

## Annex 3– Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy (draft)

This document sets out a high-level strategic approach to research and knowledge exchange within a “New Shetland College” encompassing the existing research carried out at the NAFC Marine Centre and Shetland College (incorporating the Centre for Rural Creativity). This is presented within the broader context of the University of the Highlands and Islands.

**Aim:** To embed existing research and impact activity within an innovative and exciting model that both reflects the values and setting of current activity, and creates a new identity for research in Shetland.

**Vision:** An innovative research landscape which draws on Shetland’s maritime and cultural heritage to maximise opportunities for synergies, and strengthen existing excellence.

In order to maintain, promote and enhance research and KE, it is proposed that a new ‘Research group’ be established within the new institute to encompass all existing and new research, knowledge exchange and associated activities. This group will be Multi-disciplinary and will be responsible for the coordination and management of research and knowledge exchange activities and for the development of research in Shetland in collaboration with the UHI network.

Members of staff of “New Shetland College” engaged in research and KE will be invited to join the group and to facilitate capacity building and coaching with other members of staff interested and developing their research activities.

### **Objectives:**

**Research & Impact:** Maintain and increase research, which has an impact on communities in a local, national and international context, contributes to the REF, and continues to support the local economy.

Explore collaboration between marine science and creative industries in the unique context that is Shetland.

Cultivate an International perspective relative to other island/remote maritime communities in delivering collaborative projects.

Develop and increase sustainable income streams

**People:** Develop an environment, which generates innovative research synergies.

Provide a positive environment for staff and students in the pursuit of scholarship and research. Providing opportunities for engagement with all relevant UHI groups, national research clusters and international collaborations where possible.

Increase and support a vibrant and eclectic postgraduate research community.

Support effective delivery of research degrees including exploration of opportunities for introducing interdisciplinary teaching and strengthening research teaching linkages.

### **Milestones**

Formation of a single research committee with defined Role and Remit and membership.

Development of a 5-year strategic plan outlining a path to long term sustainability for research, carried out in consultation with staff.

Shoormal conference – a minimum of one new collaborative multidisciplinary project

### **The University of the Highlands and Islands Context**

Shetland College and the NAFC Marine Centre are key institutions in the UHI partnership and play a critical role in the development of research and KE – both in a local context and in the wider University context. The emerging new unified Shetland College offers an opportunity to create a new multi-disciplinary Research Group to lead and develop research activity, income generation and capacity building in Shetland, and to contribute to the University wide research activity. The new Research Group will articulate activities to the UHI Research, Impact and Knowledge Exchange Strategic Plan, 2018-2023<sup>1</sup>.

Staff in the new research group are members of three of the four UHI research clusters (MESE, HARC and SILK) and will continue to contribute and lead in the ongoing development of these groups.

### **Shetland Context**

New Shetland College will focus its research and knowledge exchange activities in two main areas as highlighted in the UHI Research Strategy:

- » Marine and environmental science
- » Culture, creativity, heritage, language and history

These areas are represented within the current organisational structures as set out below. There are significant opportunities for interdisciplinary and collaborative working, which have been identified by staff working across the sector.

### **NAFC Marine Science**

The Department of Marine Science and Technology at the NAFC Marine has evolved over a period of 20 years from having an economic development role to being an internationally recognised research institute with excellent facilities. The focus of our research has always been to support local maritime industries, and particularly the seafood sector, with high quality applied research outputs to meet their requirements in an ever-changing policy and natural environment. Through the applied nature of our research and our close contact with industry, we have developed a strong niche within the wider research community. The Marine Science Department will continue to deliver the relevant Trust Deeds and Objectives of the Shetland Fisheries Training Centre Trust.

We aim to undertake research and provide advice that sustains coastal communities and maritime resources. This strategy is built around the following objectives:

Research – We will continue to prioritise highly applied fisheries, aquaculture and marine spatial planning research and development that benefits marine communities or the maritime environment.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/t4-media/one-web/university/research/resource/docs/Research-Strategy-2018\\_2023-WEB.pdf](https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/t4-media/one-web/university/research/resource/docs/Research-Strategy-2018_2023-WEB.pdf)

Provision of Advice – We will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to provide high quality, applicable and timely advice relating to topics including policy development, fisheries management and marine spatial planning.

Service provision – making the best use of our highly skilled staff and excellent facilities, we will develop and enhance the range of high quality aquaculture, marine survey, and consultancy services that we offer.

Added Value – We will continue to attract funding to support research and development that has a measurable impact for the communities within our target area

Networks – alongside our key local relationships we will continue to develop and maintain effective external links with relevant partners to ensure that we remain responsive to industry needs and business opportunities.

Knowledge Transfer – In delivering applied R&D work we will effectively disseminate knowledge and skills to through our networks to ensure that best use is made of our research outputs and capabilities.

There are several key enablers of this strategy:

- **Our excellent staff and students** who we shall support to achieve these, and their own personal development targets.
- **Our facilities** which we will review and develop in a strategic manner to provide the optimum environment for our research within the local, regional, national and international context.
- **Our partners** both industry and academic with whom we will continue to promote dialogue and collaboration.

### **Centre for Rural Creativity and the Creative and Cultural Industries**

The CRC is a collaboration of staff engaged in scholarly and creative engagement with the Creative Economy and Creative Arts past and present, rooted in an understanding of our regional heritage and context. While based at Shetland College it also has a UHI – wide remit as a centre for PGT and PGR delivery with colleagues in the network, and the hub for the SFC UIF KE Creative Economy group for the University.

The prime focus for research and KE activity in the CRC revolves around culture, creativity and heritage, with key areas of work with local cultural organisations and activities, such as textiles businesses and makers, socially engaged art in a number of contexts, and Shetland heritage including language, music and film. Both empirical research and practice based research projects featured in the work of the Centre.

Our research, KE and teaching activities are predominantly about the CE, people and communities, culture and heritage and creativity in the rural context of the Highlands and Islands and related spaces. In tandem with this regional context and heritage, we seek also to engage with related international networks and issues as they inform cultural challenges and opportunities. We aim to pursue a broad academic agenda by investigating the unique characteristics of our human and physical landscape, islands, island culture and rural creativity in all contexts. We seek to bring agency and empowerment to the communities we serve. In the wider context, there will be a growing focus on research activity in the Creative Economy, and on KE interactions with practitioners and small businesses.

CRC and CCI represent essentially an interdisciplinary group engaged in Art and Socially Engaged Practice, Visual Art and Textiles, Music, Film, History, Literature and Archaeology. We seek to

promote excellence in these discrete areas, and we are committed to creating strong inter-disciplinary research and KE activities to further the aims and objectives of the College and the University.

Through the work of the CRC we aim to:

- Support high quality research and KE activities and outputs including creative practice and practice-based work
- Provide opportunities for financial and strategic support for staff
- Offer postgraduate studentship support – in OGT and PGR
- Create opportunities and strategic support for inter-disciplinary activity
- Support staff research to be submitted to the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF)
- Provide opportunities for dialogue and academic discourse
- Enable and support creative and innovative adjacencies, experimentation and exploration

This strategy is built around the following objectives:

Research – We will continue to prioritise cultural, social and creative research in a rural Islands context

Provision of Advice – We will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to provide high quality, applicable and timely advice relating to areas of our expertise

Added Value – We will continue to attract funding to support research and development that has a measurable impact for the communities within our target area

Networks – alongside our key local relationships we will continue to develop and maintain effective external links with relevant partners to ensure that we remain responsive to the needs of the creative economy and business opportunities.

Knowledge Transfer – As the hub for the Creative Economy KE group we will effectively disseminate knowledge and skills through our networks to ensure that best use is made of our research outputs and capabilities.