UHI | INVERNESS

MINUTES of the MEETING of the LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 02 December 2025.

PRESENT:	Dee Bird, Arvinder Kainth, Heather Keys, Chloe Young, Victoria Erasmus, John Pocock, Oliver Sweeney, Chris O'Neil, Annie Nelson, David Stewart & Paul Shanks
CHAIR:	Dee Bird
APOLOGIES:	Wendy Grindle, Anthony Standing, The Quality Manager & Director of Research for Biodiversity and Freshwater
IN ATTENDANCE:	Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality Director of Research for Centre for Living Sustainability Tertiary Education Leader (TEL) for Management, Health and Creative Arts Tertiary Education Leader (TEL) Technology, Environment and Education Governance Officer

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Governance Officer confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

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

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

a.) **Minutes of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 09 September 2025**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 09 September 2025 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

b.) Confidential Note (CN-01-092025) of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 09 September 2025

The Confidential Note (CN-01-092025) of the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee held on 09 September 2025 was **AGREED** as a correct record.

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

- **KPI Matrix – ONGOING -** Suggestion has been made for Research KPIs to be added to the next report.
  Update at 02/12/2025: All KPI measures will be reviewed during Board's self-evaluation session in January 2026. Once the format of the new KPI Matrix report has been agreed both Research Directors will be contacted to discuss the specific research KPIs.

- **Research Update – COMPLETE -** Research agenda item to be moved higher up on the agenda.
  Decision: It was **AGREED** that this action can be removed from the list.

3. POLICY FOR APPROVAL

a.) Student Conduct Policy

The Vice Principal Curriculum, Student Experience & Quality spoke to her report and asked the Committee to approve the policy and recommend for full Board approval. The policy has been in place since 2019 and is an UHI partnership-wide policy.

There were minor changes to the document:

- Modern Apprentices have been mentioned in the policy scope
- Accommodation details have been added to widen the scope for any misconduct that could take place at the residency halls
- Sections 2.5 & 2.6 were updated to provide clarity about the terms
- Section 4.8 updated to include HISA and UHI Inverness when a possible joint investigation if needed

The Committee welcomed the report and positively commented on HISA being included in the scope of the policy.

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

Decision: The Committee **APPROVED** the Student Conduct Policy and recommended for approval by the Board.

4. EARLY STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

The Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality spoke to the report on behalf of the Quality Manager and provided the Committee with the high-level outcomes from the early all-student survey. The Early Student Experience Survey (ESES) is conducted annually at the start of the academic year to gather feedback from students at UHI Inverness on their initial experience. To continue the valued collaboration with local charities, the college partnered this year with Highland and Islands Blood Bikes (HAIBB)—a volunteer-led organisation that delivers vital medical supplies for the NHS free of charge. Their involvement helped raise awareness of the ESES survey while boosting their profile within student community, aligning with college's wider commitment to engagement and collective responsibility.

Following highlights were reported:

- Survey Participation
  - 2,023 students took part in the survey.
  - Overall response rate was 63%, up from 61% last year (+2%).
- Overall Results
  - Overall satisfaction was 96%, a slight increase from last year's 95.7% (+0.3%).
  - Student satisfaction met the 2025-26 KPI (96%) and surpassed the target response rate of 60% (+3.0).
- Additional Information
  - A total of 1,599 free text comments were received.

- Total donation to HAIBB was £1662 (survey plus cake stall, raffle and donations)

The Committee welcomed the report and congratulated all staff at UHI Inverness on such fantastic survey results. The Members encouraged the college to include the results achieved in marketing materials going forward.

Discussion about low response rates within a number of areas and measures put in place for introduction of tailored focus approaches to address the gaps took place.

The Committee would welcome more details added to the scope of the report, e.g. percentage of student population in regard to specific student groups to provide next level of details. The Members suggested that a new column could be added to show percentage levels against the actual numbers to see correlations between both.

Action 1: Survey reports to be reviewed to include greater detail in regard to student population.

Discussion about HISA related survey questions took place. The Committee expressed interest in student societies and clubs and approaches taken to address free comments left by students. The Committee Member, Annie Nelson, offered support to Chloe Young in regard to Student Association being more visible within wider student community.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality for her detailed update.

5. RESEARCH UPDATE – HIGHLIGHTS & CHALLENGES

The Director of Research for Centre for Living Sustainability provided the Committee with a brief update on recent developments within the Research area.

Following items had been highlighted:

- An aim to influence policy and practice addressing child and human rights and build sustainability through research that provides evidence about the realities of people's lives

  - Ongoing work on Child and Youth rights – collaboration with Highland Council
  - Collaboration with My Highland Future to address child poverty
- Rising numbers of postgraduate and MRes students – 23 to date with a number of international students attracted
- Media exposure – BBC - Landwart and Channel 4
- Business Competition running for the 20th year

The Principal added that the Professional Development Manager has recently published an article in the Cairn Journal run by College Development Network, CDN, about introductory research processes and approaches at UHI Inverness.

The Committee welcomed the report and positively commented on all development to date.

The Committee would welcome a short Creative Session to highlight the importance of Research within local community based on a small number, 2-3, of case studies.

Action 2: Research Creative Session to take place in 2026 to showcase a number of case studies highlighting collaboration with local communities.

The Chair thanked the Director of Research for Centre for Living Sustainability for her detailed report.

6. KPI MATRIX

The Principal spoke to the report on behalf of the Operations and Commercial Manager. Due to time constraints the Committee asked the Principal to briefly comment on highlights only.

Paul Shanks joined the meeting.

The Committee welcomed the update and a short discussion about GA and MA targets and mental health provision took place. The Committee expressed concerns about the PLSP process in place and reasons behind the unmet target. The Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality added that

college has abbreviated the form and is planning focus sessions for February 2026 to look at approaches to promote mainstream accessibility support.

The Chair thanked the Principal for his update.

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT – SELF EVALUATION & ACTION PLAN

The Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality spoke to the SEAP report. The introduction of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework placed a requirement on institutions in Scotland to produce and submit a Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) to SFC as part of these arrangements. The report was developed to meet these requirements and was submitted to UHI, as the RSB, for submission to the SFC on 27th November. This is the second cycle of the new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework, and the report is college's second publication. The previous SEAP, for 2023/24, was recognised by QAA, SFC and CDN as worthy to be shared across the sector to support emerging best practice. To date, UHI Inverness have not had engagement with the SFC. This disparity was raised last academic year and again this academic year in the UHI Quality Assurance and Enhancement committee and directly with the UHI Dean of Learning, Teaching and Students.

David Stewart left the meeting.

The Committee welcomed the report and congratulated the Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality and teams involved on their fantastic work, professional approach in producing an incredibly valuable report for the organisation. The Members agreed that this report should be used as an example of excellent practice for the sector and a discussion about approaches to do so took place.

The Committee expressed concerns about the college not being able to get in direct contact with the Scottish Funding Council to submit their report and receive direct feedback. There is a risk associated with the fact that the individuality of the college's work could be misrepresented in terms of an overall report submitted to the SFC by the RSB on behalf of the whole partnership and this could be affecting colleges as individual entities serving their communities. The Committee agreed

that a partnership-wide approach would be needed to express Boards' concerns to the RSB in regard to the SEAP report.

Action 3: Meeting to be organised with EO and LTR Chairs from across the partnership to address concerns regarding SEAP report being submitted to the SFC by the RSB on behalf of all partners.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality for her detailed report and the Committee for an excellent discussion.

8. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Committee were provided with a confidential update in respect of Annual Safeguarding Report (CN-LTR-01-122025).

Victoria Erasmus left the meeting.

9. LEARNING & TEACHING REVIEW

The Tertiary Education Leader for Management, Health & Creative Arts spoke to her report which provided the Committee with a summary of strengths and enhancement areas from the learning and teaching reviews. The process for the internal review of learning & teaching forms part of the quality enhancement arrangements at UHI Inverness. Closely aligned to Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES), the model aims to complement the existing mechanisms of self-reflection and student feedback to ensure a robust evaluation of learning and teaching to support practice. During 2024-25, 63 reviews were scheduled, compared to 54 in the previous year. 43 reviews were completed, compared to 39 the previous year. This incremental growth was expected, as new reviewers are trained, and existing reviewers are no longer able to take part. A range of SCQF levels were covered by the reviews from SCQF level 3 to level 11. The review team consisted of a bank of experienced staff from across college curriculum areas, across a range of roles. The report highlighted the areas of strength, enhancement points, feedback received from staff and students, summary of themes for 2024/25 and new themes identified for 2025/26.

The Committee welcomed the report and positively commented on number of reviews that took place in 2024/25. Discussion about the selection process of staff,

improvements made over the years and areas for further development took place. The Committee would encourage the area managers to provide a clear message going out to staff selected for the reviews that the process is looking for examples of best practice and is not linked to performance management.

The Chair thanked the Tertiary Education Leader for Management, Health & Creative Arts for her detailed report.

10. CURRICULUM UPDATE

Due to time constraint the Tertiary Education Leader for Management, Health & Creative Arts provided the Committee with highlights only in regard to the Curriculum Update.

The Committee welcomed the update, and the Chair thanked the Tertiary Education Leader for Management, Health & Creative Arts for her detailed report.

11. HISA UPDATE

The Student President spoke to her report and provided the Committee with a summary of the activity for student engagement YTD for the current academic year.

Following items have been highlighted:

- Staffing update – by-elections
- CEO update – interviews taking place this week
- Student Voice Representatives Recruitment – 112 to date
- List of recent and upcoming events

The Committee welcomed the report and positively commented on the growing list of events organised to date.

Discussion about current levels of student engagement, feedback received from the ESES and measures being put in place to address all comments received took place.

The Chair thanked the Student President for her detailed update.

12. QUARTER 1 COMPLAINTS REPORT FOR 2025-26

The report had been taken as read with comments to be sent to the Governance Officer.

13. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES - CONFIDENTIAL

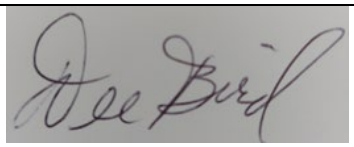
The Committee noted the minutes of the Student Journey and Enhancement Committee Meetings held on 17 September 2025 and 22 October 2025. The Committee also noted the approved minutes of the Research and Innovation Committee held on 19 June 2025.

16. AOCB

Nothing raised.

The Chair thanked all who contributed papers and the Committee Members for an interesting meeting.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY 10th March 2026 AT 4.30 P.M.

Signed by the Chair: 

Date: 02/12/2026