

Committee	Board of Management		
Date paper prepared	25/03/2025	Date of committee meeting	02/04/2025
Subject	Principal's Report		
Author	Jane Lewis, Principal with members of SMG		
Action requested	For discussion		
Purpose of the paper	To update the board on activities across the College. These contribute to our fulfilment of the SFC's outcome framework. This framework covers seven aspirations around: Funding regularity, Good governance, Financial viability and sustainability, Estates and Infrastructure, High quality Learning and teaching, Student interests access and success, Skills and workbased learning, Research excellence, Knowledge exchange and innovation and includes two cross cutting themes – Net zero and Equalities, diversity and inclusion.		
Brief summary of the paper	UHI context is updated. 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.		
Consultation	SMG members provide the material included in the report		
Resource implications	n/a		
Risk implications	n/a		
Link with strategy	Links to all parts of the college strategic plan		
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	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 Confidential - The paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online.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].		

[Freedom of information](#)

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If closed/ withheld, select date this will become 'open': Enter a date.

1. UHI Updates

Stephen Sheridan has been appointed as UHI Director of Economic Development and Advancement. With over 20 years of experience in senior management roles within education and skills, Stephen has a proven track record of fostering partnerships between industry, academia and government and has extensive experience working in the Highlands and Islands.

The UHI Transformation programme engagement has been launched with presentations to staff from the 10th March. From 24th March UHI is now seeking input from students, staff, alumni, local communities, businesses and other key stakeholders to help shape the future direction. Links to the engagement summary document and the online survey, can be found on the UHI Transformation website: www.transformation.uhi.ac.uk

2. Update on enrolment figures (FE/HE)

		19/03/25	08/02/24	Enrolments	
				2023/24	2022/23
FE	Full time (FT)	104	91	87	58
	Part time (PT)	1269	1484	2196	2476
HE	Full time (FT)	100	123	121	140
	Part time (PT)	156	227	243	234

UHI Shetland enrolments at 19/3/2025 (data extracted from Metis)

Enrolment numbers for part time FE courses are lower than last year. This is the case across the partnership and is to be expected given the required reduction in credits and the associated mitigations put in place.

Our credit target for AY 2024-25 remains at 3902. We still expect to exceed this target once MA and remaining school and part time credit claims feed into the system, despite mitigations put in place to reduce the amount of activity relying on credit funding. It is usual for our credit claims to spread across the academic year, unlike many partners who have front loading of their credits. All UHI partners are forecasting to exceed their share of the SFC minimum credit threshold.

Total credit figures				
19/3/2025	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
3592	4890	4707	4359	4337

HE enrolment is disappointing for both full and part time courses, and we are taking action to encourage students to study at HE with us next year. Our HE undergraduate non-controlled FTE

target is 126.4 this year but we are currently at 105.8 FTE. We are hopeful that this will increase somewhat to around 110 FTE; however, we will still have a significant shortfall against our target which will result in clawback.

Applications for school partnership programmes in AY 2025/26 have closed for S5/6 pupils with over 130 pupils applying. Most courses will be at capacity with some courses proving very popular, including engineering, creative and early learning and childcare. In order to accommodate as many students as is reasonably practicable, we have increased our maximum number for engineering and creative industries.

Skills for work applications also closed last week, again with strong demand. We have briefly reopened applications for a few select courses with some remaining capacity. At present we have received 228 applications from 170 individuals and anticipate all courses to go ahead with almost all at capacity. This is encouraging given the format change for the coming year of a January start and a longer day.

3. Update on Short Courses

We have been working on improving the reporting of our short course activity and the below table provides an indication of our income and candidate numbers.

Short courses				
AY		23/24	22/23	21/22
No of courses		134	200	226
No of candidates		1055	1644	1748
Income from fees		£328,634.00	£492,842.00	£490,681.00
From 1/8 to 14/3 in year	24/25	23/24	22/23	21/22
No of courses	108	96	134	120
No of candidates	562	691	1036	848
Income from fees	£234,329.00	£208,910.00	£341,566.00	£204,475.00

Short course income is ahead of this point last year, but we will need to maintain momentum to ensure a strong overall outcome for short courses over the academic year.

4. New Courses

Sections are developing and delivering new courses driven by demand and to maximise the offer available to Shetland students.

a. Creative Communities:

New courses delivered:

- Andrew Anderson delivered the newly approved college certificated modules Working with Money (SCQF level 3) and Money Management (SCQF Level 4) to the Forward Direction Eric Gray students.
- Irene Williamson has been delivering Infection Control modules to UHI Argyll students by VC as part of Networking of Care courses.

- Siun Carden has taken on the delivery of the Literature module of the Alternative to Higher English certificate. This is being delivered to students in UHI Shetland and Argyll for the first time.

b. Health, Care and Society

New courses approved:

- NC Early Education & Childcare (Change from NQ Childhood Practice). Moving to joint delivery with Argyll, NWH & Orkney.
- NC L5 Social Sciences. New for SUHI. Joint delivery with Argyll.
- NC L6 Social Sciences. Moving to joint delivery with Argyll.
- PDA Education Support. Moving to joint delivery with Argyll.

c. Marine Science

New courses delivered:

- 2 day advanced RYA first aid at sea for Scottish Seafarms
- CPD Sustainable Aquaculture Management course started 13.1.25

Newly approved courses:

- 2 day advanced RYA first aid at sea

d. Technology, Engineering, Marine & Built Environment

New course delivered

Welding & Electrics course was a huge success, inspiring women to explore career opportunities in engineering and green skills industries. The one-day course, held at the Scalloway Campus on Saturday 3rd March, welcomed 15 women from across Shetland, offering hands-on experience in welding and electrics.

5. Update on Apprentices

The end of the apprenticeship funding year comes at the end of March. So for this year the most recent update is as per period 11 (to end of February), here are our results:

Age Band	New Start	In-train	Leavers	Achievers	Achievement Rate.	Spend
16-19	43	98	38	29	76.3%	£247,455
20+	91	148	114	98	86.0%	£210,720
Grand Total	134	246	152	127	83.6%	£458,175

The achievement rate remains over target (75%) at 83.6% and for 16-19 (70%) at 76.3%

A new contract has been awarded by SDS for 25/26. The contract award is for £546,770 and 180 new start spaces which is broadly in line with 24/25 figures. The contract was awarded on a “roll-over”

basis by SDS and was only released on 11 March. The contract is for a financial year and runs 1 April 2025-31 March 2026.

Scottish Apprenticeship Week was a social media success, with case studies, information and visits from Shetland's local MP and MSP all covered. Over apprenticeship week our Facebook views were up 68%, visits up 47% and an increase of 194% in content interactions. A thematic week has proved popular, so we will plan more of these to highlight work and achievements around the college.

6. Update on Research

a. Marine Sciences

Publications:

- Niels.T. Hintzen, Katie Brigden, Hendrik-Jan Kaastra, Steven Mackinson, Martin Pastoors, Lennert van de Pol. Bias in Global Fishing Watch AIS data analyses results in overestimate of Northeast Atlantic pelagic fishing impact. In press. ICES Journal of Marine Science.
- Fraser, S., Thomason, L., McAllister, M. and Harlow, L., 2024. Shetland Inshore Fish Survey (SIFS) 2024: summary of catch rates, size compositions, and spatial distributions of commercial demersal fish species. UHI Shetland report. p32.

Grants:

- Shellfish research grant funding for FY25/26 has been approved by the SSMO board and awaiting SIC approval (Mid-march).
- Rebecca Giesler has successfully gained funding from SMEEF for £294,000, lasting for three years and starting in April. The 'Restoring Shetland's Marlie Meadows' project aims to restore 1.2 hectares of subtidal seagrass beds in the west Mainland over the next three years.

Activities:

- UHI Research Conference 8-10 January 2025) – presentation on Shell-volution
- Contribution to European IFCB meeting (21 January 2025)
- Participation in a HAB Cast kick-off meeting
- Leander Harlow joined the Marine Directorates' annual scallop survey (Jan) for a day.
- Shellfish data collection and log-sheet entry for 2024 stock assessments is completed, stock summaries will be presented at the next SSMO board meeting in March
- Completion of Phase5 of Smartrawl field trials of integrated system using Atlantia II
- Evie Herrington started an fisheries research assistant
- UHI Aquaculture Hub – Networking and Forum Event, Stornoway (12-13 March 2025). 15 staff from the Aquaculture Hub attended, including Gregg Arthur, Stuart Fitzimmons and Beth Mouat.
- Rachel Shucksmith led a Nordic region workshop at the Scottish Government buildings, Edinburgh sharing experiences in marine planning across Shetland/ Faroes/ Iceland/ Greenland/Denmark and Sweden

b. Centre for Island Creativity

Roxane Permar and Siun Carden co-authored with Sian Wild (external) a research article about Home and Belonging (related to the Looking Back At Home and Belonging REG funded project) to journal *Research For All*. Titled 'My lighthouses look out for me: reflection and relationship-building through arts-based research with care experienced young people'.

- Andrew Jennings ran a HerInDep Project workshop and conference planning event in January
- Andrew Jennings January 2025 Faroese Shetland Research Symposium 6/2 – PhD Student Research <https://youtu.be/bQcLomUTfeU?si=KyMOSIEeVu-oOTgg>
- Andrew Jennings February 2025 research and networking visit to Skärgårdsinstitutet vid Åbo Akademi in Finland and delivered two invited talks.
- Siun Carden and Malcolm Innes, co-hosted a workshop at the UHI Research Conference, 8-10 January 2025 and gave presentation about transdisciplinary research with Bernadette Smith (SAMS)
- The MA Art and Social Practice Spring School took place in Inverness, March 2025.

7. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

This year's external Health and Safety audit by Peninsula was completed at both campuses, without any red or amber issues picked up. This is the best H&S audit result we have had to date.

The lifts have all been upgraded and have a functioning emergency call out system in place.

Due to the UHI decision to phase out fixed hand phone systems across all campuses, we have updated our First Aid response procedure. We are now using a single telephone number for each campus which staff and students can call using mobile phones or teams, this contacts all the First Aiders at once and the first one who answers takes charge. This has been tested, and so far seems to work well. The First Aiders List is displayed prominently on the Intranet. The new numbers are being put up on the backs of doors around the campus and will be officially launched in newsletters.

8. Islands Deal

Campus redevelopment

On hold whilst issues relating to planning permission worked through

Shell-volution

Project moves into implementation phase with initial appointments made.

Talented

Project is underway with initial appointments being made

Creative Islands and Wellbeing

FBC signed off and project getting underway

9. General activities and achievements

a. Student achievement

During **Scottish Apprenticeship Week**, UHI Shetland students enjoyed a successful night at the annual ALBAS, the prestigious Lantra Scotland's Awards for Land-based and Aquaculture Skills, held on Thursday 6 March at the Crieff Hydro. The ALBAS, designed to foster careers within the rural

sector, commend the achievements of learners and underscore the significance of employers investing in skills.

It was a clean sweep for the UHI Shetland nominees, with all four being recognised on the night.

Derek Dunning: Winner in the Aquaculture category

Lewis Henderson: Runner up in the Aquaculture category

Mary Collins: Runner up in the Aquaculture category

Robaidh Halliday: Runner up in the Higher Education category

Their achievements were further recognised by a Scottish parliament motion submitted by Beatrice Wishart which can be viewed on the Scottish Parliament website [here](#).

Health, Care and Society access to nursing students received positive feedback from Ward 1 staff and patients. In the same section there was a positive ambulance service placement day for a FA student

Creative communities student Marie Melnyczuk completed a successful MRes Creative Practice Viva.

b. Staff achievement

Susan Menary has been awarded UHI Advance HE Fellowship. A full list of these can be found here [Professional recognition, awards and development - UHI Advance HE Fellowships](#).

Ritchie Summers has completed his Masters in Education Studies

UHI Shetland has launched a new Corporate Parenting Plan, in line with our duties as a corporate parent and a member of the local *Meids* group for looked after and in care young people. The plan can be viewed here: [News - UHI Shetland launches new Corporate Parenting Plan](#). 19 senior staff and board members attended a Who Cares? Scotland, Corporate Parenting training session.

UHI Shetland's Lerwick campus was the scene of a partnership between UHI Shetland, Shetland Construction Training Group and CITB where young people from S2 classes around the isles were invited to join in a day of literal Bridge Building; with the young people working in teams to construct bridges out of wood, in the pursuit of three prizes: Overall Winner, Best Teamwork and Best-looking Bridge. [News - Bridge Building a success!](#)

The Shetland Careers and Opportunities Fair was held on the 18th February, with UHI Shetland one of the organising partners. Staff from a variety of teams manned stalls, and we had a steady flow of the 1200 visitors on the day. In the evening Jane, Kevin and Gemma represented UHI and UHI Shetland at the Universities Event at the Anderson High School. The event was led by DYW who have provided the following feedback from young people:

- 95% of the S4, S5 and S6 pupils said the event improved their awareness of jobs and career pathways
- 93% of the S4, S5 and S6 pupils feel, as a result of attending the event, they can now identify skills and personal qualities needed for the workplace.
- 87% of the S4, S5 and S6 pupils said experiencing the event has inspired them to investigate a particular career or industry

- 99% of S2 and S3 pupils said the event has improved their awareness of jobs and career pathways
- 90% of the S2 and S3 pupils agreed to the statement “there are more careers in Shetland than I was aware of”
- 70% of S2 and S3 said experiencing the event has inspired me to investigate a particular career or industry

They also provided a link to a short video commissioned from the event: [Shetland 2025 Careers and Opportunities Fair](#)

Our **student experience** team have been busy:

- Our STEM coordinator conducted several visits to the Scottish mainland to promote the work on the Seafish project and demonstrate the VR tools.
- Student Support have been working on a room for Neuro Diverse students, launched this month, to allow students a quiet space, particularly over lunch times. Student support has partnered with HISA to deliver Feeling Fab sessions to students.
- Student support has arranged for Fast Forward, an organisation to support people with issues around online gambling and gaming, to come into the college in March.

Using UK shared prosperity funding, **Guy Tindall /Stuart Fitzsimmons /Saro Saravanan** completed their RYA Advanced Powerboat course. **Guy Tindall** completed RYA Teaching in the classroom, SRC RYA Instructor, RYA First Aid Instructor qualifications. **Joe MacDonald** attended RYA Navigational Instructors course.

Our **Health, Care and Society team** developed a bid for an SIC tender which was submitted at the end of February. Decision anticipated within 2 months.