

Committee	Board of Management		
Date paper prepared	14/06/2025	Date of committee meeting	26/06/2025
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 that contribute to the SFC outcome framework.		
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 Confidential - The paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online.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	Choose an item. If closed/ withheld, select date this will become 'open': Enter a date.		

1. UHI Updates

Work on the transformation project continues at pace. A meeting with all AP partners in May has defined the pathfinder projects which will run alongside the main pillars of activity for preparing the full business case (FBC). The aim of the pathfinder projects is to align activities in UHI to make us more effective and efficient. The Engagement report has been prepared and staff are now engaging in focus groups to inform development of the culture and academic affairs aspects of the FBC. Groups are being established to develop both Equalities Impact Assessment and Islands Impact Assessment linked to the project.

2. Update on Student numbers and registry activities (FE/HE)

Applications continue coming in for courses (FE and HE) in AY25/26. At this time of year we process applications and offers multiple times a day. We will shortly be contacting those with places with extra reminders about funding, support and induction details. HE students are able to enrol from 1st July as per UHI processes. We will also be contacting applications who have been offered, and supporting them to complete enrolment ahead of their start.

Enrolment figures for this year are given in the table below. There has been no change in FT enrolments compared to last quarter but an ongoing uplift in part time numbers for both FE and HE. 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 we have put in place.

		09/06/25	12/06/24	Enrolments	
				2023/24	2022/23
FE	Full time (FT)	104	89	87	58
	Part time (PT)	1752	2085	2196	2476
HE	Full time (FT)	100	121	121	140
	Part time (PT)	177	219	243	234

UHI Shetland enrolments at 09/06/2025 (data extracted from Metis)

Our credit target is 3902. As can be seen in the table below we have therefore exceeded the credit target by a small amount. There will be further credits to claim for SVQ and schools provision so the figure will increase slightly by the end of the academic year. We have reduced the activity for which credits are claimed. 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				
09/06/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
3953.7	4890	4707	4359	4337

HE FTE figures

Our HE FTE targets are:

	AY 24/25	AY 25/26
Total UG non-controlled, including GA and teaching qualifications	126.4	122.6
UG non-controlled FTE excluding Graduate Apprenticeships etc.	124.4	115.4
Total PG non-controlled	35	8.75

Our target for non-controlled FTE is 124.4 but we are currently short of the target at 109.6, up slightly from last quarter (105.8) but still short of the target and will be subject to clawback. Our taught post-graduate FTE is at 8.66, significantly short of the target of 35.

Over 100 Foundation Apprenticeship and Academy students have started in June. Registry and Student Experience worked together to ensure that all students had completed enrolment at their first session across Scalloway, Lerwick and Mareel. This allows a more streamlined process of getting these students moved into the new academic year and allocated their modules with SQA.

The Registry team have processed over 200 applications for the upcoming Skills for Work courses in AY25-26. They have created interview slots with the Student Experience team with all the high schools and junior high schools in Shetland to allow all applicants to have a face-to-face interview. Currently we are receiving the responses to the offers and ensuring we can offer as many places as possible to young people on the reserve list for courses.

The wider student experience team conducted around 200 interviews for the Skills For Work courses across each of the schools. This was done face to face rather than online this year to improve the experience. Interviews covered the range of disciplines. Offer letters have now been sent out to the candidates with most courses filled. There were a small number of unfilled places and those who were not successful in their interviews have been offered to consider taking one of the remaining places. However, the majority of the courses will run this year in their new format with a start date of January 2026.

Registry staff have been working with teaching staff to ensure that framework documents are complete for the courses that will be taught next year so that module entry is accurate and timely, and to ensure that resulting is allocated to the correct lecturer on the UHI system.

Registry staff have also been undertaking end of AY FE progression boards with departments to have a final check of accurate information and who will expect will be continuing next AY so we can accurately enrol them.

3. Update on Short Courses

Short course activity is given in the table below:

		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 11/6 in year	24/25	23/24	22/23	21/22
No of courses	139	118	161	168
No of candidates	767	844	1273	1216
Income from fees	£305,961	£266,079	£416,155.00	£309,130.00

Short courses continue to be busy. More dates are being added for upcoming courses which is great for adding to the website, the new Eventbrite and course booking system. The new process allows us to give more information on upcoming courses to customers and provides clearer reporting for ourselves.

Short course income is up to nearly £306k, up £39k from the same point last year. Our target for the year is £350k so we will still need £44k of bookings by the end of July to meet that figure. There are some courses already in the booking system with some spaces already filled. Reaching the target with only a few weeks of classes left may, however, be difficult to achieve.

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:

Mental Health First Aid Short Course, delivered as twilight course over 4 evenings starting 2nd June (Irene Williamson and Mhairi Garnier) with some staff also attending

New courses approved:

CPD: *Making and Meaning, Woven Textiles*, SCQF 8, 20 credits, Fridays in Semester 1 next year (Edina Szeles)

b. Health, Care and Society

New courses delivered:

Foundation Apprentice: Social Services (Children & Young People) – schools programme with 16 candidates

Foundation Apprentice: Social Services and Healthcare (Access to Allied Health Professions) – schools programme with 9 candidates

New courses approved:

NC Childhood Practice – moving away from NQ to NC – this is an updated SQA framework that is more relevant to the ELC sector. We are networking this with Argyll, Orkney and NWH.

HNC Social Services – not a new course, but new mode of delivery. Fully networked with NWH and Argyll to make viable cohort.

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NC Social Sciences SCQF5 and SCQF6 version – new courses for us – online delivery shared with Argyll. Lots of opportunities for 'in-fill' courses within these such as NPAs in Criminology, NPA Mental Health & Wellbeing, NPA Psychology.

New delivery on HNC Social Sciences Criminology unit with Argyll.

c. Marine Science

New courses delivered:

CPD Sustainable Marine Environmental Management started 5.5.25

CPD Sustainable Aquaculture Management started 5.5.25

d. Technology, Engineering, Marine & Built Environment

New courses delivered:

MCA approved Global Maritime Distress and Safety Systems General Operators Certificate, first delivery since AMERC disbanded.

Small Vessel – Competency Examination Preparation Applied Engineering

Small Vessel – Competency Examination Operational Procedures & Ship Construction

Academy Programmes in Computing, Engineering, Construction and Maritime new intake started in June

5. Update on Apprentices

Final apprenticeship results for 24/25 contract:

Age Band	New Start	In-train	Leavers	Achievers	Achievement Rate.	Spend
16-19	45	94	44	35	79.5%	£291,653
20+	100	137	133	114	85.7%	£245,376
Grand Total	145	231	177	149	84.2%	£537,029

Our achievement rate for 16-19 is ahead of the government target (70%) as is our overall achievement rate (target 75%) and is in excess of the rates achieved by the central UHI contract.

Our new SDS contract award was once again made, beginning 1/04/25. Contract was a roll-over from 23-24 so is based on previous figures. The new contract year runs to 31/03/26 and is for 183 starts with a contract value of £546,770.

6. Update on Research

a. Marine Sciences

Publications:

- Ashworth, R., Fernandes, P., Yi, D., Morrison, D., and Fraser, S. 2025. Smartrawl 5.0 Final Report. FIS045. p102.
- Walker., N., Fraser., S., and Needle, C., 2025. Shetland Inshore Survey. ICES WGNSSK meeting, April 2025.

- Fraser, S., Thomason, L., Herrington, E., and Cubbon, K., 2025. Survey report for the 2024 Fair Isle inshore fish survey. Fair Isle Demonstration and Research MPA report. UHI Shetland. p51.
- McAllister, M., Fraser, S., and Thomason, L. 2025. Final project report for “Flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) in Shetland: a baseline assessment of population, distribution, movement, and critical habitats”. UHI Shetland report. p40.
- Thomason, L., and Fraser, S. 2025. Identification of inshore nursery areas for commercially important fish species around Shetland. UHI Shetland report. p54.
- Hintzen, N.T., Brigden, K., Kaastra, H., Mackinson, S., Pastoors, M.A., van de Pol, L. (2025) Bias in Global Fishing Watch AIS data analyses results in overestimate of Northeast Atlantic pelagic fishing impact. ICES Journal of Marine Science 82(3)

Hintzen *et al.* (2025) selected as Editor’s Choice and highlighted online:

[Editor's Choice - Global Fishing Watch overestimates pelagic fishing impact in Northeast Atlantic](#)

- Blasdale, T. 2025a. Exploratory development of a survey-based biomass index for ling (*Molva molva*) in ICES subareas 3, 4, 6-9 12 and 14. Working Document presented to the ICES Working Group on the Biology and Assessment of Deep Sea Fisheries Resources (WGDEEP). 17 pp
- Blasdale, T. 2025b. Exploratory assessment of ling (*Molva molva*) in ICES subareas 3,4 6-9, 12 and 14 with the Stochastic Surplus Production model in Continuous Time (SPiCT). Working Document presented to the ICES Working Group on the Biology and Assessment of Deep Sea Fisheries Resources (WGDEEP). 18 pp

Grants:

Funding secured for two separate elements of the 2025 sandeel survey, the first in partnership with St Andrews Uni and funded by NatureScot, the second in partnership with FIMRO and funded by the Viking Shetland Community Benefit Fund.

SSMO Funding to continue stock assessment and support for sustainable management of Shetland’s shellfish fisheries (£143,881.79 Shetland Islands Council).

Activities:

Successful sandeel survey undertaken by fisheries team using Atlantia II during May to investigate changes in sandeel population at Fair Isle and in study areas around the south mainland of Shetland.

BBSRC Aqua-Plankton + SAIC Plankton Predict: Both complementary projects continue to progress well.

Invited participation by Shaun Fraser in MASTS-Scottish Government “Areas of Research Interest” workshop as fisheries expert, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, Thursday 20th March 2025

b. Centre for Island Creativity

Publications:

- Roxane Permar, “Transmission”, digital film, 00:00:00:48; play as loop, published 14 March 2025.
- Roxane Permar, “Bloodlines”, a collection of digital films disseminated online and in Nesna, Norway during the exhibition Kindred: Living in the Landscape 2025 (May 2025) and to include Shetland later in 2025.

Grants:

Activities:

Roxane Permar Keynote presentation, ‘Bloodlines: Kinship, Division and Island Power’ at UHI/Falmouth University Symposium Island Narratives of Kinship, Place and the Weather, 3-4 April 2025.

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Roxane Permar gave presentation at Kindred: Living in the Landscape 2025 at Nord University Nesna in May 2025.

Siun Carden, keynote talk "This Weather/An Aimsir Seo", at UHI/Falmouth University Symposium Island Narratives of Kinship, Place and the Weather, 3-4 April 2025.

Siun Carden, Conference Paper, "When the makkin's mostly in the sprettin: unravelling form in words and wool", International Society for Ethnology and Folklore's annual Congress, SIEF2025 in Aberdeen, Scotland, June 3–6 June

Andrew Jennings chaired Island Matters Seminars 18th March,, 8th and 29th May, Faroe – Shetland research Symposium 24th April,

Andrew Jennings presentations to the UHI Island Symposium 4th April , United Nations Islands panel event 30th May, UHI Land and Communities Showcase 10th June

Andrew Jennings Keynote address and Simon Clarke panel discussant at Explorathon event, Unlocking Key Potential: research driven innovations in education, 20th May

7. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The accident procedure has been updated and a single emergency number for each campus has been installed and widely promoted.

The Energy Policy has been amended.

Our H&S external audit by Peninsula resulted in an almost perfect report. No reds or amber actions.

Accidents remain low but are up slightly on previous years. An accident investigation has been completed and improvements put in place.

A campaign to improve on how we store and manage chemicals across both campuses is underway.

8. Facilities

Damage to the store wall, caused by a forklift accident, has been repaired and paid for by our insurance company.

The Atlantia II and Moder Dy vessels are undergoing equipment repair or upgrades. This will make them more suitable for the work they are intended for.

The Estates BDO Estate audit was completed with minor improvement suggested.

9. Staff development

Staff development activities are undertaken across the year and are identified in individual review meetings or as cross college initiatives.

Our recent staff development day included mandatory training on sexual harassment, an opportunity for staff to interact with the Human library project xxxx

Jacky Williamson, L&D9 DI Award, for SVQ work based assessors, May 2025

Kari Hamilton has completed the PG Certificate in Exclusion, and is progressing next year to the Diploma part of the MA.

George Wallington and **Maurice Clark** Completed TQFE

Wilma Anderson completed PDA Teaching in Scotland's Colleges (SCQF9)

Clemmy Cowie completed BA Child & Youth Studies (SCQF8)

Lee Smith completed BA Child & Youth Studies (SCQF9)

10. Islands Deal

a. Campus redevelopment

On hold whilst issues relating to planning permission worked through

b. Shell-volution

The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) appointed Gregg Arthur as Project Director and Michele Kerry as Project Manager for the Shell-volution project. Both officially commenced their roles on Tuesday 1 April 2025. Gregg and Michele are both based at Scalloway Campus.

c. Talented

Project is underway with Preferred Candidate Wind Turbine Lecturer for TalEntEd project decided.

d. Creative Islands and Wellbeing

Seven year project underway with UHI Shetland leading on the research theme 'Imagining an Island', this includes funding for research student fees, a small research and innovation fund and funding for a research forum. Schemes have been drafted and approved and processes to support are being developed for launch.

e. Knab redevelopment

Development of a new proposal linking student accommodation and creative arts provision underway

11. General activities and achievements

a. Student activities and achievements

Fine Art students invited the public to experience their creative process during a special Open Studio event at the Lerwick campus in Gremista. The event ran from Tuesday 2 to 4 April with the exhibition showcasing their work and highlights their creative practices through UHI Shetland.

Let's Get Quizzical! on Wednesday, 19th March and was a huge success, bringing together students, staff, and the community for an evening of fun, learning, and friendly competition. With 8 exciting quiz categories, plenty of refreshments, and a fantastic turnout, the night was filled with laughter and teamwork. Organisers Naomi, Paighton, Logan, and Dean raised over £240 from the quiz which will be re-invested in the course to purchase resources and equipment.

MA Art and Social Practice Spring School took place in Inverness. This annual event is very special because the course is entirely virtual. The experience of working together in real life dramatically changes the nature of the learning and teaching experience on return from Inverness. Students and lecturers travelled from Bristol and Reykjavik as well as places across Scotland from Shetland to Kirkcudbright.

SFW Hospitality Students successfully demonstrated their teamwork and skills in the kitchen. As part of their two-year course, they worked together to prepare and serve two incredible set lunches—one in February and another in March.

Mareel Student Showcase highlighted the talents of our film and music students with an evening of entertainment on the 5th June

Vision 2025: UHI Shetland Art students showcased their art work at the Lerwick Campus to the public at the start of June. The opening night was on Friday 6th June and was well attended.

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Student Art Prizes were presented to:

- Wendy Lowe and Kieran Cowan (NC Art and Design)
- Millie Wishart, Amber Sukrum, Susan Linklater and Estella Smith (BA Fine Art)

Shetland Fine Art students participated in the UHI art workshops in Orkney March 2025, will be hosting the next network offering in November

Student completions:

- 8 Carpentry and Joinery students passed their Skills Tests, completing the college elements of their modern apprenticeship.
- 2 Computing students graduated with BSc Hons Computing
- 4 Engineering students completed modern apprenticeship
- 21 Students successfully completed NC Computing or Engineering
- 76 School Pupils successfully completed Skills for Work TMBE programmes.
- 43 School Pupils successfully completed Academy TMBE programmes
- 10 Bridges students successfully completed Vocational Pathway programmes in Computing or Construction.
- 7 students successfully completed hospital placements
- 8 candidates successfully completed ELC/schools placements
- 4 candidates successfully completed PGDE Primary and now have probation year placements in local schools.
- 8 Hairdressing candidates successfully completed placements with local hairdressing businesses

Student sessions were organised **with Fast Forward**, a charity set up to highlight the threats of gambling and online gaming.

Student of the Year

Our student of the year was Naomi Robertson (see below)

Section students of the year were:

Creative Industries: Naomi Robertson Supported Learning Access (SCQF4) Technology, Maritime and

Built environment: Joe Johnson Carpentry and Joinery (SCQF6)

Health, Care and Society: Asha Cape NQ Childhood Practice (SCQF6)

Marine Science: Finley Alexander Forwood SVQ3 Aquaculture (Modern Apprentice)

b. Staff activities & achievements

UHI Shetland were shortlisted in the **Pearson's National Teaching Awards** for the UHI Shetland's School-College Partnership Programme with the Shetland Islands Council. As shortlisted candidates for the bronze award we were invited to meet virtually with judges and staff along with a variety of stakeholders participated in this event. Alongside this Selina worked with Jonathan Butler to produce two short films and a testimonial booklet (attached separately) to support our bid. We have been recognised with a **Silver Award**. We will now go forward to be considered for a Gold Award, which will be announced at a prestigious awards ceremony in London and on BBC One's The One Show later this year.

Dr Rachel Shucksmith has been awarded the title of **Associate Professor of Marine Management** and Governance by the UHI Academic Council. Rachel is the Marine Spatial Planning Manager and she leads on applied research and consultancy projects in marine spatial planning. In collaboration with Shetland Islands Council she has led the development of one of Europe's most advanced regional marine plans and champions the integration of local knowledge and data in marine decision-making.

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Shetland Celebration of STEM was attended by our engineering team Howie, Rachel, and Maurice and our STEM Coordinator, Eleanor. This inspiring and fast-paced event was aimed at engaging young people in science, technology, engineering, and maths. The event brought together:

- 13 school groups
- 69 pupils
- 15 teachers and parents
- 28 STEM volunteers, speakers, and judges
- 10 STEM companies
- 117 total attendees (including the Stemovators team)

Our team contributed to a packed day of careers talks, hands-on STEM challenges, judging, and supporting pupil presentations. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive from both teachers and pupils, with 100% of teachers indicating they would recommend the event and attend again

Eleanor Hutcheon and **Saro Saravanan** have completed work on the Seafish project. Part of the final activities on the project has involved Eleanor visiting schools on the mainland to promote the VR activities that were developed as part of the project. Eleanor now moves on to supporting the HIE supported Newton Room programme as part of her role.

UHI Shetland and RSPB Shetland hosted Shetland's Sustainable Seas: Protecting, Managing and Restoring Marine Biodiversity, a free public conference and evening event celebrating and exploring the protection, management, and restoration of Shetland's marine ecosystems on 10th June 2025.

Leo Kelly started as our new apprentice receptionist on 2 June 2025 and two new fisheries research assistants commenced work – **Evie Herrington** and **Alice Newbould**.

Our **Neuro diversity room** was launched to give space to students from a Neuro diverse background to have a quiet place to eat. We also provided a study space for students in Lerwick on Fridays when the library is shut.

Alison Kilgour collated the results of the CLA survey on copyright for the library.

Rachel Eunson completed EAL Environmental teaching / assessment materials, to be used UHI wide.

Computing team have been active researching cloud server solutions with the UHI ITDI Operations Team and external providers. Final testing stage of a new cloud based public server that all UHI computing staff and students will be using in 2025/26 for Database and Web Development requirements.

Following the successful tender submission we have received an SIC contract for 1 year delivery of SVQ2, 3 & 4 Health & Social Studies; PDA Education Support Assistant; PDA Supervision; CPD Leading & Managing Care. However SIC did not award the following: SVQ Level 7 & 9 Social Services (Children & Young People) – this a huge blow given that we have provided this qualification to SIC for over 15 years, to a very high standard. We have also had excellent external verification reports and glowing feedback from candidates.