CHI INVERNESS Self Evaluation 8 Action Plan

2023-24

Lindsay Snodgrass (Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience) & Liz Cook (Quality Manager)

inverness-uhi-ac-uk

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Institute details

1.1 Name of Institute UHI Inverness

1.2 Author(s)

Lindsay Snodgrass (Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience) & Liz Cook (Quality Manager)

1.3 Date of submission 29th November 2024

1.4 Statement of assurance

As the Accountable Officer for UHI Inverness (Inverness College), I confirm that I have considered the institution's arrangements for the management of academic standards and the quality of the learning experience for AY 2023/24, including the scope and impact of these. I further confirm that I am satisfied that the institution has adequate and effective arrangements to maintain standards and to assure and enhance the quality of its provision. I can therefore provide assurance to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) that the academic standards and the quality of the learning provision at this institution continue to meet the requirements set by SFC.

Accountable Officer (Name): Chris O'Neil Date: 25/11/2024

Signature:



UHI Inverness in AY 23/24

Our Context

UHI Inverness is one of the best performing colleges in Scotland. We perform well above sector benchmarks across all key measures. Over the past 3 years, together with all our colleagues, we have transformed the performance and culture of our institution through:

- Embedding mechanisms which put the learner voice at the centre of our work.
- Implementing a collaborative model of leadership.
- Investing in professional development as part of our Talent Management strategy.
- Implementing a streamlined curriculum management model.
- Embedding and extending our model of learner support.
- Introducing innovative approaches to curriculum design.
- Implementing a new curriculum planning and review process, including course level costing and staff deployment, informed by Sector Development Plans.
 - Engaging curriculum managers to participate in data analysis to support continuous improvement.
- Further developing our quality enhancement planning and a new quality enhancement tracker.
 - Implementing a KPI matrix, linked to our strategic plan and strategic objectives.

These approaches are under constant review to support continuous improvement, and many have been highlighted as sector leading in successive Education Scotland reviews.

UHI Inverness is one of the largest academic partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and in AY 23/24 delivered one-quarter of UHI's further education (FE) credits and 22.4% of UHI's higher education (HE) enrolments. The UHI is the Regional Strategic Body for FE in the Highlands and Islands region and distributes SFC credit funding to the partnership. (UHI SEAP 2024, Section 2, Institutional Context)

Our provision spans across the entirety of the SCQF levels 1-12. In AY 23/24, the college had circa 6,076 learners, 3,774 of whom were enrolled on FE programmes, over 780 of whom were our own Modern Apprentices, with >300 more being managing agents' apprentices. 2,302 of our learners were on HE programmes, as part of the University's provision, 90 of whom were Graduate Apprentices and 20 of whom were Postgraduate research learners (Appendix 1, Figure 1).

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is delivered through 4 broad Schools:

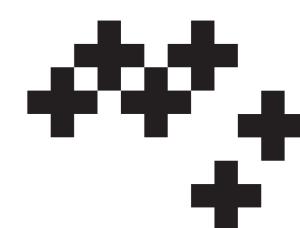
- + Business and Creative Industries
- + Care, Sports, Arts, Drama and Humanities
- + Forestry, Applied Science, Computing and Education
- + Engineering & Construction

Within the 4 Schools, our provision covers 16 subject areas and includes specialist provision within the Scottish School of Forestry and a significant and growing number of work-based learners. Circa 650 school pupils, aged 15-17, are enrolled on Senior Phase school-link programmes spanning SCQF levels 2-7. We have a growing demand for places, with applications up by 17% over the last 3 years, but are unable to meet this demand, largely due to restrictions in our SFC credit allocation (Appendix 1, Figure 2). As a partnership, UHI is now the largest college provider of work-based learning in Scotland, with UHI Inverness delivering 60% of UHI's MA provision. However, the reduction in SDS funding has meant that we are not able to meet employer demand for Modern Apprenticeship places across the region.

The labour market in the Inverness and Inner Moray Firth area poses significant economic opportunities (Appendix 1, Diagram 1), not least the Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, major growth in the renewable energy sector, and an ageing demographic leading to an increase in demand for health and social care graduates. Such opportunities mean the employment rate among 16–24-year-olds is very high locally, at 69.4% compared to the Scotland average of 55.9% (2023 Scottish Government data). The demand for labour poses an ongoing challenge and the college continues to note a strong correlation between easy access to paid related employment and the challenge to our learner retention in particular curriculum areas.

Our Learners

Over 32% of our learners in AY 23/24 were between the ages of 16 and 19 and 30% of our activity was delivered to learners living in remote and rural areas; 4% being delivered to those living in the 10% most deprived postcode areas, which reflects the Highland/Inner Moray Firth area demographic; and 4% of our activity delivered to care experienced learners. Last AY, our learners were split between 49.1% female, 50.2.3% male, and 0.7% other. A growing proportion of our learners declare a disability and in AY 23/24 this group accounted for 26% rising to 31% in AY 24/25 to date.



Learner Outcomes

Overall success for FE FT increased to 71.6% in AY 23/24, up from 68.5% in 22-23. UHI Inverness FE outcomes compare well to the latest published sector benchmarks for both AY 22/23 and 23/24; performing better for each KPI for both FT and PT programmes (Appendix 1, Table 1).

HE FT overall success increased from 63.9% to 66.6% in AY 23/24 but HE PT overall success saw a decrease. Whilst our success rates in HNC/ Ds are below the sector benchmark, there is a 3-year improving trend in overall success rates, and a corresponding reduction in withdrawals and partial successes (Appendix 1, Table 2). However, our HNC/D outcomes continue to be below sector benchmark and are therefore a continued area of development.

Learner Retention

Early withdrawals decreased in AY 23/24 for both FE and HE FT learners as compared to AY 22/23 (Appendix 1, Figure 6). There has been a marginal increase in withdrawals for FE PT learners and the increase in HE PT early withdrawals represents a trend over the last 3 years (Appendix 1, Table 6). Further withdrawals decreased across all levels and modes of study in AY 23-24 (Appendix 1, Table 6).

Targeting Our Resource

Our management structure continues to evolve in response to the on-going need for efficiency. In AY 22/23 we reviewed our EMT and curriculum management structures which has led to:

- + A further reduced EMT consisting of Principal and two Vice Principals.
- + The introduction of a new curriculum leadership structure.
- + The introduction of a new role Curriculum Quality Leads - which have a specific focus on quality enhancement, digital technology, and learner recruitment across our 4 curriculum Schools.
- + Commitment to additional resource in Wellbeing & Learning Support Services to meet the growing volume and complexity of learner need.

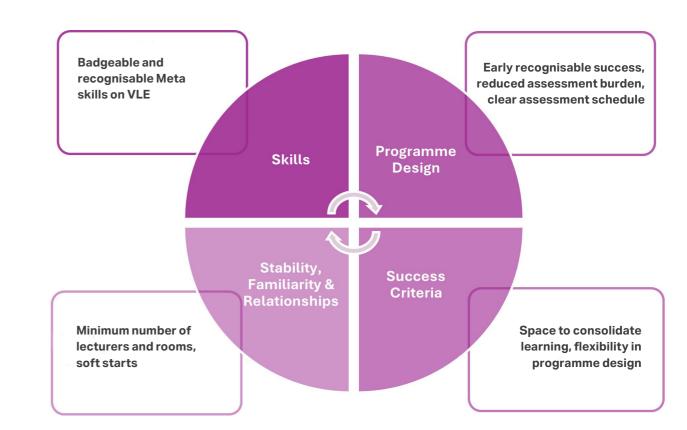
In AY 23/24, the college employed circa 348 FTE staff (permanent and fixed but excluding variable supply staff) of which 153 FTE were teaching staff and has an annual turnover of £30 million.

1. Excellence in learning, teaching and assessment

Curriculum planning, design and delivery

Design Principles

Our work around curriculum and programme design has been identified as a key strength. To support improved retention and outcomes, we have developed and embedded a set of course Design Principles based around structural change to programme design.



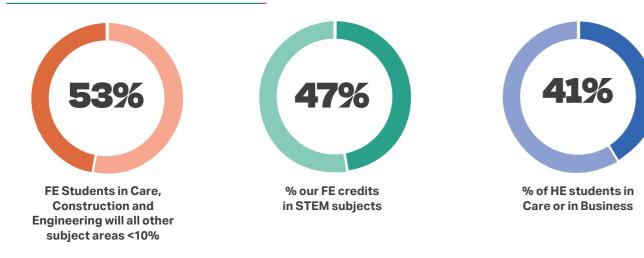


The Design Principles were piloted in AY 22/23 across a selection of Level 4/5 programmes. Across the pilot programmes, this led to an 8.9% improvement in outcomes, 6.5% reduction in withdrawals, and an improvement of 2.4% in partial success. This contributed to a 9.4% improvement in our overall FT FE successful outcomes in AY 22/23.



The pilot was extended in AY 23/24 to include all Level 4/5 programmes leading to an improvement of 8.2% across these programmes (Appendix 1, Table 4) and being instrumental in achieving our overall 71.6% successful outcomes in FT FE (Appendix 1, Table 1). The Design Principles were recognised as Highly Effective Practice as part of the Education Scotland Thematic Review of Care and are part of our continued work around the CDN Trauma Informed College programme and our focus on HN outcomes.

Curriculum Developments



Sector development plans and strong employer engagement are core to our curriculum planning, meaning our curriculum is responsive to meeting the needs of local and regional employers and addressing key sector demands:

Forestry

During AY 22/23 and 23/24, we worked with industry and key stakeholders to re-design the curriculum to address declining applications, retention and outcomes in both FE and HE programmes in the *Scottish School of Forestry (SSF).*

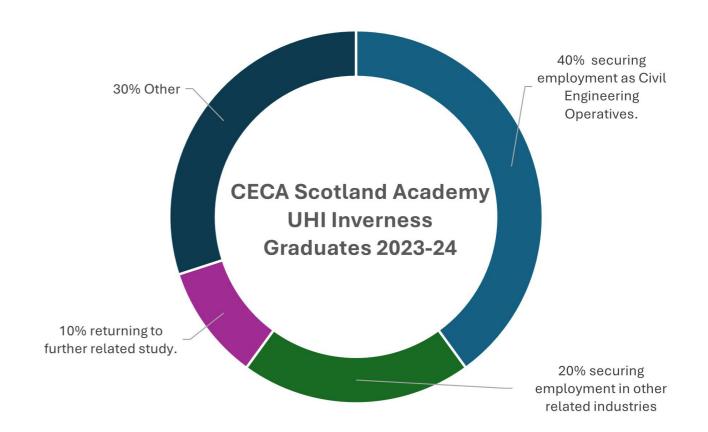
The development of a sector development plan identified the lack of currency of our qualifications. Based on feedback from key external stakeholders, changes have been made to SCQF Level 4-6 programmes giving a greater focus on the skills required to work in the industry and to support progression. Curriculum redesign is starting to have a positive impact, with a 14% increase in applications for AY 24/25. Further Withdrawals fell in 23/24, from 7.8% in AY22/23, to 4.8% due to in year changes informed by the wider curriculum redesign.

Alongside these developments, a review of HE provision identified a volume of learners transferring to part time or not completing their qualifications due to securing employment during their work placement year. Through the same process, the Forestry and Treescapes Management BScH degree has been re-designed to provide a workbased pathway for those securing employment. This has been designed to align with the Graduate Apprenticeship model and has resulted in an 8% increase in full-time year 1 Forestry applications.

CECA Scotland Academy (NPA Construction Operations)

CECA Scotland Academy is a collaborative project led by Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Scotland, supported by Energy Skills Partnership (ESP), and delivered by UHI Inverness and Fife College. In AY 23/24 both colleges delivered the first pilot programme.

With industry partners, the 18-week CECA Scotland Academy was co-designed to address the skills gap for Civil Engineering Operatives. CECA Scotland Academy culminates in a graduation and employment fair where all graduates are guaranteed an interview with a local contractor. Employers have committed to offer employment to at least 70% of graduates across the UHI Inverness and Fife cohorts. The first graduates of UHI Inverness have seen excellent success:





Modern and Graduate Apprenticeship Growth

Our responsive curriculum planning and design process has aligned our curriculum to the skills and educational needs across our region, influenced by our Sector Development Plans. This has led to growth in the development of both Graduate and Modern Apprenticeships, which are ongoing in response to employer needs and within the context of high employment locally. Our Business Solutions Team provide a single contact point to firms and act as a broker with curriculum teams to support employer-responsive delivery (Appendix 1, Figures 3 & 4).

Professional development

Professional Development Pathways

Through AY 23/24, we have invested in professional development to ensure a responsive pedagogical approach to further support retention and successful outcomes. The UHI Inverness *Professional Development Pathway for Lecturers (Appendix 2, Figure1)* provides a structured framework from initial learning and teaching induction through to the continued development of experienced practitioners. The framework is underpinned by the <u>GTCS Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges and the UHI Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy.</u>

Our investment in this professional development pathway has led to high numbers of lecturing staff holding the *Tertiary Qualification for Further Education* (Level 9 & 11) and subsequent high levels of lecturing staff holding GTCS registration (*Appendix 2, Figure 2*). Our 2024 Education Scotland review recognised our Professional Development Pathway as *Highly Effective Practice* and our levels of TQFE qualified and GTCS registered staff are sector leading. Learner feedback also shows an improving 3-year trend around learning and teaching with 93% of learners satisfied with the way they are taught (ESES, AY 23/24).

We also recognise that the development of professional services staff, who provide services to support learners, is key to further enhancement of our learner experience. As such, a *Professional Services Staff Development Pathway* was introduced in AY 23/24 (See Appendix 2, Figure 3).

Embedding a Research Culture

In line with the objectives of our <u>Tertiary Education</u> Strategy, we enable our staff to engage in research activity to inform our curriculum and enhance our learner experience. We identified that staff who have not previously engaged in research need to be supported to do so and with this in mind we have developed our *Research Development Pathway* (*Appendix 2, Figure 4*). A unique feature of the pathway is that it is open to both curriculum and professional services staff.

The pathway begins with the Enquiring Minds Scheme, which was introduced in AY 23/24, to support staff to engage in a small-scale project which would enhance the learner or staff experience and help to develop their research skills. Examples of Enquiring Minds projects include research into what motivates individuals to be invested in environmental conservation. This research has led to a further exploration of the embedding of sustainability in the curriculum and will link to staff training with Environmental Association of University and Colleges (EAUC). Another example is the development of a professional services pathway for professional services staff which is currently in the early stages of implementation, along with further research into developing a buddy system for new staff.

Our Research Development Pathway won Highly Commended for the Research Project of the Year category in the 2024 CDN Awards.

Peer review and evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment

The Learning and Teaching Review (LTR)

The Learning and Teaching Review (LTR) is a key part of our quality enhancement framework, enabling lecturers to critically reflect on their practice and explore opportunities for enhancement. The LTR aligns with the <u>UHI Learning & Teaching</u> <u>Enhancement Strategy and GTCS Professional</u> <u>Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges</u>, supporting high quality teaching.

The LTR involves a collaborative approach between the reviewer and reviewee, with the observation and dialogue conducted in a collegiate manner. This approach fosters mutual learning, and reviewers frequently report their own teaching practice is enhanced by participation in the LTR. Both reviewers and reviewees use their engagement with the LTR as evidence of professional learning for their annual PRDs and GTCS updates.

As the LTR has become more embedded, lecturers have increasingly recognised the benefits of participating in a review. 100% respondents to the LTR survey felt the process supported their development in learning and teaching. Examples of staff comments reflect the impact of the LTR:

- + I fully enjoyed the whole process, the learners enjoyed asking me about it and the process. I feel I gained knowledge and confidence from the experience.
- It was good to have an outside perspective on my professional practice away from others who teach the same subject or in similar ways.

ESES results 2024 indicate that 93% of learners are satisfied with the way they are taught, underlining the programme's positive impact. The LTR has been highlighted by Education Scotland as Highly Effective Practice in our 2024 review and we will continue to embed and extend it into AY 24/25.



2. Supporting student success **Enabling student success**

Supporting Diverse Learners

Our Access and Inclusion strategy sets out our strategic commitment to supporting every learner as an individual and tailoring support to their needs. We have had a significant focus on learner wellbeing to support retention and successful outcomes in the post pandemic period as part of our recovery and readjustment phase. A wide variety of measures have been introduced in recognition of the links between poverty or mental ill-health and the capacity to learn at UHI Inverness.

In recognition of the struggles faced by many of our learners due to the cost-of-living crisis, we contributed significantly to the CDN Pathways from Poverty series and have implemented a multitude of support mechanisms for all learners, but particularly for support those from SIMD10.

The positive impact of this extensive support has been recognised in successive Education Scotland reviews and through our improved learner retention and outcomes (Appendix 1, Figure 6). Education Scotland noted in 2024:

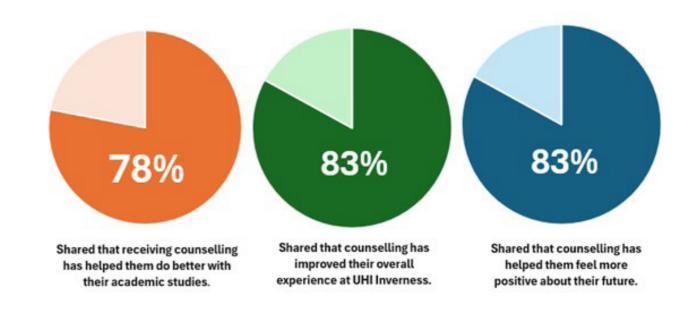
'All learners value and benefit from the support provided by the college to alleviate financial challenges. These include free breakfasts and lunches, access to a food larder and donated clothing, and free toiletries and sanitary products. These facilities are helping to support learners to stay on their programme and complete their studies'.

Supporting Wellbeing

Through the close monitoring of reasons for withdrawal, we recognise that a large volume of learners leave their course early due to 'Health Reasons' which predominantly relate to mental ill-health (Appendix 1, Figure 5). In AY 22/23, we conducted a service redesign of the wellbeing and mental health service. This led to the implementation of a new triage system in AY 23/24. The triage system offers an appointment within 3-10 working days and emergency cases are prioritised and seen immediately. A new One at a Time Therapy (OAATT) model was introduced to reduce any unnecessary sessions which learners would ordinarily engage with.

In AY 23/24, 426 learners were triaged using the new system, 87 of whom required just one session and were provided with coping strategies to support them and the remaining 339 required longer inputs of counselling support. 73% of service users reported it helped them sustain their studies.

The targeting of our resource, through the triage and OAATT model, has meant we have been able to keep on top of the growing demand placed upon this service, of critical importance given the 26% increase in learners requesting support since the previous year. Maximising our resource has also been critical when the additional funding for mental health has ceased.



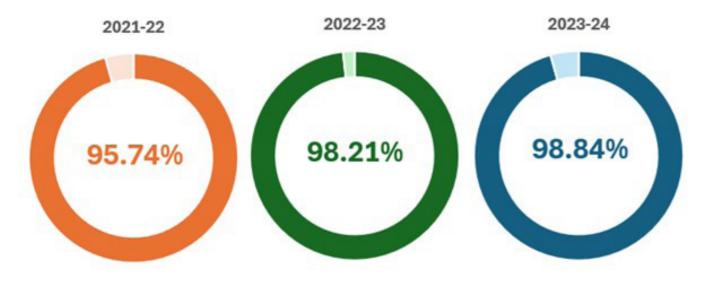
Supporting Learners with Disabilities

The level of disability disclosures in AY 23/24 was 32.25%. This was an increase of 3.69% on AY 22/23 and the volume of those learners who went on to engage with a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP) increased by 47% in AY 23/24. This increase was not reflected in enrolment data but instead through in-year disability disclosures. To support the outcomes of this growing cohort, 10 FT FE programmes were identified to participate in a pilot initiative which provided a Learning Assistant for the last 8-weeks of the course to support those with PLSPs. This had a positive impact and was contributory to a reduction in withdrawals by 2.5% for learners with a disability (Appendix 1, Table 3a&b). The pilot is being extended AY 24/25 as a means of mitigating the growing complexity and volume of learning support need which we are experiencing.



Achieving Positive Outcomes for Learners with Care Experience

UHI Inverness takes pride in being committed to widening access to those who are furthest from education, and we have had a particular focus on learners with care experience. Our Corporate Parenting Plan 23-26 outlines our commitment to our care experienced community and to the extensive additional support from pre-start to completion. We are a key partner on the Highland Promise Board and our partnership working with other stakeholders has had a positive impact on learner outcomes. Our FE outcomes for learners with care experience in AY 23/24 were +6.3% above the latest sector benchmark (Appendix 1, Table 3a&b). Despite our improved outcomes for this learner group, we acknowledge that we have further work to do in closing the outcomes gap and we see our continued engagement in the CDN Trauma Informed College programme as being critical to this.



Care Experienced Learner Group - Overall Satisfaction ESES Results

Supporting Transitions – Meta Skills

Across AY 22/23 we ran a pilot in one curriculum area around the visibility and delivery of meta skills (Selfmanagement, Social Intelligence, Innovation) to support the employability of learners and their progression into employment. Meta skills were identified at a programme level and were 'badged' against specific tasks on the VLE for learners and lecturers to then assess against. This meant that learners could identify and develop their meta skills and gain a firm grasp of their competence levels. This approach was extended and embedded across our FE FT curriculum in AY 23/24 and tied into employability skills. This has had a positive impact on the confidence of learners transitioning out of FT FE and into employment. In our Education Scotland review in AY 23/24, it was noted that:

"Meta skills are embedded well within all programmes and signposted well by staff during class activities. This has increased the confidence of learners to discuss the development and application of these skills with prospective employers".

3. Enhancement and Quality Culture

Institution wide culture of assurance, improvement and enhancement

Response to last external review

In April 2024, UHI Inverness received a positive report from Education Scotland, which highlighted a number of strengths which are captured throughout this report.

One area for development highlighted was the low overall number of student voice representatives (SVR), and that most class representatives had not received sufficient training to support them in their roles. We recognised the need to improve in this area and have been actively working with the recently appointed senior management team at HISA to develop strategies for the forthcoming year.

A team day was organised in summer 2024 to strengthen working relationships between HISA and key UHI Inverness staff, fostering a shared understanding of key activities and interdependencies. The resulting operational plan, used in conjunction with the Achieved Together Tracker, provides a focus for shared objectives. The approach to SVR recruitment was prioritised, with HISA using induction sessions to promote the role, supported by UHI Inverness staff. PDAs and PATs played a crucial role in this initiative.

Despite a significant increase in the number of SVRs in AY 24/25 compared to the previous year, this still fell short of the aspirational target to recruit one SVR per programme, which we recognise as a goal more in line with pre-pandemic levels. Challenges remain for networked provision and MA cohorts. This, and the emerging pattern of recruiting more than one SVR per programme necessitates further exploration of the SVR role and purpose, to determine the most effective way to ensure learner voices are heard at every level and in each learning space, by building on existing well embedded processes, for example, the course committee meeting model.

Using Data

We recognise the way data is used across the organisation as a strength. The Strategic Plan 2021-2025 is underpinned by a range of ten substrategies giving direction to various workstreams. The KPI Matrix is linked to strategic aims; the widespread use and visibility of the matrix supports staff and Board awareness, and continuous improvement. Learner outcomes targets are set at an institutional level, Education Scotland subject level, and programme level for FT FE and HNs. Monthly data meetings, attended by curriculum leaders and senior management, have resulted in a focussed monitoring and scrutiny of KPIs and quality standards across curriculum, identifying early interventions and sharing best practice.

Self-Evaluation – Course Committee Meetings

The ongoing approach to evaluation through the Course Committee Meeting model provides staff with the tools and opportunities to identify and implement in year changes to drive improvement. Education Scotland (May 2024) highlighted that:

'Learner representatives contribute well to programme team meetings to convey the views of their classmates and engage in evaluation of learning and teaching. They value the opportunity to suggest improvements and feel listened to.'

Organisational Enhancement Themes

Team level reflections during self-evaluation meetings give rise to both organisational and team level enhancement themes. Captured on the Quality Enhancement Tracker (QET), it provides a shared space, where both curriculum and professional service teams can identify improvement activities, track their 'in year' progress and outcomes; and connect their activities with overarching themes and strategies. This ongoing visual is used during team meeting, staff briefings and college management meetings.

Examples of organisational enhancement activities include:

Visual Feedback project – It was identified that staff and learners' perception of the extent of feedback differed. In response to this, UHI Inverness HE students explored visual ways in which to give feedback a higher profile. The aim is to effectively flag to students when feedback is taking place, thus encouraging them to take note and actively engage.

A visual feedback tool was developed that can be used in a variety of settings and ways to promote and confirm feedback. This visual feedback tool has the capacity to allow learners to understand feedback in terms of receiving, processing and responding to it, all in a simple visual process. Piloted from March to June 2024 with 8 programmes, initial feedback from staff has been positive, and learners are more aware of the type of feedback they are receiving. Full roll out is scheduled in AY 24/25.

The **Meta Skills badging project,** piloted in AY 22/23 was rolled out in AY 23/24, ensuring Meta Skills development was reflected in each programme (see Section 2 Learner Support for full details).

We will further build on this strength through a **Core skills project** focussing on how subject teams can further embed/signpost these skills within their subject specific delivery. As an initial output of the project, the Essential Skills team have been embedded within curriculum areas for AY 24/25 to support core skill delivery and the further development of Meta Skills.

There are many team-level Quality Enhancement Plan activities that have enhanced the learner experience and outcome. This detailed attention to improvement and enhancement has contributed to our overall satisfaction rates (96% ESES; 92% SSES; 82% NSS) and our AY 23/24 success outcomes (Appendix 1, Figure 6).

The visibility of the KPI Matrix, the organisational enhancement themes and the QET, and the Student Partnership Agreement annual enhancement themes (see Section 4 Learner Partnership) all contribute to a transparent quality culture, with a granular focus to support continuous improvement.

Sector Enhancement Activity

We contribute well to the wider sector, through involvement in a range of activities:

- + Colleagues have taken a pro-active approach to the implementation of the new TQEF, regularly engaging in sector and regional discussions to ensure currency of approach.
- + Several UHI Inverness staff are engaged as Associate Assessors with Education Scotland for college annual reviews, thematic, and MA reviews.
- + Representation on national advisory groups.
- + Engagement as External Verifiers and examination markers.
- + Representation on sector wide practitioner groups.

Practice is shared well within teams and across the organisation. This external engagement and sharing of practice contribute to ensuring our practice remains current and innovative, impacting positively on the learner experience and learner outcomes.



4. Student engagement and partnership

Students as partners in their learning experience

Learners are engaged partners in their learning experience. HISA representatives are members of management and Board committees and contribute to strategic discussions. *The Student Partnership Agreement* is well embedded in the culture of the organisation in various ways including by artefacts displayed through the college campuses, staff and learner induction, on *My Day* and through the *Quality Enhancement Tracker*.

Student Partnership enhancement themes are coselected by HISA Officers and UHI Inverness staff each year to inform the focus for the forthcoming year. A wide range of evidence is used to inform the themes chosen. In AY 23/24 the themes chosen were *Collective Responsibility, Student Life, Tools for Learning.* The *Achieved Together Tracker* is well embedded as a tool which showcases learner partnership and provides a neutral space for staff and learners to co-design activities.

Key successes in AY 23/24 included the introduction of a number of initiatives to create a sense of learner community and life, including discounts, activities for learners on campus (games cupboard, Highlife Highland schedule of classes) and a wide range of events. Attendance was varied at the events, and on reflection HISA have identified the need for more input from the wider learner body to inform any event planning for AY 24/25.



The need for a cross college *Collective Responsibility* campaign was identified following the end of year survey, and this concept will be developed and implemented in AY 24/25.

In the final survey of the academic year, most learners (85%) felt they could influence their course learning, and most (83.2%) believed their suggestions were taken seriously. The responses represent a stable trend over the past three years reflecting the embedding of our Course Committee Meeting model (see Section 3). This model fosters professional dialogue amongst learners, curriculum and professional service staff, and other stakeholders, including employers, supporting the identification and implementation of changes to enhance the overall learner experience.

The responses to the NSS survey showed a similar theme, with most learners feeling they had the opportunity to give feedback (83.2%), and that feedback was taken seriously (80%). A lower return for the question relating to how learner feedback is acted upon (63%) and that, coupled with the responses to the SSES, highlights the need to further build on existing dissemination tools such as *The Link* (learner newsletter), large display screens, and enhancing the level of feedback provided at CCMs. The planned revised format of SVR Committee meetings in AY 24-25 will provide a further platform to make the changes implemented in response to learner feedback more visible. Education Scotland raised an area for development in relation to SVRs, and the response to that has been included within Section 3 *Quality and Enhancement*.

Following a review of practice across the sector which we conducted in AY 22-23, the *Student Engagement Representative* (SER) role was launched in AY 23-24. This initiative provides learners with the opportunity to develop skills and gain valuable work experience in areas of interest to their studies or personal circumstances. These opportunities are widespread across the college and include those aligned to services to support learning, digital technology and learner focus groups. Fifteen learners signed up in AY 23-24 across a range of activities. Learners who continued to engage throughout the year received a summary record of work which they can use to support future searches for employment. One of the learners engaged in SER activity won *UHI Learner of the Year (See Student Engagement Representative case study)*

Learner focus groups provide a further opportunity for learners to work in partnership with staff to affect change. Curriculum focus groups were held in AY 23-24 across our tertiary provision with actions implemented as a result. For example, changes to timetable structures have enabled Plumbing apprentices more flexibility with travel at the end of their block; and HISA convened a focus group about food provision in the canteen leading to changes in the provision of and storage locations for dairy and gluten free options.



Student Engagement Representative case study

Javier started studying at UHI Inverness in 2020/21. He became known to staff in The Bothy, the learner support venue, during his time as class representative for the Level 5 ESOL class, asking to start up a Read Aloud Group to help learners develop their reading skills in English. He is an extremely committed learner who dedicated many hours to his learning whilst also assisting and mentoring his peers in his own time. Additionally, Javier was always happy to provide learner input when asked e.g., during Education Scotland visits, and to feature in social media campaigns for the Marketing team.

During AY 23-24, Javier has been an integral part of our newly created Learner Engagement Rep initiative. The Student Engagement Rep roles were launched in AY 23-24 to give learners an opportunity to gain key work experience here at UHI Inverness.

Javier volunteered to support a range of different work experience activities: The Larder, Learning Technology, ICT Helpdesk support, The Cubby, and learner focus groups. His contributions in each have been invaluable; by ensuring learners are aware of the support available to them, providing a valuable learner perspective for learning technology initiatives, and being an active contributor at our Education Scotland review in May 2024.

Javier spoke of his experiences "Being part of SER has given me an incredible opportunity to develop my social skills, increase my confident, gain valuable job experience, meet a lot of people and be part of an amazing team"

Javier manages to maintain the commitment to his various Learner Engagement Rep roles alongside his own full-time study and the additional volunteering positions he holds in the community. This keeps him extremely busy, but he is always reliable, focused, and looking for opportunities to be of further help to others, especially those who are disadvantaged. He has thrown himself into integrating and supporting our communities both here on campus and in Inverness more widely.

Responsiveness to learner feedback

Over the past two years, we have made significant strides in learner engagement and participation, evidenced by a positive response rate of 63.2% in our ESES and 57% in our SSES in AY 23/24. This marked improvement is largely attributable to our approach to collaborating with a learner-chosen charity partner to incentivise learners to complete the survey. This innovative approach led to UHI Inverness winning the *Marketing & Communications Award* for the "Your Survey Counts" campaign at the 2023 CDN Awards.

The college has seen high rates of learner satisfaction in both the ESES, at 96%, up 1pp on last year and the end of year SSES at 92% satisfaction this AY, down 1% from the previous year.

100.00% 90.00% 80.00% % Satisfaction Rate 70.00% 60.00% 50.00% ESES 40.00% SSES 30.00% 20.00% 10.00% 0.00% 2020-21 2021-22 2022-23 2023-24 Year

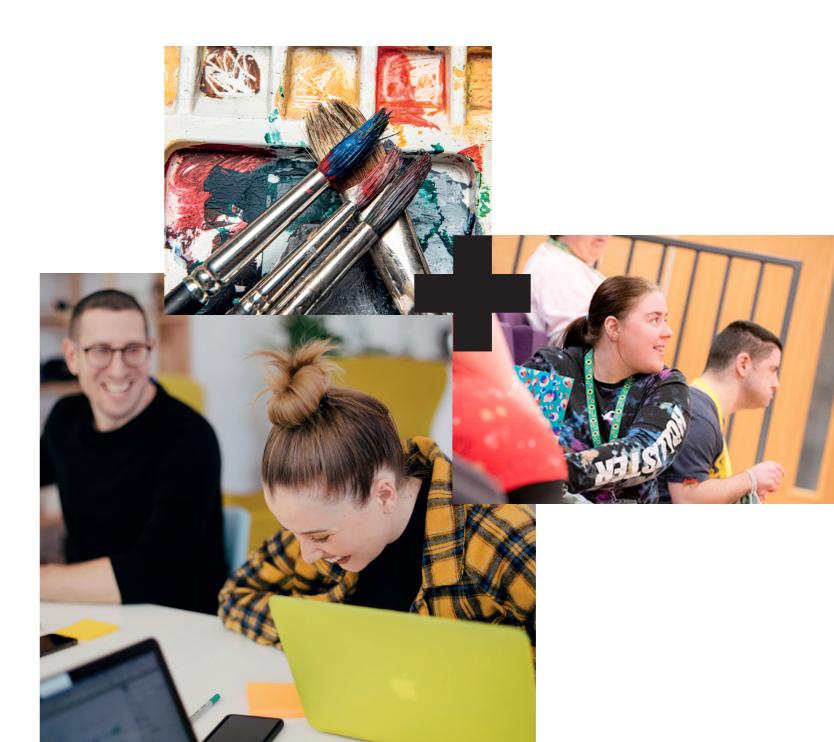
Survey satisfaction results continue to show a slight difference between FE and HE learner satisfaction, with FE learners broadly more satisfied than HE learners.

	Satisfaction %						
Level	2021-22		202	2-23	2023-24		
	ESES	SSES	ESES	SSES	ESES	SSES	
FE	94.12%	91.77%	96.36%	94.21%	97.30%	94.15%	
HE	90.21%	84.15%	93.55%	90.48%	94.14%	86.89%	

Overall, HE learners tell us they are less likely to feel part of a learner community; and feel less able to influence their learning. This can be attributed in part to networked provision where organisation and management issues are often more complex, cutting across multiple academic partners. HISA plans to run a specific survey to networked learners coordinated which will be a further source of data for analysis to inform further change (Cross reference to UHI SEAP 3.4.5). A strategic focus on HN provision in AY 24/25 will fully explore the learner experience, as well as the drive to improve success rates.

Timetabling and travel arrangement issues raised in AY 22/23 were resolved through soft starts and individual programme adjustments, and awareness raising about travel available through *the Link* newsletter and *My Day.*

A range of methods are used to communicate changes made as a result of learner feedback; including the course committee meeting model; *The Link* newsletter; the 'Learner Engagement' walkway on campus; SVR meetings; and through management and Board committees.



Satisfaction Rate 4 Year Trend

Appendix 1

Diagram 1

Economic Opportunities in the H & I

Orkney

Increasing population: 22,400

- World leading development of the marine energy sector ScotWind 240;
- Identified as 'best place to live in the UK' in 2019 survey
- Orkney shellfish attracts global demand, with 3,000 tonnes landed annually
- Investment in port infrastructure (Scapa Flow); EMEC; Centre for Net Zero; ORIC
- Tourism expansion Cruise sector

Outer Hebrides

Declining and ageing population: 26,500

- ScotWind -230; Deep Water Port
- 50% of land is Community owned. 83% of the population live on community owned land
- Largest of Scotland's marine regions with 23% of the sea area - growth in aquaculture a seaweed farming
- Tourism sector growing
- Modular West
- Spaceport One

Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross

Declining population: 39,082

- Coire Glas 500 jobs over 6 years
- Kishorn Port ScotWind 100
- Ambitious masterplan Fort William 2040 produced for future growth
- ALVANCE Aluminium investments

Argyll and the Islands

Declining and ageing population: 65,486

- High levels of self-employment and highly qualified working age population
- European Marine Science Park; Machrihanish
- ScotWind 160
- Marine biotechnology

Offshore Wind



Nature-based Jobs

Declining population: 22,870

Shetland

- Seafood industry worth £300m to the Shetland economy
- -40% Renewable energy/O&G decommissioning-ScotWind
- 200; Orion 500, Dales Voe
- Fair Isle bird observatory investment

Caithness and Sutherland

- Wick and Scrabster port infrastructure ScotWind 280
- Home to Scotland's first European Geopark
- High value skills in nuclear power and decommissioning-a key asset
- Battery manufacturing

Moray

Declining population: 95,710

- Food and drink production makes up one-fifth of the area's GVA
- Orbex expansion; MAATIC (Aerospace/Adv Tech IC)
- Buckie Harbour investment
- High share of global markets in tourism, forest products, textiles and specialised metalworking
- More than 6,000 jobs in manufacturing

Inner Moray Firth

Increasing population: 158,311

- Green Freeport 25,000/ ScotWind 1600
- World famous attractions including Loch Ness and Cairngorms National Park
- Growing life sciences and technology sectors supported by Inverness Campus .
- Construction ports for the world's largest cluster of deep-water wind projects worth around £7bn
- Buoyant house building sector
- Ross-shire Engineering expansion

Green Hydrogen

Construction

Growth Deals

- Declining population: 38,037
- Plans underway to launch satellites into space

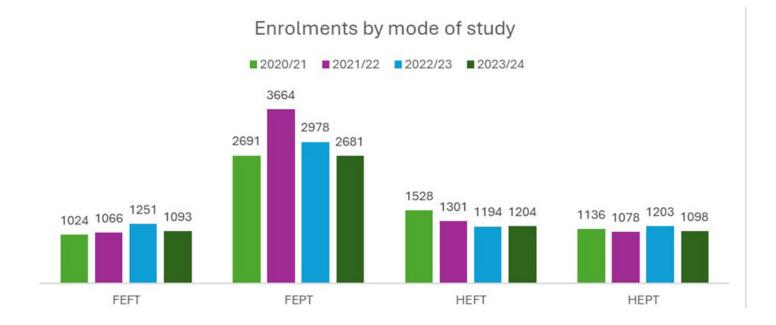
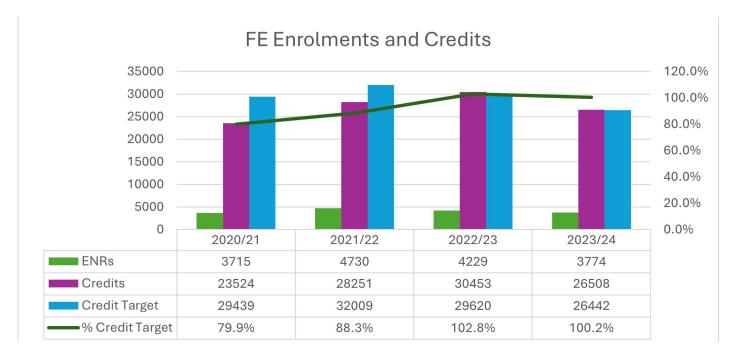


Figure 1 Enrolments by Mode of Study over time

Figure 2 FE Credits delivered over time



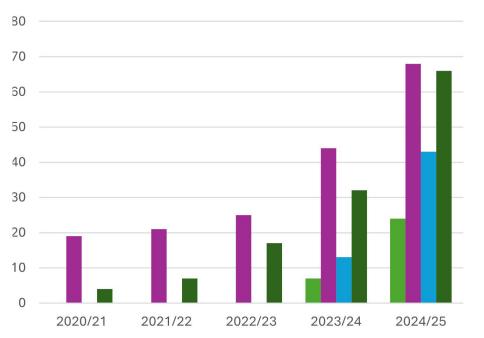
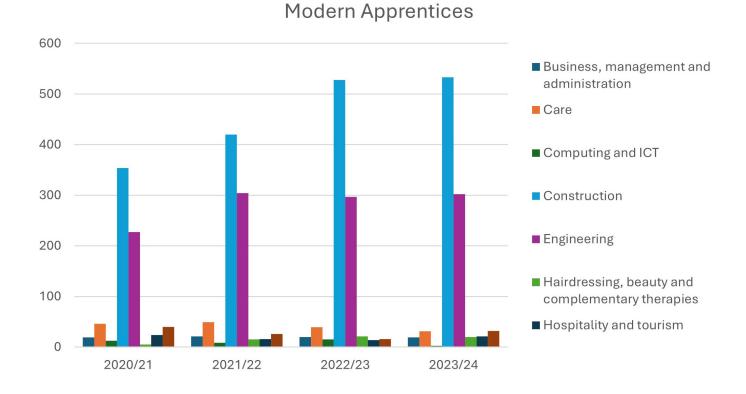


Figure 3 Graduate Apprenticeship growth over time

Business Management (Graduate Apprenticeship)

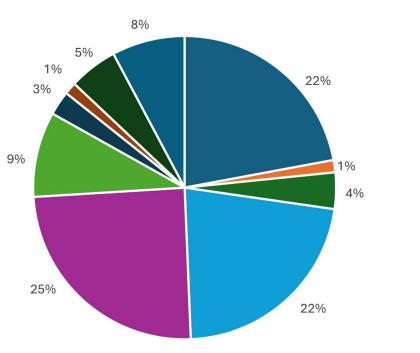
- Civil Engineering (Graduate Apprenticeship)
- Construction and the Built Environment (Graduate Apprenticeship)
- Early Learning and Childcare (Graduate Apprenticeship)

Figure 4 Modern Apprenticeship growth over time



Growth in Graduate Apprenticships

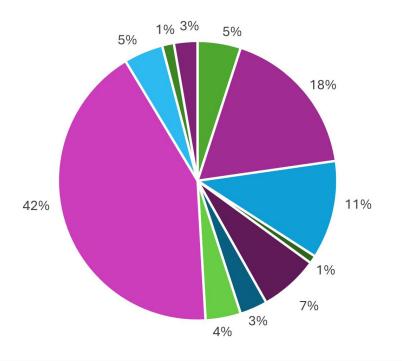
Figure 5 Reasons for Withdrawal AY 23/24



FE Reasons For Withdrawal 2023/24

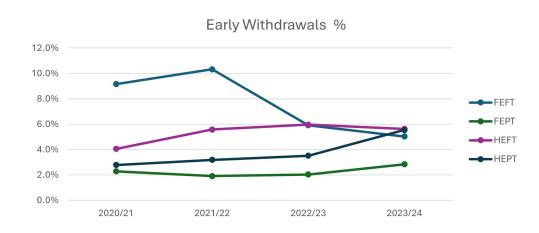
- Health Reasons
- Transferred to another Institution
- Travel Arrangements
- Unknown
- Written off after lapse of time
- Gone into Employment Unrelated Employment
- Gone into Employment Related Employment
- Other
- Course expectations not met
- Caring responsibilities

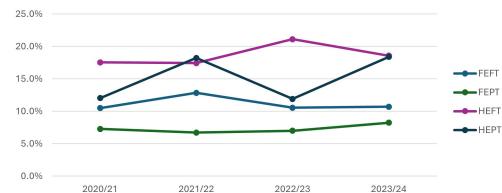
HE Reasons for Withdrawal 2023/24



- Financial Reasons
- Health Reasons
- Transfer to another course within institution.
- Travel Arrangements
- Written off after lapse of time
- Gone into Employment Unrelatec Employment
- Gone into Employment Related Employment
- Other
- Course expectations not met
- Not permitted to progress
- Medical suspension

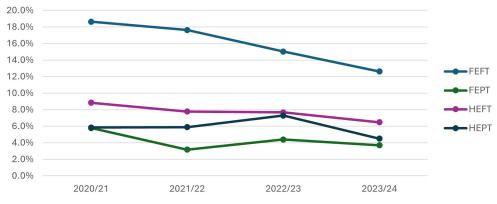
Figure 6 Retention and Achievement – all levels all modes





Partial Success %

Further Withdrawals YTD %





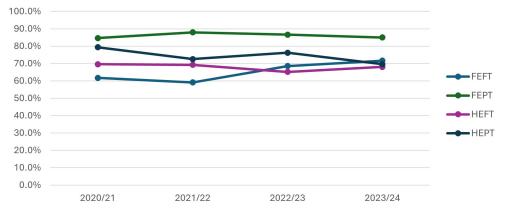


Table 1 FE FT and PT Outcomes against sector outcomes

Full-time FE UHI Inverness	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully	
2020-21	30.1%	9.9%	59.9%	
2021-22	29.5%	12.5%	58.0%	
2022-23	20.9%	10.6%	68.5%	
2023-24	17.7%	10.7%	71.6%	
National sector performance	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully	
2020-21	27.3%	11.7%	60.9%	
2021-22	29.3%	11.7%	59.0%	
2022-23	25.3%	11.1%	63.6%	
Part-time FE UHI Inverness	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully	
2020-21	11.1%	9.1%	79.8%	
2021-22	6.6%	8.4%	85.0%	
2022-23	8.7%	6.5%	84.8%	
2023-24	6.6%	8.2%	85.2%	
National sector performance	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully	
2020-21	10.1%	13.7%	76.2%	
2021-22	10.7%	13.0%	76.3%	
2022-23	10.6%	12.2%	77.3%	

Table 2 HN FT Outcomes against sector outcomes

HNC and HND Full Time	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully
2020-21	23.0%	21.3%	55.7%
2021-22	21.3%	19.9%	58.8%
2022-23	19.5%	19.9%	60.6%
2023-24	18.4%	17.8%	60.8%
National sector performance	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully
2020-21	17.6%	10.9%	71.6%
2021-22	23.6%	13.9%	62.5%
2022-23	20.6%	14.0%	65.5%

Table 3a Priority Groups FE Outcomes and targets

	UHI Inverne	ess 22-23 Actu published	al * FE Only	UHI Inverness 23-24 Target		UHI Inverness 23-24 Actual			UHI Inverness 24-25 Target				
	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal	ENR	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal
10% Most deprived postcode areas	64.9%	11.9%	23.2%	102	65.0%	13.0%	22.0%	65.3%	14.9%	19.8%	67.0%	13.5%	19.5%
20% Most deprived postcode areas	65.6%	11.7%	22.8%	123	66.0%	12.0%	22.0%	73.8%	13.1%	13.1%	75.0%	12.0%	13.0%
Ethnic minority	63.4%	19.4%	17.2%	59	69.0%	14.0%	17.0%	67.8%	6.8%	25.4%	69.0%	7.0%	24.0%
Disability	67.5%	11.6%	20.9%	937	68.0%	11.0%	21.0%	67.4%	14.2%	18.4%	69.0%	13.0%	18.0%
Care Experienced	60.6%	9.6%	29.8%	120	62%	15%	23.05	61.7%	15.8%	22.5%	61.7%	15.8%	22.5%
All FE Learners over 160 hours	73.2%	10.3%	16.5%	2,228	73.5%	10%	16.5%	74.0%	10.7%	15.3%	76%	10%	14%

Sector Benchmarks 2022-23	Scotland *Includes HN 22-23 published					
	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal			
10% Most deprived postcode areas	62.6%	13.5%	23.9%			
20% Most deprived postcode areas	63.6%	13.5%	22.9%			
Ethnic minority	67.4%	14.9%	17.8%			
Disability	64.1%	14.2%	21.7%			
Care Experienced	55.4%	17.0%	27.6%			

Table 3b Priority Groups Sector Benchmarks

Table 4 Level 4/5 Outcomes

FE Full Time	WITHDRAWALS %					PARTIAL SUCCESS %				SUCC	ESS %	
SCQF Level	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
04	30.9%	45.5%	20.8%	26.5%	8.1%	10.0%	7.5%	4.4%	61.1%	44.5%	71.7%	69.0%
05	30.7%	33.0%	32.6%	20.5%	14.2%	16.6%	13.2%	13.3%	55.1%	50.4%	54.2%	66.2%
Grand Total	30.8%	35.9%	29.5%	22.3%	12.4%	15.1%	11.7%	10.6%	56.8%	49.0%	58.8%	67.0%

Table 5 Enrolments by priority groups

*These figures are at point of enrolment and do not include learners who declare care experience, disability or mental health issue during their course.

Summary %	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 YTD
10% Most Deprived Area	3.54%	3.77%	4.02%	3.44%	3.48%
20% Most Deprived Area	4.64%	4.28%	4.49%	4.07%	4.43%
BME	2.37%	2.11%	3.50%	3.47%	3.59%
Care Leaver	2.88%	2.74%	3.53%	3.47%	2.45%
Declared Disability	22.43%	22.63%	26.86%	26.02%	30.49%
Mental Health Issue	8.25%	7.34%	7.14%	6.48%	6.79%



Professional Development

Figure 1

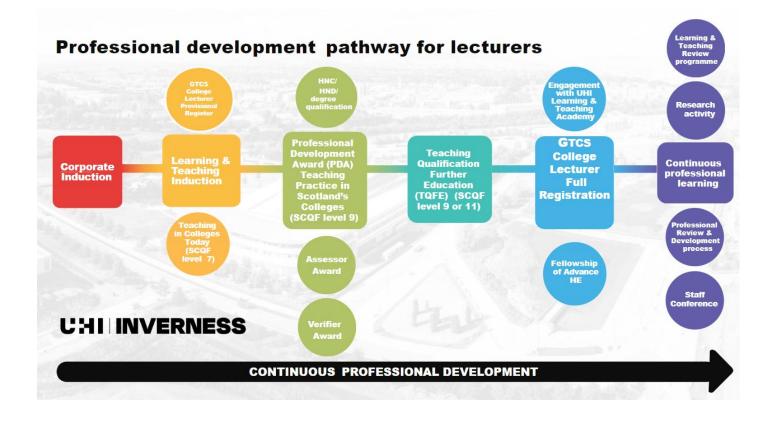


Figure 2

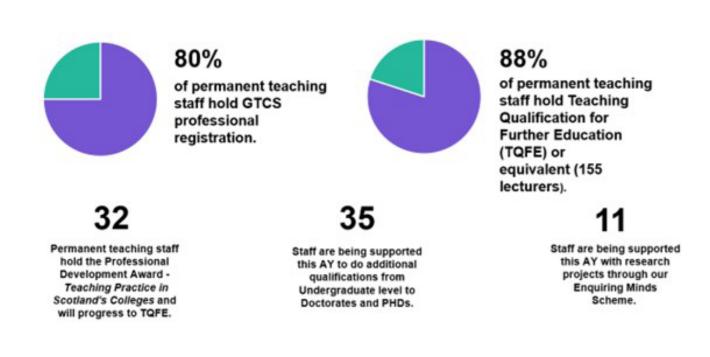


Figure 3



Professional Services development pathway - Core Development

Figure 4

Research development pathway for staff

To provide opportunities and a supportive environment for staff to develop their research and scholarship activity UHI Inverness Research & Innovation Strategy 2023-2027, Strategic Objective 4:

Level 1: Starter	Level 2: Latent	Level 3: Potential	Level 4: Active
Enquiring Minds	MRes or other	Evidence initial	Research funding
Scheme	postgraduate qualification	research activity	secured
Research	and many	Involvement in	Embedded in
Connect Scheme	Input to research events	KTPs	research cluster
Research events		Access UHI	0.2FTE research
	Input to staff	research funding	contract
CDN & UHI	study/research	- H	
Researcher	support group	Supervise	Suitable for REF
training		student	eite i
		dissertations &	
	Version and the second s	staff RCS projects	Sec. 1

Action Plan

The following action plan represents the high level areas for enhancement. These are underpinned by an internal detailed action plan.

Principle and Area for enhancement or development	Action(s) and planned impact/ outcomes	Milestone (s/ target date(s), continuing/ carried forward (c/f)	Lead
Excellence in learning, teaching and assessment	Introduce and embed the principles and practices of trauma informed practice into the classroom and across campus Outcome: Improved learner retention and achievement rates for those 'hard to reach' learners	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee	Trauma informed College Leads (Curriculum Lead – FACT; Wellbeing and Learning Support Manager)
Supporting learner success - achieving positive outcomes for every learner	Improve learner retention for AY 24-25 across FT FE and FT HN programmes – see programme level and <i>Education Scotland</i> category targets for retention. Outcome: reduction in early and further withdrawal rates	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee	VP – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality
Supporting learner success - achieving positive outcomes for every learner	Improve attainment rates / successful outcomes on FT FE and FT HN programmes - see programme level and Education Scotland category targets for successful outcomes. Outcome: Improved success rates	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee	VP – Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality

Supporting learner success - achieving positive outcomes for every learner	Further embed the 'Learning Assistant' initiative Outcome: Improved learner retention and achievement of FT FE learners with a disability	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee	Tertiary Education Leaders; Wellbeing and Learning Support Manager
Learner Engagement and Partnership	Work with HISA to develop the features of the Student Partnership ambition statement (TQEF) Outcome: Further embedding of learner partnership working	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee via the 'Achieved Together' meetings	Quality Manager
Learner Engagement and Partnership	Working in partnership with HISA, explore the future of the Student Voice Rep role Outcome: potential implementation of framework to capture all learner voices, every place, every level	Monitored through Student Journey and Enhancement Committee via the 'Achieved Together' meetings	Quality Manager