



Shetland College
University of the
Highlands and Islands

**HMIe Review of
Shetland College
March 2011**

Learner Report
May 2011

1 The Review Process

During the week beginning 7 March 2011, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) carried out an independent review of the quality of provision at Shetland College UHI on behalf of the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC). The review team consisted of several HM Inspectors, associate assessors (who are staff from other Scottish colleges) and a student team member who was there to represent your interests as learners.

Learners at Shetland College UHI played a very important role in the preparation for the review in March and also during the review week itself. Learners on a variety of full-time and part-time programmes completed a survey and focus groups which were conducted by the college's placement graduate with responsibility for learner engagement. Information from the learner survey was used to compile a comprehensive report of the student experience at Shetland College UHI, and this was made available to the HMIE review team and to the college. The college will continue to conduct annual student-led surveys, and will include the results of these in the annual college self-evaluation report and annual report.

During the review of the college, the review team observed learning and teaching and held discussions with learners and staff. This enabled the team to make an evaluation of the learning and teaching process and learner progress and outcomes. Team members also met with members of the Board of Management and obtained feedback from community groups, partners and employers who work closely with the college. This allowed the review team to evaluate leadership and quality management and other important activities that impact on the quality of your experience as a learner. The review team also discussed with staff examples of good practice which had been identified by staff in various college sections.

HMIE has recently published a report about Shetland College UHI on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The report has confidence statements that express the review team's overall evaluation of the key principles of *high quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture*. The report highlights examples of excellence or sector leading practice. The report also clearly outlines future actions for the college to improve and enhance quality, and the Board of Management will formally provide updates on actions, progress and outcomes as part of our annual report to SFC. The report is available on the HMIE website at www.HMIE.gov.uk. This website provides you with easy access to review and inspection reports, a wide range of other publications and more information on the work of HMIE and its role in Scottish Education.

In addition, Shetland College UHI has prepared this report for learners as a means of conveying to you a summary of the outcomes of the HMIE review.

2. Executive Summary

The following are holistic judgements made by HMIE relating to the key principles of *high quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture*.

2.1 HMIE is confident that:

- learners are progressing well and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes, overall. However, attainment rates for more than a few full-time learners are low;
- the college has in place high quality learning and teaching processes;
- learners are actively engaged in enhancing their own learning and the work and life of the college overall. However, learners are insufficiently involved in decision-making in the college; and
- the college is well led and is enhancing the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders overall. However, evaluation of learning and teaching is ineffective.



2.2 HMIE identified a number of strengths in relation to the three key principles of high quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture.

- The college is highly responsive to the needs of its community and this is reflected well in its strategic aims.
- The college works well with its partners to identify and respond to the needs of learners and its community.
- Learners attend campuses and learning centres that are geographically well-sited and offer a wide range of programmes.
- Retention rates are high.
- Learners are well prepared for further study or employment and most make good progress.
- Learners enjoy their learning and relationships between learners and teaching staff are positive.
- Teaching staff use a range of teaching approaches that meet individual learner requirements well.
- Learners are well engaged in planning and enhancing their own learning, particularly through participation in opportunities for wider achievement.
- The college provides strong and effective leadership for services to support learning and teaching.

2.3 Main points for action:

- Programme teams should improve attainment rates for full-time learners.
- Teaching staff should implement fully the arrangements in place for learners to set goals and reflect upon their learning.
- The college should further promote learner engagement in enhancing the work and life of the college.
- College managers and teaching staff should ensure they evaluate learning and teaching effectively.





2.4 Signposting sector-leading practice or excellence.

During the external review, the HMIE review team identified the following two examples of sector-leading or excellent practice at Shetland College UHI as worthy of sharing with the wider college network throughout Scotland. More detailed information about these practices can be obtained from the HMIE website.

- **Excellence in working with industry to support the curriculum**

This model details how the college has developed links with industry to support the integration and development of core skills and progression within two programmes - NC Art, Design and Craft and NC Digital Media Computing - which help learners to aspire to produce work beyond the course requirement.

- **Excellence in preparing learners for SVQ Level 2 in Health and Social Care**

This model shows how staff work in partnership with the local authority in Shetland to prepare employees within the care industry for mandatory registration as social care workers. Teaching staff have developed a *return to learn* programme to support employees who have not engaged with formal learning for many years. The primary aim of the programme is to enable returning learners to develop their confidence and progress to the *SVQ Level 2 in Health and Social Care* in order to achieve registration with the Scottish Social Services Council. The college has developed a 10 week day-release programme which assists learners to develop their communication and ICT skills, contextualised within the care setting.

3 Quality improvement activity planned.

In section 2.3 of the executive summary HM Inspectors identified four areas which Shetland College UHI should improve. The college is committed to providing a high quality experience for all its learners and therefore welcomes these recommendations which are designed to enhance the quality of the learner experience. The college plans to address the main points for action as follows:

- **Programme teams should improve attainment rates for full-time learners.**

We are reviewing our admission and induction procedures, as well as our first-line guidance approaches, to try to improve learner attainment on all full-time programmes.

- **Teaching staff should implement fully the arrangements in place for learners to set goals and reflect upon their learning.**

We will develop the good practice which exists in some college sections to ensure that all learners are supported to set goals and reflect upon their learning throughout their programmes.

- **The college should further promote learner engagement in enhancing the work and life of the college.**

We will develop more opportunities for learners to engage in enhancing the work and life of the college through a revised programme of focus groups and learner forums, and participation in college events.

- **College managers and teaching staff should ensure they evaluate learning and teaching effectively.**

We will review and refresh our learning and teaching strategy to include a more robust approach to the evaluation of learning and teaching on all programmes.

Shetland College UHI is confident that the above actions will further enhance the quality of the learner experience and staff's commitment to listening to learners' views.

The college is pleased with the outcome of the review and would like to thank all staff, learners and other stakeholders who participated in the HMIE review process.