

# Reconvened UHI Shetland Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee, Quarter 2, 2024-2025

*Tue 14 January 2025, 16:30 - 18:30*

Teams

## Attendees

### Chair

- Karen Hall (Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee)

### Prescribed Board Members

- Valerie Nicolson (Vice Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee)
- Harley Green (Student Director)
- Simon Clarke (Teaching Staff Director)

### Other Board Members

- Brian Smith (Independent Director)
- John Goodlad (Independent Director)

### Ex-Officio

- Jane Lewis (Principal - Shetland UHI)

### Management Team Member

- Laura Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary)

### Staff In Attendance

- Matt Sierocinski King (Board Secretary)
- Kevin Briggs (Head of Student Experience, Absent from 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)
- Shaun Fraser (Senior Scientist and Fisheries Lead, Absent from 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

### Apologies

- Daniel Lawson (Independent Director)

## Meeting minutes

## Opening Items

### 1. Welcome, Apologies, and Announcements

Ms Hall (Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee formally noted Ian Napier's passing, which included thanks for his work. Separately, she also formally acknowledged Ms Nicolson's appointment as Vice-Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee.

## **2. \*Terms of Reference**

**Noted:** The Committee noted the Terms of Reference.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

Ms Hall (Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee) asked members if they had any conflicts of interests to declare in relation to items on the agenda. No such declarations were made.

## **4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Ms Hall (Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee) asked members of the Committee to review the Non-Confidential minutes of the previous meeting for matters of accuracy. The Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee asked members of the Committee to review the Confidential minutes of the previous meeting for matters of accuracy.

**Decision:** The Committee approved the Non-Confidential minutes as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

**Decision:** The Committee approved the Confidential minutes as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

## **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **Scholarship and Research**

## **6. Research Presentation**

Dr Fraser (Senior Scientist and Fisheries Lead) gave a presentation on the Fisheries work at Shetland UHI, introducing the staff involved, along with the Shellfish, Pelagic, Demersal research that is undertaken by Shetland UHI. He moved on to speak about the Shetland inshore Fish Survey, with the results recently compiled. He spoke about the patterns in the results of different species of fish recorded, including the length of fish caught, location and depth of water.

The Committee asked questions about who funds the survey work, and whether the impact of cable laying could see the survey funded in part by the energy companies, as part of the development of off-shore wind energy in Shetland waters. Questions were also asked about the equivalents to the role of Senior Scientist and Fisheries Lead around the partnership, to which the Senior Scientist and Fisheries Lead confirmed that there was not. Professor Lewis (Principal) confirmed to the Committee that she and other staff members were part of the discussions developing a monitoring proposal linked to energy developments which might take care of future funding for the programme, but confirmed her concerns for bridging the gap between when that started and current survey funding levels. She also drew the Committee's attention to the research in fisheries that was undertaken at SAMS. The Committee discussed the cable laying impact further on the fisheries industry and the need for obtaining funding to support this research further.

The Senior Scientist and Fisheries Lead moved on to speak about the research on Flapper Skate and discussed the impact of the publicity on the work. The Committee discussed the presentation, catch rates, total biomass of all fish, and the shark project.

The Senior Scientist and Fisheries Lead left the meeting at the end of this agenda item.

**Action:** Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary) shall circulate the presentation to the Committee.

## Student Experience

### 7. Student Surveys - ESES

Mr Briggs (Head of Student Experience) presented the data to the Committee on the Early Student Experience Survey (ESES). He spoke about the demographics of participants. A question was posed about whether there is a demographic question on whether a student is from a Shetland locale, to which the Head of Student Experience confirmed that it did not. The Head of Student Experience spoke about the results in detail highlighting where there were changes from last year. He moved on to speak to the Committee about the comments and the onboarding process for students.

He highlighted the trends in comments in terms of areas of improvements, focused on transport, the Cafe, and Brightspace. He informed the Committee as to what the next two surveys would be in the

academic year. Mrs Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary) gave reflections on the comments and whether they were in response to the impact of the changes in the academic delivery made last academic year. Dr Clarke (Teaching Staff Director) spoke about the results being broken down by subjects and how each courses/partners are performing based on the results.

The Head of Student Experience left the meeting at the end of this agenda item.

**Action:** Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary) will circulate the documents that the Head of Student Experience shared with the Committee on the ESES.

## 8. SEAP (Self-Evaluation and Action Plan)

Mrs Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary) spoke about the SEAP and how it replaces the Education Scotland visit. She spoke about the challenging timeline of the completion of the SEAP. She spoke about the improvement areas, and how they are spread across multiple academic years. She confirmed that the next visit will be in 2028-2029 academic year, and she confirmed that support from the QAA and Education Scotland will continue between meetings. She confirmed that termly reviews of the document, and that the actions are to be incorporated into the organisational action plan.

The Committee asked questions about the use of the template by other partners, to which was confirmed, and the understanding of staff about their actions. Dr Clarke (Teaching Staff Director) spoke about the challenges of network working within the partnership, and how the SEAP process focuses on colleges as institutions rather than the breadth of delivery across the partnership on different subjects in HE, which are collaboratively delivered upon. The Depute Principal Tertiary confirmed that there was a partnership-wide SEAP. Professor Lewis (Principal) noted her sadness that the process has been made more complex and less meaningful (when compared to the previous Education Scotland/QAA process), and should be done on UHI-wide basis. The Depute Principal Tertiary drew the Committee's attention to the STEP process which she confirmed sits alongside the SEAP.

**Decision:** The Committee requested that updates on the action plan are brought to the Committee on a regular basis.

**Action:** Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary) shall add the SEAP action plan to the agenda of the Committee as a standing item.

**Action:** The Depute Principal Tertiary shall bring updates on the SEAP action plan are to the Committee on a regular basis.

## 9. Curriculum Planning Update

Mrs Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary) spoke about the Curriculum Planning changes that have been brought in across the partnership, and highlighted the annual cycle of the process, and how data will inform this process. She detailed that this is a tertiary plan, and that it would draw on the impact of change on pathways from FE to HE for example. She moved on to speak about Senior Phase delivery in co-ordination with SIC. She spoke about other local processes including KPIs, particularly regarding course success rates and skills pathways. She moved on to speak about the cross-partnership collaboration with academic partners, and how this would be considered for change.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the paper.

## 10. Skills Survey

Mrs Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary) shared the skills survey on screen, and spoke about retention, vacancies challenges, and skills gaps. She highlighted the business breakfast, and the technically specific nature of some of the skills gaps. She moved on to speak about apprentices and the relationships between Shetland UHI and employers. She highlighted that employers feel students are not prepared for the workplace, but also noted that those that had an FE course were more ready than students who had not taken up qualifications beyond school qualifications.

**Action:** Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary) will circulate the presentation that the Depute Principal Tertiary gave to the Committee on the skills survey.

## Performance Monitoring

### 11. Risk 1 and Risk 2 - FE Recruitment and HE Recruitment

Mrs Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary) spoke to the Committee about Risk 1 and Risk 2. She confirmed the amended phrasing of risk 2 based on the Board of Management workshop. She

detailed the causes of each risk, and confirmed the enrolment levels at present for Full Time FE students, Part Time FE students, Full Time HE students, and Part Time HE students, when compared to previous academic years. She spoke about the credit levels across the partnership, and S3 credit recording. She confirmed that last academic year Shetland UHI over delivered on credits by 22%. She explained to the Committee that she expected similar levels of over-delivery for this academic year despite the mitigations we had made. She spoke about the impact of over-delivery in terms of costs, including staff costs, and lost income, of which, totalled an estimated £115,000.

She confirmed that the risk regarding credits was red, after mitigations. The Committee discussed whether there is or will come a point at which we say no to enrolments. Dr Clarke (Teaching Staff Director) confirmed that in order to make such a decision, consideration would need to be made as to what courses and course areas could be cut, which would be detrimental to the community. Professor Lewis (Principal) spoke about the funding model lobbying and work she had done with SFC to try to resolve this issue. The Depute Principal Tertiary spoke about the other options with regards to credit management.

The Depute Principal Tertiary detailed the cohort sizes of each course to the Committee, and she spoke about the credit claims about students with additional needs on courses. She noted that there was a correlation between success rates and allocated hours, and highlighted the possible flaws in such data. The Depute Principal Tertiary thanked the Board members for their questions regarding this, as it has had on a positive impact work undertaken across the partnership.

The Depute Principal Tertiary moved on to speak to the Committee in detail about HE student numbers and the associated risk. She spoke about the gap between the target in HE student numbers and the target. She noted that this pattern at Shetland UHI is reflected across the partnership. She spoke about the post-graduate student numbers as well, and felt that the gap would not be closed. She felt that it was possible that any over-delivery next year would be funded. She spoke about the mitigating actions for the risk, the staffing changes across the partnership, noting the connection of SEAP and this risk, and confirmed that the risk currently remains at amber post-mitigations.

The Committee discussed the risks.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that due to the proximity of the Q3 meeting to this meeting, that this agenda item would come as a starred item at the next meeting.

**Action:** Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary) will add this agenda item as a starred item at the next meeting of the Committee.

**Action:** The Board Secretary will circulate the presentation that the Depute Principal Tertiary gave to the Committee on risks one and two.

## 12. Research Risk

**Decision:** This Risk was postponed to the Q3 meeting of the Committee.

**Action:** Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary) will add this risk to the agenda of the Q3 meeting of the Committee.

## Closing Items

### 13. Any Other Business

Apologies were noted from Mr Lawson (Independent Director)

### 14. Dates of Next Meetings

The dates of next meetings are:

- Q3: Wednesday 19th February 2025 at 16:30 on Teams
- Q4: Wednesday 21st May 2025 at 16:30 on Teams

Agenda Item	Action	Responsible	Progress
6	Circulate the presentation to the Committee.	Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary)	
7	Circulate the documents that the Head of Student Experience shared with the Committee on the ESES.	Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary)	
8	Add the SEAP action plan to the agenda of the Committee as a standing item.	Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary)	
8	Bring updates on the SEAP action plan are to the Committee on a regular basis.	Depute Principal Tertiary	
10	Circulate the presentation that the Depute Principal Tertiary gave to the Committee on the skills survey.	Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary)	
11	Add this agenda item as a starred item at the next meeting of the Committee.	Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary)	
11	Circulate the presentation that the Depute Principal Tertiary gave to the Committee on risks one and two.	Board Secretary	
12	Add this risk to the agenda of the Q3 meeting of the Committee.	Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary)	

