

23 April 2024

Dr Margaret Cook
Principal and Chief Executive
UHI Perth
Dear Dr Cook,

A team of HM Inspectors from Education Scotland visited UHI Perth in February 2024 to undertake an Annual Engagement Visit. During our visit, we talked to learners, staff and stakeholders, and worked closely with the senior managers.

The team found the following major strengths in the college's work:

Learner progress and outcomes

The rate of successful completion for learners on full-time further education (FE) programmes has been consistently above sector average for the last five years. The majority of curriculum areas have successful learner completion rates above the sector norm for full-time FE programmes. The successful completion rate for learners on part-time FE programmes has declined significantly in the past year and is lower than the sector average. However, college-derived data indicates that successful completion has increased for AY 2022/23. Successful completion rates for learners who declare a disability, or are care experienced, are above sector averages. Managers lead self-evaluation arrangements well and engage staff effectively in analysing learner progress and outcomes to identify areas requiring improvement. College transitions officers work well with local secondary schools to ensure school-age learners transitioning to college programmes receive information about the range of support services available to them. Teaching staff contextualise activities to ensure learners are developing skills for the workplace. Personal academic tutors (PATs) engage well with learners to monitor progress and signpost access to support services when required.

Approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating

Most teaching staff use regular team meetings with managers to review learners' progress and to tailor learning and teaching to meet their individual needs. The majority of teaching staff hold the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) or equivalent, and all staff undertake an annual professional review to identify their professional learning requirements. Learner student voice representatives (SVRs) meet regularly with curriculum managers to contribute their views about their learning experience. They value opportunities to discuss suggestions for improvement and feel that managers take good account of their feedback. The majority of curriculum managers involve staff, learners and stakeholders in activities to enhance learning and teaching across the college. All teaching staff use the college's self-evaluation arrangements to reflect on learning, teaching, and assessment approaches; and identify areas for improvement. Teaching and support staff provide a range of flexible support facilities to help learners overcome challenges and ease anxiety. These facilities help learners to build confidence to participate more fully in their programme.

Learner Engagement

The Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA) take care to ensure that training for SVRs meets the needs of learners with ASN and learners whose first language is not English. HISA use 'You said, we did' to publicise improvements to the learner experience as a result of learner feedback. HISA works closely with local businesses to gather donations for the Big Project and provides cost-of-living support by distributing food and toiletries to all learners who require it. College managers collate reports well to contribute to planning for college-wide enhancement activities. Support staff engage effectively in evaluating the services they provide for learners. All PATs monitor learner attendance and engagement continuously and effectively. Most curriculum teams engage effectively with employers to promote, contextualise, and enhance programmes. They draw constructively on this collaboration to support teaching staff to keep up to date with current and emerging industry needs.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the senior managers:

- Successful completion rates for learners from the most deprived backgrounds, or from an ethnic minority background, are below sector average.
- Arrangements for monitoring and tracking learner outcomes are not applied consistently by staff across all curriculum areas.
- Some teaching staff are not provided with sufficient opportunity to engage in activities to enhance their approach to learning and teaching.
- A significant increase in the number of learners requesting alternative assessment arrangements has impacted the college's capacity to meet demand. Teaching staff should improve planning arrangements to timeously meet specific learner support needs.
- A significant number of SVRs have not engaged with training to help them undertake their role.

Main points for action

- None identified

What happens next?

We are confident that the college has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve. We will continue to monitor progress with regular contact through the link HM Inspector.

Joe Mulholland
HM Inspector