

SFC and Education Scotland formally endorse that the enclosed evaluative report concerning **West Highland College UHI**;

- provides an accurate and appropriate account of the quality of provision and services being delivered by the college;
- identifies clearly what is working well ;
- identifies what needs to improve;
- takes appropriate account of the views of stakeholders, and
- Is supported by appropriately robust sources of evidence.

SFC and Education Scotland formally endorse that the enclosed enhancement plan concerning **West Highland College UHI**;

- is well-informed by and linked appropriately to the findings of the evaluative report;
- communicates clearly the plans to address areas of provision and services which require improvement, and
- identifies clearly what the college aims to achieve and by when.

19th January, 2018



University of the
Highlands and Islands
West Highland College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an Iar

West Highland College UHI

Evaluative Report 2016/2017

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Section 1 – Background and Context

West Highland College UHI (WHC), is a partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) operating in a multi college regional structure through a single outcome agreement. The college, created in 2010, is relatively new and one of the smaller colleges in Scotland, operating through ten college centres in a geographically and economically challenging environment. The area of Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross (population circa 40,000) is almost half the size of Wales and includes significant areas of extreme remoteness and dispersed populations. Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) classifies this area as 'economically fragile'. Infrastructure is fragmented; there are poor public transport links, broadband is patchy and bandwidth is insufficient in many locations. A lower percentage of the population in the area go into full time further and higher education, compared to the rest of Scotland*. The area can be classified as one of rural poverty, where there is underemployment largely in seasonal tourism and hospitality work, high fuel prices, migration of young people out with the area and an increasing incoming older population.

In this context, the college's vision, mission and strategic aims set out to achieve a transformational and positive impact on the local prospects of the area. The college developed and implemented a flexible operating model to deliver relevant curriculum and to provide access to education through ten distributed and distinct college centres, which are firmly rooted in their communities. The college delivers a fully, tertiary curriculum (SCQF 1 through to SCQF 12) aligned with the economic skills needs of the region and local employer needs.

The college now attracts around 3000 enrolments each year in subjects as diverse as tourism, hospitality, care, creative arts, crofting, maritime, computing and construction. Locally accessible courses are available across the whole tertiary spectrum and are designed in partnership with employers and stakeholders to closely reflect local and regional need. Curriculum includes school-college programmes, industry certificates, work-based learning, employability programmes, and qualifications ranging from SCQF 1 – 12. These are national qualifications, higher national certificates, honours degrees and post graduate up to doctoral level opportunities. The college developed the specialism "Adventure" in response to local need and predicted significant sector growth in Scotland. The School of Adventure Studies offers a uniquely tertiary adventure provision of SCQF level 5–10 with the new "Adventure Education" complementing three other adventure degrees and two feeder further education (FE) programmes attracting students from all over Scotland and beyond.

The college has developed innovative teaching approaches through an increasing core of "networked" FE full time and part time courses, based on the UHI higher education (HE) delivery model. As enrolment numbers are inevitably low due to dispersed population and demography in rural locations, networked courses provide a viable solution. In parallel, the college is increasing its range of HE networked programmes, providing further progression opportunities to compliment more than 70 HE programmes accessible through UHI and thus supporting the learner journey.

College students elect a WHC Depute President (DP) who is a member of the Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA), and links to college business as a college board member. The board recruits membership from across the area ensuring wide, local representation by working through community engagement groups, “meet the board” and by rotating board meetings in different locations. The board has membership of the UHI Further Education Regional Board (FERB), working collaboratively with all academic partner colleges to formally plan for tertiary education provision through a number of curriculum planning groups. The principal now has a dual role after her successful appointment as Vice Principal Tertiary UHI. The principal has distributed corporate responsibilities efficiently through the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

Through its’ multi-centre model, the college employs a largely (70%) part time workforce who are recruited locally and often work in other jobs, bringing a diverse range of skills, knowledge and experience to the college. The college continues to lead on the delivery of relevant and locally accessible “networked” FE full time and part time courses by using technology to ensure that the *right learning, right place*** is having a positive economic and social impact across communities. Therefore, the college relies on the information technology infrastructure, delivered by UHI, to enable much of its provision. Networked provision is the only way the college can viably deliver full time FE courses through remote and rural centres.

Future opportunities and challenges

- Whilst the distributed college operating model supports the provision of education in a sparsely populated area, there are challenges leading and managing a largely part-time workforce across ten sites.
- The college is yet unclear about the impact that national bargaining may have on the financial viability of such a small and multi-site college. Furthermore, the complexity of the region in terms of multi-layered relationships, dependencies and governance can impact on decision making and accountability.
- Local strategic growth priorities in the next few years (two) include developing Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Digital and Health (STEMDH) curriculum and realising the estates plans, both highly dependent on receiving capital funding. Estates infrastructure includes building the Centre for Science and Technology, a new build in Mallaig and the extension of Broadford.

* Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross Area Profile 2014

**Scottish Funding Council outcome agreement priority 16/17

Section 2 Evaluation Methodology

Quality Monitoring, Review and Continuous Evaluation

The college used its first successful Education Scotland external review (February 2014) outcomes well to improve and enhance all services to support improved learning and a better student experience. Education Scotland noted that suitable progress was being made through subsequent Annual Engagement Visits.

A new college HMI was appointed to the college in Autumn 16/17. The college worked closely with the college HMI to arrange a plan for development and scrutiny activity which continued throughout the academic year. A wide range of staff engaged well in planned visits, awareness sessions and in self-evaluation activity. The college HMI visited four centres and like much of college activity, used technology for wider engagement. Regular dialogue and feedback from the college HMI has enabled the college to introduce new approaches to self-evaluation and in engaging staff at all levels in quality enhancement.

The college trialled an innovative, evaluative intervention using a conversational approach called 'Question Cards - How good is our college?' with support staff, teaching staff, managers and the board. Question Cards replaced the Annual Support Team Evaluation (ASTE) process of previous years, which were used along with established quality enhancement activity. Staff contribute well through structured course committee meetings and equivalent support team meetings, reflecting on practice, taking account of the student experience (class rep attendance), resolving issues, taking forward subsequent actions and monitoring progress of actions. The Principal chairs formal curriculum review meetings where senior managers question teams about best practice and future enhancement, development and innovation. They use key performance indicators (KPI) and other available data to inform these dialogues and action planning.

The elected WHC HISA Depute President participates in events and meetings to represent students. Class representatives provide input at course committee meetings and participate in student rep meetings. Staff use disseminated minutes to resolve issues. Curriculum teams complete Annual Course Evaluations (ACE) and Self-evaluation Documents (SEDs) for HE for all provision requested by the college or UHI. Teams take account of previous meetings and curriculum review as well as other evidence sources such as:- KPIs, student feedback, student surveys, lesson observations, stakeholder feedback, audits, External Verifier (EV) reports and destination data. Senior managers use this and other activity to ensure that college self-evaluation is a continuous reflection and solution-focussed improvement process, which happens throughout the year.

Within the last two years, the college made improvements to the organisational structure, now facilitating communication and transferal of key information used in decision-making at all levels of the organisation. The principal and ELT (vice principal and director of finance) agree the strategic direction of the college with the board. The College Management Group (CMG), comprising the principal, ELT and senior managers, meets every six weeks to ensure full implementation, monitoring and progress reporting of college operational plan objectives against strategic plan aims, KPIs and outcome agreement measures. The CMG work collaboratively on projects and actions and ensure there is appropriate risk management and monitoring.

The Academic Affairs senior team meets fortnightly to steer and action the development, quality and review of student experience, learning and curriculum. The newly formed Academic Affairs Operational Group (curriculum, quality and student services) meets every four weeks to operationalise the plans and to monitor improvement progress. A new Staff

Information and Consultation Group (SICG) (elected teaching and support staff members) meets every 6-8 weeks to discuss current topics and take forward actions. Through this revised college structure, college managers monitor progress of actions and plans and incorporate the student voice in decision-making across teams.

Information Sources for Decision Making

- Student engagement and feedback – institutional surveys, complaints, red button, class rep meeting minutes, one-to-one meetings, informal feedback, course level feedback.
- UHI through quality monitoring dialogues, Quality Forum and other committees.
- KPI data and reporting, applications, enrolments, retention, success, destinations.
- Stakeholder feedback: schools, the Developing Young Workforce (DYW) group, Chamber of Commerce, Community Engagement Groups, agencies, awarding bodies, Scottish Funding Council, external auditors, EV visit reports (areas of best practice and development points are summarised in a table of awarding body outcomes).
- Staff Engagement through a number of channels including learning and development, performance management framework, reflective practitioner, learning and teaching observations, staff conferences, the SICG.

All managers and their teams have been instrumental in supporting the new quality framework arrangements and approaches to self-evaluation in this first year of implementation. Managers used disseminated evidence to collectively create the college evaluative report and agree the enhancement plan, which was coordinated through one senior manager. All managers took part in a desk-based benchmark exercise in February, to gauge views on strengths and weaknesses against all quality indicators using grades. Since the first draft of the college evaluative report in August, all managers joined at least one of three highly interactive evaluation sessions, which further fine-tuned the evaluation and enhancement plan.

The report uses the following quantitative terms:

- Almost all – over 90%
- Most – 75 – 90%
- Majority – 50 – 74%
- Less than half – 15 – 49%
- Few – up to 15%

Section Three - Outcomes of Evaluation

Leadership and Quality Culture

1.1 Governance and leadership of change

- The board provides appropriate level of challenge and direction to the principal and senior managers, making appropriate use of KPI reports, themed discussion and other available information.
- The principal and the ELT provide the board with clear and timely qualitative and quantitative reports, best practice and areas requiring improvement. They identify areas of risk to the board.
- The board represents the interests of the college well in UHI regional matters through active engagement in the FE Regional Board.
- The board audit committee actively monitors college plans and pushes for progress on recommendations. This leads to organisational improvement and it enhances the college's reputation and builds trust between the college and its stakeholders.
- The board ensures that there is student membership and there is representation at meetings. Although the student HISA depute president attends board committees, the board recognises that a single depute president has limited availability to regularly engage with board committees and the regional student association..
- The CMG drives organisational improvement through robust planning and monitoring processes underpinned by college and board committee structures. Board members and managers ensure there are effective relationships with auditors, awarding bodies and other agencies and use a "plan, do, review" approach to improvement. The CMG monitor and carefully manage spending to ensure a continuing financial surplus.
- The board and college leadership set a strong and inclusive vision with a focus on high standards and in achieving *Excellence for All* across the college area. Staff across all college centres are rooted in the vision and use college values well in their work.
- The board engages with all key staff and student representation to develop and refresh the college strategic plan.
- The board and the college engage very well with communities across the geographic expanse and use information and feedback to inform strategic direction, future planning, curriculum development and keeping course content current. Business, communities, and individuals (students) across the area take up opportunities to engage with the college through "Meet the Board", Community Engagement Groups and other events, which are planned well through its distributed centre model.
- The CMG lead initiatives such as the inclusive and award winning *Healthy Happy You*, which endorse college values and strengthen the college community across its ten centres. Such initiatives also give visibility to the wider UHI community as well as enhancing student-staff relationships.
- The principal and ELT are leading the strategic development of STEM/DH related provision to meet local skills needs. STEM/DH is of economic, strategic importance and is a priority in the area.
- The college has a dedicated and structured DYW resource to drive local workforce development and to deliver DYW actions by working closely with schools, employers and the West Highland DYW Group. This work has resulted in an increase in senior phase school-college programmes and Foundation Apprenticeships, which are in line with the Skills Investment Plan and national strategic drivers.

- All relevant teams support all students to engage with the life and work of the college and provides multiple opportunities for students to give feedback and to help plan for improvements at the college.
- The HISA Depute President engages well with the board by providing progress reports about improvement activities relating to students, answering their questions and taking on board their advice.

1.1 Areas for development

- A single HISA depute president has limited availability to attend all committee meetings and this restricts the level of student engagement in governance and college work.

1.2 Leadership of learning and teaching

- The principal and all CMG managers drive a strong quality enhancement culture and they articulate this well through the strategy for learning “Excellence for All”.
- The principal and ELT lead and manage change effectively ensuring it leads to improvement and that all managers support staff well in the process.
- The principal and ELT ensure there are regular updates about relevant matters and use of technologies well to ensure wide communication to all staff.
- All Curriculum Area Leads (CALs) use structured approaches for the dissemination of good practice with their teams to inform planning and quality improvement.
- The quality team manage robust quality assurance processes, which are used well by all curriculum and support teams. The recent SQA systems audit identified significant strengths. All curriculum and support teams have plans in place to address areas for development and recommendations.
- Almost all team leaders use the aspirational objectives within “Excellence for All” and other relevant strategies to provide direction to teams and to improve learning.
- CALs use student feedback effectively to improve standards, captured through robust college feedback mechanisms.
- All managers use a consistent approach to reporting, decision-making and managing risk by involving teams through regular meetings.
- CALs support all teaching staff through an inclusive staff learning and development (SLD) strategy and policy to take advantage of planned and organised training and professional development.
- Team leaders implement the SLD strategy well, through a comprehensive framework of well-planned learning and development activity, which includes teaching qualifications, professional awards, staff conferences, skills sessions and bespoke training. The SLD team invites all staff to attend continuing professional development (CPD) events and provides funding support where relevant. Almost all teaching staff engage in CPD.
- CALs work well with all teams to identify CPD activity to improve learning and teaching practice. Almost all staff are effective in transferring new knowledge and skills into pedagogical practice and engage well with planned CPD.
- Learning and Teaching Development Mentors (LTDM) conduct professional practice dialogues with lecturers through an established and formalised learning observation process. They observe all new and all longer-serving staff within a 3-year cycle. In addition, CALs encourage all teaching staff to enhance their own practice and to learn from experienced staff through the peer observation process.
- Almost all managers/team leaders link professional learning activity to performance review, the self-evaluation process and college strategic objectives. This is having a positive impact on the student experience and performance outcomes.
- All relevant senior managers are involved in the design of bespoke staff development programmes, which have resulted in building staff competencies and capabilities.

- All senior managers are well-informed through their work on regional committees, external bodies and engagement with stakeholders. They use information well to plan for improvement.
- Most managers consult with a range of staff and students to influence the development of relevant strategies for learning and teaching.
- Most teams use a variety of ways to seek the views of employers and stakeholders which lead to the enhancement of learning and teaching.

1.2 Areas for development

- A few managers and team leaders do not use improved processes as standard across all locations and departments.
- A few team leaders do not routinely consult with students, employers and stakeholders to feed into improvement plans.
- A few staff do not engage habitually in available staff development activity.

1.3 Leadership of services to support learning

- The Equality and Wellbeing Steering group (EWS) is leading the implementation of strategies to ensure maximum impact in improving arrangements that meet the needs of all students. The EWS developed the Equality Mainstreaming outcomes report, an Access and Inclusion Strategy, a Corporate Parenting Plan and a Gender Action Plan in place. These plans have built on previously recognised good practice such as the Buttle UK quality mark for supporting care experienced students.
- All staff across all centres engage with appropriate strategies and policies well to improve the student experience and to support learning.
- The Academic Affairs team ensures there is a sufficiently focussed joined-up approach in the design and implementation of strategies and plans to support students and learning. The cross-functional Academic Affairs Operational Group ensures the implementation of all plans for improvement.
- The quality team oversee a robust system for gathering student feedback using a number of different mechanisms, which are promoted widely to students through staff. National (Scottish Funding Council) and regional surveys are centrally coordinated to ensure widest possible return. All teams use collated feedback to inform actions for improvement. The team notify all students of intended improvement measures and outcomes.
- Student Services have developed an effective referral system with a number of local agencies for students who are in need of a formal counselling service. Staff are clear about how and when to sign post to the service and can also refer to the new online UHI counselling service where appropriate.
- The principal, through HR, has established the SICG with elected teaching and support staff reps, providing staff with a mechanism of consultation and engagement to share best practice and to resolve issues together. The group improves staff awareness of current issues and gets staff involved in planning for continuous improvement.
- The recently restructured student support department has created an inclusive student “support for learning” ethos across ten centres to ensure equivalence for all students.
- Almost all support managers provide direction in planning for improvement through operational planning processes and monitor progress regular team meetings.
- Support teams use referral systems well to identify student needs early on, and they ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to services and facilities.
- Staff continue to use personal learning support plans to identify and monitor progress for students with additional support needs.

- There is a clear system in place to provide named staff to support care experienced students.
- The Estates team responds to curriculum and student needs and has a rolling programme in place for the refresh of hardware to ensure adequate technology is available across the college for students. This includes recent installation of high definition monitors to improve the experience for all students using video conferencing.
- All college teams are beginning to work well together on projects through the new Academic Affairs Operational Group to enhance the student experience.
- All support managers encourage all staff to access college training and development opportunities. All staff are empowered to apply for SLD funding through a transparent and fair process awarded by a staff panel.
- All support staff engage in appropriate training and development opportunities through a self-service option, by applying directly to SLD or through the performance review framework.
- Senior support managers work collaboratively with UHI, SDS and local agencies to implement effective plans to support learning and student wellbeing.
- Student Services have developed an effective referral system with a number of local agencies to ensure joined up services for students, for example the provision of a counselling service for students.
- The Employment and Development (ED) team work closely with SDS and community partnerships to deliver employability across all programmes and through community outreach sessions, to develop work-ready skills to all students and clients.
- The Estates team have worked with UHI to further improve the ICT infrastructure with increased broadband through SWAN resulting in higher speeds, fewer complaints and issues for students and subsequently can facilitate an increase in online provision.

1.3 Areas for development

- Reliability of ICT has generally improved, however a sometimes stretched network combined with broadband issues occasionally impacts on the student experience.
- Whilst the college has supported HISA, student awareness of the student association ¹has fallen from the previous year (source student survey).
- A few staff representatives do not engage proactively with college staff to ensure that their views are represented at SICG.
- A few teams do not always effectively use a cross-college team approach to improve the student experience.

1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement

- The principal and ELT ensure that all managers use systematic and robust data driven processes to review and evaluate student experience and performance and to plan for improvement at individual, team and management level.
- CMG routinely monitors progress against plans to ensure that the college achieves regional outcome agreement measures.
- Most managers use aspirational performance targets effectively with their teams in the evaluation and planning for improvement.
- The principal and ELT take appropriate account of strategic UHI and stakeholder priorities when planning for improvement.
- HR led the implementation of a new people strategy and performance review framework with a focus on quality improvement and leadership at all levels and for all

¹ Source Student Engagement and Satisfaction Survey

staff. Most staff reflect sufficiently well to identify areas for performance improvement.

- All managers support staff teams well to operationalise their own plans and actions for improvement.
- Almost all teaching teams and support teams use relevant student feedback captured through well-developed voice mechanisms when planning for improvement.
- Almost all managers make appropriate use of KPI trends and outcome data over time with their teams who engage well in self-evaluation processes. This is leading to improved outcomes for most students.
- Most teams take into consideration success and achievement rates of particular student groups.

1.4 Areas for development

- Although relevant improvement plans are in place, not all managers and team leaders sufficiently monitor actions to ensure full implementation.
- There are no formal arrangements for the consistent and effective exchange of information between the local authority, schools and the college.

Delivery of learning and services to support learning

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The board and the principal ensures that safeguarding policy and process are in place and meet all legislation requirements to safeguard all students.
- All managers adhere to relevant policy and procedures.
- HR and all managers use a robust system to ensure that all staff have current membership of PVG and are aware of college arrangements for safeguarding.
- SLD has clear arrangements in place for monitoring that all staff complete safeguarding training at induction and mandatory online training.
- In addition, a majority of staff have completed Prevent training and Protect training delivered by Police Scotland. The college also makes sure that staff have access to the JISC online Prevent training. There are plans in place to widen Prevent training out to specific student groups.
- Staff make all students aware of arrangements for safeguarding at induction and through other promotion materials. Staff ensure that all students are aware of who they can talk to and how they can raise any issue.
- The college reviews safeguarding approaches regularly in line with legislation and national guidance and takes all student and staff feedback into consideration.
- The college engages with other agencies to ensure that processes are current and is working with the regional safeguarding group to create a single safeguarding policy.

2.2 Curriculum

- Academic Affairs works strategically with UHI partners, key regional and local stakeholders and employers to ensure plans for local provision align with regional strategies and proposals. This includes the college's plan for a new build of the Centre for Science and Technology.
- Academic Affairs and CALs develop a curriculum plan to reflect local and regional skills priorities aligning to the regional Skills Investment Plan and local employer demand.
- All teams use labour market intelligence and use employer views well when designing curriculum. They design programmes to include pertinent industry certification. Where appropriate, they design FE programmes to be more widely

accessible to students across the area through an established “networked” mode of delivery model.

- All relevant curriculum teams worked cohesively with schools and employers to design five foundation apprenticeships, delivered across schools using the networked model.
- All Curriculum Area Leads and their teams make effective use of a range of feedback to enhance the design of programmes each year. They take account of direct student feedback and suggestions to influence course design. Curriculum teams also regularly collaborate with employers, local agencies and UHI partners to inform design and development of courses.
- Course leaders update courses each year to take account of legislation, technology and new thinking and theories. Through effective employer relationships, they continue to refresh the curriculum to prepare students well for the sector ensuring student skills meet employer expectations.
- All course teams plan learning and teaching well, making use of different staff skills and expertise as well as inviting speakers, such as care practitioners who share current practice with students, to help improve student knowledge and understanding.
- Curriculum teams are leading the way in innovative use of technologies for learning to create accessible virtual classrooms for all pupils from smaller schools and work with schools to establish common timetabling.
- CMG reviews all curriculum team areas with staff, to evaluate performance and student experience and to consider future content. Curriculum review takes account of student views and employer suggestions.
- All teams deliver and contextualise core skills and employability sessions so that students can apply their skills to wider learning, life and work.
- Students on all full time programmes benefit from strong industry linkage in a number of ways including: work experience, work simulated environment, expert led sessions, industry certification (endorsed by employers) and enterprise projects.
- All teams use contextualised approaches in their pedagogy to ensure work readiness and to elicit a respectful, working relationship with students.
- All students gain an appreciation of developing the right work attitude whilst at college. For example, Professional Cookery students take pride in high food hygiene standards and appropriate dress very early on. Maritime students are involved from the beginning of the course, in establishing a code of conduct and expectations related to a shipping environment and students speak highly about college staff.
- Course leaders design programmes well so that all students are able to progress to the next level of FE or HE, or into employment.
- The ED team effectively coordinate a planned and structured delivery approach to employability across all courses.
- All students benefit from career management skills sessions.

2.2 Areas for development

- Not all curriculum teams are gathering and making sufficient use of available market intelligence when considering future curriculum planning.
- The 2017/18 intake for full time students and high school provision including foundation apprenticeships was less than anticipated.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Almost all students are actively engaged in their learning and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Almost all students are able to influence their own learning and make use of staff feedback to inform future learning.
- All teams empower students to be able to contribute to improving their own learning and to make suggestions and to influence course design.
- All teaching teams involve students in improving learning and teaching approaches, with some teams use innovative and highly inclusive ways to gather student views and ideas.
- All students benefit from activities which develop employability skills and almost all students have developed their knowledge and skills of the workplace.
- In a recent survey, almost all FE students (99%) indicated that they were satisfied with their overall college experience (SFC SSES) and almost all students indicated that they are treated fairly.
- All students gain highly relevant experience of using of high specification equipment in line with industry, which enhances their employability skills.
- Staff use a wide range of relevant teaching approaches for effective learning and teaching which creates interesting and positive learning experiences.
- Most programme teams have teaching staff who continue to work in their industry and use their up to date knowledge to contextualise learning and teaching. For example, Construction lecturers and Music lecturers use their industry experience well to enthuse and inspire students.
- Most programme teams find creative approaches to enhance and embed student understanding, particularly by working with experts from industry and relevant organisations. For example, students (with complex needs) learned well through an experiential learning project, meeting and interviewing refugees. This helped to personalise current affairs issues, normally only accessed by students via television and newspapers.
- All “network” teaching staff use institutional technologies innovatively and use a variety of digital technologies for learning very well by adapting pedagogies to fully integrate and involve all students.
- Most teaching staff use digital technologies well to encourage independent learning approaches such as ‘flipped classroom’ and to enhance digital literacy learning.
- All course teams plan for assessment well and take into account all individual support needs.
- All course teams ensure that students are aware of assessment schedules and provide students with ample opportunity to prepare, using appropriately timed formative assessment approaches.
- Where applicable, teaching staff coach students to peer critique or take part in supervised peer-evaluation. For example, Art students appraise each other’s work, which develops their ability to be objective and reflective about their own work as well as work of others and this helps in the preparation for assessment.
- The CMG and Academic Affairs systematically monitor key performance indicators and support staff well in the use of performance measures to develop improvement plans.
- All curriculum areas and course teams use course performance indicators well to address all issues and to plan improvement measures.
- Team leaders and LTDMs support teaching staff well through formal classroom observations and professional dialogue contributing to better practice. They use these activities to reinforce understanding and encourage regular reflective practice to improve learning and teaching.

- Most staff engage in peer observations to learn about different pedagogies and to use the experience to enhance their practice.
- All students choose from a wide range of college methods to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement of learning and teaching and college services.
- Almost all college teams review student feedback collectively, put solutions in place and are generally very responsive in implementing necessary changes.

2.3 Areas for development

- A few teams do not use appropriate technology in their learning and teaching.
- Not all course teams promote and develop student digital skills sufficiently.
- A few teaching staff have yet to engage in peer observation to enhance their practice.

2.4 Services to support learning

- The principal and ELT established a new student support department which is developing an inclusive culture and a support for learning ethos across ten centres to ensure equivalence for all students.
- The Admissions team and Marketing team use diverse methods to promote courses and to communicate information prior to students attending college, to ensure widest possible engagement.
- Staff use well developed application, interview and induction arrangements to support students, pre-entry and during the orientation time at college.
- Academic Affairs has developed a valuable relationship with SPARQS and HISA which has strengthened the student engagement agenda and will lead to the formalisation of a student partnership agreement.
- Staff are clear about how and when to sign post to the service and can also access the new online UHI referral service where appropriate.
- All students benefit from face-to-face support in all locations, which impacts positively on student retention.
- In a survey, almost all students indicate that they know who to ask for help and that progress is regularly discussed with them.
- Staff promote the benefits of progression pathways well to students, showing the linkage to the wider UHI community. Most HE students become highly suitable ambassadors to FE students. There is evidence that the college tertiary environment inspires and encourages students to consider further study, many of whom continue or return after a couple of years to study HE.
- There is a dedicated guidance resource to support students, working with curriculum teams and together they track student progress throughout the year, identifying any at risks students to intervene or refer to relevant services.
- Most course teams carry out one to one personal reviews to set goals, to keep track of progress, review and plan next steps with students.
- All students benefit from discussions with different staff to help them reflect on progress and plan for the next steps. All students can access guidance through specialists such as SDS.

2.4 Areas for development

- A few students did not receive sufficient pre-entry information.
- The on-course approach to guidance and information is not standardised across all programmes and all locations.
- There is no formalised student partnership agreement.

- In some programmes, the monitoring of student progression and achievement whilst at college, is not sufficiently developed.
- A few technical issues affect the experience for a few students.

2.5 Transitions

- Academic Affairs has increased and improved the range of tertiary progression routes helping to ensure that all students are on the right course at right level.
- Course teams and the ED team work share relevant information and work effectively with SDS, Job Centre Plus, Highland Council, and other partner agencies.
- The unique context of UHI ensures that there are integrated arrangements in place to support all student transitions between school-college programmes, FE programmes, HE programmes and work.
- Due to the tertiary nature of the college, course teams working with the ED team support all students well in making informed choices about their next steps. They have effective transition arrangements within UHI.
- Staff assist all students well in the development of academic skills to enable them to confidently progress to the next level of education or into employment.
- Specialist staff and lecturers support students well to develop key employability skills which are sought after by their particular industry.

2.6 Partnerships

- Nominated staff work strategically and collaboratively through regional groups such as Quality Forum to share best practice and to fine tune processes that will improve the student experience.
- All course teams effectively communicate and use best practice and recommendations identified by awarding body EVs to have a positive impact on the learning experience.
- Dedicated managers work with schools and employers to design and deliver accessible computing and digital skills curriculum and to build computing capability available to all pre-senior phase and senior phase students.
- The ED team meets the needs of deprived area communities well by running workshops in the community for a client group who are a much harder to reach category and socially isolated, aged between 16 and 67 years and are mainly jobcentre claimants.
- Most clients progress after time into education, training or employment. Clients are also increasingly participating in the community, which is supporting developments channelled through the Community Empowerment Act.
- Course teams engage well with employers to ensure that programmes include relevant industry-accredited qualifications, and therefore give students a distinct, competitive edge when applying for work.

2.6 Areas for development

- Whilst there is good engagement with employers and stakeholder in general, there is no formal customer account management in place.

Outcomes and impact

3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- The board and the principal ensures that the college complies fully with all equalities legislation.
- The EW group has implemented well-developed plans including the Equality Mainstreaming Report and Plan, Access and Inclusion Strategy, Corporate Parenting Plan and Gender Action Plan across all staff teams.
- The EW group routinely monitors the progress of all college plans and statutory outcomes. It is too early to measure the full impact of new plans and actions.
- Most teams are already implementing strategies and promote equalities and diversity well. Continued support over time is required to embed these processes fully across the college.
- Almost all teams are working towards addressing the gender balance in programmes and in adapting learning and teaching to include all genders.
- All teams promote equality and diversity adequately.

3.1 Areas for development

- Most teams use a variety of data to analyse specific groups of students, however reports pertaining to retention, success and achievement for all specific groups of students are not well developed.
- In some programmes, the gender balance of students is improving marginally.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is not yet fully developed and co-ordinated across all parts of the college, teams and students.

3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all students

- Full time FE achievement rates have been high over the last five years, and have been well above the national average.
- 2017/17 retention rates for full time FE are above the national average (at 18%), and have been improving each year.
- 2016/17 retention and achievement rates in Crofting and Countryside, Music, Maritime and Outdoor Adventure are consistently high over a three-year period.
- Overall, part time student success rates are high and are above the sector average for 2016/17.
- Part time programmes (more than 80 hours of learning) are performing (71%) around the sector average in 2016/17.
- Most 2015/16 full time FE leaver students are in work or in education at the time of surveying, six months after the end of the academic year. 84% of full time students are in a positive destination. 60% of these students are in education and 40% in employment. Of those students who are in education, 89% continue to study within the college and UHI which gives an indication that students are satisfied with their recent experience and also confirms that the increasing range of progression opportunities are having an impact.
- Core Skills outcomes (2016/17) are high across, Communication, Numeracy and IT, particularly at SCQF levels 5 and 6.
- Positive outcomes are high for those who are furthest from the job market. In 2016/17, 20 out of 21 (95%) Employability Fund (SDS) participants are now in work, a modern apprenticeship or in education. 34 out of 35 (97%) of young participants (16-24 yrs) are now in education or employment after participating in Activity Agreements and Employability Framework programmes.

- Staff ensure that all students from all backgrounds are treated fairly, have an equitable experience and receive appropriate support where needed.
- Most course teams consider and evaluate the outcomes of specific student groups during the self-evaluation process.

3.2 Areas for development

- There was an increase in students completing with a partial success outcome in 16/17.
- Full time achievement rates fell in a few subject areas in 16/17.
- Part time achievement rates were low in a small range of 16/17 part time programmes.
- Intermittent student attendance during a few core skills classes impacts on achievement rates across all core skills at that level.



West Highland College UHI

Enhancement Plan for 17-18

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West Highland College UHI Enhancement Plan for 17-18

Section 1 Actions for Improvement

This *Enhancement Plan* incorporates all the areas for development identified within the *Evaluative Report*. There is a list of actions below each of the areas for development. Some actions link to more than one area for development. Dates for progress updates are listed in the 'When' column. The expected completion date is in **bold**. The college management group will use a working action plan to monitor progress. This will reference the lead people who are responsible for implementation of the actions and reporting progress against actions.

1 Leadership and Quality Culture

1.1 Areas for development

- A single Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA) depute president has limited availability to attend all committee meetings and this restricts student engagement in governance and college work.

1.1 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
1.11	Appoint additional co-opted student representation to the board and other internal committees.	Dec 17 March 18
1.12	Facilitate regular class rep meetings and coordinate the appropriate dissemination of student feedback and action.	Dec 17 June 18

1.2 Areas for development

- A few managers and team leaders do not routinely use improved processes consistently across all locations and departments.
- A few team leaders do not routinely consult with students, employers and stakeholders to feed into improvement plans.
- A few staff do not engage in available staff development activities.

1.2 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
1.21 1.41	Support managers and team leaders to use improved processes through targeted development sessions (through the new Skills Transfer and Knowledge Exchange programme).	Dec 17 Feb 18 June 18
1.22	Provide inclusive, accessible and re-usable staff training and development sessions by creating recordings where possible.	Feb 18 June 18
1.23	Ensure that all staff engage in reflective practice. Support and monitor this through the performance review framework, ACE and self-evaluation processes.	Dec 17 April 18
1.24 2.22	Ensure that all teams consult widely (students/stakeholders) to inform development and improvement by monitoring (evidenced through ACE, review, approval).	April 18 June 18 Dec 18
1.25 1.42 2.34 2.44 3.22	Embed systematic monitoring of actions through established college enhancement and self-evaluation activity.	Feb 18 June 18

West Highland College UHI Enhancement Plan for 17-18

1.3 Areas for development

- Reliability of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has generally improved, however, a sometimes stretched network combined with broadband issues occasionally impacts on the student experience.
- Whilst the college has supported HISA, student awareness of the student association has fallen from the previous year.
- A few staff representatives do not engage proactively with college staff to ensure that their views are represented at Staff Information and Consultation Group (SICG).
- A few teams do not always effectively use a cross-college team approach to improve the student experience.

1.3 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
1.31	Work closely on actions with University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Learning Information Systems (LIS) to monitor technology related outages and issues closely and to improve connectivity, where appropriate.	Dec 17 June 18 Dec 18
1.32	Evaluate suitability of current hardware technologies for future use and implement a plan for future sustainability.	June 18 Dec 18
1.33	Develop a partnership agreement and approach with HISA, students and college staff to support the work of the student association and to enhance student representative activity.	Feb 18 June 18 Dec 18
1.34	Work with HISA to support the delivery of appropriate student representation training for all class representatives.	Dec 17 June 18
1.35 2.21	Create a college-wide planning framework and timeline to embed cross-college team shared responsibilities and objectives.	Feb 18 June 18 Dec 18
1.35	Establish a SICG staff engagement plan and monitor implementation.	Feb 18 June 18

1.4 Areas for development

- Although relevant improvement plans are in place, not all managers and team leaders sufficiently monitor actions to ensure full implementation.
- There are no formal arrangements for the consistent and effective exchange of information between the local authority, schools and the college.

1.4 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
1.41 1.21	Support managers and team leaders to use improved processes through targeted development sessions within the new Skills Transfer and Knowledge Exchange programme.	Dec 17 Feb 18 June 18
1.25 1.42 2.34 2.44 3.22	Embed systematic monitoring of actions through established college enhancement and self-evaluation activity.	Feb 18 June 18
1.43 2.24	Develop a workable agreement to clarify and outline expectations between the local authority, schools and the college.	Feb 18 June 18 Dec 18

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2 Delivery of learning services to support learning

2.2 Area for development

- Not all curriculum teams are gathering and making sufficient use of available market intelligence when considering future curriculum planning.
- The 2017/18 intake for full time students and high school provision including foundation apprenticeships was less than anticipated.

2.2 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
1.35 2.21	Create a college-wide planning framework and timeline to embed cross-college team shared responsibilities and objectives.	June 18
1.24 2.22	Ensure that all teams consult widely with students and stakeholders to inform development and improvement, evidenced through ACE, review, approval processes.	April 18 June 18 Dec 18
2.23	Establish a plan to co-ordinate market intelligence and effectively disseminate information.	June 18 Dec 18
1.43 2.24	Develop a workable agreement to clarify and outline expectations between the local authority, schools and the college.	Feb 18 June 18 Dec 18
2.25	Establish an improved coordination and promotion of the Developing Young Workforce (DYW) college portfolio of foundation and modern apprenticeships through schools, other stakeholders and careers events.	Feb 18 June 18

2.3 Areas for development

- A few teams do not use appropriate technology in their learning and teaching.
- Not all course teams promote and develop student digital skills sufficiently.
- A few teaching staff have yet to engage in peer observation to enhance their practice.

2.3 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
2.31	Investigate the need for a digital strategy as part of the review and refresh of Excellence for All and other relevant strategies across UHI.	April 18 June 18 Dec 18
2.32	Include digital skills sessions for staff through the new Skills Transfer and Knowledge Exchange programme.	Nov 17 March 18 June 18
2.33	Define what we mean by “digital” literacy, citizenship and work-readiness (as a region/nation)	June 18 June 19
1.25 1.42 2.34 2.44 3.22	Embed systematic monitoring of actions through established college enhancement and self-evaluation activity.	Feb 18 June 18

West Highland College UHI Enhancement Plan for 17-18

2.4 Areas for development

- A few students did not receive sufficient pre-entry information.
- The on-course approach to guidance and information is not standardised across all programmes and all locations.
- There is no formalised student partnership agreement.
- In some programmes, the monitoring of student progression and achievement whilst at college, is not sufficiently developed.
- A few technical issues affect the experience for a few students.

2.4 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
2.41	Establish a plan to provide improved and timely pre-entry information to all students.	Feb 18 June 18
3.21 2.42	Implement the HE <i>Personal Academic Tutor</i> (PAT) in line with regional approaches, for all FE students to improve support for all students.	May 2018 Jan 2019 June 2019
2.43	Develop a student partnership agreement with HISA based around the Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (SPARQs) engagement framework.	May 2018 Dec
1.25 1.42 2.34 2.44 3.22	Embed systematic monitoring of actions through established college enhancement and self-evaluation activity.	February June 18
2.45 3.23	Review the course committee meeting agenda to include enhanced student progression reporting.	Dec 17 Feb 18 June 18
2.46	Investigate the use of digital technologies and analytics in the role of supporting students in liaison with UHI.	Dec 18 June 19
2.47	Implement a plan to improve resolving software and hardware issues that require immediate 'at the point of need' support.	Dec 17 Feb 18 June 18

2.6 Areas for development

- Whilst there is good engagement with employers and stakeholder in general, there is no formal customer account management in place.

2.6 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
2.61	Appoint a Business Development Manager to lead on business development across the college.	Oct 17
2.62	Establish a business development plan	Feb 18 June 18

West Highland College UHI Enhancement Plan for 17-18

3 Outcomes and impact

3.1 Areas for development

- Most teams use a variety of data to analyse specific groups of learners, however reports pertaining to retention, success and achievement for all specific groups of students are not well developed.
- In some programmes, the gender balance of students is improving marginally.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is not yet fully developed and co-ordinated across all parts of the college, teams and students.

3.1 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
3.11	Work with other Academic Partners and UHI to instigate the development of a suite of equality and diversity performance reports.	Feb 18 June 18
3.12	Fully implement college Gender Action Plan and monitor the actions.	Feb 18 June 18
3.13	Ensure progress against planned activity within the Access and Inclusion strategy, the Equality Mainstreaming Report and Gender Action Plan.	Feb 18 June 18 Dec 18
3.14	Assist all staff in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion through planned awareness raising and continuing professional development (CPD) activity.	Nov 17 March 18 June 18

3.2 Areas for development

- There was an increase in students completing with a partial success outcome in 16/17.
- Full time achievement rates fell in a few subject areas in 16/17.
- Part time achievement rates were low in a small range of part time programmes.
- Intermittent student attendance of a few core skills classes impacts on achievement rates across all core skills at that level.

3.2 Planned actions

Ref	Actions	When
2.42 3.21	Implement the HE <i>Personal Academic Tutor</i> (PAT) in line with regional approaches, for all FE students to improve support for all students.	May 18 Jan 19 June 19
1.25 1.42 2.34 2.44 3.22	Embed systematic monitoring of actions through established college enhancement and self-evaluation activity.	Feb 2018 June 18 Dec 19
2.45 3.23	Review course committee meeting agendas to include enhanced student progression reporting.	Dec 17 Feb 18 June 18
3.24	Ensure targeted monitoring of under-performing provision.	Feb 18 June 18 Dec 19

West Highland College UHI Enhancement Plan for 17-18

Section Two Arrangements for monitoring progress on actions for improvement

The areas of development and actions within this plan link to all other college plans. A working action plan will include specific objectives where necessary and will include a list of expected outcome evidence. The principal and the Executive Leadership Team will report progress against the plan through relevant board committees and to the board. The College Management Group and Academic Affairs will monitor the progress of actions within the working action plan in consultation with associated teams. This will be on a quarterly basis, or sooner as needed.

Grading Outcomes – for illustration only

Quality Principal	Grade
Leadership and Quality Culture	
Delivery of Learning Provision	
Outcomes and Impact	

Capacity to Improve Statement

The board, the principal and all senior managers actively convey the college vision, providing direction and focus to managers. They are clear about what they want to achieve and what they need to improve to the benefit of all learners and all stakeholders. Senior managers work collaboratively with UHI and other stakeholders. Managers effectively integrate with all distributed teams and engage well with all staff and students across the college. However, effective engagement with all students can be a challenge due to the distributed nature of the college and the relatively new student association.

Managers lead their teams well, providing appropriate direction for strategic and operational priorities and use data well to inform the decision making process. The new Academic Affairs Operational Group provides the necessary join-up to facilitate improvements across the college. Although curriculum teams and support teams are working more collaboratively to ensure that learners are at the centre of decisions, all teams could collaborate more fully on actions for improvement. The college will use recent changes in committee structures and the operational plan, to address this. All students have access to many college mechanisms and opportunities to provide feedback and give valuable input from the student perspective. A majority of students use national and regional surveys and almost all students give positive feedback. The board and managers use student feedback well with teams to inform self-evaluation. However, managers could strengthen the involvement of students and stakeholders in shaping improvements and by increasing student representation at internal committees and groups.

Curriculum teams are leading the development of innovative learning and teaching through digital technologies providing an accessible curriculum across the geographical area, which has a positive impact in rural communities. They are continuously adapting and updating their pedagogy, using inclusive approaches to teaching and making good use of a range of emerging digital technologies to enhance the learning experience. They make use of available Key Performance Indicators to triangulate evidence during self-evaluation and a further suite of reports would strengthen focus on specific groups of students. Academic Affairs recognise the need to prioritise and widen core skills development to better equip students with the right set of skills and essential attributes for the future workplace. The inclusion of digital skills within an essential skills framework would support all teams in this work and would embed digital literacy and digital citizenship skills as an essential element of course design.