedings.

- 3.2 It shall be a matter for the Board or Committee to determine which College employees (with the exception of the staff Board Members who shall be invited to attend all meetings of the Board and Committees they are a member of) or other individuals should be invited to attend any Board or Committee meeting or any part of it in an advisory capacity in order to ensure that the Board or Committee has the required advice to fulfil its functions. Where invited to do so by the Chair at the meeting, these employees or individuals may contribute to the discussion, but may not vote or contribute to any decision being taken.
- 3.3 The Board may decide to meet privately without the Principal or any Senior Management Team members being present. In these circumstances the Secretary to the Board shall be present at the meeting unless requested by the Chair to leave. Where the Secretary to the Board is requested to leave, there must be a clear and specific reason for this recorded in the minutes and the Chair shall ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for recording the discussion and any decisions taken at the meeting in the minutes. Staff and Student Board members are permitted to attend such meetings unless they have a conflict of interest in relation to the matter being discussed.

4 Agenda

- 4.1 The Board Secretary in consultation with the Chair shall prepare the draft agenda. Other Board members may place an item or paper on the agenda for discussion by submitting this to the Secretary to the Board no later than 10 working days in advance of the meeting (except in the case of an extraordinary meeting where only the urgent business notified at the time the meeting was requested will be placed on the agenda). The Secretary shall ensure that all items placed on the agenda fall within the remit of the Board or Committee.
- 4.2 All matters for consideration by the Board or Committee shall be clearly identified on the draft agenda as to whether it is for, decision, discussion or noting.
- 4.3 The order of business shall be:
- Apologies for absence
 - Declarations of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any agenda items
 - Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
 - Matters arising
 - All other business with those items of business requiring a decision or discussion taking precedence over items of business for noting
 - Any other competent business (AOCB)
 - Date of the next meeting(s)
- 4.4 All business at Board and Committee meetings shall be conducted through the Chair by members indicating to the Chair that they wish to speak. The Chair shall be heard without interruption.

- 4.5 The Chair shall be responsible for the general conduct of the meeting to preserve order and to ensure that every member has the opportunity to contribute.

5 Board and Committee Papers

- 5.1 Board and Committee papers may be submitted by the Principal, a Board or Committee member, a member of the Senior Management Team or the Secretary to the Board.
- 5.2 The Board Secretary shall ensure the circulation of papers to Board or Committee members at least 5 working days prior to the meeting. Where this timescale is not possible, the Board Secretary shall advise members of this and advise of the reason for the delay and when papers might be expected.
- 5.3 The Board Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that Board papers are timeously published on the College's website, with the exception of those papers which are marked confidential.

6 Minutes of Board and Committee Meetings

- 6.1 In addition to recording the decisions and basis of decisions of all business on the agenda, the minutes shall include a record of those members present and any individuals in attendance, for all or part of the meeting.
- 6.2 Draft minutes shall be prepared for the Chair's agreement normally within five working days of the meeting and shall be labelled "draft".
- 6.3 Once agreed by the Chair, minutes shall be circulated to members normally within ten working days of the meeting and shall be labelled "agreed for circulation".
- 6.4 The minutes shall be considered for approval by the Board or Committee at its next meeting and the Chair of the meeting shall thereafter sign the minute which shall be labelled "final version".
- 6.5 The Board Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that a signed final version of the minutes is securely retained.
- 6.6 The Board Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that the final version of the minutes of each Board and Committee meeting is timeously published on the College website.
- 6.7 In the event that extraordinary business is being transacted and additional meetings are being arranged, the timescales for preparing minutes shall be adjusted to ensure their availability for approval at the next meeting.
- 6.8 Where a Committee meets infrequently, draft minutes shall be circulated by email to all Members who will be required to confirm their approval or otherwise of the draft within eight weeks of the meeting having taken place.

The meetings shall thereafter be confirmed by the Chair of the meeting, labelled as “final version” and signed as soon as is practicable.

- 6.9 All Committee minutes will be submitted to the Board for information at the next scheduled meeting of the Board, regardless of whether the minutes are labelled as draft, agreed for circulation or final version.

7 Establishment of Committees and Sub-Committees

- 7.1 As provided for in Schedule 2, the Board may establish Committees and a Committee may establish sub-committees. References in these standing Orders include sub-committees.
- 7.2 A Committee shall consist of at least five Board members appointed by the Board. One of these Members shall be elected as Chair of the Committee. The Board may also wish to elect a Vice Chair of each Committee.
- 7.3 Each Committee shall review its remit biennially unless there is an urgent matter to be considered and shall submit any proposed changes to the Board for approval.

8 Appointment of Vice Chair

A Vice Chair shall be appointed by the Board from amongst its members.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall have the authority the Chair would have under these Standing Orders.

9 Suspension of Standing Orders

These Standing Orders may be suspended when at least two-thirds of the members' present entitled to vote agree to such a motion.

Approved by the Board of Management – 19 December 2017

Item 03b



Scheme of Delegation of the Board of Management of Inverness College UHI

Lead Officer	Chair of the Board of Management
Review Officer	Secretary to the Board of Management
Date first approved by BoM	Mar 2017
First Review Date	Mar 2020
Date review approved by BoM	
Next Review Date	
Equality impact assessment	N/A
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact

Item 03b

Preamble

In accordance with paragraph 12(4) of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 ("the 1992 Act") a Board may delegate the performance of any of their functions to their chair, to any Committee appointed by them or to any member of their staff.

In accordance with paragraph C.8 of the [Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges \("the Code"\)](#) delegation of responsibilities from, and matters reserved to, the Board and its Committee must be clarified through a Scheme of Delegation including the functions delegated by the Board to the Chair, Committees, the Principal and the Board Secretary.

This Scheme of Delegation must be approved by the Board before it comes into effect, and any subsequent amendments must also be approved by the Board.

1 Authority Reserved to the Board

Whilst initial discussion or consideration may take place by Committees or individuals, the Board reserves its authority with regard to the undernoted matters:

- 1.1 determining the objectives of the Board
- 1.2 final approval of the College's Strategic Plan and Regional Outcome Agreement
- 1.3 approval of the year-end annual report and accounts
- 1.4 approval of the annual budget
- 1.5 final consideration of the Annual Audit Report
- 1.6 approval of the strategic risk register
- 1.7 acquisition and disposal of heritable property, subject to approval of the Scottish Funding Council
- 1.8 appointment and removal of the Principal
- 1.9 appointment and removal of the Board Secretary (in accordance with paragraph D.13 of the Code)
- 1.10 approval of the Students' Association constitution and the election regulations for student officers
- 1.11 delegation of functions of the Board including remits of Committees and this Scheme of Delegation
- 1.12 the making, amendment and revocation of the Standing Orders of the Board.

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2 Delegation to Committees

- 2.1 In accordance with paragraph 13 of the 1992 Act, the Board may establish Committees for any purpose and any such Committee may appoint Sub Committees.
- 2.2 In accordance with paragraph C.8 of the Code, the minimum Committees required are Audit, Remuneration, Finance and Nominations/Appointments.
- 2.3 Each Committee and Sub Committee shall have a clearly defined remit which shall clearly set out the duties and responsibilities delegated. The remit must be approved by the Board. The Committee may suggest amendments to the remit, but any amendments must be approved by the Board before they are implemented.
- 2.4 The Board may delegate functions to a specific Committee, and this shall be clearly detailed within the minutes of the appropriate meeting.
- 2.5 The Board reserves the right to review the Committees required and the authority delegated to them as and when it deems it appropriate to do so.
- 2.6 The minutes of each Committee meeting will be submitted to the Board for information at the next appropriate meeting. In addition, the Committee Chair shall give an update to the Board on key issues where requested to do so.

3 Delegation to Chair of the Board

The Chair must abide by the terms and conditions of their appointment in leading the Board and ensuring its effectiveness, and in exercising any delegated authority. The Chair has delegated authority to:

- 3.1 exercise judgement in the event of a need for an urgent decision during the period between Board meetings, such that:
 - 3.1.1 an extraordinary Board meeting is called in the case of material decisions;
 - 3.1.2 a proposal is circulated and a decision is approved by email (in accordance with the Standing Orders) and is thereafter homologated at the next Board meeting.
- 3.2 on behalf of the Board, sign and date the College's Annual Report and Accounts, after Board approval, and other documents as may be required.
- 3.3 represent the Board within the College and externally.
- 3.4 issue communications on behalf of the Board in whatever form is appropriate, both within and out with the College.
- 3.5 monitor, review and record the Principal's performance at least annually against performance measures agreed by the Board.

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- 3.6 monitor, review and record the Board Secretary's performance at least annually against performance measures agreed by the Board.
- 3.7 ensure each Board member participates in an annual development meeting, facilitated either by the Chair or Vice Chair.
- 3.8 initiate action further to a decision of the Board to take disciplinary action against, or suspend, the Principal or Board Secretary.
- 3.9 initiate action further to a decision of the Board to appoint a new Principal or Board Secretary.

4 Delegation to the Principal

The Principal, as Chief Executive of the College, shall be responsible for the operational management of the College subject to strategic and policy direction by the Board and the terms of any specific authority reserved to the Board. The Principal may in turn delegate tasks as appropriate to staff.

The Principal has delegated authority to:

General Management

- 4.1 take such measures as may be required in emergencies subject to advising the Chair where possible and homologation at the appropriate Committee or to the Board as soon as possible thereafter on any items for which approval of the Committee or the Board would normally be necessary.
- 4.2 facilitate the management of the College and its provision of services within the framework determined by the College's Strategic Plan, the Regional Outcome Agreement, the approved budget, and any other policies and strategies determined by the Board.
- 4.3 consult on behalf of the Board with representatives from key organisations, local and national, about the priorities contained within the College's Strategic Plan and in the Regional Outcome Agreement prior to final approval by the Board.
- 4.4 respond on behalf of the Board to consultative documents that may be sent to the College by the Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council or other external agencies.
- 4.5 incur expenditure in making visits and the provision of reasonable hospitality to representatives of other Colleges, organisations and companies, taking into account the principles of the Bribery Act.
- 4.6 give a direction in special circumstances that any member of staff shall not exercise a delegated function.

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- 4.7 take out membership of and attend meetings of outside bodies and professional associations where it is compatible with the duties of Principal and in the interests of the College to do so.
- 4.8 authorise the issue of press releases for publication and broadcasting on behalf of the College.
- 4.9 authorise the publication of any document on behalf of the College.
- 4.10 engage the services of outside persons, firms or organisations and enter into contracts and sign all deeds and other documents binding the Board for all purposes except those where the power to engage such services is not delegated to a Committee or is not reserved to the Board.
- 4.11 raise funds for and supply them to any of the activities which the Board has power to undertake.
- 4.12 provide courses as required by outside agencies and negotiate appropriate charges for these.
- 4.13 determine the dates of the College holidays and other details of the College's academic calendar.
- 4.14 appoint a senior member of staff to deputise for the Principal during periods of planned absence.

Staff Management

- 4.15 determine an appropriate staff structure for the College consistent with the conditions of employment that currently apply after consultation and (where appropriate) negotiation with representatives of recognised trade unions and professional institutions.
- 4.16 consult and negotiate with representatives of recognised trade unions and professional associations on behalf of the Board.
- 4.17 establish procedures for the appointment of College staff in circumstances where the power to appoint has not been delegated to a Committee or is not reserved to the Board.
- 4.18 supervise, manage and deploy staff within the College and arrange appropriate induction and training for College staff.
- 4.19 establish procedures for taking disciplinary action against College staff up to and including dismissal subject to complying with the policies laid down by the Board.
- 4.20 grant unpaid leave of absence to any member of College staff in accordance with the relevant policies laid down by the Board.

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- 4.21 represent the Board in negotiating and implementing conditions of service in relation to relevant College staff.
- 4.22 approve the secondment of College staff to external agencies in accordance with relevant policies laid down by the Board and to approve the appointment, where necessary, of a temporary replacement for the duration of the secondment.
- 4.23 in exceptional circumstances, agree individual severance arrangements with staff, taking into account limits set by the Scottish Funding Council and functions delegated to the Board or a Committee.
- 4.24 establish any other procedures required for the orderly management of College staff.

Student Management

- 4.25 arrange for the provision of appropriate curriculum and support services for students and clients.
- 4.26 administer, in accordance with any policy determined by the Scottish Government or the Scottish Funding Council, with UHI as the Regional Strategic Body or the Board the disbursement of monies to students attending the College.
- 4.27 administer, in accordance with any policy of the Board, the provision of financial or other assistance to students of the College.
- 4.28 set and amend as necessary the level of tuition fees, examination expenses, maintenance and contribution scales for all courses offered by the College and to waive or grant remission of such fees or expenses in special cases within guidelines set by the Board.
- 4.29 authorise students, and to make grants to students, to enable them to attend courses and conferences and to undertake educational visits and excursions within, the UK or abroad, within approved budgets and policies of the Board.
- 4.30 take appropriate disciplinary action, including exclusion, against students in accordance with any policies of the Board.
- 4.31 provide financial or other assistance to the Students' Association of the College within the terms approved by the Board.

Property Management

- 4.32 allocate accommodation within the College in order to meet student and staff needs and to arrange for any necessary alterations or adaptations to College property.
- 4.33 apply to the appropriate authority for any necessary statutory consents.

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- 4.34 grant any way leave or servitude over property of the College on such terms as may be appropriate.
- 4.35 grant the use of College accommodation to outside bodies or persons for the purpose of holding meetings and functions on such terms and conditions as are reasonable in the circumstances.

Financial Management

- 4.36 take personal responsibility for ensuring the proper and effective operation of financial, planning and management controls, and for giving effect to the Board's policies for securing the efficient, economical and effective management of all the College's income, assets and expenditure.
- 4.37 act at all times in compliance with the Financial Memorandum with UHI as the Regional Strategic body, conditions of grant, Scottish Public Finance Manual, and to follow the College's Financial Regulations taking particular account of the delegated financial limits.
- 4.38 enter into and negotiate contracts and other binding arrangements for the supply of goods and services (whether bought, leased, hired or otherwise acquired) to the College or to authorise another to enter into such contracts up to a value of the relevant EU Procurement threshold or Board approved budgetary limits and all in accordance with the College's financial regulations.
- 4.39 terminate contracts, when it is in the best interests of the College to do so.
- 4.40 check the financial standing of potential contractors.
- 4.41 dispose of assets up to the value of the delegated financial limit as set out in the Finance Regulations and in line with the requirements of the Scottish Public Finance Manual.
- 4.42 administer any educational endowment which transferred to and vested in the Board in terms of Section 19(1) of the 1992 Act.
- 4.43 take out any necessary insurances to protect the interests of the College.
- 4.44 settle any claims whether or not such claims are insured or whether or not a court action has been raised.
- 4.45 spend public funds only for the purposes for which they were given and in accordance with any terms and conditions attached to them.
- 4.46 arrange for the presentation to the Board for approval an annual budget of income and expenditure, including revenue and capital, and to give regular updates on income and expenditure account, balance sheet and cash flow statement.

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- 4.47 arrange for the preparation, audit and presentation to the Board of accounts following the end of each financial year in compliance with the requirements of the Accounts Direction and encompassing Audit Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council instruction.
- 4.48 report to UHI as the Regional Strategic Body, to the Scottish Funding Council should the Board adopt a policy or commission an action which is incompatible with the terms of the Financial Memorandum or the Scottish Public Finance Manual, or which would infringe on the requirements of propriety or regularity, and report to the Board in writing on such matters being considered, and advise the Board that, should it wish to choose to continue with the policy or action, then as accounting officer he or she must report the Board's intentions to UHI as the Regional Strategic Body and to the Scottish Funding Council in writing.

5 Absence of the Principal

5.1 In the absence of the Principal, the Executive Team shall ensure that the essential functions and delegated authorities of the Principal are carried out with due regard to any relevant provisions of the Financial Memorandum with UHI as the Regional Strategic Body

5.2 After a period of four weeks' unplanned continuous absence of the Principal, the Board shall designate the Depute Principal as the accountable officer for the duration of the Principal's absence, ensuring that UHI as the Regional Strategic Body and the Scottish Funding Council is advised of such absence at the earliest opportunity.

6 Delegation to the Board Secretary

The Board Secretary has delegated authority to:

- 6.1 administer, circulate, retain and publish as appropriate the records of all Board and Committee business.
- 6.2 undertake appropriate actions to ensure that the Board is sufficiently informed of its obligations as defined in legislation, the terms and conditions of grant, the Scottish Public Finance Manual, the Code and the Standing Orders.
- 6.3 administer staff elections to the Board and act as returning officer.
- 6.4 act as Standards Officer in accordance with Advice on the [Role of a Standards Officer](#) (issued by the Standards Commission for Scotland).
- 6.5 in accordance with the Code, report any unresolved concerns about the governance of a body to the relevant funding body (i.e. the Scottish Funding Council or the regional strategic body).

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7 Absence of the Board Secretary

- 7.1 In the absence of the Board Secretary, the Board shall agree temporary arrangements that can be put in place either by appointing a staff member to fulfil the delegated functions, or by making such other arrangements as may be required.

8 Previous Schemes

- 8.1 This Scheme of Delegation replaces any previous versions as may have been approved by the Board.

Approved by the Board 28th March 2017

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Code of Conduct for Members of the Board of Management of Inverness College UHI

Lead Officer	Chair of the Board of Management
Review Officer	Secretary to the Board of Management
Date first approved by BoM	June 2015
First Review Date	June 2018
Date review approved by BoM	
Next Review Date	
Equality impact assessment	N/A
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact

CODE OF CONDUCT for MEMBERS of the BOARD of MANAGEMENT OF INVERNESS COLLEGE UHI

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT

1.1 The Scottish public has a high expectation of those who serve on the boards of public bodies and the way in which they should conduct themselves in undertaking their duties. You must meet those expectations by ensuring that your conduct is above reproach.

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1.2 The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, “the Act”, provides for Codes of Conduct for local authority councillors and members of relevant public bodies; imposes on councils and relevant public bodies a duty to help their members to comply with the relevant code; and establishes a Standards Commission for Scotland, “The Standards Commission” to oversee the new framework and deal with alleged breaches of the codes.

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1.3 The Act requires the Scottish Ministers to lay before Parliament a Code of Conduct for Councillors and a Model Code for Members of Devolved Public Bodies. The Model Code for members was first introduced in 2002 ~~and has now been revised in December 2013 following consultation and the approval of the Scottish Parliament. During 2014 the Scottish Government undertook a review of the model of Code of Conduct following which a public consultation was then carried out. The revised Model Code of Conduct was introduced in February 2014.~~ These revisions will make it consistent with the relevant parts of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, which was revised in ~~2010~~ July 2018 following the approval of the Scottish Parliament.

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1.4 As a member of the Board of Management of Inverness College UHI “the Board”, it is your responsibility to make sure that you are familiar with, and that your actions comply with, the provisions of this Code of Conduct which has now been made by the Board.

Appointments to the Boards of Public Bodies

1.5 Public bodies in Scotland are required to deliver effective services to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population. In addition, the Scottish Government’s equality outcome on public appointments is to ensure that all appointments are more diverse than at present. In order to meet both of these aims, a board should ideally be drawn from varied backgrounds with a wide spectrum of characteristics, knowledge and experience. It is crucial to the success of public bodies that they attract the best people for the job and therefore it is essential that a board’s appointments process should encourage as many suitable people to apply for positions and be free from unnecessary barriers. You should therefore be aware of the varied roles and functions of the public body on which you serve and of wider diversity and equality issues.

1.6 You should also familiarise yourself with how the public body’s policy operates in relation to succession planning, which should ensure the public body have a strategy to make sure they have the staff in place with the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to fulfil their role economically, efficiently and effectively.

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Guidance on the Code of Conduct

1.7 You must observe the rules of conduct contained in this Code. It is your personal responsibility to comply with these and review regularly, and at least annually, your personal circumstances with this in mind, particularly when your circumstances change. You must not at any time advocate or encourage any action contrary to the Code of Conduct.

1.8 The Code has been developed in line with the key principles listed in Section 2 and provides additional information on how the principles should be interpreted and applied in practice. The Standards Commission may also issue guidance. No Code can provide for all circumstances and if you are uncertain about how the rules apply, you should seek advice from the public body. You may also choose to consult your own legal advisers and, on detailed financial and commercial matters, seek advice from other relevant professionals.

1.9 You should familiarise yourself with the Scottish Government publication “On Board – a guide for board members of public bodies in Scotland”. This publication will provide you with information to help you in your role as a member of a public body in Scotland and can be viewed on the Scottish Government website.

Enforcement

1.10 Part 2 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 sets out the provisions for dealing with alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct and where appropriate the sanctions that will be applied if the Standards Commission finds that there has been a breach of the Code. Those sanctions are outlined in **Annex A**.

SECTION 2: KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

1.1. The general principles upon which this Code is based should be used for guidance and interpretation only. These general principles are:

Duty

You have a duty to uphold the law and act in accordance with the law and the public trust placed in you. You have a duty to act in the interests of the public body of which you are a member and in accordance with the core functions and duties of that body.

Selflessness

You have a duty to take decisions solely in terms of public interest. You must not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit for yourself, family or friends.

Integrity

You must not place yourself under any financial, or other, obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence you in the performance of your duties.

Objectivity

You must make decisions solely on merit and in a way that is consistent with the functions of the public body when carrying out public business including making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.

Accountability and Stewardship

You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public. You have a duty to consider issues on their merits, taking account of the views of others and must ensure that the public body uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

Openness

You have a duty to be as open as possible about your decisions and actions, giving reasons for your decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

You have a duty to act honestly. You must declare any private interests relating to your public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

You have a duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, and to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the public body and its members in conducting public business.

Respect

You must respect fellow members of your public body and employees of the body and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times. Similarly you must respect members of the public when performing duties as a member of your public body.

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1.2. You should apply the principles of this Code to your dealings with fellow members of the public body, its employees and other stakeholders. Similarly you should also observe the principles of this Code in dealings with the public when performing duties as a member of the public body.

SECTION 3: GENERAL CONDUCT

3.1 The rules of good conduct in this section must be observed in all situations where you act as a member of the public body.

Conduct at Meetings

3.2 You must respect the chair, your colleagues and employees of the public body in meetings. You must comply with rulings from the chair in the conduct of the business of these meetings.

**Relationship with Board Members and Employees of the Public Body
(including those employed by contractors providing services)**

3.3 You will treat your fellow board members and any staff employed by the body with courtesy and respect. It is expected that fellow board members and employees will show you the same consideration in return. It is good practice for employers to provide examples of what is unacceptable behaviour in their organisation. Public bodies should promote a safe, healthy and fair working environment for all. As a board member you should be familiar with the policies of the public body in relation to bullying and harassment in the workplace and also lead by exemplar behaviour.

Remuneration, Allowances and Expenses

3.4 You must comply with any rules of the public body regarding remuneration, allowances and expenses.

Gifts and Hospitality

3.5 You must not accept any offer by way of gift or hospitality which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on your part to show favour, or disadvantage, to any individual or organisation. You should also consider whether there may be any reasonable perception that any gift received by your spouse or cohabitee or by any company in which you have a controlling interest, or by a partnership of which you are a partner, can or would influence your judgement. The term "gift" includes benefits such as relief from indebtedness, loan concessions or provision of services at a cost below that generally charged to members of the public.

3.6 You must never ask for gifts or hospitality.

3.7 You are personally responsible for all decisions connected with the offer or acceptance of gifts or hospitality offered to you and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in your public body. As a general guide, it is usually appropriate to refuse offers except:

- (a) isolated gifts of a trivial character, the value of which must not exceed £50;
- (b) normal hospitality associated with your duties and which would reasonably be regarded as appropriate; or

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- (c) gifts received on behalf of the public body.

3.8 You must not accept any offer of a gift or hospitality from any individual or organisation which stands to gain or benefit from a decision your body may be involved in determining, or who is seeking to do business with your organisation, and which a person might reasonably consider could have a bearing on your judgement. If you are making a visit in your capacity as a member of your public body then, as a general rule, you should ensure that your body pays for the cost of the visit.

3.9 You must not accept repeated hospitality or repeated gifts from the same source.

3.10 Members of devolved public bodies should familiarise themselves with the terms of the Bribery Act 2010 which provides for offences of bribing another person and offences relating to being bribed.

Confidentiality Requirements

3.11 There may be times when you will be required to treat discussions, documents or other information relating to the work of the body in a confidential manner. You will often receive information of a private nature which is not yet public, or which perhaps would not be intended to be public. You must always respect the confidential nature of such information and comply with the requirement to keep such information private.

3.12 It is unacceptable to disclose any information to which you have privileged access, for example derived from a confidential document, either orally or in writing. In the case of other documents and information, you are requested to exercise your judgement as to what should or should not be made available to outside bodies or individuals. In any event, such information should never be used for the purposes of personal or financial gain, or for political purposes or used in such a way as to bring the public body into disrepute.

Use of Public Body Facilities

3.13 Members of public bodies must not misuse facilities, equipment, stationery, telephony, computer, information technology equipment and services, or use them for party political or campaigning activities. Use of such equipment and services etc. must be in accordance with the public body's policy and rules on their usage. Care must also be exercised when using social media networks not to compromise your position as a member of the public body.

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Appointment to Partner Organisations

3.14 You may be appointed, or nominated by your public body, as a member of another body or organisation. If so, you are bound by the rules of conduct of these organisations and should observe the rules of this Code in carrying out the duties of that body.

3.15 Members who become directors of companies as nominees of their public body will assume personal responsibilities under the Companies Acts. It is possible that conflicts of interest can arise for such members between the company and the public body. It is your responsibility to take advice on your responsibilities to the public body and to the company. This will include questions of declarations of interest.

SECTION 4: REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 The following paragraphs set out the kinds of interests, financial and otherwise which you have to register. These are called “Registerable Interests”. You must, at all times, ensure that these interests are registered, when you are appointed and whenever your circumstances change in such a way as to require change or an addition to your entry in the body’s Register. It is your duty to ensure any changes in circumstances are reported within one month of them changing.

4.2 The Regulations¹ as amended describe the detail and timescale for registering interests. It is your personal responsibility to comply with these regulations and you should review regularly and at least once a year your personal circumstances. **Annex B** contains key definitions and explanatory notes to help you decide what is required when registering your interests under any particular category. The interests which require to be registered are those set out in the following paragraphs and relate to you. It is not necessary to register the interests of your spouse or cohabitee.

Category One: Remuneration

4.3 You have a Registerable Interest where you receive remuneration by virtue of being:

- employed;
- self-employed;
- the holder of an office;
- a director of an undertaking;
- a partner in a firm; or
- undertaking a trade, profession or vocation or any other work.

4.4 In relation to 4.3 above, the amount of remuneration does not require to be registered and remuneration received as a member does not have to be registered.

4.5 If a position is not remunerated it does not need to be registered under this category. However, unremunerated directorships may need to be registered under category two, “Related Undertakings”.

4.6 If you receive any allowances in relation to membership of any organisation, the fact that you receive such an allowance must be registered.

4.7 When registering employment, you must give the name of the employer, the nature of its business, and the nature of the post held in the organisation.

4.8 When registering self-employment, you must provide the name and give details of the nature of the business. When registering an interest in a partnership, you must give the name of the partnership and the nature of its business.

¹ SSI - The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 (Register of Interests) Regulations 2003 Number 135, as amended.

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4.9 Where you undertake a trade, profession or vocation, or any other work, the detail to be given is the nature of the work and its regularity. For example, if you write for a newspaper, you must give the name of the publication, and the frequency of articles for which you are paid.

4.10 When registering a directorship, it is necessary to provide the registered name of the undertaking in which the directorship is held and the nature of its business.

4.11 Registration of a pension is not required as this falls outside the scope of the category.

Category Two: Related Undertakings

4.12 You must register any directorships held which are themselves not remunerated but where the company (or other undertaking) in question is a subsidiary of, or a parent of, a company (or other undertaking) in which you hold a remunerated directorship.

4.13 You must register the name of the subsidiary or parent company or other undertaking and the nature of its business, and its relationship to the company or other undertaking in which you are a director and from which you receive remuneration.

4.14 The situations to which the above paragraphs apply are as follows:

- you are a director of a board of an undertaking and receive remuneration declared under category one – and
- you are a director of a parent or subsidiary undertaking but do not receive remuneration in that capacity.

Category Three: Contracts

4.15 You have a registerable interest where you (or a firm in which you are a partner, or an undertaking in which you are a director or in which you have shares of a value as described in paragraph 4.19 below) have made a contract with the public body of which you are a member:

- (i) under which goods or services are to be provided, or works are to be executed; and
- (ii) which has not been fully discharged.

4.16 You must register a description of the contract, including its duration, but excluding the consideration.

Category Four: Houses, Land and Buildings

4.17 You have a registerable interest where you own or have any other right or interest in houses, land and buildings, which may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work and operation of the body to which you are appointed.

4.18 The test to be applied when considering appropriateness of registration is to ask whether a member of the public acting reasonably might consider any interests in houses, land and buildings could potentially affect your responsibilities to the organisation to which you are appointed and to the public, or could influence your actions, speeches or decision making.

Category Five: Interest in Shares and Securities

4.19 You have a registerable interest where you have an interest in shares comprised in the share capital of a company or other body which may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work and operation of (a) the body to which you are appointed and (b) the **nominal value** of the shares is:

- (i) greater than 1% of the issued share capital of the company or other body; or
- (ii) greater than £25,000.

Where you are required to register the interest, you should provide the registered name of the company in which you hold shares; the amount or value of the shares does not have to be registered.

Category Six: Gifts and Hospitality

4.20 You must register the details of any gifts or hospitality received within your current term of office. This record will be available for public inspection. It is not however necessary to record any gifts or hospitality as described in paragraph 3.7 (a) to (c) of this Code.

Category Seven: Non-Financial Interests

4.21 You may also have a registerable interest if you have non-financial interests which may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work and operation of the body to which you are appointed. It is important that relevant interests such as membership or holding office in other public bodies, clubs, societies and organisations such as trades unions and voluntary organisations, are registered and described.

4.22 In the context of non-financial interests, the test to be applied when considering appropriateness of registration is to ask whether a member of the public might reasonably think that any non-financial interest could potentially affect your responsibilities to the organisation to which you are appointed and to the public, or could influence your actions, speeches or decision-making.

SECTION 5: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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General

5.1 The key principles of the Code, especially those in relation to integrity, honesty and openness, are given further practical effect by the requirement for you to declare certain interests in proceedings of the public body. Together with the rules on registration of interests, this ensures transparency of your interests which might influence, or be thought to influence, your actions.

5.2 Public bodies inevitably have dealings with a wide variety of organisations and individuals and this Code indicates the circumstances in which a business or personal interest must be declared. Public confidence in the public body and its members depends on it being clearly understood that decisions are taken in the public interest and not for any other reason.

5.3 In considering whether to make a declaration in any proceedings, you must consider not only whether you will be influenced but whether anybody else would think that you might be influenced by the interest. You must, however, always comply with the **objective test** ("the objective test") which is whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your discussion or decision making in your role as a member of a public body.

5.4 If you feel that, in the context of the matter being considered, your involvement is neither capable of being viewed as more significant than that of an ordinary member of the public, nor likely to be perceived by the public as wrong, you may continue to attend the meeting and participate in both discussion and voting. The relevant interest must however be declared. It is your responsibility to judge whether an interest is sufficiently relevant to particular proceedings to require a declaration and you are advised to err on the side of caution. If a board member is unsure as to whether a conflict of interest exists, they should seek advice from the board chair.

5.5 As a member of a public body you might serve on other bodies. In relation to service on the boards and management committees of limited liability companies, public bodies, societies and other organisations, you must decide, in the particular circumstances surrounding any matter, whether to declare an interest. Only if you believe that, in the particular circumstances, the nature of the interest is so remote or without significance, should it not be declared. You must always remember the public interest points towards transparency and, in particular, a possible divergence of interest between your public body and another body. Keep particularly in mind the advice in paragraph 3.15 of this Code about your legal responsibilities to any limited company of which you are a director.

Interests which Require Declaration

5.6 Interests which require to be declared if known to you may be financial or non-financial. They may or may not cover interests which are registerable under the terms of this Code. Most of the interests to be declared will be your personal interests but, on occasion, you will have to consider whether the interests of other persons require you to make a declaration. The paragraphs which follow deal with

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(a) your financial interests (b) your non-financial interests and (c) the interests, financial and non-financial, of other persons.

5.7 You will also have other private and personal interests and may serve, or be associated with, bodies, societies and organisations as a result of your private and personal interests and not because of your role as a member of a public body. In the context of any particular matter you will need to decide whether to declare an interest. You should declare an interest unless you believe that, in the particular circumstances, the interest is too remote or without significance. In reaching a view on whether the objective test applies to the interest, you should consider whether your interest (whether taking the form of association or the holding of office) would be seen by a member of the public acting reasonably in a different light because it is the interest of a person who is a member of a public body as opposed to the interest of an ordinary member of the public.

Your Financial Interests

5.8 You must declare, if it is known to you, any financial interest (including any financial interest which is registerable under any of the categories prescribed in Section 4 of this Code). If, under category one (or category seven in respect of non-financial interests) of section 4 of this Code, you have registered an interest

- (a) as the Principal of the College;
- (b) as a member of the teaching staff of the College having been elected from their number to the Board;
- (c) as a member of the non-teaching staff of the College having been elected from their number to the Board;
- (d) as a student of the College having been nominated by the Students' Association of the College to the Board; or
- (e) in relation to any particular experience or position which was relevant to / a reason for your appointment to the public body (for example, as director of an education authority)

you do not, for that reason alone, have to declare that interest.

There is no need to declare an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

You must withdraw from the meeting room until discussion of the relevant item where you have a declarable interest is concluded. There is no need to withdraw in the case of an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

Your Non-Financial Interests

5.9 You must declare, if it is known to you, any non-financial interest if:

- (i) that interest has been registered under category seven (Non-Financial Interests) of Section 4 of the Code; or
- (ii) that interest would fall within the terms of the objective test.

There is no need to declare an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

You must withdraw from the meeting room until discussion of the relevant item where you have a declarable interest is concluded. There is no need to withdraw in the case of an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

The Financial Interests of Other Persons

5.10 The Code requires only your financial interests to be registered. You also, however, have to consider whether you should declare any financial interest of certain other persons.

You must declare if it is known to you any financial interest of:-

- (i) a spouse, a civil partner or a co-habitee;
- (ii) a close relative, close friend or close associate;
- (iii) an employer or a partner in a firm;
- (iv) a body (or subsidiary or parent of a body) of which you are a remunerated member or director;
- (v) a person from whom you have received a registerable gift or registerable hospitality;
- (vi) a person from whom you have received registerable expenses.

There is no need to declare an interest if it is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

You must withdraw from the meeting room until discussion of and voting on the relevant item where you have a declarable interest is concluded. There is no need to withdraw in the case of an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

5.11 This Code does not attempt the task of defining "relative" or "friend" or "associate". Not only is such a task fraught with difficulty but is also unlikely that such definitions would reflect the intention of this part of the Code. The key principle is the need for transparency in regard to any interest which might (regardless of the precise description of relationship) be objectively regarded by a member of the public, acting reasonably, as potentially affecting your responsibilities as a member of the public body and, as such, would be covered by the objective test.

The Non-Financial Interests of Other Persons

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5.12 You must declare if it is known to you any non-financial interest of:-

- (i) a spouse, a civil partner or a co-habitee;
- (ii) a close relative, close friend or close associate;
- (iii) an employer or a partner in a firm;
- (iv) a body (or subsidiary or parent of a body) of which you are a remunerated member or director;
- (v) a person from whom you have received a registerable gift or registerable hospitality;
- (vi) a person from whom you have received registerable election expenses.

There is no need to declare the interest if it is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

There is only a need to withdraw from the meeting if the interest is clear and substantial.

Making a Declaration

5.13 You must consider at the earliest stage possible whether you have an interest to declare in relation to any matter which is to be considered. You should consider whether agendas for meetings raise any issue of declaration of interest. Your declaration of interest must be made as soon as practicable at a meeting where that interest arises. If you do identify the need for a declaration of interest only when a particular matter is being discussed you must declare the interest as soon as you realise it is necessary.

5.14 The oral statement of declaration of interest should identify the item or items of business to which it relates. The statement should begin with the words "I declare an interest". The statement must be sufficiently informative to enable those at the meeting to understand the nature of your interest but need not give a detailed description of the interest.

Frequent Declarations of Interest

5.15 Public confidence in a public body is damaged by perception that decisions taken by that body are substantially influenced by factors other than the public interest. If you would have to declare interests frequently at meetings in respect of your role as a board member you should not accept a role or appointment with that attendant consequence. If members are frequently declaring interests at meetings then they should consider whether they can carry out their role effectively and discuss with their chair. Similarly, if any appointment or nomination to another body would give rise to objective concern because of your existing personal involvement or affiliations, you should not accept the appointment or nomination.

Dispensations

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5.16 In some very limited circumstances dispensations can be granted by the Standards Commission in relation to the existence of financial and non-financial interests which would otherwise prohibit you from taking part and voting on matters coming before your public body and its committees.

5.17 Applications for dispensations will be considered by the Standards Commission and should be made as soon as possible in order to allow proper consideration of the application in advance of meetings where dispensation is sought. You should not take part in the consideration of the matter in question until the application has been granted.

SECTION 6: LOBBYING AND ACCESS TO MEMBERS OF PUBLIC BODIES

Introduction

6.1 In order for the public body to fulfil its commitment to being open and accessible, it needs to encourage participation by organisations and individuals in the decision-making process. Clearly however, the desire to involve the public and other interest groups in the decision-making process must take account of the need to ensure transparency and probity in the way in which the public body conducts its business.

6.2 You will need to be able to consider evidence and arguments advanced by a wide range of organisations and individuals in order to perform your duties effectively. Some of these organisations and individuals will make their views known directly to individual members. The rules in this Code set out how you should conduct yourself in your contacts with those who would seek to influence you. They are designed to encourage proper interaction between members of public bodies, those they represent and interest groups.

Rules and Guidance

6.3 You must not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation that lobbies do anything which contravenes this Code or any other relevant rule of the public body or any statutory provision.

6.4 You must not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation who lobbies, act in any way which could bring discredit upon the public body.

6.5 The public must be assured that no person or organisation will gain better access to or treatment by, you as a result of employing a company or individual to lobby on a fee basis on their behalf. You must not, therefore, offer or accord any preferential access or treatment to those lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients compared with that which you accord any other person or organisation who lobbies or approaches you. Nor should those lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients be given to understand that preferential access or treatment, compared to that accorded to any other person or organisation, might be forthcoming from another member of the public body.

6.6 Before taking any action as a result of being lobbied, you should seek to satisfy yourself about the identity of the person or organisation that is lobbying and the motive for lobbying. You may choose to act in response to a person or organisation lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients but it is important that you know the basis on which you are being lobbied in order to ensure that any action taken in connection with the lobbyist complies with the standards set out in this Code.

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6.7 You should not accept any paid work:-

(a) which would involve you lobbying on behalf of any person or organisation or any clients of a person or organisation.

(b) to provide services as a strategist, adviser or consultant, for example, advising on how to influence the public body and its members. This does not prohibit you from being remunerated_ for activity which may arise because of, or relate to, membership_ of the public body, such as journalism or broadcasting, or_ involvement in representative or presentational work, such as_ participation in delegations, conferences or other events.

6.8 If you have concerns about the approach or methods used by any person or organisation in their contacts with you, you must seek the guidance of the public body.

ANNEX A**SANCTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE STANDARDS COMMISSION FOR BREACH OF THE CODE**

- (a) Censure – the Commission may reprimand the member but otherwise take no action against them;
- (b) Suspension – of the member for a maximum period of one year from attending one or more, but not all, of the following:
 - i) all meetings of the public body;
 - ii) all meetings of one or more committees or sub-committees of the public body;
 - (iii) all meetings of any other public body on which that member is a representative or nominee of the public body of which they are a member.
- (c) Suspension – for a period not exceeding one year, of the member's entitlement to attend all of the meetings referred to in (b) above;
- (d) Disqualification – removing the member from membership of that public body for a period of no more than five years.

Where a member has been suspended, the Standards Commission may direct that any remuneration or allowance received from membership of that public body be reduced, or not paid.

Where the Standards Commission disqualifies a member of a public body, it may go on to impose the following further sanctions:

- (a) Where the member of a public body is also a councillor, the Standards Commission may disqualify that member (for a period of no more than five years) from being nominated for election as, or from being elected, a councillor. Disqualification of a councillor has the effect of disqualifying that member from their public body and terminating membership of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, joint board or any other body on which that member sits as a representative of their local authority.
- (b) Direct that the member be removed from membership, and disqualified in respect of membership, of any other devolved public body (provided the members' code applicable to that body is then in force) and may disqualify that person from office as the Water Industry Commissioner.

In some cases the Standards Commission do not have the legislative powers to deal with sanctions, for example if the respondent is an executive member of the board or appointed by the Queen. Sections 23 and 24 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 refer.

Full details of the sanctions are set out in Section 19 of the Act.

ANNEX B**DEFINITIONS**

“Chair” includes Board Convener or any person discharging similar functions under alternative decision making structures.

“Code” code of conduct for members of devolved public bodies

“Cohabitee” includes a person, whether of the opposite sex or not, who is living with you in a relationship similar to that of husband and wife.

“Group of companies” has the same meaning as “group” in section 262(1) of the Companies Act 1985. A “group”, within s262 (1) of the Companies Act 1985, means a parent undertaking and its subsidiary undertakings.

“Parent Undertaking” is an undertaking in relation to another undertaking, a subsidiary undertaking, if a) it holds a majority of the rights in the undertaking; or b) it is a member of the undertaking and has the right to appoint or remove a majority of its board of directors; or c) it has the right to exercise a dominant influence over the undertaking (i) by virtue of provisions contained in the undertaking’s memorandum or articles or (ii) by virtue of a control contract; or d) it is a councillor of the undertaking and controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders or councillors, a majority of the rights in the undertaking.

“A person” means a single individual or legal person and includes a group of companies.

“Any person” includes individuals, incorporated and unincorporated bodies, trade unions, charities and voluntary organisations.

“Public body” means a devolved public body listed in Schedule 3 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, as amended.

“Related Undertaking” is a parent or subsidiary company of a principal undertaking of which you are also a director. You will receive remuneration for the principal undertaking though you will not receive remuneration as director of the related undertaking.

“Remuneration” includes any salary, wage, share of profits, fee, expenses, other monetary benefit or benefit in kind. This would include, for example, the provision of a company car or travelling expenses by an employer.

“Spouse” does not include a former spouse or a spouse who is living separately and apart from you.

“Undertaking” means:

- a) a body corporate or partnership; or
- b) an unincorporated association carrying on a trade or business, with or without a view to a profit.



Appointment of Teaching (Academic) and Non-Teaching (Support) Staff Members to the Board of Management of Inverness College UHI

Lead Officer	Chairman of the Board of Management
Review Officer	Board of Management Secretary
Date first approved by BoM	Mar 2017
First Review Date	Mar 2020
Date review approved by BoM	
Next Review Date	
Equality impact assessment	N/A
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact

Election Rules

- 1 In accordance with Schedule 2 to the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 (“Schedule 2”), the Board must include two members of staff. One shall be appointed by being elected by the teaching (“academic”) staff of the college from amongst their own number and the other shall be appointed by the non-teaching (“support”) staff of the college from amongst their own number.
- 2 Paragraph 3B (1) of Schedule 2 provides that such elections must be held in accordance with rules made by the Board.
- 3 Before making, varying or replacing these Election Rules, the Board must, as required under 3B of Schedule 2, consult the representatives of any trade union which the Board recognises as being, or which otherwise appears to the Board to be, representative of the academic/support staff of the College.
- 4 Having consulted relevant representatives as required under paragraphs 3(B)(2) and (3) of Schedule 2, these election rules have been made by the Board under paragraph 3(B)(1) of Schedule 2. These rules were made by the Board on 28th March 2017 and come into effect on that same date.
- 5 For the purposes of these election rules, staff groups are defined as follows:
 - **Teaching Staff/Academic Staff** – all staff (including Managers) who are on the academic staff payroll.
 - **Non-Teaching Staff/Support Staff**– all staff (including Managers) who are on the support staff payroll.
- 6 Appointments shall proceed as follows:
 - (a) The appointment shall be made by election administered by the Returning Officer (the Returning Officer shall normally be the Secretary to the Board. Where the Secretary to the Board is unavailable, the Board must appoint another staff member to act as Returning Officer).
 - (b) The Returning Officer shall communicate to staff any vacancies that arise and request nominations for membership from the Academic or Support Staff as relevant.
 - (c) Such nominations must be received by the Returning Officer by the date specified in the communication, being not less than fourteen days from the date of the communication.
 - ~~(d)~~ ~~(d)~~ Each nomination must be signed by the nominee, the proposer and one other person all being members of the academic or support staff as appropriate. Only academic members of staff may nominate the academic member and only support staff may nominate the support staff member.
 - (e) If more than one nomination is received, the Returning Officer shall thereafter arrange for an election to be conducted using an appropriate electronic system and shall notify each member of the academic or support staff of the college as appropriate of the names of the nominees and the process to be followed.
 - (f) The election shall be completed by the date and time specified in the notice issued by the Returning Officer being not less than seven days from the date of the issue of the notice of the election. Only academic members of staff may vote for the academic member and only support staff may vote for the support

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staff member. All staff members who are eligible to vote shall each be entitled to one vote.

7 The following rules shall be followed as regards counting votes:

- (a) The Returning Officer shall offer each nominee the opportunity to be present or represented at the counting of votes.
- (b) The counting of votes shall take place within 24 hours of the time set for the close of the election and shall be done by the Returning Officer in the presence of such nominees or their representatives as have chosen to attend.
- (c) The nominee receiving the most votes shall be declared elected.
- (d) In the event of a tie the election shall be decided by the drawing of cards or lots amongst the nominees with the most number of votes.
- (e) In the event of elections for academic and support staff members being held concurrently, the counting of votes shall be done as a separate and consecutive process for each election.
- (f) The Returning Officer may use such staff of the College as may be necessary to assist in the counting of votes.
- (g) The names of the persons elected shall be reported to the next meeting of the Board after the election, and announced to all staff.

The 'counting of votes' may be a physical count of ballot papers where a paper system has been used, or the opening of an electronic report where an electronic voting system has been used.

8 The following rules shall apply in the event of a vacancy arising in respect of the appointment for a staff member

- (a) In the event of an election requiring to be held because of the expiry of the term of office of the respective members of the Board the procedures set out above shall be completed no later than four weeks prior to the date of expiry.
- (b) In the event of an election requiring to be held because of a resignation or death of the respective members of the Board the procedures set out shall be completed no later than eight weeks after the vacancy occurs. The eight weeks excludes College vacation periods to ensure that all staff have the opportunity to participate.

**Appointment of Teaching (Academic) and Non-Teaching (Support) Staff Members to the
Board of Management of Inverness College UHI**



Sample Advertisement

As you may be aware, membership of the College Board of Management includes two places for College staff members (one academic and one support). The position of **[academic/support]** member will become vacant on **[date]**. The Board has a strong commitment to equality and diversity and particularly welcomes Board members from those groups under-represented on Scotland's public bodies.

Staff members of the Board of Management are full members and have the same rights, responsibilities and obligations as other Board members. Staff members are **not** there as 'representatives' of the staff, they are there to bring knowledge and expertise of the day-to-day workings of the College into Board meetings, processes and decision-making.

Nominations are sought to fill the current vacancy. Nominations must come from current members of **[academic/support]** staff. Each nomination will require a proposer and seconder, both also current members of **[academic/support]** staff. The nominee must also prepare a support statement, which should give a brief outline of why they should be elected to the Board. This will be used in the event of an election being required.

Where only one nomination is received, that nominee will automatically be elected to the Board. Where more than one nomination is received, an election by electronic secret ballot will take place and the nominee receiving the most votes shall become elected to the Board. In the event of a tie the nominee shall be determined by the drawing of cards or lots.

The term of appointment shall be for a period of four years.

Information about the role and on the role of a Board member is available

Nomination forms can be found

Should you require any additional information or have any queries, the Board Secretary would be happy to meet with you – **[insert name]** – **[insert e mail]**

**Appointment of Teaching (Academic) and Non-Teaching (Support) Staff Members to the
Board of Management of Inverness College UHI**



Sample Nomination Form

We, the undersigned, wish to nominate:

Name:

[Curriculum Area / Department]:

For election as the **[academic/support]** staff member of the Board of Management. Our nominee has agreed to stand for election, and has provided a supporting statement overleaf.

PROPOSER

Name:

Signed:

Department:

Date:

SECONDER

Name:

Signed:

Department:

Date:

Notes

- All proposers, seconders and nominees must be eligible to stand for election as the **[academic/support]** staff member on the Board of Management.
- Proposers can only propose one person and cannot be a nominee or seconder.
- Seconders can only second the nomination of one person and cannot themselves be a nominee or proposer,
- Nominees cannot act as a proposer or seconder to any other nominee.
- Proposers, seconders and nominees shall be entitled to one vote in the event that an election is required.
- Return Form to: **[insert name]** Secretary to the Board of Management, 1 Inverness Campus, Inverness, IV2 5NA or e mail **[insert e mail]** by **[insert date and time]**. Late returns shall not

**Appointment of Teaching (Academic) and Non-Teaching (Support) Staff Members to the
Board of Management of Inverness College UHI**

be accepted.

Nominee's Supporting Statement
(Maximum 150 Words)

I accept the nomination to stand for election as the **[academic/support]** staff member of the Board of Management.

Name:

Signed:

[Curriculum area / Department]:

Date:

Board of Management

Subject/Title:	Staff Disciplinary Policy
Author: [Name and Job title]	Nicola Quinn HR Manager
Meeting:	BoM Committee
Meeting Date:	1st December 2020
Date Paper prepared:	12th November 2020
Brief Summary of the paper:	BoM Committee are asked to agree the changes to the Staff Disciplinary Policy and approve for publication.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Approval
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	
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:
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	The Staff Disciplinary Policy was discussed at Scrutiny Panel (29/05/2020). Staff Consultation took place between 8th – 29th June 2020 and JCC agreed the changes to the Staff Disciplinary Policy on 5th August 2020. SMT Committee approved the Staff Disciplinary Policy changes on 17 th September 2020. BoM HR approved on 12th Nov 2020.

Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]			
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes/No]			
*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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STAFF DISCIPLINARY POLICY

REFERENCE: PL/HR/2017/004

Lead Officer	Director of Organisational Development and Performance <u>HR Manager</u>
Review Officer	HR Manager <u>Business Partner</u>
Date first approved by BoM	9 March 2009
First Review Date	20 December 2012
Date review approved by BoM	1 June 2017
Next Review Date	June 2020
Equality impact assessment	Yes
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact
HR Manager	09.03.09	Amendments approved by BoM HR Committee
HR Manager	01.06.17	Review approved by BoM HR Committee
HR Manager		

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1.1. Policy Statement

The College aims to resolve ~~any~~ issues before reaching a formal stage. The college aims to take steps to deal with issues as quickly as possible, where appropriate. ~~and where to appropriate deal with issues as quickly as possible in an expedited manner where appropriate.~~ In doing so the disciplinary policy and procedures are to help the College promote orderly employment relations as well as ensuring fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff.

The purpose of the disciplinary policy is to:

- provide a framework within which disciplinary issues can be resolved in a way which is designed to promote fairness in relation to the treatment of all staff;
- ~~ensure that disciplinary issues are resolved as quickly as possible in an expedited manner;~~ ensure that the College acts promptly when disciplinary matters come to light;
- inform staff of the behaviours that are expected from them during the course of their employment.
- meet the ~~college~~ College's statutory responsibilities ~~in line with legislation.~~

The detailed procedure sets out the stages which must be followed – Procedure Reference: PR/HR/2017/002

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1. Legislative framework/related policies

~~1.1.~~ Data Protection Act ~~1998~~2018.

~~1.1.1.2.~~ [General Data Protection Regulations](#)

~~1.2.1.3.~~ Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

~~1.3.~~ [Employment Act 2002 \(Dispute Resolution\) Regulations.](#)

1.4. Employment Relations Act 2004.

1.5. Health & Safety at Work 1974.

~~1.6.~~ [Disability Discrimination Act 1995.](#)

~~1.7.1.6.~~ Equality Act 2010.

~~1.8.~~ The Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.

~~1.9.1.7.~~ Promoting Attendance Policy.

~~1.8.~~ Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

~~1.10.1.9.~~ [Performance Improvement Policy.](#)

~~1.11.~~ [Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy.](#)

~~1.12.~~ [Preventing Fraud and Corruption Policy.](#)

~~1.13.1.10.~~ Protection of Children and Adults at Risk Policy.

~~1.14.1.11.~~ Inverness College Public Interest Disclosure (whistle blowing) Policy.

~~1.15.1.12.~~ Data Protection Policy.

~~1.16.1.13.~~ Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all Inverness College staff.

~~1.17.1.14.~~ Compliance

4.1. This policy and associated procedures must be complied with and will be audited regularly with reports going to the appropriate committees.

4.2. This document is compliant with the disciplinary, dismissal and grievance regulations as detailed in the 'Legislative framework/related policies' above.

~~1.18.1.15.~~ Monitoring

5.1 Each college policy will be monitored and its implementation evaluated. Appropriate procedures for monitoring and evaluation are the responsibility of the lead officer. These procedures will be subject to audit by the Quality Unit.

~~1.19.1.16.~~ Review

6.1 The policy and related procedures will normally be reviewed every three years to ensure it continues to meet College requirements within the legislative framework.

Board of Management

Subject/Title:	ICT Policies & Procedures
Author: [Name and Job title]	Martin Robinson, ICT Services Manager
Meeting:	Board of Management Committee
Meeting Date:	1st December 2020
Date Paper prepared:	12th November 2020
Brief Summary of the paper:	<p>BoM Committee are asked to agree the changes to the revised ICT policies & procedures listed below and approve these for progression to the next stage of approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Usage and Retention Policy • Information Security Policy • UHI Partnership Information Security Acceptable Use Policy
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Approval
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	
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:
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	The revised policies and procedures were approved at Scrutiny Panel 7 th October 2020, SMT Committee on 22 nd October 2020, and BoM Audit Committee on 10th November 2020. Following approval from Board of Management, these policies will be published.

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Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]			
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes/No]			
*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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Email Retention and Usage Policy

REFERENCE: PL/IT/2018/001

Lead Officer	Depute Principal – Planning & Student Experience
Review Officer	ICT Services Manager
Date first approved by BoM	11 October 2018
First Review Date	October 2019
Date review approved by BoM	
Next Review Date	
Equality impact assessment	N/A
Further information (where relevant)	

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Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact
ICT Services Manager & Info Dev Manager	29/09/20	Change in legislative references: Freedom of Information Act 2000 to Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act UK Data Protection Bill 2018 to UK Data Protection Act 2018 Para 4.6 added “and the student’s college email address.” Para 6.1 removed the word “wide”

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1. Policy Statement

Email is subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2000, the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the UK Data Protection Act 2018. As such it needs to be managed appropriately and only retained when required.

It is not appropriate to retain all emails indefinitely, or conversely to delete emails that could be viewed as records relating to a project or work activity subject to a longer retention period.

In addition, College email should be used for work purposes only and not used for personal communication or to subscribe to non-work related mailing groups, as these communications will also be subject to the regulations above.

2. Legislative framework / related policies

- 2.1. Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2000
- 2.2. General Data Protection Regulation 2016
- 2.3. UK Data Protection Act 2018
- 2.4. Data Protection Policy
- 2.5. Information Security Policy
- 2.6. UHI Partnership Information Security Acceptable Use Policy
- 2.7. Records Management Policy
- 2.8. Freedom of Information Policy

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all email sent and received by Inverness College UHI staff using their individual and, where relevant, group or team UHI email addresses.

4. Use of College Email

- 4.1. College email accounts should be managed securely and for work purposes only to comply with the relevant legislation above.
- 4.2. College email addresses should NOT be used to subscribe or login to non-work-related websites or mailing lists, e.g. paypal, ebay, shopping websites, facebook etc.
- 4.3. College email should NOT be used for non-work related communication or activity.
- 4.4. Staff should NOT download College email to a non-College PC, laptop or mobile device. However, it is possible to access College email via the web browser (<http://outlook.com/uhi.ac.uk>) or the Microsoft Outlook app on an ios or Android device. *(Please contact the ICT Helpdesk for more information)*
- 4.5. College email should NOT be forwarded to an alternate email account, such as hotmail or yahoo.

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- 4.6 Staff should only communicate with enrolled students using their College email account and the student's college email address.
- 4.7. Do NOT use .pst files (Outlook personal folders) to archive emails to a PC or external hard disk. These are liable to be lost or overlooked when requested under FOI.
- 4.8. Anything you write, send or receive in an email may be subject to disclosure under FOI or the DPA. Email may also be used as evidence in legal proceedings.

5. Retention of Emails

- 5.1. College staff are responsible for managing their email in the same way they manage other business records.
- 5.2. The retention of email is governed by the information within it, not the medium it is stored. Please refer to the Record Management Policy for more information on the appropriate storage for records. For example, key communication regarding an EU funded project would require much more thought before deleting than emails to a colleague to arrange a meeting.
- 5.3. That is, due to the diverse work across the College, there is no "one size fits all" approach to email retention.
- 5.4. However, the presumption is that unless there are good reasons to retain an email it should be deleted and there are automated methods within your email client to comply with this.
- 5.5. Retention of emails should comply with the current data protection legislation. In particular, "Personal data shall be kept in a form which permit identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed".
- 5.6. College staff should consult their line manager, in the first instance, where they require clarification on email retention and department records management.

6. Compliance

- 6.1. This policy is a cross college policy; and all staff must work to meet the requirements outlined within the policy.
- 6.2. Any staff found to be in breach of this policy may be subject to action through the College's disciplinary procedures.

7. Monitoring

- 7.1. This policy will be reviewed regularly, at least annually, by the ICT Services Manager and Information Development Manager to ensure it reflect changes in legislation and best practice.

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Information Security Policy

REFERENCE: PL/IT/2017/001

Lead Officer	Depute Principal – Planning & Student Experience
Review Officer	ICT Services Manager
Date first approved by BoM	19 March 2015
First Review Date	June 2017
Date review approved by BoM	29 May 2017
Next Review Date	June 2020
Equality impact assessment	08 March 2017
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact
ICT Services Manager	28.05.17	Reviewed by BoM Audit Committee
ICT Services Manager	24.09.20	Updates to reflect changes in regulation and new Government guidelines

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1. Policy Statement

The purpose of the Inverness College Information Security Policy is to:

- Promote, develop, and maintain a consistent and secure approach to the handling, storing and processing of information.
- Ensure all staff, students and relevant third parties understand their responsibilities with regards to Information Security.
- Ensure the College Information assets and IT infrastructure are not misused.
- Ensure the College adheres to relevant Information Security legislation.

Failure to adequately secure information increases the risk of significant financial and reputational losses. This policy outlines the College's commitment and approach to Information Security as well as the roles and responsibilities required to support this.

2. Legislative framework/related policies

2.1. The legislative frameworks applying to this policy are.

- Data Protection Act 2018;
- Computer Misuse Act 1990;
- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000;
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002;
- The Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000.

2.2. The related Inverness College policies are.

- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- UHI IS ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Business Continuity Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy

2.3. External Standards relevant to this policy are:

- Information Security ISO/IEC 27001;
- Information Security ISO/IEC 27002;
- Records Management ISO 15489-1;
- The UCISA Information Security Toolkit.
- JANET Acceptable Use Policy.
- Scottish Government Cyber Resilience Strategy for Scotland
- National Cyber Security Centre: Cyber Essentials

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3. Scope

3.1. The policy scope is to ensure that the three key principles of Information Security are upheld. That is:

- **Confidentiality:** Ensuring information assets are protected from unauthorised access or modification.
- **Integrity:** Ensuring information is accurate, complete, and is delivered by reliable systems.
- **Availability:** Ensuring information is accessible and useable when required for authorised use.

3.2. For the purpose of this policy, information includes data stored on computers (including mobile devices), transmitted across networks; printed out or written on paper; sent out by fax; stored on disk or tape; and, spoken in conversation or over the telephone, including voicemail recordings.

3.3. As such, all information that is created, processed, stored. or transmitted physically or electronically as part of Inverness College's educational and related business activities is an asset of the organisation and, therefore, should be appropriately protected.

4. Information Management Security System (ISMS)

4.1. This policy defines an approach to Information security based on implementing and maintaining a fit for purpose set of controls, including policies, procedures, training, software, and hardware functions that formulate the Inverness College Information Management Security System (ISMS),

4.2. The ISMS is integrated with the College's processes and management structure and, as defined in ISO 27000, appropriate for the educational purpose of the College.

4.3. The ISMS facilitates a risk-based approach to Information Security. For example, the management of personal data, such as student / staff records or financial records, would be different to that of public facing website or course materials

4.4 The ISMS allows the College to:

- Understand how its information assets are protected against threats, both electronic and physical.
- Maintain a framework for identifying and assessing security risks, as well as applying applicable controls to address these.

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- Classify information to indicate its sensitivity and importance to the College.
- Maintain key Information System operations even in the event of disaster, such as floods or IT outages.
- Maintain a programme, including training, to promote Information Security awareness across the College.
- Ensure breaches of information security are reported, investigated and appropriate action is taken.

4.5 In addition to the legislative framework and College policies, referred to above, a number of other child Information Security policies and guidelines will form part of the ISMS.

5. Information Security Incident Management

5.1. Any member of staff, student or researcher aware of any information security incident should report it to the College Data Controller (data.controller.ic@uhi.ac.uk). The Information Security Incident Management Procedure details how such events are addressed and learnt from.

6. Responsibilities

6.1. The Inverness College Board of Management are responsible for approval of the Information Security Policy.

6.2. The **Inverness College Senior Management Team** is responsible for providing leadership and commitment to the application of Information Security, including ongoing review of the Information Security Policy.

6.3. The **Depute Principal - Planning and Student Experience** has operational responsibility for Information Security.

6.4. The **ICT Services Manager** is responsible for:

- Reviewing and maintaining the Information Security policy and updating the ISMS to address new threats, legislation and operational requirements of the College.
- Provision of specialist advice on matters of Information Security.
- Identifying and addressing risks to information systems.
- Ensuring that new systems or changes made to the College's ICT do not compromise the security of the existing infrastructure.

6.5. The **Information Development Manager** is responsible for:

- The classification scheme for information based on its importance to the College.
- Ensuring the implementation and the ongoing maintenance of the Records Management System.
- Providing advice and guidance to staff with regard to record keeping, storage and destruction of documents.

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6.6. The **MIS Manager** is responsible for:

- Ensuring business processes associated with the collation, interpretation and reporting of information across the College are robust, auditable and implemented by all staff.

6.7. The **Estates and Campus Services Manager** is responsible for:

- Ensuring the physical and environmental security of the Inverness College premises.

6.8. **Information Asset Owners** are responsible for:

- Determining and reviewing the level of access to be granted to staff, students and third parties to ensure the information they manage is appropriately accessible and secure.

6.9. All **Managers** are responsible for:

- Ensuring their staff are aware of their security responsibilities.
- Ensuring their staff have appropriate training for the systems and information they are using or processing.

6.10. All **Staff** should be aware that Information Security is their responsibility and should be considered as part of everyday working practice. As such, they are responsible for:

- Ensuring they comply with the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.
- Reporting any security incidents as and when they are aware of them.

6.11 All **Students** must abide by the UHI Acceptable Use Policy which documents how to use the College's ICT appropriately.

7. Compliance

7.1. This policy applies to all staff, students, contractors, third parties and partner organisations. Non-compliance should be raised as security incident to the Inverness College ICT Services Helpdesk.

8. Monitoring

8.1. The effectiveness of the Information Security Policy and Information Security Management System requires periodic and event-based monitoring. Any organisational changes to Inverness College, legislative change or major ICT changes may require review of this policy and others.

8.2. In addition, the evaluation of new Information Security risks may result in actions to add new, amend or delete existing controls. For example, a

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review of the Physical Security would be required on the College opening a new campus.

8.3. Each college policy will be monitored and its implementation evaluated. Appropriate procedures for monitoring and evaluation are the responsibility of the lead officer. These procedures will be subject to audit.

8.4. The number of Information Security incidents raised is recorded in a Data Breach Log by the Data Controller.

9. Review

9.1. The Information Security Policy shall be reviewed annually by the ICT Services Manager and presented for approval to the Board of Management or other designated committee every 3 years.

**University of the
Highlands and Islands
Partnership**

Information Security

Acceptable Use Policy

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SECTION 1

Control

1.1 Author and Version Control

Original author:	Simon Young
Current revision author: (if applicable)	

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Purpose/change	Policy review date
01	30/03/16	Simon Young	Changes for partnership policies	30/09/2018
02	11/03/19	Simon Young	Annual Review	11/03/2020
03	03/10/19	Simon Young	Removed signature sheet	11/03/20
04	04/09/2020	Simon Young	Reviewed and modified from DPA 1998 to DPA 2018	04/09/2021

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1.2 Policy Summary

Overview Why is the policy required?	This Acceptable Use Policy is part of the ISO/IEC 27001:2013 policy documentation set and is a requirement to ensure that relevant staff, students and contractors understand their obligations in the use of the university partnership email and Internet facilities.
Purpose What will it achieve?	This policy offers protection and guidance for users and ensures compliance with security good practice and legal requirements.
Scope Who does it apply to?	It applies to all personnel whether staff, students, contractor, or other third party with access to the university partnership's data or information systems.
Consultation/notification Highlight plans/dates	
Implementation and monitoring (including costs)	
Enforcement Detail how the policy will be enforced and who will be responsible	
References (highlight any advice received from external organisations)	

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SECTION 2

Introduction

2.1 Purpose

This policy is in place to protect the university partnership organisations and employees from illegal or damaging actions that might result from misuse of the university partnership's network. Although specifically aimed at protecting the university partnership's own systems and reputation, it aligns with the Acceptable Use Policy provided by the "JANET" network.

2.2 Scope

This policy applies to persons authorised to use the university partnership's network including its own members to whom it provides network access.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- computer equipment;
- software;
- operating systems;
- storage media;
- own equipment (such as home PCs, mobile and smart-phones);
- network accounts providing electronic mail;
- world wide web (www) browsing;
- File copying, e.g., using the file transfer protocol (FTP).

2.3 Compliance

This policy applies to all users of the university partnership's systems (viz. all students, staff, contractors and third parties employed by university partnership) and any personal device used on university partnerships premises whether connected to the university partnership or a third party network, and it provides guidance on acceptable standards for using information technology (IT) equipment throughout the partnership.

Indications of non-compliance with the provisions of this policy shall be investigated in accordance with the disciplinary or contractual procedures in place with the university partnership as appropriate.

2.4 Terminology

The word "**shall**" is used throughout this document to state where a policy is a mandatory requirement.

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The word “**should**” is used throughout this document to state where a policy is a recommended requirement.

For the purposes of this policy the term “**personnel**” includes university partnership staff, contractors, students and third parties who have access to Information Systems.

“**JANET**” (originally a contraction of “Joint Academic NETwork”) is the name given both to an electronic communications network and a collection of electronic communications networking services and facilities that support the requirements of the UK education and research community. All further and higher education organisations in the UK are connected to JANET, as are all the Research Councils, across the UK. This network also carries traffic between schools within the UK, although many of the schools' networks maintain their own general Internet connectivity.

SECTION 3

Policy

3.1 Introduction

The university partnership seeks to promote and facilitate the proper and extensive use of information technology in the interest of learning and research. Whilst the tradition of academic freedom will be fully respected, this also requires responsible and legal use of the technologies and facilities made available to students and staff at the university partnership.

This acceptable use policy is intended to provide a framework for such use of the university partnership's IT resource. It applies to all computing, telecommunication, and networking facilities provided by any department or section of the university partnership.

This acceptable use policy is taken to include the [JANET Acceptable Use Policy](#) and the [JANET Security Policy](#) published by JANET (UK) and the [Eduserv General Terms of Service](#). Members of the university partnership and all other users of the university partnership's facilities are bound by the provisions of these policies in addition to this acceptable use policy. They are also bound by such other policies as published by the university partnership in the IT support section of the university's intranet. It is the responsibility of all users of the university partnership's IT services to read and understand this policy.

3.2 Purpose of Use

The university partnership's computer resources are provided primarily to facilitate a person's essential work as an employee or student or other role within the university partnership.

Use for other purposes, such as personal electronic mail or recreational use of the world wide web, is a privilege, which can be withdrawn, not a right. Any such use must not interfere with the user's duties or studies or any other persons use of the computer systems and must not, in any way, bring the university partnership into disrepute. Priority must always be granted to those needing the facilities for academic work.

University partnership e-mail addresses and associated university partnership e-mail systems must be used for all official university partnership business, in order to facilitate audit and institutional record keeping. All staff and students must regularly read their university partnership e-mail.

Commercial work for outside bodies, using centralised managed services, requires the explicit permission from the director of learning and information services; such use, whether or not authorised, may be liable to charge.

3.3 Responsibilities

All personnel, as described in Section 2.4 Terminology, shall comply with this policy.

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The **information security officer** shall be responsible for ensuring that this policy is disseminated amongst relevant personnel and the principles incorporated into an Information Security Awareness programme.

Line managers shall ensure that staff and contractors for whom they have responsibility are properly briefed on this policy.

Human resources shall ensure that the principles of this policy are incorporated into induction training for new staff and contractors.

All users must affirm that they have read and agreed to this Acceptable Use Policy.

3.4 Review period

This policy shall be reviewed and updated, if appropriate, after a period of twelve months.

3.5 Authorisation

In order to use the computing facilities of the university partnership a person must first be registered. Registration of all members of staff and registered students is carried out automatically. Others must apply to the IT service desk (<https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/lis/>). Registration to use university partnership services implies, and is conditional upon, acceptance of this acceptable use policy, for which a signature of acceptance may be required on joining the university partnership. The lack of a signature does not exempt an individual from any obligation from this policy.

The registration procedure grants authorisation to use the core IT facilities of the university partnership. Following registration, a username and password will be allocated. Authorisation for other services may be granted automatically dependent on the role performed or requirements of the persons' academic programme, or requested by application to the IT service desk.

All individual allocated usernames, passwords and e-mail addresses are for the exclusive use of the individual to whom they are allocated. Passwords should be changed from the default on the first login and should follow password best practice guidelines. The user is personally responsible and accountable for all activities carried out under their username. The user should make sure they do not leave a workstation or device they are logged into unattended and should ensure they are logged out at the end of their session. Attempts to access or use any username or e-mail address which is not authorised to the user, is prohibited. No one may use, or attempt to use, IT resources allocated to another person, except when explicitly authorised by the provider of those resources.

All users must correctly identify themselves at all times. A user must not masquerade as another, withhold their identity or tamper with audit trails. A user must take all reasonable precautions to protect their resources. In particular, passwords used must adhere to current password policy and practice.

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3.6 Privacy

It should be noted that IT staff, who have the appropriate privileges, have the ability, which is occasionally required, to access all files, including electronic mail files. It is also occasionally necessary to intercept network traffic. In such circumstances appropriately privileged staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure the privacy of service users. The university partnership fully reserves the right to monitor e-mail, internet access, telephone and any other electronically-mediated communications, whether stored or in transit, in line with its rights under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000)

www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_200000023_en_1.

Reasons for such monitoring may include the need to:

- Ensure operational effectiveness of services;
- Prevent a breach of the law, this policy, or other university partnership policy;
- Investigate a suspected breach of this law, this policy, or other university partnership policy;
- Monitor standards.

Access to staff and student files, including e-mail files, will not normally be given to another member of staff unless authorised by a member of the senior management team at each partner, or nominee, who will use their discretion, if appropriate. In such circumstances the head of section, or more senior line manager, or in the case of an HE student, the university dean of students, will be informed, and will normally be consulted prior to action being taken. Such access will normally only be granted in the following circumstances:

- Where a breach of the law or a breach of this or another university partnership policy is suspected;
- When a documented and lawful request from a law enforcement agency such as the police or security services has been received;
- On request from the relevant head of section, where the managers or co-workers of the individual require access to e-mail messages or files, which are records of university partnership activity, and the individual is unable, e.g. through absence, to provide them.

The university partnership sees student privacy as desirable but not as an absolute right, hence students should not expect to hold or pass information, which they would not wish to be seen by members of staff responsible for their academic work. In addition to when a breach of the law or of this policy is suspected, or when a documented and lawful request from law enforcement agency such as the police or security services has been received, IT staff are also authorised to release the contents of student's files, including e-mail files, when required to by any member of staff who has a direct academic work-based reason for requiring such access.

After a student or member of staff leaves the university partnership, files which are left behind on any computer system owned by the university partnership, including servers and including e-mail files, will be considered to be the property of the university partnership, staff should make arrangements to transfer to colleagues any e-mail or other computer-based information held under their personal account, as this will be closed on their departure.

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3.7 Behaviour

No person shall jeopardise the integrity, performance or reliability of computer equipment, software, data and other stored information. The integrity of the university partnership's computer systems is put at risk if users do not take adequate precautions against malicious software, such as computer virus programs. All users of the university partnership's IT services must ensure that any computer, for which they have responsibility and which is attached to the university partnership's network, is adequately protected against viruses, through the use of up to date anti-virus software (any exceptions to this must be approved by the director of learning and information services), and has the latest tested security patches installed. Reasonable care should also be taken to ensure that resource use does not result in a denial of service to others.

N.B. All university partnership computers connected to the network are updated on a routine basis

Conventional norms of behaviour apply to ICT-based media, just as they would apply to more traditional media. Within the university partnership setting this should also be taken to mean that the tradition of academic freedom will always be respected. The university partnership, as expressed in its Equality and Diversity Charter, is committed to achieving an educational and working environment which complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Distributing material, which is offensive, obscene, abusive or extremist, may be illegal and may also contravene the university partnership's policy on harassment and bullying and the university partnership's policy on social media and may result in disciplinary action.

No user shall interfere or attempt to interfere in any way with information belonging to or material prepared by another user. Similarly, no user shall make unauthorised copies of information belonging to another user. The same conventions of privacy should apply to electronically held information as to that held on traditional material such as paper.

For specific services the university partnership may provide more detailed guidelines, in addition to the policies provided in this acceptable use policy.

Users of services external to the university partnership are expected to abide by any policies, rules and codes of conduct applying to such services. Any breach of such policies, rules and codes of conduct may be regarded as a breach of this acceptable use policy and be dealt with accordingly. The use of university partnership credentials to gain unauthorised access to the facilities of any other organisation is similarly prohibited.

3.8 Definitions of Acceptable & Unacceptable Usage

Unacceptable use of the university partnership's computers and network resources may be summarised as:

- the creations, retention or propagation of material that is offensive, obscene, indecent or extremist, except in the course of recognised research or teaching that is permitted under UK and international law; propagation will normally be considered to be a much more serious offence;

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- intellectual property rights infringement, including copyright, trademark, patent, design and moral rights, including use internal to the university partnership;
- causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to others, as specified in the JANET Acceptable Use Policy;
- defamation (genuine scholarly criticism is permitted);
- unsolicited advertising, often referred to as "spamming";
- sending e-mails that purport to come from an individual other than the person actually sending the message using, e.g., a forged address;
- attempts to break into or damage computer systems or data held thereon;
- actions or inactions which intentionally, or unintentionally, aid the distribution of computer viruses or other malicious software;
- attempts to access or actions intended to facilitate access to computers for which the individual is not authorised;
- using the university partnership's network for unauthenticated access;
- unauthorised resale of the university partnership's or JANET services or information;
- excessive IT use during working hours that significantly interferes with a staff member's work, or that of other staff or students.
- the recording audio/visual of others without their permission
- using the university partnership's network to access gambling sites

These restrictions should be taken to mean, for example, that the following activities will normally be considered to be a breach of this policy (potential exceptions should be discussed with IT):

- the downloading, uploading, distribution, or storage of music, video, film, or other material, for which you do not hold a valid licence, or other valid permission from the copyright holder;
- the use of peer-to-peer software and related applications to illegally download and/or share music, video, film, or other material, in contravention of copyright law
- the publication on external websites of unauthorised recordings, e.g. of lectures;
- the distribution or storage by any means of pirated software;
- connecting an unauthorised device to the university partnership network, i.e. one that has not been configured to comply with this policy and any other relevant regulations and guidelines relating to security, IT purchasing policy, and acceptable use. This includes network hubs, switches and wireless access points not approved or managed by IT but excludes halls of residence.
- circumvention of Network Access Control;
- monitoring or interception of network traffic, without permission;
- probing for the security weaknesses of systems by methods such as port-scanning, without permission;

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- associating any device to network Access Points, including wireless, for which you are not authorised;
- non-academic activities which generate heavy network traffic, especially those which interfere with others' legitimate use of IT services or which incur financial costs;
- frivolous use of university partnership owned computer laboratories, especially where such activities interfere with others' legitimate use of IT services;
- opening an unsolicited e-mail attachment, especially if not work or study-related;
- the deliberate viewing and/or printing of pornographic images;
- the passing on of electronic chain mail;
- posting of defamatory comments about staff or students on social networking sites;
- the creation of web based content, portraying official university partnership's business without express permission or responsibility;
- the use of the university partnership business mailing lists for non-academic purposes;
- the use of CDs, DVDs, and other storage devices for copying unlicensed copyright software, music, etc.;
- the copying of other people's web site, or other, material without the express permission of the copyright holder;
- plagiarism, i.e. the intentional use of other people's material without attribution.

Other uses may be unacceptable in certain circumstances. The installed machine on each network socket must be a workstation only and not provide any server based services, including, but not limited to, Web, FTP, IRC, Streaming media server, peer to peer facilities, or e-mail services.

It should be noted that individuals may be held responsible for the retention of attachment material that they have received, via e-mail that they have never opened, via e-mail that they have read. Similarly, opening an attachment, received via unsolicited e-mail, especially if clearly unrelated to work or study, which leads to widespread virus infection, may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Acceptable uses may include:

- Personal e-mail and recreational use of internet services, as long as these are in keeping with the framework defined in this policy document and do not interfere with one's duties, studies or the work of others.

However, such use must be regarded as a privilege and not as a right and may be withdrawn if abused or if the user is subject to a disciplinary procedure.

3.9 Personal Safety

- Users will not e-mail personal contact information about other people without their consent. Personal contact information includes the address, telephone, work address, etc.
- Student users should promptly disclose to a member of staff or other university partnership employee any message they receive that they feel is inappropriate or that makes them feel uncomfortable.

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3.10 Inappropriate Language

- Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public and private e-mail messages; file names, the content of files and material posted on web pages.
- Such inappropriate language includes obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.

3.11 E-mail Misuse

- Users will not email information that could cause damage or a danger of disruption.
- Users will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person.
- Users will not knowingly or recklessly e-mail false or defamatory information about a person or organisation.
- Users will not forward an e-mail that was sent privately without permission of the person who sent the message.
- Users will not e-mail private information about another person.

SECTION 4

Legal Constraints

Any software and / or hard copy of data or information which is not generated by the user personally and which may become available through the use of the university partnership's computing and communications resource shall not be copied or used without permission of the university partnership's copyright owner. In particular, it is up to the user to check the terms and conditions of any license for the use of software or information and to abide by them. Software and / or information provided by the university partnership may only be used as part of the user's duties as an employee or student of the university partnership or for educational purposes. The user must abide by all licensing agreements for software entered into by the university partnership with other parties, noting that the right to use any such software outside the university partnership will cease when an individual leaves the institution. Any software on a privately owned computer that has been licensed under a university partnership agreement must then be removed from it, as well as any university partnership owned data, such as documents and spread sheets. When a computer ceases to be owned by the university partnership all data and software must be removed from it. The user must comply with all relevant legislation and legal precedent including the provisions of the following acts of parliament, or any re-enactment thereof:

- Copyright, design and patents act 1988
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/Ukpga_19880048_en_1.htm
- Malicious communications act 1988
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/Ukpga_19880027_en_1.htm
- Computers misuse act 1990
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1990/Ukpga_19900018_en_1.htm

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- Criminal justice and public order act 1994
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1994/Ukpga_19940033_en_1.htm
- Trade marks act 1994
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1994/Ukpga_19940026_en_1.htm
- Data protection act 2018
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/Ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted
- Human rights act 1998
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/Ukpga_19980042_en_1.htm
- Regulation of investigatory powers act 2000
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/Ukpga_20000023_en_1.htm
- Telecommunications (lawful business practice)(interception of communications)regulations 20000
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/si/si2000/ukpga_20002699.htm
- Freedom of information act Scotland 2002
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2002/13/contents
- Communications act 2003
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/ukpga_20030021_en_1
- Equality Act 2010
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents

See below for a summary of the main points.

Copyright, designs and patent act 1988

This act, together with a number of statutory instruments that have amended and extended it, controls copyright law. It makes it an offence to copy all, or a substantial part, which can be a quite small portion, of a copyright work. There are, however, certain limited user permissions, such as fair dealing, which means under certain circumstances permission is not needed to copy small amounts for non-commercial research or private study. The act also provides for moral rights, whereby authors can sue if their name is not included in work they wrote, or if the work has been amended in such a way as to impugn their reputation. Copyright covers material in print and electronic form, and includes words, images, sound and moving images, TV broadcasts and many other media.

Malicious Communications Act 1988

Under this Act it is an offence to send an indecent, offensive, or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person. Additionally, under the Telecommunications Act 1984 it is a similar offence to send a telephone message, which is indecent, offensive, or threatening.

Computer Misuse Act 1990

This Act makes it an offence:

- to erase or amend data or programs without authority;
- to obtain unauthorised access to a computer;

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- to "eavesdrop" on a computer;
- to make unauthorised use of computer time or facilities;
- maliciously to corrupt or erase data or programs;
- to deny access to authorised users.

Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994

This defines a criminal offence of intentional harassment, which covers all forms of harassment, including sexual. A person is guilty of an offence if, with intent to cause a person harassment, alarm or distress, they: -

- use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour; or
- Display any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting, thereby causing that or another person harassment, alarm or distress.

Trade Marks Act 1994

This Act provides protection for Registered Trade Marks, which can be any symbol (words or images) or even shapes of objects that are associated with a particular set of goods or services. Anyone who uses a Registered Trade Mark without permission can expose themselves to litigation. This can also arise from the use of a Mark that is confusingly similar to an existing Mark.

Data Protection Act 2018

UHI has a comprehensive Data Protection Policy

The policy applies to all staff and students of UHI. Any breach of the Data Protection Act 2018 or UHI Data Protection Policy is considered to be an offence and in that event, UHI disciplinary procedures will apply. As a matter of good practice, other agencies and individuals working with UHI, and who have access to personal information, will be expected to have read and comply with this policy.

Human Rights Act 1998

This act does not set out to deal with any particular mischief or address specifically any discrete subject area within the law. It is a type of higher law, affecting all other laws. In the context of UHI, important human rights to be aware of include:

- the right to a fair trial;
- the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence;
- freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
- freedom of expression;
- freedom of assembly;
- prohibition of discrimination;
- the right to education.

These rights are not absolute. UHI, together with all users of its LIS services, is obliged to respect these rights and freedoms, balancing them against those rights, duties and obligations which arise from other relevant legislation.

ITEM 03h

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

The Act states that it is an offence for any person to intentionally and without lawful authority intercept any communication. Monitoring or keeping a record of any form of electronic (including telephone) communications is permitted, in order to:

- Establish the facts;
- Ascertain compliance with regulatory or self-regulatory practices or procedures;
- Demonstrate standards, which are or ought to be achieved by persons using the system;
- Investigate or detect unauthorised use of the communications system;
- Prevent or detect crime or in the interests of national security;
- Ensure the effective operation of the system.

Monitoring but not recording is also permissible in order to:

- Ascertain whether the communication is business or personal;
- Protect or support help line staff.

UHI reserves the right to monitor e-mail, telephone, and any other communications in line with its rights under this act. The Lawful Business Practice Regulations allow exceptions to the basic principle of non-interception as stated in the RIPA, and allow interception without consent in certain instances.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Act, intended to increase openness and transparency, obliges public bodies, including Further / Higher Education Institutions, to disclose a wide range of information, both proactively and in response to requests from the public. The types of information that may be found and released are wide-ranging, for example minutes recorded at a board meeting of the institution or documentation relating to important resolutions passed. Retrieval of such a range of information places a considerable burden on an institution subject to such an information request. In addition to setting a new standard of how such bodies disseminate information relating to internal affairs, the Act sets time limits by which the information requested must be made available, and confers clearly stated rights on the public, regarding such information retrieval. UHI has its own Freedom of Information policy.

Communications Act 2003

This act makes it illegal to dishonestly obtain electronic communication services, such as email and the World Wide Web.

Equality Act 2010

The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises the current legislation to provide Britain with a new discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged are:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970;
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- the Race Relations Act 1976;

ITEM 03h

- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003;
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003;
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006;
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2;
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.

Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

UHI has a statutory duty, under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, termed “PREVENT”. The purpose of this duty is to aid the process of preventing people being drawn into terrorism.

You must not create, download, store or transmit unlawful material, or material that is indecent, offensive, defamatory, threatening, discriminatory or extremist. UHI reserves the right to block or monitor access to such material.

SECTION 5

Discipline

Staff or students who break this acceptable use policy will find themselves subject to the university partnership’s disciplinary procedures. Individuals may also be subject to criminal proceedings. The university partnership reserves its right to take legal action against individuals who cause it to become involved in legal proceedings as a result of their violation of licensing agreements and / or other contraventions of this policy.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Subject/Title:	Financial Recovery Plan – Update
Author: [Name and Job title]	Professor Chris O'Neil, Principal & Chief Executive
Meeting:	Board of Management Committee
Meeting Date:	01 December 20
Date Paper prepared:	25 November 2020
Brief Summary of the paper:	To provide the Board of Management with an update on the FRP and request for approval of conclusion of FRP.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion and Approval of Conclusion of FRP
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	
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:
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	

Item 04

Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]	Confidential		
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes/No]	No		
*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)	X
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of <u>any person or organisation</u> (S33)	X	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

Board of Management Committee

Subject/Title:	Budget Monitoring 30 November 20
Author: [Name and Job title]	Roderick M Ferrier, Director of Finance (Shared)
Meeting:	Board of Management
Meeting Date:	01 December 20
Date Paper prepared:	26 November 20
Brief Summary of the paper:	To provide the Board of Management with financial monitoring for the four months ended 30 November 20
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Consideration and discussion
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	
Resource implications:	Yes If yes, please specify: Must ensure funds are fully utilised in year and on budget.
Risk implications:	Yes If yes, please specify: Operational: to support the institution in the delivery of its operational objectives. Organisational: if funds not utilised or overspend could lead to reduction in future years allocations
Equality and Diversity implications:	No If yes, please specify:
Consultation: [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]	No		
*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)	x	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

That members note the terms of the report.

Purpose of Report

This report is to provide members with information on revenue income and expenditure as compared to budget; and to consider the Estimated Outturn position for the year ended 31 July 21.

Current Position

The current outturn projections show a cash surplus position at 31 July 21 of over £909,000. Once the loan capital element of the Unitary Charge is paid, this will bring this down to nearer £159,000 surplus cash position. I consider this a satisfactory position, and this is especially so when the following areas have the projected deficits as follows:

Research	(68,193)
Nursery	(195,509)
Refectory	(350,466)

For the College to sustain these levels of deficit in 2020-21 would be a good achievement. Having said this, I am probably being cautious in terms of Nursery Income which is likely to be better than I am projecting, and furlough funding for Refectory staff will be higher than I am predicting. Thus, I expect both these positions to improve as compared to what I am projecting, but I am erring on the cautious side at present.

The Variance column relates to the difference between outturns, not the difference between outturn and budget.

The following notes address the various headings of income and expenditure:-

1. I top-sliced the FE Main Teaching Grant too much in the budget exercise and this is likely to see income exceeding budget by £73,198.
2. The funding from the Scottish Funding Council was £107,551, but this has been top-sliced by £45,000 to fund IT delivery.
3. It is estimated that there will be 50 students above the budgeted number of 1,491 FTE. This would equate in RAM terms to roughly $\text{£3,000} \times 50 = \text{£150,000}$ above budget.
4. This relates to Knowledge Transfer funding and University Innovation funding. It is anticipated to be on budget.
5. FE fees are expected to be on budget.
6. Full-time HE fees have been run; and Part-time fees are in progress of being run. Given the RAM nos above, it is expected that an additional $\text{£1,600} \times 50 \text{ students} = \text{£80,000}$ will be achieved. It depends on whether this increase is mostly degree or HNs. I have not yet disclosed this expected higher fees within the Estimated Outturn, as on looking at last year's fees they were a bit less than 2020-21 budget. Perhaps the budget was set too high.
7. Overseas fees have mostly been run and are likely to be under budget.
8. Europe funding relates to some Research Income and excess 2019-20 Credit income. The latter is likely to be clawed back as overall the partnership credit target was not achieved.
9. PHD funding does not come in regularly

10. Other Grants mostly relate to Research and some of this has been carry forward from 2019-20
11. Catering income is expected to be minimal and I will recognise income only when generated.
12. It is anticipated that Modern Apprenticeship income will be delivered. The estimated outturn may err on the cautious side, but it depends on any tail-off.
13. It is anticipated that Foundation Apprenticeship income will be delivered
14. It is anticipated that Graduate Apprenticeship income may be light short of budget
15. Nursery Income may be projected on the cautious side given it is being kept till June/July.
16. HC Pre-School funding - see note 15
17. FWDF income is likely to be higher than budget
18. Short Course income – this is unlikely to achieve budget
19. Rent income budget was reduced to £0
20. Salon income is likely to be affected by Covid 19
21. LIS income is received from UHI, and the cost element included in LIS costs
22. Other income is likely to be ahead of budget at the year-end, although at present I have simply included it as being on budget.
23. Furlough income was unbudgeted and with the extension of the scheme by the Government, then this unbudgeted income will likely rise.
24. Staff Costs projections include 2% pay rise. I have included Pension Strain Costs as an additional cost of up to £100,000. This could be phased over the years, but I am considering dealing with it as a one-off cost.
25. Energy costs - based on last year's outturn, the projected outturn has been increased
26. Based on last year's outturn, the projected outturn has been increased
27. Contract Cleaning costs were well underspent last year due to Covid 19. It is anticipated that the outturn will be better than budget in 2020-21
28. An on-going review of insurance costs will be taking place
29. This relates to supercharges re the Unitary Charge
30. Based on last year's outturn, I would be surprised if outturn did not better budget
31. I would expect food costs will be significantly down due to the Refectory and Shop only operating at minimal delivery
32. This is an area that I think has been under-budgeted in terms of Student Accommodation and SDS costs. I think the information was given to Finance, but perhaps budget finalisation meant this has been missed. In my view outturn will be higher than budget.
33. Last year's outturn is higher due to costs for laptops. If there are monies, then further funding will be made available in 2020-21. Estimated Outturn near enough = budget at present
34. Outturn is likely to better budget
35. Outturn is likely to better budget
36. Outturn is likely to better budget
37. Outturn is likely to better budget
38. In 2019-20 debt management improved which meant a credit. I am reinstating this to be more in line with trend.
39. Outturn is likely to better budget
40. This relates to the interest element of the Unitary Charge

Summary and looking forward

This year is likely to be better than budget and on current projection will deliver a net cash surplus. Given the last nine months, this is a good development, and I commend the

Principal and the Senior Management Team for delivering so quickly on the Finance Recovery Plan. I have recommended that the current Plan be viewed as being delivered. There are still areas of College business that need further review and action, but rather than repeat these endlessly I believe more time is given over to thinking, planning and doing, rather than reporting repeatedly the same information to endless committees.

Risk Upsides

- Probably been cautious on some costs
- FWDF income is likely to be better than outturn
- Furlough monies likely to be higher than outturn
- Pension Strain could be phased if appropriate. I have included as a one-off hit.

Risks Downside

- Research has to be reviewed in more detail

Assuming the staff costs can be kept in check then this year should be fine in terms of financial performance.

However, the message being picked up from the Scottish Funding Council is that with public finances the way they are and being completely smashed by Covid 19, there will be further pressure on funding in coming years. Therefore, efforts to get more efficiencies from a more efficient UHI partnership are not going to go away, and in fact are becoming more urgent.

INVERNESS COLLEGE

PERIOD ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 20

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	To Date 30-Nov-20 £	Committee Budget 31-Jul-21 £	Estimated Outturn 31-Oct-20 £	Estimated Outturn 30-Nov-20 £	Variance £	Actual 31-Jul-20 £
Income						
Scottish Funding Council Grants	3,234,161	9,879,636	9,952,834	9,952,834	0	9,643,514
UHI	1,736,257	4,898,398	5,063,169	5,063,169	0	5,494,221
Tuition Fees	2,860,011	3,154,664	3,207,512	3,075,513	(132,000)	2,982,860
Other Grants	402,747	846,049	891,864	869,184	(22,680)	483,079
Refectory and Training Restaurant	25,347	373,259	16,799	25,347	8,549	552,594
SDS	68,626	1,319,408	1,324,298	1,300,814	(23,484)	1,527,170
Commercial	114,988	546,372	522,445	535,000	12,555	770,922
Miscellaneous	281,953	715,360	742,240	734,733	(7,507)	728,864
Unitary Charge	1,605,075	4,837,824	4,837,824	4,837,824	0	4,751,307
	10,329,166	26,570,969	26,558,985	26,394,418	(164,567)	26,934,531
Expenditure						
Staff Costs	5,307,994	17,223,000	16,422,400	16,551,452	129,052	17,480,487
Premises	540,072	1,914,553	1,932,199	1,922,199	(10,000)	1,529,700
Other Operating Costs	1,848,090	7,631,771	7,282,178	7,011,330	(270,848)	7,175,113
	7,696,156	26,769,324	25,636,776	25,484,981	(151,796)	26,185,300
Cash prior to loan capital repayment	2,633,010	(198,355)	922,208	909,437	(12,771)	749,231
Loan Capital	244,271	750,644	750,644	750,644	0	685,520
Cash after Loan Capital Repaid	2,388,739	(948,999)	171,564	158,793	(12,771)	63,711
Deferred Grant Release	0	600,000	600,000	500,000	(100,000)	451,883
Depreciation	0	(1,536,000)	(1,536,000)	(1,436,000)	100,000	(1,393,595)
	0	(936,000)	(936,000)	(936,000)	0	(941,712)
Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Deficit)/Surplus	2,388,739	(1,884,999)	(764,436)	(777,207)	(12,771)	(878,002)

INVERNESS COLLEGE

PERIOD ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 20

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Income Details	Note	To Date 30-Nov-20 £	Committee Budget 31-Jul-21 £	Estimated Outturn 31-Oct-20 £	Estimated Outturn 30-Nov-20 £	Variance £	Actual 31-Jul-20 £
SFC Grants							
Recurrent Grant	1	3,240,000	9,817,085	9,890,283	9,890,283	0	9,580,402
Infrastructure and Estates	2	(5,839)	62,551	62,551	62,551	0	45,839
Other Grants		0	0	0	0	0	17,273
		3,234,161	9,879,636	9,952,834	9,952,834	0	9,643,514
UHI							
Ram/MicroRam	3	1,477,075	4,563,921	4,713,921	4,713,921	0	4,308,533
Other Funding		201,621	217,258	217,258	217,258	0	1,067,047
Research - KT and UIF	4	33,700	108,129	108,129	108,129	0	108,129
UHI Income		23,861	9,090	23,861	23,861	0	10,512
		1,736,257	4,898,398	5,063,169	5,063,169	0	5,494,221
Tuition Fees							
FE	5	21,290	81,454	54,303	54,303	0	113,792
HE	6	2,763,353	2,905,126	2,985,126	2,905,126	(80,000)	2,766,120
Overseas Fees FE		0	5,914	5,914	5,914	0	36,647
Overseas Fees HE	7	75,368	147,000	147,000	95,000	(52,000)	55,170
Evening and Vocational		0	15,120	15,120	15,120	0	3,416
Student Residential Fees		0	50	50	50	0	7,717
		2,860,011	3,154,664	3,207,512	3,075,513	(132,000)	2,982,860
Other Grant Funding							
EU Funding	8	40,453	0	40,453	17,773	(22,680)	286,439
Postgraduate (PHD) Funding	9	0	171,450	171,450	171,450	0	0
Other Grants	10	362,294	674,599	679,961	679,961	0	196,640
		402,747	846,049	891,864	869,184	(22,680)	483,079
Refectory and Training Restaurant							
Catering Income		25,347	306,832	16,799	25,347	8,549	460,950
Shop/Training Restaurant		0	65,539	0	0	0	89,714
Vending Machine		0	888	0	0	0	1,930
	11	25,347	373,259	16,799	25,347	8,549	552,594
SDS and Similar							
Modern Apprenticeships	12	252,601	901,814	901,814	901,814	0	911,624
Foundation Apprentices	13	(87,967)	247,500	247,500	247,500	0	253,780
Graduate Apprenticeships	14	(61,754)	170,094	170,094	150,000	(20,094)	132,570
CITB		(34,253)	0	0	0	0	224,226
Training For Work		0	0	0	0	0	2,360
Work Based Assessment Fees		0	0	4,890	1,500	(3,390)	2,610
Individual Learning Accounts		0	0	0	0	0	0
		68,626	1,319,408	1,324,298	1,300,814	(23,484)	1,527,170
Commercial							
Nursery Fees	15	54,399	48,750	54,247	100,000	45,753	154,677
HC Pre-School Funding	16	33,033	56,250	32,188	50,000	17,812	70,012
FWDF Income	17	0	264,750	264,750	300,000	35,250	423,861
Research		0	5,362	0	0	0	0
Consultancy		0	0	0	0	0	0
Short Course Income	18	27,557	158,254	158,254	80,000	(78,254)	123,820
Commercial		0	13,006	13,006	5,000	(8,006)	(1,448)
		114,988	546,372	522,445	535,000	12,555	770,922
Unitary Charge - funding		1,605,075	4,837,824	4,837,824	4,837,824	0	4,751,307
Miscellaneous		281,953	715,360	742,240	734,733	(7,507)	728,864
Deferred Grant Release		0	600,000	600,000	500,000	(100,000)	451,883
		8,724,091	22,333,145	22,321,161	22,056,594	(264,567)	22,635,107

INVERNESS COLLEGE

PERIOD ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 20

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

		To Date 30-Nov-20 £	Committee Budget 31-Jul-21 £	Estimated Outturn 31-Oct-20 £	Estimated Outturn 30-Nov-20 £	Variance £	Actual 31-Jul-20 £
Micellaneous							
Hire of Accommodation	19	1,120	0	560	1,120	560	10,372
Childcare Voucher Payroll		0	0	0	0	0	0
Endowments and Donations		0	0	0	0	0	0
Photocopying Charges		0	1,784	1,784	1,784	0	8,132
Sale of Materials		1,767	8,927	8,927	4,000	(4,927)	2,237
Sale of Equipment		451	3,766	3,766	3,766	0	0
Hire of Equipment		125	800	800	800	0	0
Income from Vehicles		0	514	514	514	0	0
Telephone Income		0	1	1	1	0	0
Salon Income	20	762	23,025	23,025	10,000	(13,025)	26,663
Exam Fee Income		0	11,179	4,426	4,426	0	1,811
Deposits		(655)	6,114	6,114	6,114	0	6,851
External Examiner Fees		0	0	0	0	0	206
LIS Income	21	76,561	404,582	404,582	404,582	0	0
Other Income	22	150,755	243,703	243,703	243,703	0	446,119
Foundation Support		7,615	0	0	0	0	38,944
Bank Interest		378	10,100	10,100	10,100	0	9,890
Library Charges		116	865	865	865	0	731
Discount Recived		0	0	0	0	0	393
Donations		0	0	0	0	0	(62)
Covid 19 Furlough Monies	23	42,957	0	33,073	42,957	9,885	176,577
Support for Learners		0	0	0	0	0	0
		281,953	715,360	742,240	734,733	(7,507)	728,864

INVERNESS COLLEGE

PERIOD ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 20

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Expenditure Details						
	To Date	Committee	Estimated	Estimated	Variance	Actual
	30-Nov-20	Budget	Outturn	Outturn		31-Jul-20
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs						
To Split Out	4,705,574	14,608,705	14,277,454	14,368,280	90,826	14,608,705
Fixed Term Contracts	68,298	658,824	260,000	278,585	18,585	658,824
Teaching	0	0	0	0	0	0
Teaching Support	0	0	0	0	0	0
Premises	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indirect Costs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hospitality	124,197	363,319	373,836	374,456	619	363,319
Early Learning Centre	116,320	365,086	361,630	340,968	(20,661)	365,086
Research	244,688	688,268	725,087	719,610	(5,477)	688,268
Furlough - Covid 19	0	0	0	0	0	0
	5,259,077	16,684,202	15,998,007	16,081,899	83,892	16,684,202
Agency and External	500	23,974	23,974	23,974	0	49,710
Pension and Strain	12,842	135,660	135,660	135,660	0	344,530
Other Staff and Travel	47,750	157,631	158,121	159,921	1,800	146,732
Redundancies	(22,381)	0	7,044	107,044	100,000	167,115
Staff Training	558	71,549	71,141	17,953	(53,188)	58,673
Other	9,648	149,984	28,452	25,000	(3,452)	29,525
	5,307,994	17,223,000	16,422,400	16,551,452	129,052	17,480,487
	0	0	0	0	0	1,506,714
24	5,307,994	17,223,000	16,422,400	16,551,452	129,052	18,987,201
Premises:						
Maintenance and Repairs	10,400	78,966	78,966	78,966	0	53,020
Fixtures and Fittings	6,007	4,932	4,932	4,932	0	14,960
Energy Costs	25 93,175	430,868	460,000	460,000	0	445,653
Rents	8,325	64,037	64,037	64,037	0	48,911
Rates and Water	26 12,696	59,762	63,000	63,000	0	62,553
Cleaning and Domestic	27 63,167	289,259	261,570	261,570	0	192,546
Insurance	28 37,660	108,257	108,457	108,457	0	141,354
Premises Other Costs	43,912	97,269	110,033	100,033	(10,000)	86,046
Wider Groundwork Agreement	0	0	0	0	0	0
HIE Maintenance Charges	48,002	115,200	115,200	115,200	0	114,358
	323,344	1,248,550	1,266,196	1,256,196	(10,000)	1,159,402
Unitary Supercharges	29 216,727	666,003	666,003	666,003	0	370,298
	540,072	1,914,553	1,932,199	1,922,199	(10,000)	1,529,700
Operating Costs						
Equipment/Materials	30 105,752	848,356	822,649	574,100	(248,549)	467,870
Refectory and Food supplies	31 17,869	210,621	45,000	45,000	0	275,569
Other Student Costs	32 54,371	212,710	279,746	399,987	120,241	383,036
Telephones & Postages	8,171	63,265	62,407	62,407	0	28,991
IT Costs	33 100,709	280,349	281,349	280,564	(785)	365,995
LIS Costs	76,561	404,583	404,583	404,583	0	362,450
Transport Costs	34 10,429	168,421	124,301	59,301	(65,000)	91,947
Print, Photocopying and Stationery	10,347	65,387	63,967	45,960	(18,007)	59,663
Consultancy and Legal	15,977	184,411	184,411	184,411	0	376,124
Financial Services	34,668	186,692	185,212	185,212	0	149,570
Other Services	0	1,324	1,324	1,324	0	2,685
Exam and Registration	35 10,984	376,494	350,000	350,000	0	293,034
Student Awards	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	(644)	0	0	0	0	322
Board of Management	0	509	509	509	0	1,023
Advertising and Marketing	36 240	80,473	71,400	51,400	(20,000)	46,383
Hospitality	37 3,147	69,672	61,000	21,000	(40,000)	48,748
Bad Debts	38 0	40,000	40,000	40,000	0	(125,521)
HISA Costs	16,593	50,759	39,759	39,759	0	88,949
VAT	39 421,866	1,449,843	1,322,900	1,322,900	0	1,255,948
Other Bank and Loan Interest	5,012	0	3,759	5,012	1,253	10,229
Unitary Charge Interest	40 956,038	2,937,901	2,937,901	2,937,901	0	2,992,099
RDEL	1,848,090	7,631,771	7,282,178	7,011,330	(270,848)	7,175,113
Interest on Pension Liability	0	137,000	137,000	137,000	0	236,000
Actuarial Loss	0	0	0	0	0	5,711,286
	1,848,090	7,768,771	7,419,178	7,148,330	(270,848)	13,122,399
Central Costs						
Depreciation	0	1,536,000	1,536,000	1,436,000	(100,000)	1,393,595
Revaluation Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	1,536,000	1,536,000	1,436,000	(100,000)	1,393,595
	7,696,156	28,305,324	27,172,776	26,920,981	(251,796)	27,578,896
Unitary Charge costs						
Loan Interest	956,038	2,937,901				2,992,099
Loan Capital	244,271	750,644				685,520
	1,200,308	3,688,545				3,677,619
Super Charges	216,727	666,003				370,298
	1,417,036	4,354,548				4,047,917

Board of Management

Subject/Title:	COVID-19 and Planning for 2021/22
Author: [Name and Job title]	Ken Russell, Depute Principal Academic - Development (DPAD) & Roddy Henry, Depute Principal – Planning and Student Experience
Meeting:	Board of Management
Meeting Date:	1 st December 2020
Date Paper prepared:	29 th November 2020
Brief Summary of the paper:	This paper has been produced to provide an update on COVID-19 infrastructure related activity since the October Board of Management Meeting and to explore some of the pertinent factors and knock-on impacts affecting planning for AY 21/22
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: 1) compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change	Key areas are compliance with Government advice and risk management To embed or reflect our values and commitments in all our work and through our processes, procedures and arrangements

Resource implications:	<p>Yes / No</p> <p>If yes, please specify:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) additional expenditure on alcohol-based hand gels and wipes as well as additional PPE 2) potential expenditure on deep cleaning of any affected areas 3) additional costs of delivering classes due to conformance with 2-metre physical distancing
Risk implications:	<p>Yes / No</p> <p>If yes, please specify:</p> <p>Operational: potential further physical closure of College to prevent spread of virus; impact will depend on timing and duration of any closure along with progress made with delivering practical work</p> <p>Organisational: Stress on staff to continue to deliver in prolonged exceptional circumstances</p> <p>Reputational: failure to comply with SG guidance and our own protocols</p>
Equality and Diversity implications:	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>If yes, please specify:</p> <p>Some learners may be more affected than others and we have taken every step we can within existing resources to address issues such as digital poverty</p>
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	<p>Unions: EIS FELA, UNITE and GMB all actively involved in COVID-19 Transition Management Team.</p> <p>HISA are also represented on the team.</p> <p>Regular engagement with UHI Crisis Management Group (2x weekly), Extended Health and Safety Practitioner's Forum (weekly)</p> <p>SFC, Colleges Scotland, Richard Lochhead, Universities Scotland, College Development Network etc regularly provide input and seek responses on specific issues. Directors of Curriculum, Student Experience, External Relations and Research and Innovation. Curriculum teams (largely Heads and Deputes).</p>

Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]			
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes/No]			
*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

Executive Summary

This report is designed to inform the Board of Management on how we have and continue to respond to the COVID-19 virus and consider how our safety measures, in line with Scottish Government requirements, impact on delivery for the AYs 20/21 and 21/22. We have sought to be vigilant in seeking out guidance and best practices in order to keep our staff, students, and contractors safe. We are all in this together and continue to drive behavioural change to mitigate risks. This is a good point to take stock, despite the levels of uncertainty, as:

- a) we have recently had feedback on the Early Student Experience Survey and withdrawals information
- b) we are finalising (all other things being equal) our timetables for semester 2 of AY 20/21
- c) we are reviewing our latest version of the Curriculum Plan for AY 21/22
- d) some of the administrative impacts of EU withdrawal are becoming clearer in terms of how we will be expected to oversee EU, EEA and Swiss students as we move forward

INTRODUCTION

This paper is presented in two main parts: A) an overview of arrangements related to COVID-19 for the current academic year, and B) a consideration of the impact of COVID-19 on delivery and students in AY 2021/22.

A) OVERVIEW OF CURRENT COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS

This part of the report is composed of the following subsections:

- 1. Dealing with positive COVID-19 cases – “The Gold Team”**
- 2. Capacity challenges**
- 3. Schools related delivery**
- 4. Prospects for Semester 2 AY 20/21**
- 5. Supervised experiential Learning Activity conducted outwith the Buildings**
- 6. Placement Activity**
- 7. Staff Wellbeing**
- 8. COVID-19 Testing arrangements**

1. Dealing with positive COVID-19 cases – “The Gold Team”

To date we have only had one case of COVID-19 where the Health Protection Team (HPT) requested Trace and Protect support from ICUHI. In this instance there was no transmission within the college and those identified - 6 other students and two members of staff were required to self-isolate. The student has recovered and none of the others developed symptoms. We have had one other confirmed student case however the HPT did not follow this up with the College due to the elapsed time between the date the student was last in College and receiving a positive test. Separately, we had a further reported case, but this was not confirmed by HPT.

We have set up an Incident Management Team (known as the Gold Team) and we have had two practice runs at working our way through the action plan and these have operated smoothly, though some minor refinements have been made. Both these exercises involved potential cases but that subsequently required no further significant action other than a rigorous clean of the demarcated potentially affected area of the college. In both cases delivery was recommenced with 72 elapsed hours.

2. Capacity challenges

On campus we have been operating at a much-reduced capacity due to the need to maintain 2m physical separation which is generally regarded as the first line of defence in combatting the virus. It should be noted that in the Hair and Beauty areas of the curriculum we have been able to operate a “1m plus” regime as this was approved by the professional body (HABIA) and the UK Government and also adopted in Scotland. The delivery constraints have been most problematic in specialist workshop areas and, in many cases, we are operating at 25%-30% of the normal rated capacity and

this clearly impacts on staffing costs. In some cases, we have been able to split groups where part of a cohort is in the workshop and part will be engaged in directed study and in completing electronic portfolios. We have expanded our ESOL provision through peripatetic staff simultaneously supervising exercises for different groups of students in separate rooms. For supported Education, we have been able to draw on designated support workers, classroom assistants and the lecturing team to continue to provide as near a normal service as possible.

The early emphasis was on clearing those students with deferred work from AY 19-20 and this has been progressing steadily. There are some areas such as construction where there was a more extensive backlog, and this is unlikely to be cleared before the end of January at the earliest. We have been working with the Engineering Technology and Construction teams to find ways of increasing capacity and we have had some success in being able to increase capacity by, say, an extra 2 students. This can mean the difference between having to run a class twice instead of 3 times.

3. Schools related delivery

We have had considerable dialogue with Highland Council related to our capacity, risk assessments (theirs and ours), nature of the demand and logistics. We were able to accept our first groups of school pupils on to campus on Friday 6th November and this has been gradually ramping up over the subsequent 3 weeks. Due to the need to clear the deferred students and delayed new starts in FE and Modern Apprenticeships, we have not been able to satisfy the normal pattern of demand for schools provision in Construction or Engineering and we have sought to provide some non-campus based alternatives. It is with some regret that we find ourselves in this position however all parties are being realistic about what can be delivered. We continue to support some off-campus delivery at Nairn Academy and Kingussie High School.

4. Prospects for Semester 2 AY 20/21

Due to the ongoing nature of the pandemic we will be operating a similar regime for semester 2 as we have had in semester 1. This includes not being able to receive Erasmus students on exchange with us or indeed have any outward mobility either. Despite the potential availability of a vaccine in the medium term there are many observers of the education system who claim that we will still be operating in a restricted regime for semester 1 of AY 21/22. We are therefore examining ways in which we can increase our capacity in a safe manner. The approach being taken has involved: dialogue with Heads and Deputies to support them to work with their staff on more detailed scrutiny of learning activities resulting in the generation of ideas for change (room layout, sequence of jobs, balance of activities for specific student groups (time in the lab versus time on the computer), faster turnaround time due to enhanced staff/student ratio (including assessment and verification) etc. This then leads to the development of a revised risk assessment with appropriate mitigation and the development of a business case for COVID-19 related expenditure which can be offset by reduced staff costs. We are also supporting Heads and Deputies with additional Health and Safety training (IOSH Managing Safely course) to enhance the ability of curriculum teams to undertake

more of this activity themselves with advice and guidance from the H&S Manager. The delivery of the IOSH training commenced on 26th/27th November 2020.

5. Supervised experiential Learning Activity conducted outwith the Buildings

Prior to the confirmation that we were placed in Tier 1, we had taken the decision that there would be no off-campus experiential learning. The key reasons for this were highly limiting transport restrictions (e.g. the capacity of a 16-seater minibus was reduced to 4 and if one hired a 43-seater coach only 12 passengers could be carried). There was also considerable evidence that car-sharing was significant in spreading the virus. A further cause for concern was the potential for legitimate educational activities being reported by members of the public for exceeding normal allowable limits for groups meeting outside. It was decided that the easiest way to eliminate such risks was not to permit outdoor learning activities. We have challenged staff to find alternative ways to support learning – often through the capture of videos, that can be viewed on demand, to illustrate particular learning points. The students can then undertake individual practical work and write this up for assessment.

We have now invited curriculum teams to produce risk assessments for activities to be conducted outside of the building (within the wider Inverness Campus grounds and further afield). As these activities are mainly within Sports, Forestry and Construction the deputy heads for these areas have been consulted. It is important to note that the only aspect of offsite activity that has been permitted is in the realms of doctoral or contract research and these have been conducted successfully drawing on Scottish Government research guidance and our own risk assessments. The Business Solutions team have also produced a process for determining offsite assessor activity and this model has been drawn upon to inform the curriculum-based process for students.

6. Placement Activity

Separate guidance has now been produced to support the operation of semester 2 based placement activity. The priority has been to support placements that are required by Public, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies for a student's qualification to be accredited or recognised. Again, curriculum teams have been challenged through faculties and subject networks to identify suitable alternatives to physical placements that would still meet learning outcomes for the programme and deliver the opportunity to acquire the intended employability skills. The Depute Principal – Academic Development has been asked to review and where appropriate sign off on both FE and HE placement activity. A short life working group has also been commissioned to put forward proposals for a new Single Policy to support placement activity across the partnership.

7. Staff Wellbeing

Please note that student wellbeing is discussed elsewhere. A short life working group (Chaired by the Principal) has been instigated to address staff wellbeing. Many of the members of the COVID-

19 Transition Management Group are also on this SLWG. Terms of reference for this group will be considered at the December meeting of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group. The work plan will be informed by the recent IC Staff Survey and will draw on the HSE Management Standards.

8. COVID-19 Testing arrangements

The last couple of weeks have been quite frenetic in terms of setting up arrangements to offer voluntary tests to students and staff who wish to travel to another address over the Christmas break. We are pleased to report that after a lot of consideration and negotiation, we have been able to secure standard PCR testing options for our students and staff at either the DHSC facility in Car Park 3 on campus (drive in only) or at the Walk-In Centre at the Highland Council Offices at Glenurquhart Road. We were able to communicate this to students on Friday 27th November. Information for staff should have been circulated by the time of this meeting. We have also been able to extend the same facility to Inverness-based EO students and to medical students on placement in the Inverness area from the Universities of Aberdeen and St Andrews.

We have also registered as a satellite testing centre to support students in the City Heart residences who are unable to obtain a standard PCR test. We have a stock of test kits on hand should this need arise.

We hope to receive information from the Scottish Government during w/c 30th November regarding testing arrangements for students returning to (or indeed arriving at) Inverness College in January 21.

B) THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CURRICULUM DELIVERY AND STUDENTS IN 2020-21

The impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on our curriculum this year can be seen in three main indicators:

1. Reduced credit activity
2. Reduced student satisfaction overall
3. Increased Early Withdrawal rates for students on full-time FE programmes

1. Reduced Credit Activity

1.1 Delivery restrictions

We are about 2,000 credits behind where we should be at this time of year due to the restrictions on workshop capacity and the associated inability to enrol planned activity in construction and engineering. Most of this is Modern Apprenticeship (MA) activity.

If the current restrictions continue into/throughout Semester 2, and unless we find ways to increase capacity in construction and engineering workshops under the restrictions (work on this is underway), the college will not be able to deliver all of the planned FE credits by the end of the year.

It should be noted, again, for the avoidance of doubt that the forecast reduced credit activity is due to these restrictions rather than recruitment issues.

Construction and engineering workshop capacity is severely restricted, down to less than one-third normal capacity. In addition to this, a backlog of around 470 students who were unable to complete in 2019-20 due to the lockdown were enrolled in Semester 1 to complete. This further delayed the planned 2020-21 activity, most of which is contracted Modern Apprenticeship (MA) activity. In addition, several non-MA construction and engineering courses have had to be cancelled due to the restrictions on workshop capacity.

MA activity is an integral part of our FE activity, not separate to it, and accounts for about 20% of our credit claim. Therefore, the restrictions are having a significant impact on our ability to deliver planned credit activity in 2020-21. Although other colleges are operating under similar restrictions, we are disproportionately impacted due to the fact that about one-third of our FE credit activity is in construction and engineering.

1.2 Recruitment under COVID-19

Full-time FE activity other than MA activity (we enrol about 160 full-time MAs each year, the majority of MA enrolments are part-time) held up fairly well this year, despite concerns, and was in line with the established trend. More offers were made this year than last year as we did not hold any interviews (with a few exceptions) and fewer applicants withdrew from the application process. However, the flip-side was that more applicants did not respond to offers made and more students did not start (DNS) after accepting offers than in the previous two years: DNS numbers were up by 72 this year (5.4 percentage points), however we had 74 more offers accepted.

Recruitment targets for full-time FE are always set high as demand fluctuates between programmes year-on-year and initial planning is completed well before recruitment begins. Adjustments are then made on a course-by-course basis throughout the recruitment process. However, due to the FRP activity and to some extent the COVID-19 environment, targets were revised throughout the spring and early summer of 2020 – this is reflected in the targets recorded in the table below.

End of admissions cycle data for full-time FE Semester 1 starts (excluding MAs and continuing students):

YEAR	Course Target	Total Offer Accepted	Total DNS	DNS v Offer accepted	Total Enrolled Students	Enrolled v Offer accepted	Enrolled v Target
2017/18	1244	1189	294	24.7%	975	82.0%	78.4%
2018/19	1200	1183	188	15.9%	965	81.6%	80.4%
2019/20	1292	1188	217	18.3%	941	79.2%	72.8%
2020/21	1000	1262	299	23.7%	918	72.7%	91.8%

The result is that our performance (in terms of enrolment against target) looks much better this year, whereas in reality the recruitment pattern was much the same as in recent years and much as expected. Had we not had to postpone and then cancel four Semester 1 class groups in construction and engineering due to the workshop restrictions, we would have matched or very probably exceeded last year's recruitment for full-time Semester 1 FE programmes.

It is important to note that neither MAs nor continuing students (some hairdressing courses span two academic years) are included in the admissions cycle and are therefore not included in the table above. However, they do count towards our end of year full-time FE enrolment numbers.

1.2.1 The FE recruitment context

Questions have been asked about the relatively low number of enrolments relative to the number of applications received for full-time FE courses. It is important to be clear about certain aspects when referring to the admissions data, drawing conclusions and considering actions.

Firstly, as with all data sets, what lies behind the numbers needs to be understood. It is a mistake to conflate the number of applications with the number of applicants. The two are not the same as applicants can make up to three applications. The 'offers made' figure more closely resembles the number of applicants in the system at that point, although an applicant may still have more than one offer.

The other critical factor is the nature of applicants to full-time FE programmes. Applicants to our FE programmes come from a wide range of backgrounds and starting points, however the profile of applicants for full-time FE programmes is significantly different to the profile of applicants to traditional degree programmes, particularly degree programmes at traditional universities. Applicants to full-time FE programmes have generally not worked their way through school and achieved three or more passes at Higher with the aim of studying at university – many have had an unhappy relationship with study at school or elsewhere and/or have been out of any education for some time, many have challenging and often chaotic backgrounds and many have no clear idea of what they want to do next with their lives.

The acceptance of an offer for a full-time FE programme is not then always evidence of a commitment by the applicant to start the programme. Professionals who have worked in the sector for a number of years know this only too well. This understanding informs our target setting and our admissions practice. Only 65% of all students who start full-time FE programmes in Scotland ever complete their programmes successfully¹, and 25% leave before they get to the end of their programme. These statistics evidence the challenge and the context.

This context manifests itself in the admissions cycle most clearly in the number of applicants who accepted an offer and then did not start (DNS) the programme. We have a long-established system of contacting the 'DNS' applicants immediately when they do not turn up for the first day. We then go to any waiting lists as soon as possible to give others the opportunity to join the programme. We

¹ College Performance Indicators 2018-19, SFC 2019.

often get no response from DNS applicants, and when we do, we often find that the applicant has gone into some form of employment.

We review our admissions practice and cycle each year and have made a number of improvements over the years, particularly the ongoing communications with applicants once an offer is accepted to 'keep them warm'. An extensive review of the Early Student Journey was conducted as part of the recent College Improvement Project and one outcome of this work was the establishment of the Personal Development Advisor (PDA) role.

A key aim of the PDA role, implemented in 2019-20, was to reduce further the number of DNS occurrences on full-time FE programmes. The PDA will make personal contact with applicants to full-time FE programmes as soon as an offer is accepted in order to build a relationship, answer questions, make sure additional support is in place and support applications for funding. COVID-19 prevented this aspect of the role from being fully implemented over the summer of 2020, however we are focussed on it being fully implemented in 2021, despite the PDA capacity being reduced under the FRP: this reduction was not initially planned as part of the FRP.

The table below shows an expanded 'end of admissions cycle' data set for full-time FE Semester 1 starts (excluding MAs and continuing students) for the past four years. Some further explanation/definitions:

- **Total rejected:** the number of applications (not applicants) that did not meet the entry criteria. Applicants may have other applications that were progressed and/or they would have been guided to alternative opportunities.
- **Total offer not made:** offers are not made for four main reasons - the applicant has made more than one application and an offer is only made on one of them; the course applied for is full (an alternative offer may be made or the applicant placed on a waiting list); the course and the waiting list are full (an alternative offer may be made), or; the applicant did not attend interview. These numbers are occurrences of an offer not been made and do not represent the number of applicants.
- **Total waiting list:** applicants placed on a course waiting list as sufficient offers have already been made and accepted for that course. Waiting lists are referred to by admissions whenever an applicant withdraws from an offer, does not attend interview (applicants are always given a further opportunity to attend) or does not start a programme.

Expanded end of admissions cycle data for full-time FE Semester 1 starts (excluding MAs and continuing students):

Sum = Total Applications									
YEAR	Course Target	Total Applications/Applicants ²	Total Rejected	Total Offer Not Made	Total Offer Made	Total Waiting List	Total Offer Accepted	Total Did Not Start	Total Enrolled Students
2017/18	1244	2388 / 2079	183	633	1425	147	1189	294	975
2018/19	1200	2169 / 1868	109	571	1356	133	1183	188	965
2019/20	1292	2199 / 1892	154	575	1369	101	1188	217	941
2020/21	1000	2122 / 1779	131	393	1495	103	1262	299	918

The difference between the total offers made and the total offers accepted is the number of offers declined or not responded to.

We will continue to review the data and make further improvements and interventions.

2. Reduced student satisfaction overall

The results of the early Student Experience Survey (ESES), which was open for three weeks in October 2020, show a drop in student satisfaction overall, and a 12-point drop in overall student satisfaction for full-time FE and HE students. The response rate was also down this year at 36.8% (1127 of 3062), compared to 43.6% for 2019-20 and 51.32% for 2018-19.

The ESES is now a regional UHI survey with all Academic Partners participating. The overall UHI satisfaction rate mirrors our own, with a 9.4% drop in overall satisfaction across the UHI as a whole.

ESES overall satisfaction rates for Inverness College by level and mode of attendance:

	2018-19			2019-20			2020-21			1 year % trend
	% Satisfied	Raw Count (of Satisfied)	Raw Count (All Students)	% Satisfied	Raw Count (of Satisfied)	Raw Count (All Students)	% Satisfied	Raw Count (of Satisfied)	Raw Count (All Students)	
FE FT	96.4%	720	747	97.3%	613	630	85.6%	373	436	-11.7%
FE PT	97.5%	430	441	98.1%	403	411	88.8%	71	80	-9.3%
HE FT	92.6%	472	510	91.7%	485	529	79.7%	425	533	-12.0%
HE PT	94.7%	161	170	91.7%	88	96	88.5%	69	78	-3.2%

Satisfaction rates for specific programmes vary considerably, and it is clear from the data that student satisfaction on particular programmes – mainly those with a strong practical focus requiring

² Applicant numbers based on unique records in SITS (student records system)

specialist facilities to which access is restricted – have contributed to the overall decrease in satisfaction. There is also much positive feedback and an obvious understanding from many students that the college and its staff are doing whatever they can to deliver in a very challenging context.

Managers and teams are working through the detailed findings to ensure that issues are identified and addressed as far as is possible. We are also using the feedback to help plan for Semester 2 and for 2021-22.

3. Increased Early Withdrawal rates for students on full-time FE programmes

Early Withdrawal (EW) is a key performance indicator, particularly for full-time FE programmes, and is aligned with the census date for credit and HE funding, i.e.: if a student's last day of attendance is before the EW date the college cannot claim credits or HE FTE for that activity. We have made a concerted effort over several years to reduce the EW rate on full-time FE programmes particularly, and in the last two years the college has returned EW rates for full-time FE programmes that were among the best in the sector.

However, we are seeing an increase in EW this year on full-time FE programmes, which indicates a potential 10% EW rate, compared to 6.65% last year. Early analysis shows slight increases across a number of subject areas, and more marked increases in Beauty and Hairdressing courses, Computing and some of our full-time Higher and National 5 courses. Full-time HE course withdrawal rates look similar to last year currently.

While there is some correlation between programmes with increased EW rates and those with reduced satisfaction rates, there is no clear pattern of this. It seems likely that the remote mode of deliver is proving difficult for a number of students across FE programmes and this is having an impact on withdrawal rates overall. Discussions with senior managers across the college sector indicate similar patterns, although the balance of subjects and the approaches to campus access are influencing factors.

We are working hard to address the issues as much as we can, including looking at increasing access to the campus where possible.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Curriculum Planning for 2021-22

Planning for 2021-22 is now underway. Heads and Depute Heads of School are engaging with the latest Labour Market Information and other data from SDS to help ensure our offer responds to demand and to the impact of the COVID-19 environment: this impact is not consistent across regions or sectors, however it will almost certainly prompt a shift in patterns of employment.

The risk of a lost generation of youth through long-term unemployment has been recognised, in much the same way as it was during recent economic challenges. Society's use of digital technology

for work, and increasingly for aspects of our daily lives, has increased and in some respects has become a dependency. The flip side of this is that there is a renewed emphasis and focus on health and wellbeing and the importance of green spaces and our engagement with nature. Wider aspects of health and wellbeing have also come to the fore as the likelihood of further pandemics of this nature increases. This has prompted the focus on population health in Scotland and 'lifelong health and wellbeing'.

The zero-carbon agenda has emerged from the pandemic with renewed focus: already a flagship policy of the Scottish Government, the agenda is seen as fundamental to addressing fiscal challenges and the need for locality, as well as to address climate change. The focus on 'transformational infrastructure' and the promotion of active travel tie the green and health and wellbeing agendas together.

Alongside the nature of the curriculum offer, our attention is focused on the potential delivery scenarios we may face at the start of 2021-22. We are planning with two main scenarios in mind: a return to unrestricted access to campus facilities, and the continuation of current restrictions. This enables us to prepare for these eventualities and anything in between. We are also considering the lessons learned from the enforced move to remote learning across the curriculum in order to exploit the positive findings and provide a more flexible delivery pattern where it is appropriate and advantageous to do so. This should free-up campus space and support efficiencies as well as providing a more student-centred delivery pattern on some programmes.

One challenge to our 2021-22 delivery is the continuing impact of the backlog of construction and engineering MAs should the current restrictions continue much longer. This will likely mean a need to further postpone activity into 2021-22, placing continued pressure on workshop space. Therefore, curriculum planning in these areas is still fluid and will be refined as the situation develops, alongside efforts to alleviate the backlog.

CONCLUSIONS

Staff across all areas of Inverness College have worked extremely hard and utilised creativity and innovations in their practices to keep everyone safe and give students the best experience possible whilst operating under the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to seek improvements and learn from our experiences using relevant data as well as sharing best practices from elsewhere. We are utilising scenario planning to be prepared for the eventualities that we may face in AY21/22. It will undoubtedly be the case that we will be carrying a backlog of activity into AY21/22 that we will not have been able to clear in AY20/21 however will work to keep this to a minimum.

Board of Management

Subject/Title:	Principal's Update
Author: [Name and Job title]	Professor Chris O'Neil Principal and Chief Executive
Meeting:	Board of Management
Meeting Date:	01 December 2020
Date Paper prepared:	25 November 2020
Brief Summary of the paper:	This report provides the Board with an overview of new and continuing activity.
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	
Resource implications:	N/A
Risk implications:	N/A
Equality and Diversity implications:	N/A
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	N/A

ITEM 5

Status – [Confidential/Non confidential]	Confidential		
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in “open” business* [Yes/No]	No		
*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)	X
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (S33)	X	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

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[.asp](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/web/FILES/Public_Interest_Test.pdf) and http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/web/FILES/Public_Interest_Test.pdf

Subject/Title:	Ram Consultation
Author: [Name and Job title]	Sarah Burton Chair of Board of Management
Meeting:	Board of Management
Meeting Date:	06 October 2020
Date Paper prepared:	26 November 2020
Brief Summary of the paper:	Consultation on changes to the University's Resource Allocation Model (RAM)
Action requested: [Approval, recommendation, discussion, noting]	Discussion ahead of response deadline of 18 December 2020
Link to Strategy: Please highlight how the paper links to, or assists with:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance • partnership services • risk management • strategic plan • new opportunity/change 	
Resource implications:	N/A
Risk implications:	N/A
Equality and Diversity implications:	N/A
Consultation: [staff, students, UHI & Partners, External] and provide detail	N/A

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Committee	University Court
Subject	Academic Partner and University Senior Management Team Quarterly Status Updates
Action requested	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For information only
Brief summary of the paper	Update reports for period covering 01 June 2020 – 31 August 2020
Resource implications (If yes, please provide details)	No Click or tap here to enter text.
Risk implications (If yes, please provide details)	Yes Issues/ concerns captured in paper
Date paper prepared	16/09/2020
Date of committee meeting	23/09/2020
Author	University SMT and AP Principals
Link with strategy	Information sharing
Equality and diversity Does this activity/ proposal require an Equality Impact Assessment?	No If yes, please give details: Click or tap here to enter text.
Data Protection Does this activity/ proposal require a Data Protection Impact Assessment?	No If yes, please give details: Click or tap here to enter text.
Island communities Does this activity/ proposal have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities)?	No If yes, please give details: Click or tap here to enter text.
Status (e.g. confidential)	Non-confidential
Freedom of information	Open
Consultation	Described in paper

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

Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research	<input type="checkbox"/>	Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court	<input type="checkbox"/>
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other [please give further details] Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>

For how long must the paper be withheld? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

No reports provided by Argyll College UHI, SAMS UHI**Contents**

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Introduction from the Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor

I am pleased to provide court members this quarterly update on the portfolio activities of the university senior management team as well as institutional updates from our academic partners.

This quarter we have been focused primarily on preparing for our 2020/21 student intake. We have continued to hold twice-weekly Crisis Management Group meetings involving colleagues from across the partnership. As we restart the new academic year, our priority remains to provide a safe learning, research and working environment for all our students and staff, and it is vital that we also help to protect our communities.

Our strength and experience in delivering through blended learning means we are well placed to continue to help our students succeed now and in the future. Whilst our campuses may be quieter because of COVID-19 health and safety measures, I am pleased to report that we are open and delivery of our courses has started in earnest.

As well as the work to prepare for our students, we have also been pushing forward with change management activities to ensure that we are ready and able to meet all the challenges we face as a university partnership.

Alongside these activities, I have also been involved in the following meetings:

- Strategic Discussions with SRUC/HIE/UHI
- Update discussions with Karen Watt, SFC, both sectoral and one to one
- Meetings with Richard Lochhead MSP, sectoral and as a representative on a smaller SG Research Reference Group
- Weekly Scotland MillionPlus information sharing meetings
- Additional Universities Scotland Principals meetings
- EO Evaluation meetings and relation actions
- Wider Change Management Workstream Meetings and additional Partnership Council meetings
- Perth College UHI / EO dialogues
- SMO UHI Strategic dialogue
- General Optical Council Risk Based Review Meetings (to secure accreditation for the new BSc Optometry programme that has now begun)
- NHS Highland CEO Interview Panel Member (13 August 2020)

Crichton Lang

Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Chief Operating Officer and Secretary

Prepared by Fiona M Larg

Notable accomplishments

- Activities continue regarding the building of a Life Sciences Innovation Centre (LSIC) at Beechwood campus. Planning application submitted.
- Increased security on UHI Records, the web version of the student records system, SITS by adding multi-factor authentication for staff logins.
- Supported research to configure and deliver the new research ethics approval management system, Haplo, for undergraduate, postgraduate and staff research projects.
- Major upgrade of MyDay, the staff and student portal.
- Student Residences. Extra preparations in light of Covid-19 including signage and hand sanitation and staged, contactless arrivals. All tenants have been issued with a “community agreement” setting out guidelines and expectations.
- Occupancy projection for 2020/21 is 69% across our four locations. Applications for Fort William are 100%. Some applicants have requested later tenancy start dates due to online provision. Contracts reflect changes to legislation with 28-day notice period for Covid related termination. Work with Cushman & Wakefield to scrutinise and improve the service continues.
- The student records office has issued nearly 1,300 award certificates and around 3,000 transcripts, along with confirming another 1,600 SQA validated awards during the last quarter. Overall, awards for academic session 2019/20 appear to be in line with last year.
- Recruitment of Vice-Chancellor well underway with final interviews scheduled for 2nd October.

Collaboration with other academic partners

- Appointment of a Chair for Shetland UHI Ltd – the transition board.
- Engagement with employers to ensure the university is well-placed to assist businesses and individuals working to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Internal and external communications to support the recruitment campaign and to ensure key messages regarding Covid-19 were received.

Issues or concerns

- Large number of media enquiries resulting from the university’s previous involvement with Ballet West
- Closure of pre-registration shortened midwifery pilot programme following withdrawal of support from the Scottish Government generated a number of interactions with opposition politicians and the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Jane Freeman.

Vice-Principal Further Education

Prepared by John Kemp

Notable accomplishments

Prior to the summer break the Senior Management Curriculum Team (chaired at that time by Sue MacFarlane before I was in post) analysed the extent to which the FE curriculum could be delivered given the expected to be in place in August/September. This has helped the partnership offer almost all of its planned courses for the current academic year.

Significant events/ awards

I established and chair a group that is overseeing our work on addressing digital poverty. This group had established plans to increase the supply of laptops and other support to students and then to recharge these to student support budget. On 14th August SFC announced additional funding for digital poverty. The partnership group has agreed a common criteria for allocating laptops with these funds (circa 400), and other laptops we have purchased in advance. We are currently assessing whether we need to take further action in this area, including purchasing further stocks of laptops for students whose needs we cannot address from the current stock and January start students.

Collaboration with other academic partners

I have been working closely with academic partners in the three island local authority areas on the skills, entrepreneurship and talent attraction elements of the Islands Deal. The academic partners and other colleagues within the university have been supporting other strands of the deal. As part of the skills element I have had discussions with both Heriot Watt University and Robert Gordon University about their potential involvement in the workstream.

Issues or concerns

The partnership as a whole did not meet the SFC credit target for further education 2019-20. While this was certainly related to the covid 19 pandemic, the effect was not evenly spread across the partnership, with some partners exceeding the target. SFC will not reduce our funding for not meeting the core grant, but this will mean that we cannot draw down some additional European funding.

The uncertainty about recruitment in 2020-21 has been compounded by credit guidance issued by the SFC only weeks before the start of term which asked colleges to reduce the standard number of credits (40 hour blocks of learning) per full time student from 18 to 16 and to deprioritize school college provision within the senior phase. In the context of the region having to deliver an additional 2,000 credits without additional payment these elements of the guidance are potentially problematic. We are engaging with SFC on this issue.

With the chief officers of the other two regional strategic bodies I met SFC to discuss its review of coherent provision and sustainability in mid July at the meeting we discussed possible changes to the outcome agreement system – both for academic year 20-21 and future years. At time of writing we have not heard any more on this.

Vice-Principal Research

Prepared by Professor Neil Simco

Notable accomplishments

The University – primarily through SAMS UHI - has achieved a strong showing in the Shanghai world rankings in the field of oceanography. It is placed 1st in Scotland, 4th in the UK (ahead of Cambridge, UEA and Liverpool) and 44th in the world.

In knowledge exchange, Stephenie Pagulaya, Shetland College UHI, is a finalist in this year's Converge Challenge awards. Converge Challenge is a national competition for academic entrepreneurialism.

July saw the publication of a major research output led by Conchúr Ó Giollagáin and entitled 'The Gaelic Crisis in the Vernacular Community'. This is the most comprehensive study ever undertaken into the state of Gaelic in the Western Isles, and the study is currently the subject of considerable academic and political debate. The University's Islands Strategy was published in August, and part of this marks a commitment to increasing research activity in the islands. The University is currently in discussions with the Scottish Government in relation to funding to support this strategy.

Significant events/ awards

The University has received an uplift of some £918K from the SFC for 2020/21 to help mitigate the impact of COVID19. These funds will be used to support funded extensions for PhD students and staff costs affected by COVID, as well as to undertake in-year research projects exploring the impact of COVID in region. Detailed work has been completed to ensure that the funds are distributed to academic partners and to ensure that eligible PhD students are able to access these. In addition, the Institute of Health Research Innovation has been very active in progressing a number of funded projects aimed at deepening of our understanding of the impact of COVID and how this can be mitigated.

The Archaeology Institute has secured a major new international project relating to climate change and cultural heritage in Africa. This is illustrative of our growing international presence across our areas of research strength.

Collaboration with other academic partners

The University submitted a significant research proposal to the Strength in Places wave 2 UKRI competition, in the field of marine science, and in collaboration with the Universities of Stirling and Heriot Watt and industrial partners. Whilst the bid – in this intensely competitive field – was not successful, the feedback was very encouraging and we will look to resubmit in wave 3.

Issues or concerns

COVID19 has had an impact on preparations for REF2021 across the whole of the university sector in the UK and the date for submission has been put back to 31st March 2021. Within UHI we have decided to retain our existing timetable for preparation, with only minor adjustments, but some staff, especially case study authors are having to make adjustments in order to comply with the new time schedules.

The current SFC review promises to be potentially significant in regard to research and knowledge exchange, especially in regard to the prospect of research intensification within Scotland. Given the criticality of UHI's research and knowledge exchange to the economy in the Highlands and Islands, the framing of our response to the SFC review will be important.

Vice-Principal International and External Engagement

Prepared by Professor Stuart Gibb

Notable accomplishments

- Pilot' partnership project established between UHI and University of Akureyri (UNAK), Iceland to offer UHI's Business Administration (Executive) MBA to students at UNAK in 2020-21: Recruitment > double targets. Development of further partnership working with UNAK in other target curriculum areas, embedding learning from the 'pilot', to be explored.
- International Student Recruitment – Phase 2 Project ongoing (aim to develop a partnership-wide approach towards growing numbers of fee- paying students studying with the University; growing income and reducing reliance on SFC funding). Project also seeks '*to secure joint ownership and responsibility and to progress goals, in a managed, robust and transparent manner*' and promote culture change aligned with broader initiatives (e.g. Assembly Recommendations) in both the Internal environment (enhance clarity & promote coherence - working toward shared goals), and external environment (build confidence, competitiveness, credibility in the international).

Significant events/ awards

- 'OneHealth Breakthrough Partnership' involving UHI, NHS Highland, Scottish Water, HIE and James Hutton nominated for 2020 British Medical Journal Healthcare Award (ceremony / announcements October). Follows NHS Caithness General being first hospital in the world to secure accreditation by the Alliance for Water Stewardship and advancing NHS's social responsibility healthcare and the environment.

Collaboration with other academic partners

- Development of international collaborators and partnerships partners with EU and RoW organisations includes:
 - University of Akureyri pilot 'partnership' recruitment project - EO, PC
 - Council for At Risk Academics hosting– SAMS, EO
 - College Development network awards nomination – PC, UHI
 - Global Challenge Research Fund: Health, Polluted Water and Soils Network - NHC, UHI KE
 - Arctic Strategy: Including Uni. of the Arctic, FCO, UKRI, OIC engagement - SAMS, OC, EO
 - International scholarships (Chinese funded) – PC, NHC (+SAMS & NHC))
 - International Student Recruitment Project (see above) : contributions from most APs

Issues or concerns

- Failure to recognise, and to capitalise (student numbers and income) growing potential for international, online education on this through UHI's existing experience and curriculum proposition).
- Marketing to recruit fee paying students (focused on domestic recruitment)
- Removal (and subsequent re-assignment) of Continuous Improvement Team from the 'International Recruitment Project' in mid-term
- Aspirations and expectations around international student recruitment need to be balanced with, and in proportion to, the level of investment and resources available

Vice-Principal Tertiary

Prepared by Lydia Rohmer

Notable accomplishments

This period has been dominated by crisis management of the COVID pandemic. From 20 April to mid June 2020, VP Tertiary role also covered significant aspects of the VP FE role (due to extended sick leave). Key activities in this period included:

- Re-development of the Brand Ambassador and Visual Identity project streams of the Branding project into a partnership-wide Student Engagement and Recruitment Project, to secure student recruitment through and beyond the Covid period for AY2020-21, as well as position the university in a disruptive and competitive environment. (12 out of 13 partners collaborating on this project): recruitment broadly on par with previous year; significantly enhanced engagement levels with web and online media content and messages; planning now underway to inform next cycle of recruitment for AY2021/22, including project evaluation and progressing development of options for further alignment of communication and marketing services across UHI
- Support UHI strategic response to COVID as part of Crisis Management Team, and as member of PEG
- Supporting the new Regional Strategy Committee, providing key strategic priorities for both Tertiary and FE portfolios going forward in response to Covid, as reflected in the current Crisis Management Plan
- Input to UHI's emerging response to regional economic recovery and strategy:
 - paper on economic recovery to Regional Strategy Committee
 - working with HIE, SFC and SDS on the creation of a new Regional Education and Skills Alignment Partnership
 - working with UHI Key Account Manager in creating a coherent UHI input to local economic recovery partnerships, and developing a UHI response to up-and re-skilling
- Input to Assembly on 1 July 2020 to inform UHI strategic response to SFC Review Phase 2
- Co-representing with VP FE UHI as RSB in SFC review workstream for RSBs
- Representation on UHI in regional STEM partnership
- External representation of UHI for college sector matters:
 - Member of High Level Ministerial Stakeholder Group for College and Universities (which meets every two weeks and is seeking to address key Covid related issues for colleges and universities)
 - As co-chair for the National Articulation Forum, published the final report on Articulation and recommended actions in August 2020.
 - Engagement in a number of college sector meetings with SFC, SDS and HIE executives to solve sectoral issues related to COVID

Significant events/ awards

Co-chaired National Articulation Forum since December 2019; report published in August 2020.

Collaboration with other academic partners

The tertiary work is fully consultative and collaborative, as is all FE related regional activity; lead support of three workstreams in Crisis Management Plan

Issues or concerns

Covid related sustainability of current workload within 0.5FTE role. The post is configured to work on a matrix basis and has no resource or staff attached to it outwith allocated project funding.

Pre-covid priority for curriculum mapping project and financial support is now required to be re-considered within post-covid financial environment.

Vice-Principal Strategic Developments

Prepared by Gary Campbell

Notable accomplishments

- The Heads of Terms has been signed on the Moray Growth Deal (MGD), which will mean that two UHI projects Aviation/Technology (MAATIC) Hub and the Business Enterprise Hub worth well more than £20 million are now well underway
- Strategic Investment Funding (SIF) in relation to the MAATIC project are being spent to plan construction and land acquisition
- As part of the TCD Perth College UHI is now at the stage of commitment of funds towards the Aviation Academy for Scotland which will be led by Perth College, University of the Highland & Islands, Air Service Training, Tayside Aviation and other key stakeholders. Strategic Investment Funds of £604,850 have been requested from Executive Office to support the Professional Fees costs of the project.
- Island Deal – reported elsewhere
- Argyll RGD progressing, heads of agreement have yet to be signed by the two governments (likely early 2021). We are involved in three strands: (i) Marine Industries Training Centre (Project Director in post), (ii) STEM Hubs – council to undertake an options appraisal and (iii) Skills agenda – support for new building in Dunoon for our activities is being discussed.
- Partnership Council has agreed in principle to significant changes in how the curriculum is planned and managed. The final form and operational details will be subject to consultation.
- Professor Andrew Rae has successfully led a consortium with HIAL and colleagues from NHC and OC, to develop a Sustainable Aviation Test Environment. The project cost is roughly £3.69M with a 50% grant contribution from Innovate-UK.
- Discussions are underway internally and with other stakeholders how to capitalize developing capacity and expertise in aerospace and applied advanced technology.

Collaboration with other academic partners

- All the above has been taken forward in close consultation and cooperation with academic partners.
- Significant interaction with SG, Boeing, HIE, US, SFC, ESP and others

Issues or concerns

- The refocusing of efforts on Covid-19 responses to secure core business has made progress on the more externally facing and longer-term strategic developments such as the growth deals somewhat problematic.
- Primarily due to a lack of capacity across the partnership, sometimes exacerbated by low levels of trust and transparency, there is less 'joined-up-ness' between activities as would be desirable. This may be between different geographic elements, different levels, overlapping remits and potential competition for funding, publicity, or students. This is probably inevitable in the present circumstances but ultimately it is certainly sub-optimal for the partnership and the region.

Highland Theological College UHI

Prepared by Hector Morrison, Principal

Notable accomplishments

- Despite the pandemic, HTC's new intake of HE students is slightly up on last year
- Many HTC-UHI graduates have become ministers and leaders in a variety of churches and denominations over the years. Since lockdown, it has been inspirational to see the way in which many of them were able quickly and successfully to get their Sunday services (and other activities) on-line, not least thanks to their blended-learning experience through HTC-UHI.
- Several of our recent graduates have been inducted into their new congregations through the first ever on-line induction services as various churches have adapted to the new circumstances.

Significant events/ awards

- Our HTC Student of the Year 2020 is Laura Symon who for the past two years has been a superb HISA Depute for HTC initiating a number of events which have enabled our Dingwall, Paisley and remote students to become more integrated cohorts.

Inverness College UHI

Notable accomplishments

- COVID-19 planning, staff and student communications, including return to campus and remote teaching, significant focus.
- Recruitment for 2020/21 – FE (1376, active accepted total, as of 10th Sept) HE (1185, active accepted total, as of 10th Sept)
- Financial recovery plan
- The Bothy – new Brightspace resource for Student Support at Inverness College UHI
- Apprenticeship recruitment indications are that overall starts will increase for a 5th year running.
- Neuro Diverse Cybersecurity Programme - IC UHI has been successful in securing funding for a project to support neurodiverse people into cybersecurity learning pathways. Supported by employer CapGemini, the project will be delivered in partnership with Autism Initiatives and their outreach organisation, Highlands One Stop Shop, and UK wide organisation, NeuroCyber.
- Principal Briefings – Microsoft Teams staff groups – x11 in June, x8 in August – keeping staff updated on the financial position and updates on working with COVID-19
- Inverness College UHI graduate Nicholas Ralph makes his TV debut in a new adaptation of All Creatures Great and Small.
- First cohort of Civil Engineering Graduate Apprenticeships at Honours Degree level.

Significant events/ awards

- Inverness College UHI staff and students have been recognised in the annual Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) Awards following a record number of nominations for the College. The HISA Awards give students the chance to thank the academic staff, support staff and students who have inspired and supported them throughout the year. Of the 14 awards up for grabs, Inverness College UHI staff took five, with two students also winning awards. And of the 900-plus nominations received across the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership, more than half came from Inverness College UHI students, with local nominations up more than 40% on last year.
- Scotland's Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Educators' (SEE) Programme, run by CREATE, the University of the Highlands and Islands' Centre for Enterprise and Innovation based at Inverness College UHI, has been named as a finalist in the National Enterprise Educators Awards, run by Enterprise Educators UK. The programme has been shortlisted in the Enterprise Catalyst category, which recognises an individual or team from further or higher education, who are delivering exceptional enterprise education or practice, inside or outside the curriculum.
- The University of the Highlands and Islands and the Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) have recognised five Inverness College UHI students in their Sporting Blues Awards. The annual awards acknowledge the sporting excellence of the university partnership's students and alumni.

Collaboration with other academic partners

- Board chair/principal joint communication issued to IC UHI staff re board chairs (Inverness, Moray, West Highland and North Highland) seeking views and advice of SFC and SG on a proposed options appraisal to identify a range of potential pathways for the closer alignment of services between groupings of academic partner colleges.
- Recruitment and engagement campaign
- Online open day – 5th August

Issues or concerns

- Enrolment and conversion of students. HE enrolments and conversion are looking good compared to last year, suggesting students may be choosing to study locally rather than move away during the pandemic. However, FE enrolment has dipped and conversion is proving more difficult, although numbers are slowly rising. There is a lot of work being done by both academic and support staff to help conversion.
- Exploring alternatives for the future management of the Early Learning and Childcare Centre from next year as alternatives to redundancy.

Lews Castle College UHI

Prepared by Sue Macfarlane, Interim Principal and Chief Executive

Notable accomplishments

Although College buildings were closed and despite all the challenges faced by both staff and student due to Covid19 more students at LCC completed their courses and achieved their award than last year. We had already seen an increase in our student retention and completion rate in 2018/19, well above the national benchmark, and together with high levels of student satisfaction, that trend continued in 2019/20 with an attainment rate of 75%.

A number of successful virtual open days took place between June and August allowing students to speak directly to admissions, student services or lecturing staff.

The college successfully completed a number of developments on campus to allow for the safe start up of the academic year. This included redesign of workshops to deliver creative industry courses, and increased blended delivery models and new ways of delivering our curriculum remotely.

Significant events/ awards

As part of his ministerial tour of the Outer Hebrides in August, David Duguid MP paid a visit to our Stornoway Campus to hear about the exciting opportunities we offer young people. He was particularly interested in our renewable energy, wind power and hydrogen curriculum areas and the environment for our students to try, experiment and innovate.

Our NC Art and Design and BA Fine Art students had to adjust their usual showcase plans and create a digital exhibition space instead where a much wider audience could enjoy their fantastic work.

A total of 24 Lews Castle College staff were nominated for the HISA awards this year. Rachel Erskine, Programme Leader for the MA in Health and Wellbeing and Postgraduate Certificate in Healthcare Quality Improvement at the College, was named Best Personal Academic Tutor/Learning Support. In addition to Rachel's award, 3 other staff were Highly Commended: David Bell – Above and Beyond award and Netty Sopata and Cameron Stark for Most Inspiring Lecturer award.

Collaboration with other academic partners

Our response to the Islands Strategy and Islands Deal is ongoing and we look forward to continuing working with our partners in Shetland and Orkney.

Moray College UHI

Prepared by David Patterson, Principal

Notable accomplishments

In this period the college managed to result 94% of its students (greatly reducing the expected number of students requiring to complete their studies in the new year) and to record the highest level of student achievement (subject to audit) in the college's history.

Over the lockdown and re-opening period, the frequent and regular catch-up meetings for all senior leaders across the partnership has allowed speedy resolutions and positions to be taken on key issues, that have then been jointly sense-checked and implemented regionally or locally with due regard for local contexts. **This impactful involvement of all the region's leaders together has been partnership working at its best and must be part of the model for the future of UHI.**

Significant events/ awards

After over 3 years of preparatory work, the **Moray Growth Deal Heads of Terms agreement** was signed by the UK and Scottish governments on 24th August with the College and University engaged at the very heart of the planned developments. Joint funding of £65m was allocated to 8 projects, valued at c.£100m, now identified to move forward to Outline and Final Business Case approvals.

Project	Total Value	Involvement level
Moray Aerospace, Advanced Technology and Innovation Campus (MAATIC)	£33.3m	Lead
Business Enterprise Hub (BE Hub)	£7.3m	Lead
Cultural Quarter	£31.1m	Project Board membership
Manufacturing and Innovation for Moray (MIM)	£6.0m	Project Board membership; co-located in MAATIC
Early Years STEM	£5.3m	Project Board membership
Digital Health	£5.0m	Project Board membership; located in College/AGBC;
Bus Revolution	£4.0m	No direct involvement
Housing Mix Delivery	£5.0m	No direct involvement

Issues or concerns

Underlying issues of financial concern, exacerbated by Covid-19 lockdown, remain. The immediate challenge facing the college and our partners is how to ensure short-to-medium term sustainability while also gearing up to fully play our expected role as an anchor institution at the heart of economic recovery in Moray and in the wider region.

North Highland College UHI

Prepared by NHC Marketing

Notable accomplishments

Principal of North Highland College UHI Announces Retirement in September

The Principal and Chief Executive of North Highland College UHI has announced his intention to the Board of Management to retire from his post on September 30th 2020.

Mr Donald MacBeath, a native to Caithness, has held a number of positions across the college, starting as a lecturer in the mid-1980s and progressing to Assistant Principal and Vice Principal before accepting his post as College Principal in June 2014.

During his tenure, North Highland College UHI has achieved a number of notable firsts across Scotland:

- The delivery of the country's first professional golf degree based in Sutherland, and establishing a formal partnership with the Professional Golf Association (PGA) which has led to recognition of this degree by the PGA and enabled the first delivery of training for PGA Golf Professionals in Scotland
- the establishment of Scotland's first Newton Room, delivered from the College's Thurso Campus in Caithness
- and the establishment of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) group for Highland Region - a partnership launched with the Caithness Chamber of Commerce
- An instrumental figure of the establishment of both Argyll and West Highland College UHI which North Highland College UHI continues to share a close link, Mr MacBeath has Chaired the Partnership Planning Forum during the last two years on behalf of the University of the Highlands and Islands.

ERI News

PhD student at the ERI, Lydia Niemi was asked by the Scottish Policy and Research Exchange to make [a video](#) on her research on pharmaceuticals in the environment. The video is part of an initiative to connect researchers and policymakers in Scotland, and aims to increase research impact/significance. In making the video Lydia met with representatives from the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) who provide data/briefs in parliament.

College Holds Virtual Open Days

The College held its first virtual open week in June.

In total, 88 bookings were received from the website, six bookings from social media and 10 direct leads were generated from Facebook for lecturers to follow up with, giving a total of 104 enquiries.

The College saw the event as a huge success given that it was the college's first attempt at an online event on this scale and we will be aiming to make improvements in order to increase attendance for future online open events.

Orkney College UHI

Prepared by Professor Edward Abbott-Halpin, Principal

Notable accomplishments

- Campus re-opened having implemented new safety measures and services such as click and collect service for library book withdrawals and a pre-ordering system in cafeteria
- Inductions moved online and delivered virtually
- Many classes moved to begin online delivery
- 5 Aug – Held our first ‘virtual’ open day

Significant events/ awards

22 Jul – New hydrogen course developed by Maritime Dept at Orkney College UHI approved by MCA

<https://www.orkney.uhi.ac.uk/news/new-hydrogen-course-developed-in-orkney-approved-by-mca.html>

28 Aug – Orkney College student named UHI Alumnus of the year: <https://www.orkney.uhi.ac.uk/news/social-entrepreneur-writer-and-climate-change-champion-recognised-with-university-title.html>

Collaboration with other academic partners

4 Aug – New research revealed a lost Viking waterway running through the Orkney mainland, connecting the North Atlantic and Scapa Flow, possibly forming the equivalent of an ancient ‘highway’

<https://www.orkney.uhi.ac.uk/news/viking-waterway-through-the-orkney-mainland-revealed.html> (collaboration between the Universities of the Highlands and Islands, St Andrews and Wales.)

Perth College UHI

Prepared by Margaret Cook, Principal

Significant events/ awards

- The Centre for Mountain Studies (CMS) celebrated its 20th anniversary on 1 August 2020.
- Publication of special issue of 'The Geographer', the newsletter of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, with articles based on presentations scheduled for the forum 'Challenging Upland Futures', planned for 1-2 September 2020 to celebrate the 20th anniversary, now postponed until 19-20 January 2021.
- Award of project by Cairngorms National Park Authority: evaluation of the Volunteer Cairngorms programme (from a response to a KT Academic-Industry discussion): September-December 2020.
- Exam results event/ Online Open Day 5 August 2020.
The event drove a high level of traffic to our website and social media engagement.
It gave us a strong message that worked well in the situation: "We're here for you" which was also a positive message outwith direct recruitment purposes to our community, staff, new and returning students.

Collaboration with other academic partners

- Joint supervision of 2 PhD students at Inverness College UHI.
- Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research (West Highland College UHI): NPA SCITOUR project
- This Exam results / Online Open Day event was held across the partnership which saw strength in the marketing messaging being unified, in terms of visuals and communications.

Sabhal Mor Ostaig UHI

Prepared by Gillian Rothach, Principal

Notable accomplishments

- Protecting and supporting students and staff to remain safe from Covid-19
- High levels of commitment, course completion and academic success for SMO students, despite the disruption of Covid-19
- Moving much of the college business on-line to enable services and stakeholder relationships to continue and thrive
- Development of new on-line provision: research seminars, short-courses.

Significant events/ awards

- Successful exam board for the Gaelic and Related Studies Scheme
- Degree awards to students, including those undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships
- High rate of post-graduate satisfaction

Collaboration with other academic partners

- Continued operation of what was UHI's first Scheme, the Gaelic and Related Studies Scheme, with partners at Lews Castle College, and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.
- Various cross partnership committees.

Issues or concerns

- Enormous workload pressures on senior staff who now asked to attend significantly more meetings than ever before.
- Single services initiatives which do not fit SMO's requirements.

Shetland College UHI

Prepared by Jane Lewis

Notable accomplishments

- Completion of consultation run by SC and NAFC on the Ministerial Merger Business Case. Report presented and response developed and sent to UHI/SFC on 6th August.
- A Transition Board has been created for the new College with appointment of Directors.
- In May receipt of Education Scotland Progress Visit report showing satisfactory progress.
- Induction of new staff remotely.

Significant events/ awards

Re-opening of College for students and staff on a limited capacity basis, following COVID secure procedures on 17th August.

Student presentation of end of year work: <https://www.shetland.uhi.ac.uk/news/art-and-design-students-display-end-of-year-work-a-little-differently--.html>

Collaboration with other academic partners

- Production of Colleges Shetland weekly newsletter with NAFC for the staff of both colleges.
- Collaboration with other partners (particularly Islands partners) on preparation of Islands Deal projects.

Issues or concerns

Pressure on staff adapting to new ways of working, in particular new ways of delivery for this academic year.

West Highland College UHI

Prepared by Lydia Rohmer, Principal

Notable accomplishments

Covid 19 Management

The college has successfully completed the academic year 2019/20 in this period, managing excellent student engagement, retention and completion despite Covid 19 circumstances.

The college has participated in the steering group for the UHI student engagement and recruitment project, and has secured recruitment levels for 2020-21 which are on a par with the previous year, despite some specific FE and HN courses recruiting lower numbers. Extensive work is still being invested in school-college partnership working under Covid conditions. The college has provided its staff and students with excellent extended training and induction on delivering blended learning and studying in this way. Weekly Covid management meetings continue in the light of changing guidance and to ensure a covid secure learning and work environment for students and staff.

The college is implementing contracts gained at the end of AY2019-20, but was successful in gaining a number of further contracts:

- Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research has secured another project: New ERASMUS + project (called T-CRISIS NAV) was approved, on helping tourism SMEs navigate their way out of crisis. A three-year project with partners in Ireland, Denmark, Iceland, Spain and Germany, led by CRTR. Starts Sept 1st.
- Advancing Manufacturing in the West Highlands; this is one of 12 national projects under the national Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund (ERDF). Total project value - £1.6M over 2.5 years. The college has secured lease of a further building to house this project and has worked to commission the building for opening in autumn 2020.

Other notable accomplishments

- Fiona Grant, Direct Academic Affairs, featured alongside Nicola Sturgeon in a national DYW online careers event
- Lydia Rohmer, Principal and CEO, acted as co-chair for the National Articulation Forum, which published its final report in Articulation in Scotland and associated recommendations
- Lydia Rohmer continuing to be one of three lead Principals to represent college sector on the Ministerial Leadership Forum for Colleges and Universities
- Lydia Rohmer member of Colleges Scotland working group inputting formally to Prof Mark Priestly review of SQA exams
- 2 former students from Photography and Textiles courses were awarded a Project Grant from Highland Youth Arts – Creative in your Community fund.
- NC level 6 Student of the year Ellie Lane has secured employment at award winning Glenfinnan House Hotel working with chef/owner Duncan Gibson
- Katie MacDonald, course leader Supported Learning Programmes, set up a new UHI network group for SLP lecturers to support the development of SLP learners and programmes for Covid19 delivery
- WHC School of Adventure Studies staff are pioneering some of the outdoor NGB COVID policies and are at the forefront of leading the outdoor industry back to some sort of normal with our local industry partners.
- The college is a steering group member of the Highland Council economic recovery partnership.

Significant events/ awards

- The college signed the SFC-led Declaration Against Racism;
- The college celebrated the end of year creative showcase of its creative arts and industries students in its biggest online showcase ever to great critical acclaim, which can be seen here: <https://www.whcuhicreative.com/>

Collaboration with other academic partners

- Extensive collaboration across UHI for COVID management and regional coherence planning/implementation
- New collaboration with a number of academic partners (Argyll, Inverness, Moray, North Highland) on joined delivery of FE and HN provision, sharing staff expertise
- Chair of Board in discussion with other academic partners on potential strategic collaboration and options appraisal;
- Principal part of UHI Principal/Vice Chancellor Recruitment Panel

Issues or concerns

- Covid-related future sustainability; capacity to sustain multiple strategic change work streams

Note of main outcomes of first meeting of meeting of the Regional Strategic Committee held on 5th May 2020.

This note is being sent to all academic partner chairs, their principals and members of Court so that the leaders of the whole partnership are aware of the discussions. We are happy if recipients copy it to board members or other UHI and partner staff for their interest. We will circulate a note like this after every meeting of the committee. The committee will of course agree a full minute and report that to the university court as normal. This summary note is intended to let everyone who might be involved in taking forward the issues the committee discussed what the actions agreed and planned next steps are. It is also important that we are transparent across the partnership. If you would like more detail on any particular item, you can access the papers in Admin Control.

If there are items you would like the committee to consider in the future, please contact the chair, Garry Coutts.

The main items discussed were:

Adapting the business

The principal and members of the senior team presented on the ways that the partnership will need to respond to the Covid-19 crisis in three phases, dealing with the immediate issues, the preparations for academic year 2020-21, and the issues beyond then.

The committee asked the executive:

- for a collective effort across the partnership to address the very significant challenges. This will need pace and leadership.
- that the priority for our curriculum for the moment should be core provision that serves our region.

The committee recognised:

- the importance of delivery by distance and blended learning for the next academic year, but also recognised that connectivity and digital poverty issues would also need to be considered.
- The balance between part time and full time students might change in the short term.
- that the actions needed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic overlapped significantly with the curriculum review it discussed later on the agenda.
- the importance of clear branding of our tertiary offer and the criticality of raising our profile with key stakeholder groups.

The committee asked the executive to pull together the actions it was already taking or formulating to adapt the business and the actions they had presented to the committee into a clear action plan linked to timelines and resource allocation. This plan is being developed now by the partnership council and will be complete by 29th May.

Finance service

The committee discussed a paper – which had been asked for by the further education regional board – proposing that the university executive work with the partnership to develop and consult on an aligned common finance service and to have an agreed model and service level agreement in

place by the end of July. The executive acknowledged that progress on this had been slower than anticipated.

The committee:

- supported the recommendation that we develop the option agreed and ask the non-executives to ensure their principals/senior execs supported the development of the model and engaged with the process.
- asked the principal to identify the capacity to take forward this project with urgency and report on progress to the chair and vice chairs of the committee periodically.

Partnership Agreements

The committee considered a draft of the revised partnership agreements between the university and the academic partners. The committee noted several areas where further detail would need to be finalised. The final version will be circulated to partners in the near future. These agreements have not been revised for some time. Our intention is that the new ones will be updated more regularly – in particular in response to many of the changes we will need to make as we implement the change programme related to the Assembly actions and our response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Review of curriculum and resource allocation methods

This review of our curriculum and the way that we allocate funding within the partnership began before the coronavirus pandemic in order to ensure we had an attractive offer to students and the region and a way of funding it that was fair and efficient. The committee agreed that it was now even more urgent and should be progressed without delay.

The review will cover both higher and further education. On the resource allocation method the committee agreed that the executive would develop detailed modelling of the impact of three possible methods of funding which combined simplified funding for learning with an institutional element – or block grant – that supported a proportion of non-teaching costs.

The committee agreed the approach in the paper and the executive will be consulting with partners soon on these proposals. On the RAM, detailed modelling should be complete by mid June and consultation on a preferred model will take place in the autumn. On the curriculum review we intend to decide urgent changes to the curriculum for academic year 2020-21 within the next four to six weeks and changes for 2021-22 in the autumn of 2020.

Reporting and assurance

The committee also considered a number of papers that were there to give assurance on our finances and our funding and agreed that:

- In future that will be done with a single dashboard that summarises the key data and signals where there are issues the committee needs to be aware of or consider action.
- this needed to be populated with consistent data from across the partnership.
- prior to coming to committee, there needed to be executive scrutiny of both the data and any proposed mitigations to provide an element of assurance to the committee about the veracity and potential impact of any proposals.

The committee considered a paper on our funding from SFC for 2020-21. While there is an increase in funding in both further and higher education, the committee was concerned that the funding for further education contained an increase in credits with no related increase in funding. This is related to SFC wanting to return to a price times volume funding method. The executive will continue to

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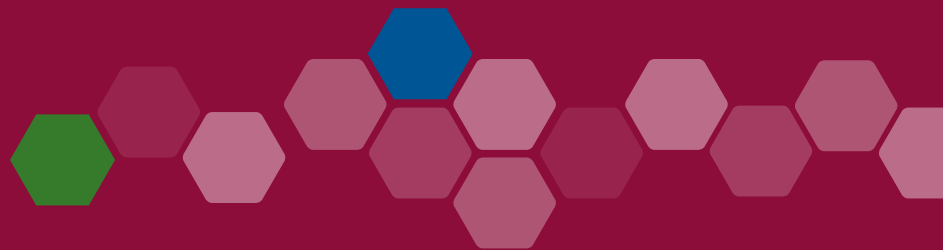
make the case to SFC that doing it in this way is unfair to our region where the costs created by national bargaining need to be supported in the long term.

The committee also discussed papers on the financial position of the partnership. As there was a deficit across the incorporated colleges in FY 19-20, there is a risk that SFC may reduce funding. The committee agreed the university will make a case against this. We agreed that we needed more active monitoring of the emerging financial issues and agreed the partnership council should take an active role in this.



Case studies of student hardship during COVID-19: Final Research Report

October 2020



CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

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Case studies of student hardship during COVID-19

Final Research Report

October 2020

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and context

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused disruption across all parts of Scotland's educational system, including in further and higher education delivered by Scotland's colleges and universities.

Early on in the pandemic, stakeholders raised a particular concern around student financial hardship as a result of lost or reduced employment, either for the students themselves, other family members (parents, carers etc) or partners. For example, a National Union of Students (NUS) COVID-19 and Students Survey¹ published in April 2020 found that for Scottish students:

- Of those who were in some form of employment at the time (61% of respondents), 14% had their hours reduced, 8% were required to take unpaid leave and 6% were being let go / made redundant;
- For almost a third of respondents (31%), the income of someone who supported them financially had been 'majorly' (13%) or 'moderately' (18%) affected by COVID-19; and
- Over two fifths of respondents (43%) were 'concerned' (16%), 'very concerned' (11%) or 'extremely concerned' (16%) about their ability to manage financially during the pandemic. A further 37% were 'somewhat concerned' and 19% were 'not at all concerned'.

In response, a support package for students during COVID-19 was launched in April 2020 comprising the 'Student Emergency Hardship Fund' and 'Summer Hardship Fund'. Alongside this, in May 2020, the Scottish Government committed to undertake a research project to better understand the range of financial hardship issues faced by college and university students in Scotland.

1.2 Aims and objectives of this research

This research project was undertaken between May and August 2020. Fieldwork (online) with institutions took place in May and June, and with students in July and early August.

The overall aim of this research project was to explore the range of financial hardship issues faced by college and university students in Scotland during COVID-19 and the different types of support they were (or weren't) accessing to help avoid experiencing longer-term hardship.

The research adopted a case study approach, by exploring the experiences of different case study groups of students with common characteristics (e.g. working

¹ <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/covid-19-and-students-survey-report>

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students, students with caring responsibilities, international students). The specific objectives of the research are outlined below.

The research objectives were to explore...

- the current employment circumstances of students;
- the alternative employment opportunities available for students (if any);
- what any change of income might mean for students in practical terms; and
- what financial support has been available to students since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced.

1.3 Structure of this report

This research report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 describes the background and context to the research and sets out the research aim and objectives;
- Chapter 2 outlines the methodology adopted in the research project including a description of the case study approach;
- Chapter 3 describes the main issues and themes identified in the contextual information on student hardship gathered from institutions and third sector providers at the start of the project;
- Chapter 4 presents the case study student interview results in terms of the five thematic areas explored. Case study findings are also described in relation to the contextual information in Chapter 3, exploring where feedback from the institutions supports or contradicts feedback from the students; and
- Chapter 5 sets out some conclusions from the research. This includes consideration of policy initiatives taken so far to mitigate student hardship impacts, and areas where there may still be gaps.

2. Methodology

This project builds on data from two sources of information:

Contextual information gathered from institutions and third sector organisations² helped to identify themes for the delivery of case study interviews by identifying typical / recurrent sets of circumstances that the case studies should address; and

Case study interviews with students which allowed a focus on the particular sets of personal circumstances identified via the contextual information above, and linking of these with a more detailed discussion of employment, access to benefits and particular trajectories of hardship.

It is important to note that data from the sources above were obtained at different time periods. This is an important consideration given the rapidly evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated policy response. In particular, aspects of the policy environment had already changed by the time one stage of data gathering had been completed. This issue is picked up in the conclusions chapter (see section 5.5). Contextual information was provided by institutions throughout May and June 2020, while the case study interviews were undertaken in July and early August 2020. Annex 3 provides an overview of the main policy developments that took place during the lifetime of the project.

2.1 Contextual information from institutions and providers

Universities and third sector organisations were asked to provide the Scottish Government with information on their experiences of dealing with requests for assistance from students, resulting from COVID-19 related lockdown restrictions. Responses were received from 14 institutions and organisations (nine from universities and five from third sector organisations). Although this is only a partial picture of the sector, the returns provided rich contextual data to set the student interviews against and a reasonable breadth of responses given the short timescales involved. Within the timescales of the project it was unfortunately not possible to seek responses from colleges, although three college students participated in the case study interviews (see section 2.2).

2.2 Case study interviews with students

10 semi-structured online interviews were undertaken with students from a variety of backgrounds and with different demographic characteristics. The aim was to focus on reaching a high proportion of working students but also with an interest in having good representation of the following characteristics:

- Students with caring responsibilities;
- European Union (EU) students;

² Including organisations specifically focussed on supporting students.

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- International students; and
- Care experienced and estranged students.

Box 2.1: Who took part in the case study interviews? Eight different ways of describing the interview sample

As part of the interviews, Scottish Government researchers spoke to 10 students who can be categorised in the following ways:

5 undergraduates; 2 postgraduates; 2 higher education (HE) college students; and 1 further education (FE) college student.	Or... 5 students who identified as male; and 5 students who identified as female.	Or... 6 students from Scotland; 2 international students ³ ; and 2 EU students ⁴ .	Or... 2 students with childcare responsibilities; and 8 students with no caring responsibilities.
Or... 8 students who had been working in some capacity prior to lockdown; and 2 students who had not.	Or... 5 students who considered themselves to be disabled; and 5 students who did not.	Or... 3 mature (also referred to as 'independent') students; and 7 young (also referred to as 'dependent') students.	Or... 2 care experienced and/or estranged students; and 8 students without such experience.

Other desired demographic characteristics in the sample were: (i) an even gender split; (ii) good representation of disabled / non-disabled students; (iii) students from

³ HESA define international students according to various categories including other European Economic Area (EEA) countries (e.g. Iceland, Norway), other European countries (e.g. Albania, Belarus, Turkey) and non-EU: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/students>

⁴ EU students are defined by HESA as those students whose normal residence prior to commencing their programme of study was in countries which were EU members as at 1 December of the current reporting period: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/students>. Although for funding purposes SAAS define eligibility for funding as an EU graduate more broadly (e.g. including EEA countries and Switzerland): <https://www.saas.gov.uk/full-time/eu-student-funding-full-time>

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universities and colleges; and (iv) mature students. This was largely achieved in the sample, although it was not possible to speak to any students who cared for an adult. Also, only one care experienced student and one Further Education (FE) college student were interviewed (see Box 2.1 above).

Average interview length was 20 minutes. The interview topic guide and questions are included at Annex 2. In some cases the interview was shorter, particularly where students did not report having experienced hardship or needing to access support services.

The combination of contextual information provided by institutions and third sector organisations and the student interviews supports stronger conclusions about the overall situation for students resulting from COVID-19 restrictions.

2.3 Limitations of the research

The depth and scope of this research was necessarily limited (e.g. due to resources and timescales). Whilst the case study analysis provides some rich evidence on the types of hardship experienced by students during COVID-19, it is not representative of the student population in Scotland as a whole. Accordingly, further quantitative research is advisable to fully understand the population level prevalence of these hardship issues (see Annex A for further details).

The contextual information provided by institutions was also limited due to the timescales involved. It would have been useful, in particular, to have diverted some resource to securing responses from colleges.

3. Contextual information from institutions and providers – results

Scottish Government researchers approached higher education institutions (universities) as well as third sector organisations with a view to gathering contextual information about the circumstances students have found themselves in as a result of COVID-19 lockdown. A number of detailed responses (9 from universities and 5 from third sector organisations) were received which provide context to the more in-depth case study interviews and have identified a number of recurrent themes related to student hardship.

An overview of the key themes from the contextual information is provided below. Please note that whenever student experiences are discussed in this section, this is drawn from feedback from institutions, rather than the students themselves. Any such reports will be third person accounts, as contrasted with first person narratives provided through the student interviews in Chapter 4.

3.1 Financial hardship

Institutions described significant financial hardship being reported by students, who would have been made redundant at the start of lockdown, furloughed on insufficient income (reflecting base hours without overtime, that students would normally rely on to support themselves) or having lost zero-hours contract (ZHC) work opportunities in the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 restrictions (e.g. hospitality and retail).

Typically students would be employed in public-facing roles which cannot be conducted at a distance or from home, which we have been told is precisely the type of work that has been affected by lockdown restrictions. That type of work would further require travel to and from the workplace, which, if using public transport, would not have been possible during lockdown or has been perceived as too risky. This is particularly true for students in the shielding category or those caring for others, for whom minimising the potential risk of exposure to the virus was a priority.

Where students were furloughed, the amount of furlough payment was often seen as insufficient and not reflecting the earnings students would normally receive. This was due to furlough amounts only reflecting contracted hours, while many students made a large proportion of their income from working overtime. There were also cases of self-employed students 'falling through the cracks' of the government furlough scheme and instances of students taking on additional employment and being financially penalised by being put on an emergency tax code and by losing household benefits, which would predominantly affect parents and carers.

Institutions highlighted student reports concerning the big time gap between higher education (HE) student funding payments ending in June and Universal Credit (UC) applications being processed, leaving them with periods of no income over the summer months. This was exacerbated by the lack of certainty over when the new

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term would start after lockdown and how this might affect the date of the first funding payment(s) in the new academic year. This combined with the lost income from lost employment opportunities was seen as a big factor in exacerbating financial hardship for many students and extending their period of indebtedness. For many students, existing rent payment arrangements mean that they cannot pay for rent over the summer months without resorting to employment during that period.

Both the institutions providing evidence, as well as the student participants in the case study interviews raised **concerns about spiralling debt, limited access to discretionary funds and benefits, as well as reliance on commercial loans** to help students pay some of their bills, which will leave them in debt that they may not be able to repay without further help. That however only applies where students were able to access credit in the first place, as this was not a given in all cases. In the words of one university respondent:

“We have referred students to guidance from FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) regarding consumer credit products. While some have been able to use this to take a payment break, many report that creditors are not offering these breaks as a result of accounts already being in arrears” (university feedback)

Those reliant on income provided by their families were also affected by changes in financial circumstances affecting their parents and partners, so the **implications of COVID-19 for the wider financial support networks** were an important consideration. This theme has recurred in both the evidence provided to us by institutions and in the case study interviews.

Institutions also described how many students who had sought alternative employment over the period of lockdown had attempted to apply for key worker roles but were not successful in securing jobs as the number of applicants exceeded the available vacancies. Students who were in the shielding category were not eligible to work in such roles, owing to their ‘risky’ nature.

3.2 Housing

Students were reportedly finding it difficult to secure new accommodation during the lockdown period.

Students in private lets⁵ who were affected by loss of income were also at risk of rent arrears, which was a particularly acute problem in cities with high rent prices such as Edinburgh and St Andrews. Other housing related issues reported included: (i) private rental contracts which could not be broken even when the students had left; (ii) rental contracts for the full house that had to be paid even if other sharing students had left; and (iii) live-in landlords removing students out of concern for their own health.

⁵ Not specified whether this was purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) or other private sector rented accommodation (e.g. flats, houses).

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3.3 Varying impacts depending on student demographics

Institutions described important differences in how students from different demographic backgrounds were impacted by the financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

Those already living in deprivation were said to have been potentially most adversely affected, with some universities with a high number of students from most deprived areas in Scotland seeing a substantial number of enquiries for support. In such cases, parents are often unable to support the students with extra costs and students are often expected to contribute to the household income, which is nearly impossible without access to work.

Care experienced students: who have been looked after by a UK Local Authority, at any time, before they turned 18 can apply to the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) for accommodation support over the summer but do express worry about being able to pay for general living costs during this period.

Estranged students: worry about the summer period and the next academic year as there will be less part-time work available and they will most likely have no support network to fall back on.

Refugees and asylum seekers: cannot access HE student funding and are likely to experience difficulty accessing other forms of public funding, so are therefore particularly vulnerable. They were solely reliant on funding provided by the University, or charitable sources. This category of student is also more likely to lack an established family / support network.

Final year students: who are due to graduate and have received their final funding payments, but are unable to find work.

EU and international students: without access to discretionary / hardship funding. This is especially difficult for international students where lockdown restrictions in their home countries have prevented financial support from reaching them. In some cases their sponsors have lost the ability to continue supporting them financially.

Students with family / caring responsibilities, young carers and those living in isolated communities: also identified as particularly vulnerable.

3.4 Eligibility for benefits

Institutions that provided evidence, have confirmed that there were students who were ineligible to claim benefits “in no way whatsoever”. While students may in principle have been able to access support from the benefits system, the system itself was seen as “*slow to adapt, archaic, onerous (...) and if financial support is forthcoming, it is delayed*” (university feedback).

The researchers were told that those taking on a short 3 month contract would in practice lose access to benefits, only to become eligible again once the contract ends. The delay in receiving benefits again once that happens would then result in

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increased stress, anxiety, household tension and further financial hardship. Communications sent by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) were also a cause of confusion and added stress and anxiety, these were reported to be at times contradictory and chaotic.

Lone parent students and those studying part-time were most likely to be eligible for UC.

3.5 Discretionary funds

Institutions reported much **higher demand for discretionary funds** compared to normal, which was seen as indicative of the very difficult circumstances for many students: *“Students have been coming to us for as much support as we can offer to help cover extra rent, food bills, living costs, debts, support paying off accommodation debts, removal costs, increases in energy bills”* (university feedback)

Researchers heard how many universities’ discretionary funds were exhausted by April / May 2020 and while increased funding allocated by SAAS and the Universities has been useful, keeping up with demand has proven very difficult (see section 5.5 and Annex 3 for full details of the support package put in place and timelines for this). Some institutions have confirmed they were focusing on providing support to continuing students until the end of July and considering how best to support them in the period between that and when student funding payments start again.

Asylum seekers cannot access Higher Education (HE) student funding, or any other public funding sources, and are therefore particularly vulnerable. They are solely reliant on funding provided by the University, or charitable sources⁶.

⁶ However asylum seekers studying FE courses can access funding for emergency travel / study / childcare costs from college FE discretionary funds.

4. Case study interviews – results

Through the background information gathering stage undertaken with institutions and third sector organisations⁷ prior to the interviews (see Chapter 3), it was possible to identify particular circumstances where the impacts of the COVID-19 related restrictions could be seen as distinct, depending on student demographics. It was also a priority to speak to working students, as they would most likely have been affected by lockdown related loss of income.

In practice, the majority of the interviews (8 out of 10) were with working students. This working context was set against other key factors identified as being of particular relevance to student hardship. Together, these factors formed the backbone of the thematic case studies and are as follows:

1. Working students;
2. Students with caring responsibilities;
3. International students;
4. EU students; and
5. Care experienced and/or estranged students.

The working students case study has the richest evidence, owing to the range of experiences reflected in these interviews and also because 8 of the 10 students interviewed were in this category (see Box 2.1). Accordingly, generalisations from this research about working students are likely to be the most robust, albeit limited to evidence from the eight ‘working student’ interviews undertaken. In sections where other case study categories are discussed, the evidence is more limited and the focus is on bringing out the unique circumstances particular to the types of students interviewed. In all cases, the interview findings have been set against the background information provided by institutions as part of the initial data gathering stages.

4.1 Case Study (1): Working Students

Most of the students (8 out of 10) interviewed as part of this project reported that they had either been working or actively looking for work at the time lockdown was announced in March 2020. In this sense, the working student case study is the most complete and representative of the range of students we have spoken to. The term ‘working students’ could refer to either those in employment in March 2020, or expecting to work in the subsequent months.

The amount of time spent working varied from a couple of hours per week, assisting with presenting lab work at university (i.e. work within the ‘university’ sector) to working full time as part of an industrial placement. For all but one of the

⁷ Within the timescales of the project it was unfortunately not possible to seek responses from colleges – see section 2.3.

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working students interviewed, lockdown meant loss of income from employment either as a result of complete or partial loss of work. The following main themes emerged from the analysis of interview data: (i) loss of income; (ii) inability to find alternative employment; (iii) reliance on benefits and credit; (iv) lack of targeted support; and (v) lack of clarity about the future. These themes are outlined in more detail in the sub-sections below.

4.1.1 Loss of income

All but one of the working students interviewed as part of this project described experiencing a loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 related lockdown restrictions. In most cases, this loss of income has had a substantial impact on the students' ability to pay their bills and rent, as well as to make savings for the academic year ahead. Some of the students also mentioned experiencing a lack of direction and sense of purpose due to being unable to work.

The working students interviewed were employed in a variety of sectors and under a range of contractual conditions prior to lockdown. Sectors mentioned were: (i) hospitality; (ii) retail; (iii) delivery services; (iv) university (e.g. lab demonstrators); and (v) real estate. Some relied on zero hours contracts (ZHCs) and found their hours reduced dramatically but with only limited / no furlough arrangements offered to compensate for that loss, closely mirroring feedback from the universities (see section 3.1). One student described how their employer offered furlough payments that only covered the contracted hours, but being on a ZHC meant that this did not reflect the actual earnings lost. Again, this was an issue highlighted by the institutions in their feedback (see section 3.1) and does not appear to be an isolated case.

Those who were employed through their university, either as lab assistants or industrial placement students, saw those employment arrangements disappear as a result of the restrictions on face-to-face contact. For some students, such as international students or those with caring responsibilities, being able to work a few hours every week on campus provided a valuable opportunity to supplement their income using a predictable part-time pattern. In the case of industrial placements, the perceived loss extended to their ability to complete experiments relevant to writing up the final thesis.

Box 4.1: Lost job opportunities and associated impacts

One college student interviewed was hoping to save money for the forthcoming academic year by seeking opportunities in the hospitality sector over the summer. Such opportunities have become scarce and as someone in the shielding category they made the decision to leave the city they study in to stay with their family in a rural setting that was perceived to be safer. They are now considering attending classes remotely in the new academic year, which will also help with not having to pay rent for student accommodation.

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A couple of students were also going through recruitment at the time lockdown was announced and have lost the opportunity to take up the work they had applied for as a result of the restrictions (see Box 4.1 above).

In contrast to the majority of interviewees who had lost their income, there was one working student whose circumstances remained more or less the same throughout lockdown. They were employed at a supermarket prior to lockdown and have managed to retain that job with only a small change to their hours. While this was a positive example of someone being able to support themselves throughout the lockdown period, such positive experiences were very rare in the interviews undertaken (seven of the eight working students spoken to had lost at least some income during lockdown). As discussed further below, finding work in retail or hospitality was particularly challenging for students over the lockdown period, echoing feedback from the universities (see section 3.1).

In one unique case, a student was self-employed but reported having lost income as a result of the wider economic situation affecting their particular sector of employment (housing).

Overall, apart from two interviewed individuals, the loss of income resulting from COVID-19 restrictions was something that students were able to cope with to a degree by either: (i) cutting down on their spending; (ii) relying on benefits and discretionary funds; and / or (iii) family support. Importantly, in none of the interviews were students able to secure alternative employment over the lockdown period, even when some opportunities were perceived to exist. This is discussed separately at section 4.1.2 below.

The financial circumstances of some students taking part in the interviews were closely connected with the circumstances of their partners, which corresponds with feedback from the institutions (see section 3.1). Where students relied on their partners' income to support themselves, the wider job market situation and threat of job losses affecting their partners had a clear impact on their own livelihoods. This is discussed separately in the students with caring responsibilities case study (see section 4.2).

Box 4.2: Students 'falling between the cracks in the system'

In one such example, a student described working on a zero hours contract and losing most of their hours over the lockdown period. Despite them having considerable work experience, they could not find alternative employment and have struggled navigating the benefits system that could only offer limited assistance. With no friends or family to rely on, they've resorted to having to sell their belongings and depending on credit cards to pay their rent and bills.

In a couple of more extreme cases, the interplay of personal circumstances (such as being an international student or an estranged student with no family support) and external factors such as limited work availability have compounded the difficult

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financial situation of the students who had very limited opportunities to find alternative means of support. In those cases, students reported ‘falling between the cracks in the system’ and facing spiralling debt (see Box 4.2 above).

4.1.2 Inability to find alternative employment

Most, but not all of the students who reported loss of income chose to seek alternative employment during the lockdown period. Many in this situation reported that finding only a limited number of alternative jobs available (mainly in supermarkets and health related roles) and in most cases there were so many applicants that students ended up not hearing back from the employers if they applied. Students also thought that those with experience in relevant sectors were more likely to receive job offers, and that they perceived competition for the few available jobs to be particularly fierce over the period of lockdown.

Three of the students interviewed did manage to find work offers in the lockdown period. Opportunities mentioned included: (i) working in a hospitality role at an NHS testing centre; (ii) work for the NHS in a health related role; and (iii) at a Royal Mail sorting centre. None of those opportunities were perceived to have been suitable for the interviewed students, who mentioned: (i) problems with transport to the workplace over the period of lockdown; (ii) concerns over their own health and safety (where the risk of contracting COVID-19 was seen as too high to justify taking up the work); and (iii) problems with getting Disclosure Scotland and PVG checks (Protected and Vulnerable Groups – a type of enhanced disclosure check) in time to be able to take up the work offer.

Some students interviewed chose not to seek alternative employment over the lockdown period. This was partially due to the perceived difficulty of finding work (which students were made aware of through their social networks) and the need to balance household responsibilities with their studies (in the case of students with childcare responsibilities). Those students would usually express less of a concern about their ability to support themselves and make comparisons to other students that were perceived to be in a much harder position.

Box 4.3: Students demonstrating adaptability in accessing employment

One of the interview participants mentioned that they were to attend training that would allow them to work in a specialised NHS role. This was not related to their course of study or previous experience but was a way of securing employment in an area where job prospects were perceived to be good.

As part of the interviews, students were also asked about any potential changes to their work situation and work aspirations in the post-lockdown reality. Most reported that they expect the situation to improve somewhat as lockdown continued to be eased but have yet to see any concrete changes in terms of increased opportunities or resumption of recruitment. Fear of contracting COVID-19 and uncertainty about the safety of working conditions was raised as a specific barrier to

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taking up employment in the new academic year by a number of the interviewees. On the other hand, there is also evidence of adaptability and resourcefulness in making the most of the new situation (see Box 4.3 above).

4.1.3 Reliance on benefits and credit

Most of the working students interviewed reported having applied for benefits or financial support. A few also used credit cards and overdraft facilities to help pay their rent and utility bills. Some of those students were keen to stress that applying for financial assistance was not something that they took lightly and would not have considered before they were forced to by the challenging lockdown circumstances.

A couple of the students have chosen not to apply for any support, one of the students said they *“were not stressed about not being able to make ends meet”* and *“wanted other people in a worse position to take advantage”* (University student interview participant) of the support offered. The perception that there were students in much worse circumstances and a feeling of solidarity with them was something that was brought up repeatedly in the interviews. Young students interviewed were less likely to take up benefits or formal financial assistance if they had the option to live with their family.

Working students typically mentioned the following sources of support: (i) universal credit; (ii) discretionary funds offered by their university / college; and (iii) council funding. These sources of funding are discussed further below.

Universal credit

Most of the working students from the UK interviewed had used Universal Credit (UC) to help them pay for rent and bills over the lockdown period. While some of the students interviewed had already applied for UC before lockdown and were familiar with how the system works, there were those who had never had to apply before and found the process challenging (see Box 4.4).

Box 4.4: Student experiences applying for Universal Credit (UC)

One of the students interviewed said that the DWP did not seem to understand the student funding portion of the income on the application for UC and that the organisation seemed generally less used to dealing with students applying for the benefit. Separate calls with DWP advisers needed to be arranged to explain the particularities of student finance and student bursaries in particular, which has been frustrating to the student.

This type of experience does not seem to be unique. Other students interviewed also experienced a lack of understanding of student funding on the part of DWP advisors.

Another student reported that in addition to the long waiting times for their UC application to be processed, the amount they then received was incorrect and they felt really let down by the system.

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Discretionary funds

Most university students interviewed had access to some sort of funding (discretionary or other) offered by their institutions. These could take the form of loans and bursaries, but the particular arrangements would differ depending on the institution involved⁸. The student experiences identified in the interviews will not necessarily cover all types of student finance arrangements available to students in institutions throughout Scotland.

Almost all of the (working and non-working) students who applied for loans and bursaries⁹ from their institutions have managed to receive them at least once. Most students commented on their inability to receive more than one instalment of the discretionary funding however, and the fact that wait times for decisions about such funding could take a long time (in one of the cases, it was said to have been 10 weeks), leaving the students unable to plan their spending and contributing to the hardship experienced. From the interviews, it became clear that discretionary funds were perceived to be allocated on a wide basis of eligibility and not according to particular need. This was particularly concerning to students who could not rely on family support for financial assistance, and who therefore felt that they should have been identified as a priority for such funding by their universities. As mentioned earlier, many students interviewed expressed an understanding that other students were in more acute need of financial support. Given the perceived limited financial resources available to their institutions, they subsequently did not apply for such funds themselves.

Out of the three college students interviewed, two were not interested in applying for funding but were generally aware that colleges offered some assistance. Another commented on the complete lack of information about financial assistance offered by their particular institution and the inability to speak to anyone within the college about support. In their own words *“I feel like every door was closed, every single door”* (HE college student interview participant).

Council funding

Students interviewed reported mixed experiences with approaching local authorities for support. While some were successful in receiving one off forms of support and council tax breaks, a small number of students reported not being able to speak to anyone at the council about their problems, due to the high volume of callers.

4.1.4 Lack of targeted support and complex support system

The mature students interviewed felt better placed to navigate the often complex financial support system, compared to their younger counterparts. They were also

⁸ It is noted that Discretionary Funds are classed as non-repayable monies (not grants or loans, which are provided by SAAS / SLC) so some interviewees may have misunderstood the nature of the support they received from their institution.

⁹ Ibid.

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less likely to rely on online information sessions organised by their institutions and were able to offer some informal advice to other students looking for information.

“I just think there needs to a bit of pastoral care in education. (...) nobody tells you anything, you’ve got to go and look it up yourself. You listen to your friends saying you’re due this and that and then when you do phone people they say ‘oh, I’m not really here to tell you that’(...). I don’t think there’s a clear enough understanding of what people are due” (HE college student interview participant)

At least one student also highlighted problems with how different sources of financial support interacted with each other (see Box 4.5).

Box 4.5: Problems with different sources of financial support interacting

In one particular case, an emergency loan from the university went directly to cover rent arrears. When discretionary university funding came through at a later time, a large chunk of it had to be used to pay off the emergency loan, instead of contributing towards the bills and rent.

4.1.5 Lack of clarity about the future

Most of the students interviewed highlighted the lack of certainty about their exact study arrangements in the new academic year, as well as the lack of job certainty in the near future. On a few occasions, students expressed concerns about student funding coming in on time, given that some institutions were still to confirm if the academic year was to restart in September, or at a later date.

In other cases the institutions have already confirmed term / start dates for the new academic year and the uncertainty was more about how long the remote study arrangements would be in place, as this would impact how long students might stay with their families, therefore avoiding having to pay rent in the place of study.

Box 4.6: Uncertainty about the future – an international student’s perspective

For one of the international students interviewed, the uncertainty about the wider job market meant that the period of a few months following their degree completion that could potentially be used for job searches in accordance with visa regulations, will probably offer far fewer opportunities than originally anticipated.

As highlighted in the feedback from institutions (Chapter 3), the lack of certainty about being able to resume employment in the new academic year is making students and their partners face difficult decisions. One student with childcare responsibilities explained how their partner had decided to take on full time study to be able to access the safety of student funding, following the loss of their job.

4.2 Case Study (2): Students with caring responsibilities

Two of the students interviewed as part of the project had caring responsibilities.

It was only possible to identify students who had childcare responsibilities. However, it is important to recognise that those taking care of an adult may be faced with a unique set of challenges that are beyond the scope of this current research. The importance of a wider societal and economic context was particularly important where students had to rely on external childcare and income from their employed partners.

4.2.1 Lack of suitable childcare arrangements

Students interviewed had to deal with the additional challenge of finding time for childcare in addition to studying. While one of the students took care of their child while their partner worked, the other was a single parent and had to rely on formal childcare (see Box 4.7).

Box 4.7: Issues and decisions faced by students requiring childcare support

One student who was also a single parent commented on the lack of childcare provision over the lockdown period, which prevented them from looking for work. While childcare has now become available as a result of lockdown restrictions being eased, they expressed concerns over potentially exposing their child to COVID-19 and preferred to wait for a vaccine to become available before relying on childcare again.

4.2.2 Reliance on second income and child specific sources of funding

Both students with childcare responsibilities interviewed reported relying on their partners' or ex partners' income to help cover the costs of childcare. In the latter case this took the form of child support arrangements paid by the ex-partner. In one of the cases, the partner had lost their job as a result of lockdown and had decided to start college, which should help with paying some of the bills when they become eligible for student support.

In the case of the single parent relying on their ex-partner, the ex-partner was uncertain about being able to keep their job at the time of the interview, which could have serious implications for the overall finances of the student. At the moment they relied on student funding, single child allowance and UC but could not make ends meet without the additional funds from their ex-partner.

The lack of student funding over the summer has been identified as an issue by most of the students interviewed and was of particular importance to students with childcare responsibilities and those without wider family support. As one interviewee argued "*SAAS maintenance loans had to be paid off anyway, so why not extend them?*" (HE college student interview participant). This issue is also something that was raised through the contextual data gathering stage (see Chapter 3).

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4.3 Case Study (3): International students

International students were a distinct category in terms of how the COVID-19 related restrictions affected them financially. In the two interviews undertaken with students in this category, the economic situation in the students' countries of origin was a factor compounding their own financial circumstances (see Box 4.8).

Box 4.8: Financial issues experienced by international students during COVID-19

One of the international students interviewed relied on family in their country of origin to support them financially throughout their degree. When the family ran into financial difficulties as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, they were unable to provide that support. As a result of visa restrictions, the student could not work more than 20 hours a week and relied on lab assistant work at their university. This work has become unavailable as a result of lockdown.

The other international student interviewed sent remittances to their country of origin but felt they were unable to support their family as they had lost their casual work as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Student funds were provided to the student despite their international status and these were seen as a 'lifeline'.

Both international students described significant challenges to their mental health, resulting from the COVID-19 isolation, loss of opportunities to work, uncertainty about the future but also compounded by lack of friends and a support network at their place of study. It is perhaps not surprising that many students arriving in a new destination to undertake a limited period of intense study would have less time and opportunity to develop more meaningful relationships in the local community during that time. Information provided by universities and third sector suggests that this group of students is often particularly badly affected by a lack of formal financial support when other sources of funding become unavailable (see section 3.1).

The international students interviewed reported on the availability of emotional support through the university as well as online training dealing with finding work, but these were not perceived to be useful. The emotional support was seen as merely listening and not being able to address the root of the mental health issues such as loss of security, while the employability training was seen as something that ultimately *"you cannot put on your CV"* (University student interview participant).

4.4 Case Study (4): EU Students

Two EU students were interviewed as part of the case study interviews. One was self-employed, while another one still lived at home with their parents and was about to start the first year of their degree after the summer. Neither of the students have applied for any additional support, saying they have mostly been able to

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support themselves without the need to apply for additional help. The student who was self-employed reported some loss in earnings as a result of the slower economy over lockdown and had to cut back on expenses, but this has not threatened their ability to pay rent or bills. Both students have successfully applied for SAAS grants and reported finding the process straightforward¹⁰.

4.5 Case Study (5): Care experienced and estranged students

The background information gathering stage with universities and third sector providers highlighted the particularly vulnerable position care experienced and estranged students found themselves in as a result of lockdown restrictions. This was largely due to a lack of access to informal financial support networks offered to other categories of students considered in this research (e.g. by their families).

Two of the students interviewed could be classified as care experienced and estranged (falling into one of those categories each). Their contrasting experiences of hardship appeared to have resulted largely due to the fact that one of them had been employed by a supermarket at the time lockdown was announced and was able to hold on to that job. The less positive experience is outlined at Box 4.9 below.

Box 4.9: Experiences of estranged students during COVID-19

One estranged student interviewed reported having lost the bulk of their hours as a delivery driver with the company refusing to close down and offer furlough to their staff. The inability to find alternative sources of employment and the limited options for discretionary support meant the student needed to access commercial credit to just pay off the arrears on rent and bills. They felt very strongly that students in similar circumstances, without families to fall back on, should be identified and prioritised for support by universities.

The care experienced student interviewed was keen to highlight that despite being in the fortunate position of having been able to hold on to their job, they were aware of other care experienced students who were in a very precarious position as having work could make all the difference between being able to pay their bills or not.

¹⁰ It is noted that EU students cannot access living cost support from SAAS, only an EU fee award. So these interviewees may have misunderstood the nature of the support they had received from SAAS.

5. Conclusions

This focussed piece of research has identified several hardship issues faced by students in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic. On the whole these were distinctly negative experiences though there were one or two isolated instances of students being able to adapt to challenging circumstances (e.g. in accessing alternative employment).

Crucially, feedback from student participants in the case study interviews broadly corroborates that from the institutions themselves (universities), suggesting that these issues are likely to be experienced by the student population more widely (at least in terms of HE at university). Accordingly, quantitative research to explore the population level prevalence of these issues is a key area for future research (see Annex 1). Given the small sample of students interviewed, particularly where findings are broken down by categories of students, it is possible that largely positive or negative experiences described for particular groups are not accurately reflecting student circumstances. For example, while the EU students interviewed as part of the project experienced relatively little hardship, it is quite possible that there will also be EU students with a less positive experience.

Scottish Government, SAAS and SFC worked collectively across the sector to raise awareness of the packages of support available. However it is evident that following this and perhaps due to the difficult circumstances colleges and universities found themselves working in during COVID-19 restrictions, that their own communications and advertising around the availability of Discretionary Funds and how to access the 'Summer Support package', were not received or fully understood by their students.

The remainder of this chapter outlines the key findings from the research covering issues related to employment (section 5.2), financial support (section 5.3) and concerns about the future (section 5.4). Finally, section 5.5 maps out some of the key policy developments that have taken place during this research and considers the extent to which there might still be policy gaps to address, in terms of the range of COVID-19 related student hardship issues identified in this research.

5.1 General observations

Most students spoken to have experienced some form of financial hardship, this would typically have resulted from a combination of loss of employment or the inability to secure a job over the summer as well as the inadequate provision of financial support over the lockdown period. The level of hardship differed widely between students, with some being able to cope and others facing severe hardship, pushing them into a spiral of debt.

Students in the most precarious circumstances tended to have limited or no access to informal financial and emotional support networks. These would include international, estranged and care experienced students.

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5.2 Employment

Many students were typically employed in the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 restrictions, such as the hospitality and retail sectors as well as in on-campus roles such as classroom / lab assistants, which were also the most likely to offer part-time opportunities. Interviewees reported that competition for any work within the hospitality and retail sectors increased dramatically over the lockdown period, coupled with limited opportunities for employment.

Where work was available over the period of lockdown, this was not always seen as suitable for the students, e.g. if they felt it was not safe to work in public facing roles or to use public transport to get to and from work. In some cases, students were prevented from leaving the house due to being in the 'shielding' population, which has had a detrimental impact on their employment options.

5.3 Financial support

Furlough arrangements for students working in the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 restrictions (e.g. hospitality and retail) were insufficient and only covered the small portion of the income the student would be expected to receive as part of their work, owing to the reliance on extra hours in many jobs in hospitality and retail. This was due to furlough amounts only reflecting contracted hours, while many students made a large proportion of their income from working overtime.

The role of wider financial support networks of the student should not be underestimated. In many cases students will rely on financial support from their families and partners, who may also have become affected by COVID-19 related loss of income.

Financial support arrangements were seen as insufficient in many cases, with long processing times and limited availability (or eligibility) of discretionary funds and in some cases universities and colleges offering no meaningful way of providing students with information of what they might be eligible for. Students commented that discretionary funds were not targeted at students who were most at need, such as care experienced or estranged students who typically had no other sources of support to rely on.

Students considered the UC application system as not set up well to target student applicants with the DWP seemingly unused to dealing with student applicants. This had a negative impact on the length of time taken to process UC applications.

Some students highlighted the disconnected nature of the support system, where financial support offered by one institution could be spent on covering the loans or debts accrued through other means. Overreliance on commercial credit was becoming a reality for many who could still access it.

Many students noted the need for HE student funding to be available over the Summer months.

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5.4 Concerns about the future

Even at the time when lockdown restrictions were being eased, students expressed real concern about being able to find part-time work. They were also concerned about the wider job market situation and the implications of this for their chosen careers.

Students in most precarious circumstances tended to have limited or no access to informal financial and emotional support networks. These would include international, estranged and care experienced students.

5.5 Policy developments so far and issues still to be addressed

Annex 3 includes details of policy developments so far to support students during COVID-19. These have been led by Scottish Government and administered by SAAS, with other inputs from the SFC and hosted on the Student Information Scotland (SIS) website. These measures are referred to as the 'Student Emergency Hardship Fund' and the 'Summer Hardship Fund'. The plan is comprised of two stages with different packages of support:

- Stage 1 which was launched in April 2020; and
- Stage 2 which was launched on 2 June 2020.

Looking across the different categories of support in the plan (Annex 3), evidently many of the hardship issues identified in this research are reflected in the student support policy developments that have taken place so far (e.g. accommodation, loss of income / employment, general financial hardship, care experienced students). For example, the plan has:

- Targeted support to address financial hardship in general through increased monies for discretionary funds and relaxation of limits / rules governing access to these funds;
- Specific support and new policy developments to help students with accommodation related issues;
- Focussed effort supporting students who are most in need (e.g. care experienced students);
- Continued focus on mental health and wellbeing support for students; and
- Some help for students to access summer employment (dedicated job opportunities section on the SIS website).

However, some potential gaps in provision are as follows:

- Advice and guidance for students on how to navigate the benefits system (i.e. UC) and other forms of support (e.g. council tax relief) in conjunction with financial support that may be available from SAAS / institutions (though it is noted that the SFC engaged with DWP to confirm that access to

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discretionary funds after FE course completion date should not impact subsequent summer benefits claims);

- Consideration of accommodation issues for students housed in the wider private rented sector (i.e. not PBSA or university / college run halls); and
- Consideration of future budget position in terms of continued and increased access to COVID-19 related discretionary funds.

Annex 1: Methodological limitations

There are some important limitations to this work.

In particular, results from this study do not provide any indication of the prevalence of the conditions described in this work in the wider population of students in Scotland. In other words, where we can be confident that instances of hardship described in the case studies are real and valid, that trajectories of disadvantage for different groups can be identified and outlined and comments on institutional shortcomings can be made, it is not possible to quantify the number of students across Scotland who have actually found themselves in hardship as a result of lockdown restrictions. This would have been achieved by undertaking quantitative research, such as a representative survey of students. Qualitative work undertaken as part of this project lends itself well to producing tightly defined research questions and aiding development of quantitative survey questionnaires, which could be used in future research.

A further research design limitation concerns the process for recruiting students to participate in the interviews as well as their online delivery mode. Recruitment mostly relied on students contacting the Scottish Government or SAAS to confirm their interest in taking part. It may have resulted in an overrepresentation of particularly motivated and vocal individuals, with more vulnerable and hard to reach students not being represented. There is also the risk of digital exclusion that some students are facing, which may have prevented those without access to their email accounts from responding to the calls for research participants. Furthermore, self-selection bias may be present in the findings, reflecting the fact that sampling was partially driven by students putting themselves forward to take part in the interviews, rather than being pre-identified as part of a formal sampling frame. The decision to structure the recruitment and interview process in this way was largely driven by the extremely time limited window for fieldwork, informed by urgent policy needs for this evidence and by ethical and data protection constraints.

Finally, within the timescales of the project, it was unfortunately not possible to seek responses from colleges, so the institutional perspective is limited to university specific HE issues (although wider issues, e.g. in relation to specific groups of students such as estranged students, were picked up to a degree in the responses from third sector organisations). Any further research should seek to engage with colleges (FE and HE) in a more direct manner.

Annex 2: Interview topic guide and questions

a) Discussion of current employment circumstances for the student .

- How will they have changed since the lockdown was introduced? (to include the number of hours worked prior to lockdown, type of contract student was on, discussion of sector and how these will have changed)
- Is it likely that these circumstances will change again imminently (for example, where a move from furlough to redundancy is anticipated)?

b) What are the alternative employment opportunities available to the student, if any?

- What options has the student explored and why did they decide to pursue them or not?
- Were there any limitations on why the student could not undertake the alternative employment (for example, personal circumstances, having to travel without means to do so, etc.)?

c) What does the change of income mean to the student in practical terms? (As part of this we will try to understand the scale of the change in income without asking about the precise numbers – for example we can probe about a proportion of income lost)

- To what extent does the student rely on this income to support them?
- What was the effect on student's living arrangements, wellbeing, relationships, ability to continue studies, immigration status?

d) What financial support has there been available to the student since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced?

- Has the student applied for any? If so, how did they find the process and what was the outcome?
- If challenges experienced when applying, what would have helped the student to overcome them?
- Was other supported offered/available to the student? To include assistance with finding work, emotional support, housing assistance.

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- ☐ are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- ☐ are available via an alternative route
- ☒ may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact socialresearch@gov.scot for further information.
- ☐ cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

Annex 3: Policy developments to address student hardship issues

Topic	Stage	Higher Education (college and university)	Further Education (college)
Student hardship: FUNDING	Stage 1 actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All HE bursaries, grants and loans continuing to be paid as planned; March 2020: £569,000 of re-distributed Discretionary Funds (DFs) made available to support HE Students; Upper limit of £4,000 per student removed; Guidance adjusted to allow support with ICT equipment or broadband services; April 2020: additional £2.2M Emergency Covid-19 HE Discretionary Funding; and £100,000 of emergency funding for students studying at private providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All FE bursaries continuing to be paid as planned; April 2020: Funds previously set aside for travel and childcare costs by colleges to be transferred to support DFs; Upper limit of £4,000 per student in DF awards removed; and £2M of student support funds made available earlier to support FE students.
	Action for Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New flexibility to carry forward unused DF money; Colleges and universities are allowed to continue to access their allocation of the £2.2M ring-fenced Covid-19 hardship fund until September 2020; Colleges and universities have early access to £11.4M DFs; and SAAS funded students who are studying at a college / university out with the UK will be able to access emergency funding through the previously announced £100k private provider fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) confirmed to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) that DF payments should not negatively impact benefits applications or assessments, providing those payments are made after the students' end of course date; The SFC issued guidance to colleges advising of this, and that payments from DFs can be made to bridge the gap between bursary payments ending and Universal Credit (UC) payments beginning; and The SFC will continue to engage with colleges to identify any future additional funding requirements and to identify if any AY 2020/21 funds need to be brought forward.
Student hardship: SUPPORTING	Stage 1 actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension of the Care-experienced Accommodation Grant so eligible students can access support from early 	NB: debt recovery and the Care-experienced Accommodation Grant are not applicable to FE.

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Topic	Stage	Higher Education (college and university)	Further Education (college)
STUDENTS MOST IN NEED		<p>April, 8 weeks earlier than usual, benefiting around 200 students at around £200,000; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of all 'new' debt recovery actions – benefiting up to 600 students. 	
	Action for Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In recognition of institutions deferring term start dates, SAAS will continue payments (bursaries / grants) in line with original (pre-COVID-19) term dates. This minimises the period of time between final 2019/20 bursary payment and the first 2020/21 payments; and • Suspension of all 'new' debt recovery actions continued for an additional 3 months - benefiting up to [600] students. 	
Student hardship: REPEAT YEARS	Action for Stage 2	Students in FE and HE are both able to access funding should they require to repeat a year of study. For those students who have exhausted their funding options and require to repeat a year of studies due to COVID-19, colleges (FE) and SAAS (HE) will consider their requests on compassionate grounds.	
SUMMER EMPLOYMENT	Action for Stage 2	Student Information Scotland (SIS) website has new dedicated job opportunities section	
Student hardship: SUPPORT WITH STUDENT ACCOMMODATION	Stage 1 action	<p>Halls of residence and Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) providers asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look sympathetically on requests to extend accommodation, or to break agreements early; and • Support students remaining in university, college or private sector student accommodation with the vital support and services. 	
	Action for Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronavirus (Scotland) (No 2) Bill came into force, on 27 May 2020. In relation to tenancy arrangements for students in halls of residence and PBSA, there will be a 7 day notice period for those who have already entered into a student residential tenancy agreement and have occupied the property; and a 28 day notice period for those who have already entered into a student residential tenancy but have not yet occupied the property and agreements entered into while the Act is in force. Students would only be able to use notice periods for COVID-19 specific reasons; and • The provisions of the Act relate to HE and FE students. Guidance on the provisions of the Act may be accessed here. 	

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Topic	Stage	Higher Education (college and university)	Further Education (college)
Student wellbeing: MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT	Stage 1 action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFC supporting HEIs to recruit additional counsellors and to offer counselling support to students in an appropriate non face to face format; • Think Positive, NUS Scotland's student mental health project (supported by the Scottish Government), have confirmed they are refocusing their work and the associated small grants scheme to address COVID-19 issues; and • We are working with the SFC to confirm funding for AY 2020/21, to continue to support institutions in the recruitment of counsellors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions in HE also apply to FE; and • SG are committed to achieving equity of access to counselling across colleges and universities and the SFC and Scottish Government will work closely with colleges and universities to work towards achieving this.
	Action for Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the SFC on flexibility as part of our ongoing commitment of £3.645M in AY 2020/21 and to explore how we can further support colleges and universities in the delivery of counselling services including enhancing access to online platforms and sharing best practice across the sector; • Funding has been agreed to support the extension of the NUS Scotland Think Positive Student Health Project Coordinator role to March 2021, with a focus on COVID-19 mental health support for students; and • The SFC will announce funding for AY 2020/21 for counsellors. 	As above.
Student communications	All stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAAS are working fully remotely and remain open to new and existing students, have been processing applications for AY 2020/21 from 1st April and are providing up-to-date information to students through their marketing, website and social media channels; • SAAS have published a live FAQ based on enquiries they have been receiving in relation to COVID-19; • Student Information Scotland (SIS) website is the central point for students to receive comprehensive advice on COVID-19 to students across FE and HE and also has a live COVID-19 FAQ; and • The SFC is also making advice available on their website. 	



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