

Planning for UHI Mainstreaming Report 2015

Shetland College UHI

Key area where progress has been made with regard to equality and diversity:

A dedicated post which incorporates student engagement has been created; part of the role is to work with staff in co-ordinating and ensuring that student engagement is embedded across all sections of the college.

Action you have taken to progress this key area:

Student engagement is a key pillar of the sector's approach to quality and therefore to 'enhance the approaches to learner engagement and the student voice' is one of the college's strategic priorities. This highlights the commitment of putting the learner at the heart of what we do at Shetland College UHI. Therefore, establishing a post with learner engagement was a key priority and we feel it has been particularly effective to blend this role with communications.

Prior to this post being created, there was a part-time marketing assistant role. The college Senior Management Team decided to shift the focus from solely promotion of the college to incorporate all different forms of internal and external interaction to target different groups. It was envisaged that a student engagement perspective would be beneficial in such a role and be in line with our strategic priorities.

The Senior Management Team agreed it was crucial to have front line experience of working with students when promoting the college and the blended role offers a particularly high quality student-centred perspective. For marketing purposes, it is necessary to have frequent communication with all departments of the college, which creates effective communications channels which are used for both marketing and student engagement. This makes it easier to provide rapid feedback to students when issues are raised, as the post is embedded across the college.

The blended post provides consistency for students, from before they have applied right through to when they receive their award. Immediately there is an established point of contact for every stage of their college life. While a student engagement post would typically interact with students from enrolment through to the end of their studies, the marketing duties of the blended post also incorporate promotion of the college at local events and organising the awards ceremonies, book-ending the learners' journey. While promoting the college in the wider community and facilitating the awards ceremonies the blended post brings student engagement to the foreground while promoting the college, reassuring parents/guardians and potential

students that they will be supported while studying with us.

Measures you are using to monitor your progress:

The Operations Manager has the strategic lead for learner engagement and line manages the Communications and Student Engagement Assistant.

A learner engagement log is maintained and records student voice events and activities including the impact. This data helps to formulate and plan future activities and events in relation to learner engagement.

Evidence of progress that has been made:

Since the post has been in place there has been a number of successful learner engagement projects put in place including, a rapid response feedback mechanism for learners, regular visits and workshops from local agencies, along with equality thematic displays in the café and library, providing learners with information and offering volunteer opportunities, Learners participating in cross college committees and course teams.

Challenges that have been faced in progressing this key area:

To ensure funding is sourced and maintained for the coordination of student voice activities and events.

Further action you intend to take:

Continue to further develop student voice activities and events in partnership with learners that will have a positive impact on the experience of the learner.