

Committee	Board of Management		
Agenda Item Number	6		
Date paper prepared	19/09/2023	Date of committee meeting	04/10/2023
Subject	Principal's Report		
Author	Jane Lewis, Principal with members of SMG		
Action requested	For discussion		
Purpose of the paper	<p>To update the board on activities across the College. These contribute to our fulfilment of the Regional Outcome Agreement*. The Regional Outcome Agreement covers aspirations around: Fair access and transitions; High quality learning, teaching and support; Partnership participation and student experience; learning with impact; equalities and inclusion; Responsive institutions; Climate emergency; Knowledge exchange and innovation; Research excellence and sustainability.</p> <p>Outcomes for students include our targets for FE credits; our UG and PG targets and our Schools delivery. It also highlights work on fair access; articulation and work with care experienced students.</p> <p>Outcomes for economic delivery and social renewal includes responding to employer and industry needs for example through upskilling and reskilling the workforce. It also includes our work on Islands Deal projects and knowledge exchange</p> <p>Outcomes for research includes our work to maintain and increase research excellence</p> <p>*The present ROA is for 2022-23 which was received and sent to the board at our last meeting</p>		
Brief summary of the paper	<p>The current position on student numbers and credits is provided. Activities of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing committee are provided. An update is given on activity related to the Islands Deal. Updates are given on research activities and other college activities and achievements.</p>		
Consultation	SMG members provide the updates in the report		

Resource implications	n/a
Risk implications	n/a
Link with strategy	Links to all parts of the college strategic plan
<u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</u>	n/a
Island Community Impact	n/a
Paper status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open – The paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction. <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted – The paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential - The paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online. [Please note papers may still be subject to Freedom of Information requests – see below].
<u>Freedom of information</u>	Choose an item. If closed/ withheld, select date this will become 'open': Enter a date.

1. UHI Updates

The new college – North, West and Hebrides was vested at the beginning of the academic year and has had its formal launch in September. The college covers a huge geographic area with 19 campuses.

The Islands forum was held in Shetland. Once again this was an excellent forum for sharing across local authorities and other stakeholders with a number of key themes being identified. These were reflected in a revised UHI Islands Strategy which is currently going through review and approval.

2. Update on enrolment figures (FE/HE)

		20/9/23	12/9/22	Enrolments				
				2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
FE	Full time (FT)	76	49	57	72	76	90	94
	Part time (PT)	475	406	2469	2585	2235	2197	3348
HE	Full time (FT)	112	116	140	128	163	117	112
	Part time (PT)	116	150	227	273	255	254	278

Shetland UHI enrolments at 20/09/2023 (data extracted from Metis)

Enrolment numbers for FE full time are strong this year being equivalent to our highest in the last three years; this is very encouraging given the downward trend that we have experienced over the past five years. Part time numbers are more challenging to predict but indications are that they are healthy for this point in the year.

However, our credit target for AY 2023-24 has reduced from 4335 to 3900 due to the required 10% reduction in credits across the partnership. With the flat cash award from SFC, we will not be paid for any additional credits delivered, and as such we must try to ensure that the delivery of any credits over target doesn't increase any costs. We are aiming for a small amount of over delivery to support the case for growth, and considering where savings can be made from reduced delivery.

Keeping credits on target this year will be challenging. We exceeded our credit target by over 7% in 2022-23 and had been planning for growth in line with our business case for merger and strategic plan. Following Board direction, we are initially targeting specific areas to achieve a credit reduction including short courses moving to full cost recovery, full time programmes reducing overall credits and reassessing the credit load of modern apprenticeships.

Full time HE enrolment numbers suggest that we will see enrolment levels that are lower than AY 2022/23. Our HE FTE target for AY 2023-24 is 140 FTE for undergraduate taught

'home' fee status students. This was a realistic prediction based on previous activity, but now looks challenging.

Health, Care and Society have introduced new courses for this academic year:

- **HND Counselling** (full time course - qualification needed to register with BACP as a counsellor). Students require 100 hours of clinical practice, placement opportunities are being explored with SIC Schools Counselling Services; NHS; Women's Aid, Bereavement Shetland.
- **NQ Hairdressing** (full time course – students qualify as junior hairdressers on completion). Working with social media to advertise for models, and making links with SIC care homes to provide hairdressing services for residents.
- **Modern Apprenticeship Healthcare Support** (Clinical & non-clinical) Level 2/3 – working with NHS Shetland to provide this qualification for existing Healthcare Support workers

The section works in partnership:

- SIC continue to provide placements in social services, ELC and CYP. Our students provide the next generation of workers in SIC settings. We are planning to work with adult services to provide a pathway for senior phase school pupils and college students into social care work. They are keen to offer potential of 'guaranteed interview' for those who successfully complete our pathway courses for relief social care posts.
- All our courses meet SSSC registration requirements that are necessary for industry. NHS Shetland continue to be very supportive with placements for our access to nursing qualification and are keen to work with us more closely in relation to modern apprenticeship provision in healthcare support.

Update on Short Courses

Short Courses will now be full cost recovery due to the cut in the credit total.

A very successful three-week course on Introduction to Commercial Fishing recently finished with nine newly qualified people ready to make their first steps into the fishing industry. The local industry swung into action to support this course, from emergency support for net-mending when an injury meant the main course lead was unable to show students the intricacies of net mending, to visits to local agencies and offers of employment for the students from fishing skippers.

Recently UHI Shetland have been without a First Aid trainer after the external trainer decided to no longer continue training. This has necessitated the cancellation of a few First Aid courses, which is unfortunate, but plans are underway to offer this with our current staff by having up to six of our current First Aiders take a 'Train the Trainer' course that would allow them to teach the different First Aid classes we offer. This would mean we could be more flexible about training dates too.

Short courses: There have been 30 short courses offered over the summer period and start of the AY23/24. These courses offered training for 193 people.

3. Update on Apprentices

Our contract for 23/24 was approved with a total of 178 new start places and a value of £536,118. The contract conditions changed somewhat this year meaning that progressions (apprenticeships that are split and require the individual to undertake a lower level before moving to a higher qualification) now form part of our start places. Previously they were discounted.

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SDS has allocated 25,500 to learning providers across Scotland. There was formerly an option to ask for more places if contracts were filled. Providers have been told that there will be no such reallocation this year unless providers give back funding or places.

Performance is measured against a series of KPLs, including volume and value targets. These are set against financial periods. The most recent measurement period is Period 5 ending on 1 September. By the end of period 5 we had to be at 28% of our starts (50 new starts) and have claimed 37% of our value (£198360). At 1 September we were at:

85 starts

£239592 of our contract spend

We were therefore ahead of our target which means we are not at risk of any of the contract spend being taken from us. The next measurement period is at the end of period 8 (1 December) but there is a significant step up to 69% of starts and 64% of spend so we will continue to monitor our performance in relation to these targets.

In addition, we are measured against our completion rate. The target is at 75% and at the end of period 5, we were at 86.8%, comfortably ahead of target. The continuing ASOS by EIS FELA is a potential threat to the target as non-resulting may lead to apprentices leaving before their courses have been resulted affecting our achievement rate and meaning we will not be able to claim the outcome funding, which is significant.

Owing to increased volume of activity, in September we recruited a new staff member, Alexis Slater, to assist with the high volume of Aquaculture apprentices. Northlink has also decided to recruit 6 new Engine and Deck rating apprentices, who are using Port Arthur house for their accommodation too. In addition, we will be holding our Try Something Different Day in November where pupils in S3/S4 will be encouraged to try being an apprentice for the day. As part of this project, pupils identifying as female will be offered STEM placements and pupils identifying as male will be offered positions in Care and Administration. This project is a collaboration between UHI, SDS, DYW and SIC.

We are anticipating that we will be bidding for the contract for 24/25 around October/November this year and await instruction and information on the procurement process. This will be done through PCS.

4. Update on Research

a. Marine Sciences

Staffing:

- Louise Thomason was recruited to the vacant Fisheries Research Assistant post and took up her position at the start of August.
- Tanya Riley was recruited to the vacant Marine Scientist post and took up her position in August.
- Mia McAllister returned to a Temporary Fisheries Research Assistant post (Aug-Dec) and is developing elasmobranch research and has contributed significantly to fisheries fieldwork and sampling.

PhDs:

- **Fisheries** - James Harris has started PhD "Linking predator and prey dynamics: spatio-temporal trends in seals, seabirds and fish around Shetland" led by Debbie Russel at SMRU and co-supervised by Shaun Fraser.

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- **Aquaculture - IFCB project** Gary Groves, recently completed his initial literature review and first year Thesis Panel. He continues to develop data visualisation and dashboard and plans to soon explore alternative machine learning architectures for image recognition.
- **Marine Spatial Planning**
 - **Porpoise project:** SS has deployed FPODs in porpoise monitoring sites in Shetland, progressing the acoustic fieldwork element of her project.
 - Proposal: PhD on invasive species has been sent to the Super DTP committee, with Rebecca Giesler as the primary supervisor in collaboration with SAMS and Herriot-Watt, a decision should be received by Christmas.

Research Publications:

- Palder, O.J., Feeking, J.P., **Fraser, S.**, and Melli, V., 2023. Approaching single-species exclusion in mixed demersal trawl fisheries. *Ocean and Coastal Management*. Ocean and Coastal Management. 242: 106672. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2023.106672>

CA & RS gave research presentations on Marine Sciences research and on Marine Spatial Planning at the Islands Forum research showcase on 13/9/23.

Pelagic workstream:

- KB & CA attended series of meetings in Aberdeen/Edinburgh/Fraserburgh/Peterhead as part of South African Fisheries Delegation Visit (with Marine Directorate and SPFA), as part of the Fishmongers Exchange Fisheries exchange grant scheme (19th–23rd June).
- KB & CA attended SUHI-SPFA meetings 12th-13th July for continued development of collaborative work, including update of workplan and MoU.
- KB attended initial planning meeting for development of pelagic bycatch monitoring as part of wider CIBRINNA project.
- KB abstract accepted for World Fisheries Congress presentation.
- KB herring survey onboard fishing vessel Challenge (2nd -14th Sept).
- Pelagic self- and co-sampling work programme is progressing in line with targets.

Whitefish workstream:

- Successful completion of Fair Isle Fish Survey using MFV *Atlantia II* and using scientific trawl and baited remote underwater video.
- Successful completion of annual Shetland Inshore Fish Survey (SIFS) using MFV *Atlantia II* and survey targeting demersal species and nursery grounds at 52 trawl stations around Shetland.
- Invited presentation by SF at Northern Fishing Alliance (NFA) Cod Focus Group on the method and practicalities of Shetland Inshore Fish Surveys, Moulogne-Sur-Mer, participated online, August 2023.
- CA provided presentation and update on SIFS at Shetland RIFG meeting in Sept.
- Abstracts submitted for MASTS ASM by SF and MMCA.
- Ling project is getting underway. BATMap workstream progressing with eight volunteer vessels identified.

Shellfish workstream:

- We assisted the SSMO with a successful MSC Audit.
- SIC have approved grant funding for FY 23/24 at the requested level - £135,707.04 to support the stock assessment and £26,201.76 for a velvet crab sampling project.

- SSMO have requested funding information with a deadline of October to allow board members to review prior to submission to SIC by December.
- We are working with SSMO on producing a LoA or MOU which will detail our ongoing working arrangements with respect to funding following increased reporting requirements from SIC.
- Stock assessment summaries have been provided to SSMO and presented to the board – further meeting to be held with Scallop fishermen in September.
- TR is progressing SSMO funded investigation of fishery-habitat interactions project and it is hoped that we will be able to report on this by the end of the year.
- LH worked with Charlotte Colvin from Bangor University collecting Whelk samples for climate change study.
- Velvet pier side sampling began in Sept which aims to collect data on moult cycles, to better inform fishery closures.

Fisheries Policy workstream:

- Staff have continued to work with the Shetland Fishermen's Association and Shetland Fish Producer's Organisation on issues of ongoing concern to the local fishing industry under the MoU with these organisations. This has included work in relation to marine protected areas, the assessment of monk, cod and other stocks, and the preparation of several 'Fishy Falsehood' papers for the SFA.

Aquaculture:

- **UHI Aquaculture Hub -**

1. Targets for 22/23 mostly exceeded (on average by 212%), The highest achievement was in our combined income for aquaculture projects (857% of target). Other exceeded targets were for meetings and guest speakers (both 400%), workshops (300%) and applications (220%).
2. 389 FE/HE 'aqua' enrolments in 2022/23, which was very similar to 2021/23 (391 enrolments). As expected, most enrolments were FE and part time.
3. Positive feedback to Forum Event at SAMS.
4. Launched [Aquaculture Student Support Scheme](#) and [Aquaculture Industry Engagement Fund](#)
5. Planning to have trade stand at Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers and Aquaculture UK

- **Shell-volution project -**

1. Feedback was provided to UHI in June as requested and has been collated. Submission of Full Business Case in August was not achieved. We continue to await developments from UHI.

- **Harmful Algal Blooms and Phytoplankton monitoring -**

1. SAIC-funded project with Scottish Seafarms (SSF)+MOWI+SAMS+UHI Shetland confirmed, but still waiting on LoA from UHI Legal. IFCBs have both had significant technical difficulties but are now both monitoring seawater at [Scalloway and Cole Deep](#) for phytoplankton.
2. HAB App is progressing.
3. We were not able to access PRIMROSE (Interreg) funding.
4. We continue to contribute to the European IFCB network

- **Lea of Trondra** – we are currently reactivating expired licences before exploring planning permission for shellfish activities. The Works Licence is now approved and Marine Licence is in preparation.

Marine Spatial Planning:

- **Shetland Marine Plan**-We have submitted the Shetland Regional Marine Plan to Minsters and are still awaiting news regarding its formal adoption. Discussions with MS-LOT and Marine Scotland are ongoing over final changes to policies and the implementation strategy.
- **Funding** - Unsuccessful in small grant application for porpoise outreach project to Shetland Amenity Trust Heritage Grant fund.
- **Activities:**
 - o Represented UHI Shetland & Shetland Community Wildlife Group at the Cunningsburgh Show, promoting citizen science involvement in porpoise, seagrass, and skate monitoring.
 - o Survey work: SMEEF funded seagrass mapping project, porpoise project and invasive non-native species routine monitoring.
 - o Hosted NatureScot marine environment team at UHI Scalloway, engaged in SMEEF seagrass mapping project.

b. Centre for Island Creativity

2022-23 has continued to be a very busy year with a very wide range of activities including completing funded projects, creating new funding bids, developing new networks and collaborative proposals and submitting research reports and publications.

Milestones included the final approval and launch of the new PhD Creative Practice programme, created and led by the Centre for Island Creativity. Continuing work on the Creative Island Wellbeing Programme (Island Growth Deal project) has been a major feature of the year with the submission of the Outline Business Case and the ongoing work to develop the Full Business Case. Our work with National Trust for Scotland was recognised by being a shortlisted finalist in the Powerful Partnerships category of the Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards.

Work in the Textile Facilitation Unit has been severely disrupted over this period owing to a number of issues outside our control. However, a comprehensive business case was developed for a range of investments in the TFU to stabilise the facility to produce a financially sustainable operation. This business case was submitted to F&GP in July 2023 with an updated version in Sept 2023.

Some of the myriad of research and knowledge activities undertaken in the academic year are summarised below:

Period / published	Description	Type	Lead
Jun-23	Development of fully detailed and costed business case with options appraisal for investment in and development of the Textile Facilitation Unit	Funding Bid	Malcolm Innes
ongoing	Regular bi-weekly meetings with Creative Islands Wellbeing steering group (Islands Growth Deal): NHS Western Isles, HIE, Western Isles Council, Pier Arts Centre Orkney, An Lanntair Stornoway, Taigh Chearsabhagh North Uist, Shetland Arts Development Agency	Development Meeting	Malcolm Innes

ongoing	Membership of UHI REF2027(28) Steering Group. Working across the network on the development of a new Unit of Assessment for Art & Design	Development Meeting	Malcolm Innes
ongoing	Membership of Steering Group for Creative Island Wellbeing Programme, Island Growth Deal Project. Working with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, HIE, Orkney Council, Pier Arts Centre, An Lanntair, Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre, NHS Western Isles, Shetland Arts Development Agency and others. Work included submission of Outline Business Case and ongoing development of the Full Business Case	Funding Bid	Malcolm Innes
ongoing	1:1 meetings about Creative Islands Wellbeing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Neil Firth, Director of Pier Arts Centre, Orkney o Martin Malcolm, Head of Public Health Intelligence & Information Services (R&I Lead), NHS Western Isles o Simon Heart, Director of Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum & Arts Centre, North Uist o Greame Howell, CEO of Shetland Arts Development Agency 	Development Meeting	Malcolm Innes
ongoing	Several meetings with Shetland Amenity Trust to develop the Woolly Thinking Conference for delivery in September 2023	Development Meeting	Malcolm Innes, Siún Carden

5. Update on merger related topics

The letter sent to Shetland Islands Council following merger has been updated with our progress in working together and representing the MOU. A data sharing agreement has not been signed.

6. Health, Safety and Wellbeing (Angela)

All issues picked up by BDO in their audit should be completed shortly. The Compliance Assistant has now started.

With HISA's approval, Lerwick campus is to become fully non-smoking. The bike shed which was being used for smoking causing damage to bikes, and was being vandalised at night, will be blocked off and a freestanding cigarette ashtray will be placed at the far end of the campus perimeter. No Smoking signs will be put up when the shed is no longer accessible. The shed will be used for storage by Construction and the bike stands will be placed in a sheltered area next to the reception windows where they can be observed.

Disabled Parking is going to be more prominently displayed as blue badge only and the number of places reviewed.

A number of H&S documents have been created and are going through various committees including Site Security, Harassment, Violence and Aggression, Safe Use of Electrical Equipment, H&S Competency Matrix, Risk Assessment and Safe Systems of Working Policy.

First Aiders Lists have been reviewed and will be updated across the campus.

Incident Coordinator Training is being rolled out for new recruits and refresher courses are planned. Spot checks are taking place in preparation for our external Peninsula H&S audit which is now due.

7. Islands Deal

Information on Shellvolution and the Creative Islands and wellbeing project are given above. A full business case has been submitted for the Talented project. Preparation of the full business case for the Campus redevelopment project has been paused pending strategic review of our long term campus plans. A position is currently advertised for a project lead to take the work forward.

8. General activities and achievements (all)

a. Student achievement

PGDE students attended an induction in Badaguish Outdoor Centre in Aviemore as part of their course. Rachel, one of the students, filmed a vlog for UHI Shetland and you can view this on our social media channels.

b. Staff achievement

+ At the HISA awards Dr Andrew Jennings who won the 'Most Engaging Video Conference Lecturer award' in this year's HISA awards. Andrew was given the award for:

"Dr Jennings delivers an interesting variety of Scottish travellers covering a long time span from early travellers to the present day and showing how travel has changed. Useful comparisons and unusual tidbits of information. Interesting PowerPoints with lots of additional info and useful links. Slow, steady speech so I can take notes. Lots of additional material posted to brightspace after lecture to help with assignments and for interest. Fully supporting the student."

+ UHI Shetland had a busy table at the Family Tent of the Tall Ships where there were activities for young people, as well as staff on hand to chat to anyone about the wide range of courses that UHI Shetland offers.

+ Staff from UHI Shetland hosted crew activities as part of the Tall Ships 2023. Crews from the visiting ships were taught Introduction to Sea Survival Techniques and also completed a Construction workshop on our Lerwick Campus.

+ A team from College Development Network (CDN) visited UHI Shetland recently to provide support to college staff and to gain insights from their experiences of delivering education within remote and rural communities. CDN is the national improvement agency for the Scottish college and post-school skills sector. Education experts from the organisation work with colleges to develop their people, share their great work, and enhance student success.

The visit provided a package of support, with a variety of sessions for college staff. It also involved local authority and third sector participants from Voluntary Action Shetland, Anchor for Families, The Compass Centre, COPE Ltd Enterprising People, and Shetland Skills Development Scotland.

Participants benefited from a range of sessions, including an introduction to CDN's new 'Step Forward' **Researcher Development Programme**, which supports college staff to develop the skills required to undertake research projects, enhancing their own practice and improving outcomes for their college and its learners. The CDN team worked with UHI Shetland on a Step Forward project

aimed at supported the embedding of sustainability across the curriculum and transforming ideas into practice through targeted action research.

A session called 'The Trauma Informed College' showcased CDN's recently-launched Trauma Informed Programme, which provides access to training, resources and interventions that to help colleges tackle the challenges faced by learners and their communities in accessing and sustaining their participation in education.