

**UHI | INVERNESS**

## **Role Description and Applicant Brief**

# **Chair of the Board of Management**

**UHI Inverness**



# About UHI Inverness

UHI Inverness is a successful, high performing, and thriving tertiary institution providing a wide range of learning opportunities to local, regional, national and international learners. Our provision spans across the entirety of the SCQF from access courses to opportunities for study at postgraduate level, encompassing vocational and professional training and skills development opportunities. UHI Inverness delivers courses at the main campus in Inverness, at the Scottish School of Forestry at Balloch and the WASPS Inverness Creative Academy. We support work-based learning across a wide area, as well as contributing to the University's innovative and progressive use of technology to provide blended and online learning across the Highlands and Islands and beyond.

UHI Inverness delivers over one-quarter of the region's further and higher education provision spanning across the entirety of the SCQF levels 1-12. The college currently has circa 5,436 learners, 3,568 of whom are currently enrolled on FE programmes, over 700 of whom are our own modern apprentices, with >300 more being managing agents' apprentices and 2,256 of whom are on HE programmes as part of the University's provision.

Our focus is to support our students to gain valuable qualifications and secure rewarding careers and to play a key role in contributing to the continued prosperity of the Highlands. As such our broad curriculum base and more specialist curriculum is closely linked to the needs of our communities and businesses, and the wider economy.

At UHI Inverness students are welcomed to the complete learner journey. UHI is where learning means more. We are more than a College and more than a University. As one of the largest partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands, UHI Inverness offers a diverse and flexible tertiary education to all.

Our unique structure means we provide choice and flexibility. The choice to study part-time, full-time or online, and a university partnership which provides the flexibility to study the course that's right for each student, no matter where they live in the region via digital technology. Our curriculum is designed so students can enter and exit at any level in their student journey and leave with a qualification. We offer our students a seamless route from further education to higher education, meaning a 16-year-old can come to UHI on a school's link programme as part of their Senior Phase or an access course and leave with an honours degree – or more. We bring together the best of further education teaching, higher education teaching and work-based learning to deliver an innovative curriculum, which is enriched by the region and responds to the needs of industry and our communities. When students leave UHI Inverness, they will have the skills employers are looking for and be able to hit the ground running in their chosen career. The learning experience puts the student at the centre. The University of the Highlands and Islands partnership boasts high levels of student satisfaction in the 2024 National Student Survey (NSS) scoring above sector benchmark. We proudly sit 6<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of student satisfaction across Scotland's universities and are ranked first in Scotland when it comes to postgraduate student satisfaction. UHI Inverness also boasts exceptionally high student satisfaction at 92% across all student groups in our latest 2024 Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES).

UHI Inverness is currently one of the best performing colleges in Scotland and has been recognised as such by Education Scotland in successive reviews and in student outcomes data. Successful outcomes for full-time further education programmes are amongst the best in Scotland.



# Strategic plan 2022-2026

## Our Purpose

UHI Inverness as leaders in tertiary thinking and tertiary delivery, will have a transformational impact on the development and prospects of the people, communities and economy of the Highlands and Islands. We will design and deliver an innovative, integrated curriculum that spans all levels and types of qualifications, providing world-class education, training and research with local, national and international sustainable value.

## Our Values

Our values define who we are, our expectations of ourselves and of each other. They describe how we interact with one another and how we interact with our students and partners.

The values that underpin the culture of UHI Inverness are:

- Be Ambitious – through teamwork and partnership we have a desire and determination to collectively succeed.
- Be Bold – we have passion and courage to do what we say we will do and exceed expectations.
- Be Creative – we use our collective expertise and imagination to create new things and continuously improve what we do.

## Our Vision

As an ambitious, bold and creative tertiary institution, we will provide world class research-informed training and education. We will provide an excellent experience, tailored to the needs of our students and communities. Working closely with business, partners and stakeholders, we will support the sustainable and ethical development of the communities of the Highlands and Islands.

## Our Commitments

We will operate in an environment of mutual respect, behaving professionally at all times;

We will act with integrity, being honest and transparent in our work and putting the interests of our students first;

We will be accountable for our actions, do what we say we will do and exceed expectations;

We will be passionate in our work and in our ambition for our students, our college and our university.

## WE ARE A COLLEGE AND A UNIVERSITY

Whatever the ambition, we can offer a route to get you there. Our tertiary learning environment means we provide choice and flexibility, with fulltime, part-time and online study options and more than 200 courses to choose from, ranging from access courses to degrees and beyond.

## BEST OF BOTH

As the UK's most northerly city, Inverness offers the perfect balance – a vibrant social and cultural scene, set within the great outdoors. It is also a welcoming and safe city with relatively low crime levels and plenty of community spirit.

WE WORK WITH MORE THAN 400  
EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE TRAINING TO  
CIRCA

**700**

APPRENTICES INCLUDING FOUNDATION,  
MODERN AND GRADUATE



## RESEARCH

Nearly three quarters of UHI research submitted by the University of the Highlands and Islands is considered world leading and internationally excellent. UHI Inverness has established areas of expertise in biodiversity, ecology, genetics, sustainability, culture, equity and social justice. We are committed to delivering on sustainable development goals which address the biodiversity and climate emergencies and empower communities across our region. Our research team includes a thriving postgraduate community and is strengthening lengths between research and teaching.

\* 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF)

## STUDENT SATISFACTION

The University of the Highlands and Islands partnership achieved 81% overall satisfaction in the 2024 National Student Survey and UHI Inverness achieved 92% satisfaction in our most recent student survey.



## INSPIRATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

UHI Inverness is located at Inverness Campus, a growing hub for research, innovation and enterprise. It is a location of national and international significance for business, research and development and education.

## SUPPORT

We pride ourselves on the tailored approach we take to supporting students as individuals and students build a good rapport with the staff who support their learner journey. We care for our 6000 strong student population and support is available every step of the learner journey if needed. We pride ourselves on the high level of additional support which we provide to



our students which spans across traditional learning support, wellbeing and counselling support, through to financial and practical support. UHI Inverness was one of the first colleges in Scotland to provide a free breakfast and lunch to all students in recognition of the link to positive wellbeing and student outcomes. From practical to emotional, we are there for our students. This holistic approach to supporting students and their outcomes has been recognised through the achievement of a variety of national awards and commendations.

## STUDY ABROAD

UHI Inverness has more than 50 academic partnerships in over 20 countries across Asia, Europe and North America. Students can develop their personal skills and gain an international network of friends by studying for up to a year in a host country.

## INDUSTRY LINKS

Our curriculum is designed with industry in mind, and we work closely with businesses to ensure our courses remain relevant and students leave with the skills to succeed. Many of our courses enjoy industry accreditation and live projects and work experience are critical to our students' learning



## 2023-24 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The number of students who successfully complete their studies at the college, and progress to further study or employment, has risen steadily over several years. The college's further education provision is among the best in Scotland, with successful outcomes being amongst the best in the college sector. The college's Higher Education curriculum continues to grow and develop, increasingly informed by a growing research community.

# About UHI

The University of the Highlands and Islands was established in 2011 following the award of university title by the Privy Council and is the United Kingdom's leading integrated University encompassing both further and higher education.

UHI is an integrated university encompassing both further and higher education. UHI is more than a college and more than a university. We are part of a new breed of tertiary institutions, the only one in Scotland and one of only a few in Europe. We are a diverse and flexible partnership serving our communities and connected to their needs, this is our greatest strength and empowers us to deliver more.

Our distinctive partnership of 12 colleges and research institutions are locally based and rooted in communities, but with national and international reach, as part of a regional university structure. The academic structure of the university is built around two faculties: arts, humanities and business and science, health and engineering and a management school, which have three subject networks, each managing their curriculum.

Our reputation is built on our innovative approach to learning and our distinctive research and curriculum – all enriched by the people, natural environment, economy, culture and heritage of the Highlands and Islands and its communities. In 2021/22 we had circa 36,000 students at the heart of our university partnership and we are measured by their success. Our curriculum portfolio across both further and

higher education is designed to meet current and future local and regional needs and to attract other students to the Highlands and Islands to study. We take a very flexible approach to the delivery of our programmes and deliver these across all our academic partners.

Our provision is designed for maximum flexibility for both individuals and business. We deliver workshops, short courses, accredited modules and programmes in a range of different subject areas. All of the learning opportunities are designed to help you develop skills, knowledge and confidence, helping support the growth and development your business at the same time.

Our learning opportunities are often supported by technology, making them highly flexible, especially for busy professionals and busy organisations. Learning content is made available 24/7 and we have a virtual classroom tool to help provide opportunities for people to meet and discuss issues in real time, while minimising the personal and business inconvenience of extensive travel and time away from the office.

For business we can deliver in whatever way works best for the business, there is the potential for considerable variation between traditional delivery approaches and those supported by technology. Our aim is to take advantage of appropriate technology solutions to help ensure minimum disruption to business and individuals but also to provide a supportive learning environment that ensures that maximum value is gained by the individual and employer.



# The Board of Management

## Governance and Structure

The UHI Inverness Board of Management is charged with setting the strategic direction for the College.

The Board of Management is essential to the development and achievement of the strategic aims and objectives of the College. The Board of Management has overall strategic responsibility for developing, monitoring and enhancing the business of UHI Inverness, determining its future direction and fostering an environment in which our mission is achieved and the potential of all learners is maximised.

The Board of Management must monitor and observe compliance with the statutes, ordinances and provisions regulating UHI Inverness and its framework of governance and, subject to these, take all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to UHI Inverness.

## About our Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for supporting and enhancing the development and implementation of the objectives of the College, approval of our Strategic Plan and Regional Outcome Agreement, approval of end of year annual report and accounts, approval of annual budgets, final consideration of the Annual Audit Report, approval of the strategic risk register, acquisition and disposal of heritable property, subject to approval of the Scottish Funding Council, appointment and removal of the Principal, appointment and removal of the Governance Officer, approval of the Student's Association constitution and the election regulations for student officers and the delegation of functions of the Board including remits of Committees, Scheme of Delegation and the making, amendment and revocation of the Standing Orders of the Board.

Operational management is delegated to the College Executive - Professor Chris O'Neil and his Executive Management Team. The Board is accountable to a range of stakeholders including regional partners and community, the Scottish Funding Council, the Regional Strategic Body and Scottish Ministers.

**The** Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill 2013 means that colleges are funded on a regional basis. UHI Inverness is assigned to the University of the Highlands and Islands as the regional strategic body charged with oversight of the college.

## Code of Conduct

UHI Inverness receives public funding from the Scottish Parliament (through UHI as the Regional Strategic Body) and other sources. The Board of Management therefore has to adhere to and demonstrate the highest standards of corporate governance and public accountability.

The Scottish public has high expectations of those who serve on the boards of public bodies. The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 provided for a new Code of Conduct. As a member of the Board of Management, it is your responsibility to make sure that your actions comply with this Code of Conduct.

The general principles upon which the Code of Conduct is based are public service; duty, selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability and stewardship; openness; honesty; leadership and respect.

Members must register and declare all interests as required by the Standards Commission for Scotland and these are published on the College website and in the annual accounts.

Members bring their skills, knowledge and experience into UHI Inverness. They also act as ambassadors to promote UHI Inverness in the wider community.



## **Independence**

The Board of Management is an autonomous body: at least 50% of the membership is from external appointments. These non- executive members are an essential part of the system of checks and balances. Non-executive Board members are from the public, voluntary, business and commercial sectors.

To assist the autonomy of the Board, it is supported by an independent Governance Officer. The Governance Officer is the only staff member in the College not appointed by the Principal. The Governance Officer to the Board of Management works directly to and for the Board to ensure it receives the information it needs in an appropriate format to enable it to discharge its duties.

Members bring their skills, knowledge and experience into UHI Inverness. They also act as ambassadors to promote UHI Inverness in the wider community.

## **Term of office**

The normal term of office for a member is four years, with the opportunity for re-appointment to serve for a further four years.

Board members are subject to a Standard PVG Disclosure check as part of the appointment process.

## **Attendance at meetings**

The Board meets at least four times a year. Meetings last for approximately 2.5 hours, from: 4.30pm – 7.00pm.

In addition, the Board normally holds one 'away day' each year. This enables a concentrated focus on issues such as strategic planning and Board member development.

The Board has a number of Standing Committees. The Chair is a member of the Chairs, Search and Nomination and Performance, Review and Remuneration Committees and an ex officio member of all other committees, with the exception of the Audit Committee.

A Chair can typically be expected to devote about 20 days annually to attending meetings. There will also be additional induction and training attendance requirements and two continuous professional development sessions.

Board members are not remunerated for their work although reasonable travel costs can be reimbursed.

Board members are subject to a Standard Disclosure check as part of the appointment process.

# Board of Management Chair

## Role Description

The Chair of the Board of Management is appointed by the Regional Strategic Body to chair meetings of the board. The Chair is responsible for providing effective leadership of the Board of Management and, in association with the Governance Officer, its efficient operation by:

- ensuring the efficient conduct of the business of Board meetings, following established and agreed procedures
- taking care that the business of Board committees is reported appropriately to the Board of Management
- Ensuring that the appropriate business is reported to the Further Education Regional Board and representing the College at meetings of the FE Regional Board
- ensuring that the views of all Board members are sought at meetings of the Board and that Board members work together effectively as a team.
- being satisfied that the Nine Principles of Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership, public service and respect) are observed in all board business.

### **The Chair shall ensure that the Board fulfils its duties in:**

- articulating the vision of the College as an academic partner and assigned college of UHI
- maintaining and developing the ethos of the College
- setting corporate objectives in line with local outcome agreement with UHI
- assessing the performance of the Principal and Chief Executive
- establishing high standards of integrity in the conduct of Board business
- monitoring the financial health and compliance of the College in line with the Local Financial Memorandum agreed with UHI.
- Monitoring the college's achievement of its agreed outcome measures
- Working effectively with the FE Regional Board

**The Chair shall seek to promote the best interests of the College wherever possible, be its ambassador, and represent it at meetings, presentations and conferences.**

### **Operation of the Board**

The Chair of the Board of Management:

- will be expected to develop an effective working relationship with the Chair of the FE Regional Board
- will be expected to develop effective working relationships with the Governance Officer to the Board of Management and the Principal in order to promote and enhance the good governance of the College
- shall call, agree the agenda for, and preside at meetings of the Board of Management.
- shall have a second or casting vote at meetings of the Board where there is an equal division of votes on an issue
- may act on behalf of the Board between meetings on matters delegated by it or on routine matters such as the signing of documents, or in response to approaches from external organisations on issues which do not require approval by the Board. Any such actions will be reported to the Board.



Exceptional circumstances may arise where an urgent decision is required and it is not possible to convene a meeting of the Board. In such circumstances the Principal (or in his or her absence, a designated senior post holder) shall seek the approval of the Chair (or in his or her absence the Vice Chair). In reaching a decision, the Principal (or senior post holder) and or Chair (or Vice Chair) shall seek where possible to consult with other Board members. Any decisions taken in these circumstances must be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

## **Performance of the Board and individual Board members**

The Chair:

- should ensure that the Board has established performance indicators against which to measure its performance
- should ensure that each Board member has the opportunity to discuss his or her contribution and development needs at least annually
- is expected to promote critical self-assessment of Board performance and processes and make an active contribution to the annual performance assessment of the governance of the College
- shall support the Governance Officer to the Board of Management in the development and delivery of associated performance assessment action plans and Board development programmes
- Shall address any unauthorised absence of a Board member from the Board or any committee for two consecutive meetings

## **Responsibilities in respect of the Principal and the Governance Officer to the Board of Management**

The Chair is responsible for promoting a constructive and supportive working relationship with the Principal, to assist them in achieving agreed objectives while maintaining a professional relationship at all times. The Chair and the Principal shall meet regularly for consultation and communication, and in particular for the following purposes:

- briefing of the Chair by the Principal on matters of interest and importance and vice versa
- updating each other on key events and progress since the previous meeting
- informal exploration of differences of opinion as they arise and managing a resolution to these
- agenda setting, in consultation with the Governance Officer to the Board of Management
- early warning of problems which may arise for the college
- the opportunity for informal discussions relating to working practice.

**The Chair:**

- shall undertake the annual appraisal of the Principal and ensure that the Principal has access to appropriate opportunities for development and training.
- offer both general and specific support to the Principal where strategic, major or contentious issues are involved
- shall undertake the annual appraisal of the Governance Officer and ensure that they have access to appropriate opportunities for development and training.
- shall assist in compiling job descriptions and personnel specifications of the Principal, other designated senior post holders and the Governance Officer to the Board of Management and shall supervise arrangements for the selection process.

# Person Specification

## General Skills and Personal Qualities

<p><b>Leadership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing effective leadership to the Board of Management and Principal and Senior Team</li> <li>• Having a strong understanding of governance</li> <li>• Being clear and concise at all times</li> <li>• Being confident, able to make and be accountable for decisions</li> <li>• Showing honesty and integrity</li> <li>• A commitment to equality and diversity</li> </ul>	<p>We will ask you to provide example of situations where you have led teams to successful outcomes</p> <p>This may have been in employment, through working in the community or in a voluntary capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>Working collaboratively and constructively with others</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appreciating the knowledge/skills of colleagues</li> <li>• supporting colleagues whenever possible</li> <li>• sharing knowledge at every opportunity</li> <li>• showing respect for colleagues and stakeholders</li> <li>• striving to achieve consensus</li> <li>• able to accept a consensus decision even if it goes against a personal view</li> </ul>	<p>During the interview we will ask you to give us some practical examples of situations where you have worked collaboratively and constructively with others</p> <p>This may have been in employment, through working in the community or in a voluntary capacity</p>
<p><b>Challenging the views of others in a constructive and supportive way</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being confident in questioning proposals and debating issues</li> <li>• putting forward your views in an objective way</li> <li>• not being too dogmatic about your own perspective</li> <li>• helping others to consider their own position in a non-confrontational way</li> </ul>	<p>We will assess this by asking you to complete a practical exercise, as part of the interview, which will allow you to demonstrate this skill</p> <p>We will also have a follow up discussion which will enable us to ask some further questions</p>
<p><b>Seeing the 'bigger picture'</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to look ahead and consider issues/topics within different timeframes</li> <li>• identifying relevant implications from what is being discussed such</li> </ul>	<p>We will assess this by asking you to complete a practical exercise, as part of the interview, which will allow you# to demonstrate this skill</p>

	<p>as challenges, risks etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seeing beyond your own personal experience or specialism and considering other information and perspectives</li> <li>• does not take a short term, parochial view</li> </ul>	<p>We will also have a follow up discussion which will enable us to ask some further questions</p>
<p><b>Analysing information and making decisions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using information which is available to reach conclusions</li> <li>• clearly explain how conclusions have been reached</li> <li>• identifying some of the implications associated with what you are considering – priorities, risks, opportunities etc.</li> <li>• recognising when information is limited and where more information might be needed</li> <li>• being able to balance a number of different considerations</li> </ul>	<p>We will assess this by asking you to complete a practical exercise, as part of the interview, which will allow you to demonstrate this skill</p> <p>We will also have a follow up discussion which will enable us to ask some further questions</p>
<p><b>Communicating effectively</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being focussed and succinct in your communication with good listening skills</li> <li>• confident in expressing views and opinions in a group setting</li> <li>• persuasive, able to influence others to your own perspective</li> <li>• able to adapt your style appropriately for different situations</li> <li>• satisfactory written skills</li> </ul>	<p>We will assess your written skills from the completion of your written application. We will assess your verbal skills through your responses to the practical exercise and the interview</p>
<p><b>Enthusiastic and passionate about education</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge/understanding of further and higher education and the University's mission</li> <li>• able to explain how further/higher education have benefited yourself and how they can benefit the wider community</li> <li>• can enthuse others about education</li> </ul>	<p>We will want you to tell us about your personal interest in and enthusiasm for education</p> <p>We will also have a discussion with you about this during the interview, as well as assessing your knowledge/ understanding of the University</p>

# Useful Information

The College website provides comprehensive information about the College and Board:

<https://www.inverness.uhi.ac.uk/>

Photos and brief biographies of current Board members, together with key college and sector publications can be found at:

[About us - Board of management \(uhi.ac.uk\)](#)

Further information on the University of the Highlands and Islands can be found at: [www.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.uhi.ac.uk)