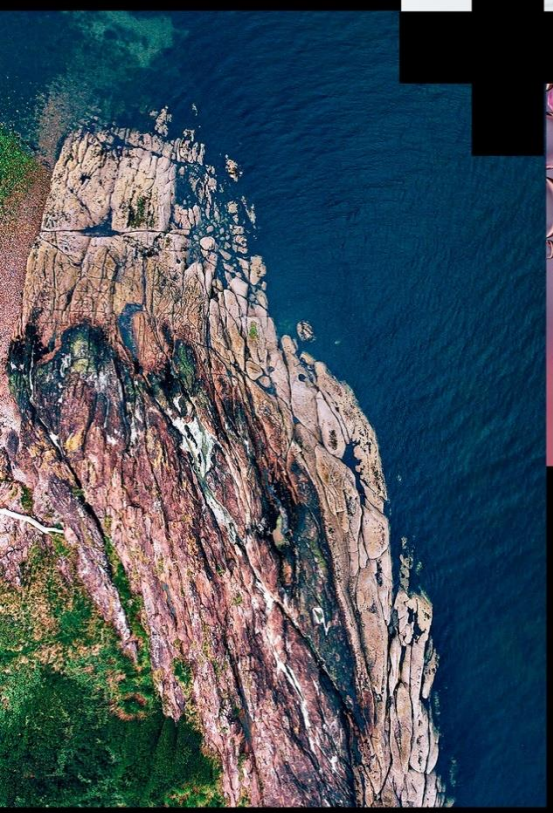
Highlands and Islands Regional Tertiary Outcome Agreement



2021-22

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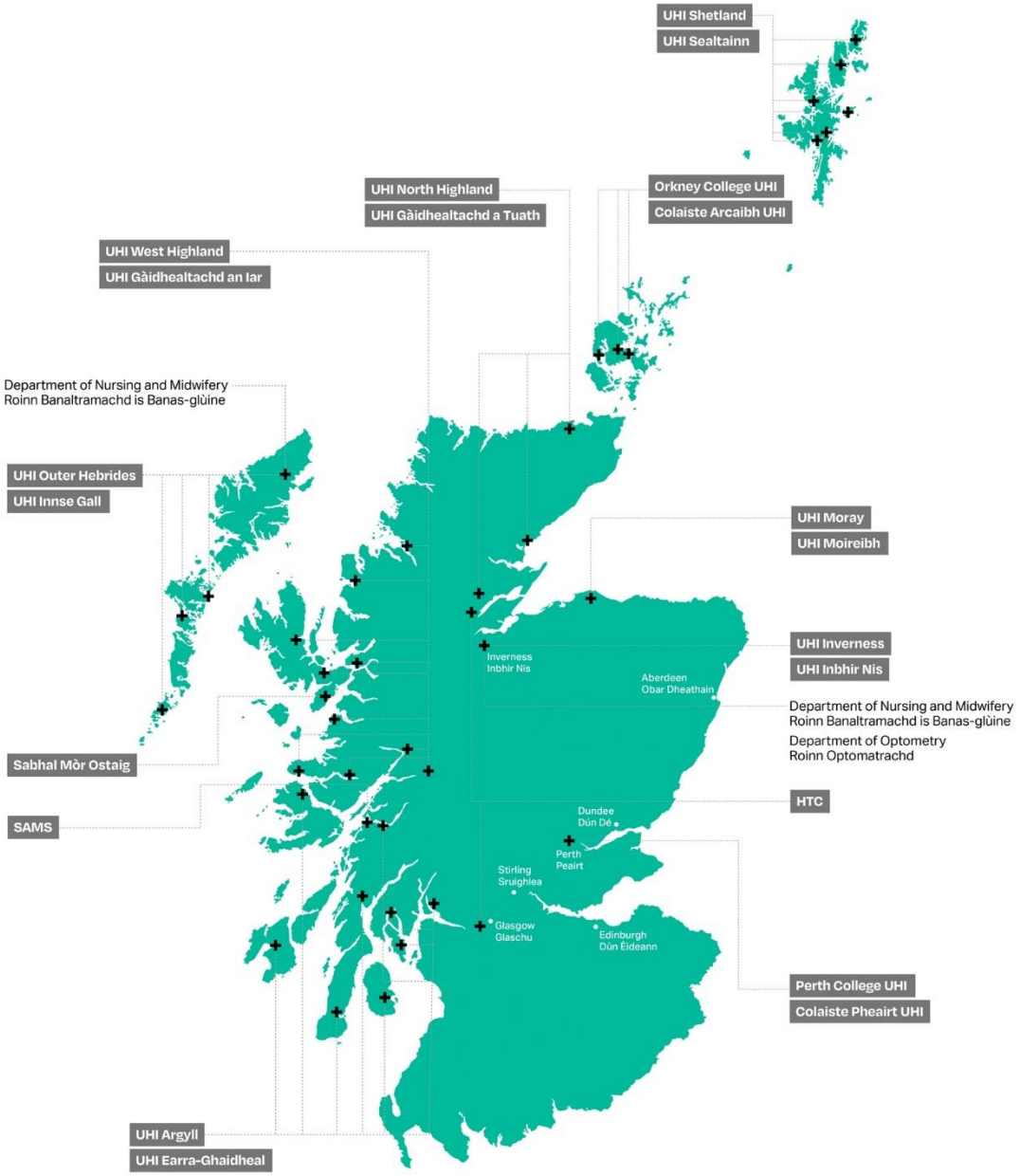
HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS REGIONAL TERTIARY OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2021-22

Introduction

The University of the Highlands and Islands is the only university based in our region, covering the Highlands and Islands, Perth and Kinross, and Moray. We are a tertiary institution, the first in Scotland and one of only a few in Europe, providing access to a range of programmes across all the SCQF levels.

Access to our further and higher education study and research opportunities is through a distinctive educational partnership of colleges and research institutions. Each academic partner has its own character and contributes to the distinctive organisation that is the University of the Highlands and Islands. As a partnership we have a student-centred culture and individual approach to student learning.

Our regional tertiary partnership



The university welcomed a new principal and vice-chancellor, Professor Todd Walker, in February 2021. In June we published a new strategic plan for 2021-25, entitled Daring to be Different. The plan builds on the foundations we have laid in the last ten years since achieving university title. It sets new ambitions in areas of strength for the future. It signals a shift in thinking and sets an ambition of becoming more engaged with our communities and more enterprising in our activity. The plan is captured in a strategic framework:

Mission	**To have a transformational impact on the prospects of our region, its economy, its people and its communities**			
Vision	**To become connected, streamlined and sustainable**			
Brand story	***Where learning means more***			
Core values	**Collaboration**	**Openness**	**Respect**	**Excellence**
Stakeholders	**Staff | Students | Alumni | Business | Government | Community | Industry**			
Strategic pillars	**Tertiary education**	**Research Impact**	**Enterprise**	**Engagement**
	We will deliver a high-quality connected curriculum built on personalising the learner journey with more content, to more people, through more channels	We will enhance our research impact, ensuring it is internationally ranked, industry linked and world leading	We will embrace an entrepreneurialspirit based on strong economic and commercial growth, resulting in a socially responsible and well managed enterprise	We will be a connected organisation that pursues engagement with the people and the communities in which we work,always striving for mutual benefit
Cross-cutting themes	**Equality and Inclusion | Gaelic Language | Climate Change**			
Operational planning themes	Academic Plan Student Recruitment Plan	Research Plan Knowledge Exchange Plan	Sustainability Plan Digital Enhancement Plan	Alumni and Advancement Plan Engagement Plan
Enabling plans	International Plan • People and Culture Plan • Island Plan • Gaelic Language Plan • Highlands and Islands Students' Association Student Partnership Agreement			

The university elected business leader Alastair MacColl as the new chair of the university court in June 2021. In October, Angus Campbell was appointed to the university court as regional lead for further education.

The university has been working through a change programme which will continue into 2021-22 and beyond. The workstreams are:

- Strategic curriculum review – covering both further and higher education
- The UHI Blueprint – a partnership-wide financial sustainability plan
- Executive office restructure in line with the requirements of the new strategic plan
- Branding and positioning – rebranding to help position the university partnership in a highly competitive local, national and international market
- The rural and island college merger involving Lews Castle College UHI, North Highland College UHI and West Highland College UHI.

The change programme, along with the university's response to the recommendations from the *Scottish Funding Council's review of coherent provision and sustainability,* will have positive outcomes for our region. As a tertiary institution with a regional mission to support economic recovery, sustainability and wellbeing, the university welcomes the review recommendation on integrated tertiary funding as a model that could better serve our students and the region. We will work with SFC to co-create an approach to funding that addresses our specific rural context and the need to deliver through a dispersed network of campuses often with small cohorts of students.

The impacts on our university partnership of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit are also continuing. For 2021-22, these two external influences have contributed to a recruitment challenge in both further and higher education. For further education, this is a continuation from 2020-21, with ongoing impacts from disruption to provision, particularly in practical and work-based programmes, the continuation of social distancing measures on capacity and the learner experience, changes to approaches within schools and an inability to provide face-to-face taster sessions.

There is evidence that our region has been particularly vulnerable to some of the impacts of the pandemic (SDS resilience and vulnerability index looking among other things at digital connectivity) and Brexit. Within our region, we have the six most vulnerable local authorities to the impact the UK's departure from the EU, including the impact on the labour market of the out-migration of EU workers.

As with the rest of the country, the impacts on the region have varied during the different phases of the pandemic. While employment levels initially fell across our region, with youth unemployment rising significantly in some areas, the number of people in employment is set to grow over the next few years as jobs lost during the pandemic are replaced. This growth is expected to bring the employment back to pre-pandemic levels by 2023 or possibly earlier. Job opportunities and unfilled vacancies across the region have increased, giving more options for those who may have otherwise considered further or higher education. More recently, in schools across our region, following disruption to teaching, we have also seen more pupils choosing to stay on to S5 and S6.

This outcome agreement highlights how we will help lead our region through this uncertain period.

Section 1: Outcomes for students

1 Fair access and transitions

Education is accessible to students from all backgrounds and students are supported through successful pathways.

One of the key elements in our commitment to widening access is the continued development of integrated tertiary pathways from school to further and higher education using academic and vocational routes to maximise opportunity. Through these pathways, we are delivering truly seamless supported learning journeys. Depending on individual requirements and aspirations, students can access further and higher education from SCQF Level 1, with progression opportunities through the SCQF levels up to postgraduate research.

Being locally based within our communities, we enhance our tertiary provision through relevant outreach activities promoting access to the most hard-to-reach individuals and groups, as well as working in partnership with relevant local organisations. For example, our 'Virtual School' programme provides Highland secondary school pupils in the senior phase with access to a range of courses regardless of their location, and recently won a national award for 'Outstanding Use of Technology in Delivering Remote Teaching and Learning'

1.1 Access national measures for 2021-22

Both the regional FE credits and HE non-controlled FTEs are anticipated to be below the SFC target for 2021-22, with various factors associated with this position as highlighted in the introduction. The core national measure targets for this year however have been based on maintaining appropriate levels of proportions in each measure. This reflects the impacts and uncertainty over the last two years due to the pandemic and the impacts from Brexit which will continue through 2021-22 and beyond.

Higher education – SFC funded targets and Scotland domiciled undergraduate entrants

The impact of Covid on higher education recruitment has varied during the pandemic with changes to employment opportunities, uncertainty over online delivery and the student experience and an evolving position with SQA exams. In 2020-21, this resulted in an increase in recruitment and progression, especially for full-time study, and particularly from those making late decisions and applications during Clearing. For 2021-22, as uncertainties reduced, recruitment for our non-controlled subjects fell significantly, especially for full-time study. UCAS has identified a shift in the 2021-22 recruitment year towards higher tariff institutions, possibly due to the early decision on SQA exam assessment and increase in A Grades, reflected in a 33% reduction in Clearing activity. The SFC uplift in funded places for each institution, plus additional funded initiatives to get people into employment also increased options and competition within at best a static regional market. The change in funding position for new EU students post-Brexit, along with the additional immigration requirements to study in the UK reduced applications from EU students significantly

At this stage of the academic year, enrolments (headcounts and FTEs) tend to fluctuate up to the fundable cut-off date of 1 December. However, the decline currently evident in headcount for non-controlled subjects compared to the same point last year indicates there will be a significant

fall in end-of-year FTE. The university partnership is actively engaged in maximise recruitment opportunities throughout the rest of the academic year.

Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants (SDUE): as reflected in the comments above on applications for 2020-21, the number of SDUEs increased significantly, to 3216 (7%). On current data, 2021-22 numbers will be significantly reduced, estimated at approximately 10% below last year.

Further education - SFC credit targets

In further education, prior to 2019-20 the university partnership has routinely met our student activity targets, despite facing some significant geographical challenges and a rapidly changing profile of recruitment. Since then, the pandemic has had a significant impact on recruitment of FE students.

We remain committed to meeting the needs of students and employers in our region during this challenging time. This commitment recognises the specific current priorities for our region, including our response to Covid recovery, climate emergency and our crucial role in ensuring the delivery of a regional STEM strategy and delivery to schools to ensure access to educational pathways for pupils across our region.

Our regional credit target is 118,883, however, on 14th October we provided an update to SFC anticipating we are likely to deliver around 107,000 credits, including 2,012 on foundation apprenticeships. This is short of our target but above delivery in 2020-21.

The pandemic will have impacted each region in different ways. The premise behind the current SFC credit guidance – to spread the credits across as many people as possible because there might be a rise in demand – has not happened in our region. Here, a strong labour market has meant that demand has been lower.

However, it is likely that we are not yet in a steady state and recruitment numbers this year will not tell us much about what is needed over the next few years. For that reason, our view is that this year should be seen as another 'emergency year' by SFC.

1.2 Continued commitment to key policies, priority groups and targets

Fair access - Admissions processes and entry requirements

The University of the Highlands and Islands is in the unique position of being able to offer a wide range of entry points for learners and a range of progression pathways. Our published entry requirements do not set unnecessarily high (selective) barrier for applicants but are set at the minimum required to successfully complete the programme. When considering applications, we look beyond grades achieved to find the right option for each individual, including consideration of a number of contextual indicators. Care-experience is one of these indicators and we have a continued commitment to offering a place to applicants who disclose care-experience who meet the minimum requirements of the programme. Our entry requirements recognise a range of qualifications and experience to increase accessibility of our programmes.

We have developed comprehensive processes for the assessment and award of recognition of prior learning to new students. Over recent years procedures have been streamlined to make the process as easy as possible for both applicants and assessors. Currently, over four hundred

new students each year will enter with RPL. We are additionally confident that our processes allow for the maximum possible credit to be awarded to our new students. Development work in the coming year will include training for staff who are new to assessing RPL claims, and promotion of these opportunities to new students.

Articulation

During the past year we have significantly added to the colleges where we have formal articulation agreements. In addition to the existing agreements with Dundee and Angus, and Northeast Scotland College, we now have agreements with Forth Valley College, Glasgow Kelvin College, City of Glasgow College, Ayrshire College, Edinburgh College, and West Lothian College. In 2021 – 22 we aim to review these agreements in the light of curriculum developments at the university to ensure that all possible articulation routes are in use. We will also work with our partner colleges to increase awareness of these opportunities.

National measure: from the SFC national articulation database: at the time of writing, the last available data was for 2019-20 where 80% of Scotland-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to our undergraduate programmes entered with advanced standing. This was a significant increase from the previous year which was 69%. Subsequent availability of data for 2020-21 highlighted the impact of COVID on HNC/D articulation with advanced standing (64%) and as a result an aspirational target for 2021-22 entry has been set at 75%.

Learners from areas of multiple deprivation SIMD20 (HE) and SIMD10 (FE)

Setting the context for the relevance of SIMD, our region has only 17 (2%) of the SIM10 data zones (covering only four academic partners) and 47 (3%) of the SIMD20 areas with none in the island communities. We perform well in recruiting from these areas compared to the population living there. We are confident that SFC understands the national targets relating to SIMD need to be considered in the light of these figures. By comparison however, 45% of the working age population in our region live in the lowest quintile for the SIMD access to services domain. Analysis of the SEP index data shows 31% are living in remote rural areas, including 22% in areas classified as very remote. This means there are other challenges for many of our communities and the specific impacts of the pandemic are yet to be understood.

SIMD20 students (HE): in both 2018-19 and 2019-20, we had around 10% of full-time first-degree entrants from SIMD20 areas which was above target. However, with relatively small numbers and the impact of small changes on percentage fluctuations, we were cautious about the target for 2020-21. This caution was well placed as the percentage fell to 9.3%. The impact of COVID in the longer term is not yet known, however, we have again set a target of 10% for 2021-22.

SIMD10 (FE): targets have previously been set to maintain the proportion of credits delivered to students from SIMD10 areas. While 2021-22 will continue to be an unusual year, and one in which there are increased alternatives available to this group, including employment, and options through the Young Persons Guarantee and employability funding, we consider that the level of activity delivered will still, in the main, be representative of the proportion of the population in the region residing in these identified areas of deprivation. Therefore, in line with SFC guidance, the region's focus will continue to be on enhancement of the success rates of these students, rather than real terms growth in student numbers.

For 2021-22 we are aiming to achieve the same proportion as that achieved in the last 'normal' year prior to the pandemic, 2018-19, which is **3.7%** of our credits being delivered to learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas. Applied against our revised forecast of 107,000 total credits for 2021-22, we expect this to equate to **3,959 credits**.

Care-experienced and other under-presented groups

We are continuing to work on encouraging disclosure and identifying the students from under-represented groups and ensure they are aware of the support available to them. This includes improving the data held on these students to provide a greater insight of their student journey e.g., successful completions, withdrawals etc.

Specifically:

- Action plans are in place to monitor progress on how we strengthen support to these students which are monitored by the priority groups forum.
- To raise awareness of support, the university participates in national awareness days such as National Care Day, National Care Experienced Week etc.
- Staff training events will be considered throughout the year to ensure staff are equipped with skills and knowledge to respond to student needs.

Students with disabilities:

The newly created Inclusive Practice Toolkit which provides guidance to those with a responsibility of writing personal learning support plans (PLSPs) is being promoted to support and disability staff across the partnership. The second phase of this toolkit, which will provide all staff with an understanding of our disability processes and the importance of implementing reasonable adjustments, will hopefully be launched by the end of this academic year.

We are continuing to strengthen the processes in place to support disabled students, e.g., we are expanding the university's dyslexia sticker scheme to FE students (currently only available to HE students), and to improve the use of data in comparing outcomes for disabled students compared to non-disabled students.

The university has a disabled student allowance (DSA) process to ensure we are supporting student making applications and those who make the assessments.

Relevant National measures:

In higher education: the proportion of care-experienced entrants has been increasing year-on-year, with the highest ever proportion reported on 20202-21 (1.9%). For UHI the numbers involved in this measure are small meaning that percentage fluctuations can be quite significant even with minimal change. While the full extent of the impact of the pandemic in the long term is still to be measured, our student services colleagues are focused on supporting this groups, and therefore and will seek to maintain the 2020-21 proportion.

For further education, the region has, through the corporate parenting action plans and through the implementation of the further education strategy for the enhancement of student attainment, worked to improve FE recruitment and outcomes for care-experienced young people. We are seeking to maintain this commitment and delivery to students declaring care experience and focus on improving outcomes for this group.

For 2021-22 we are aiming to achieve the same proportion of credits as that achieved in the last 'normal' year prior to the pandemic, 2018-19, which is **3.2%** of our credits being delivered to

care-experienced learners. Applied against our revised forecast of 107,000 total credits for 2021-22, we expect this to equate to **3,424 credits**.

Senior phase pupils (DYW)

Over recent years, in response to the Developing the Young Workforce programme, the region has significantly expanded its school/college collaborative work. In 2013/4 only 1.3% of total student activity delivered was dedicated to delivery of vocational programmes for senior phase pupils. By 2018-19 this had risen to over 4% of total activity.

School/college provision has been one of the hardest hit areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. We responded quickly and effectively to the closure of schools, working flexibly to ensure the continuation of online provision and support through a range of technologies and means. College staff worked throughout this time to adapt and adjust provision wherever possible within the guidelines to maintain engagement, including adapting plans to enable some periodic face-to-face or group sessions alongside virtual delivery for those students and cohorts where online provision was most challenging. The university partnership's expertise and track record of blended learning and online delivery, such as through the already established and award winning 'Virtual School' in Highland, was crucial during this time. However, it was particularly difficult to mitigate disruption to some practical and work-based provision during this time, including Foundation Apprenticeship programmes requiring employer placements and the completion of SVQ evidence through employer-based activity.

In 2021-22, whilst many of the restrictions have now been removed or eased, the legacy of the disruption caused throughout 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years has had a significant continued impact on school/college provision, particularly for senior phase pupils. In some areas this includes an apparent change in approach towards senior phase delivery leading to fewer pupils applying to college courses in favour of in-school or alternative provision.

Despite this, for 2021-22 we remain committed to maintaining the baseline we achieved prior to the pandemic in 2018-19, and therefore expect around **1,050** pupils to study vocational qualifications with us this year.

2 High quality learning, teaching and support

Students at all levels experience a high-quality, safe and supportive learning experience that enables them to succeed in their studies and they find it easy to participate and engage in their educational experience

2.1 Learning and teaching strategy and enhancement themes

During and due to the pandemic, we have begun to reflect on our learning and teaching practices - their nature, resilience and sustainability going forward. In this context, two strategic projects have been initiated: the curriculum review and the learning and teaching workstream. In April 2021, an extension was approved of the current Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES) to 2021/22 to enable the completion of the strategy but also align the development of a new strategy with these two strategic projects. The new LTES will be focused on the concept of a 'signature pedagogy or pedagogies for the university. The 2021-25 strategic plan will pave the way for the new LTES to be a single, integrative one that can be implemented

across the university, across FE and HE provision, and adopted and implemented across the partnership.

Digital and blended learning strategies:

The importance and profile of blended and online learning have increased significantly over the last year because of the impacts of COVID-19. The university has been in a pioneer in using this approach to deliver education across our region and beyond

During 2021/22 we will be reviewing our virtual learning environment, Brightspace, to determine future needs and developments. This work will be progressed within the context of a consultation focused on 'defining and developing our future digital learning landscape'.

We will continue to develop, promote and encourage engagement and uptake of open educational practices by staff and students in the delivery of learning, teaching and assessment.

Staff skills in delivering high quality learning and teaching:

We will be seeking to expand our work in the interlinked areas of professional development and professional recognition of learning and teaching practice, support and leadership. This will include broadening the range of professional recognition opportunities available to staff, beyond Fellowships of the Higher Education Academy. This will encompass continued engagement with the National Teaching Fellowships/Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE), CMALT Accreditation Framework and further engagement with Aurora. It will also include provision of leadership development opportunities and ensuring colleagues who teach exclusively FE are able to access and achieve relevant recognition and accreditation beyond the incoming General Teaching Council for Scotland registration requirements.

Enhancement themes:

The sector wide QAA enhancement theme for 2020-2023 is resilient learning communities, which has had further resonance during the covid pandemic and the impact on student and staff experiences. For 2021-22, the university will continue to work on the three strands identified:

- Facilitating resilient students – working with HISA, mental health, and careers and employability colleagues to identify good practice in supporting student resilience, develop further support mechanisms for student mental health and wellbeing and support transitions into study and the development of employability skills.
- Facilitating resilient staff – assessment and feedback symposium on 'sustainable assessment'; webinars and workshops on reflective writing and practice; support for communities of practice on innovative use of the university's virtual learning environment.
- Creating a resilient institution - develop micro-credentials relating to the curriculum area of social sciences; ensure the work of the curriculum review embeds resilience into the approach to curriculum content and design; create resources to support resilient practices in graduates of our programmes for educators (TQFE, PgCert Tertiary and Higher Education).

2.2 Supporting student experience through the pandemic

For academic year 2020/21, delivery of our course provision moved online and the necessarily adaptations were made to programme structure, content and assessment arrangements to support students through the impact of the pandemic. Together with HISA, the university has

reviewed the position on fair assessment, considering the evolving situation and impacts of COVID-19, and the regulatory requirement to meet national academic standards and quality expectations, and practice in other universities. It is now appropriate to revert to our normal academic regulations for progression and award of undergraduate and postgraduate taught degrees, as the student learning experience settles into the 'new normal'. We believe that this will support effective student engagement in their studies, fairness in assessment, and that students can be confident in the value of their awards, now and in the future.

We have put in place an on-going package of support measures for students, in recognition that impacts of Covid continue. These include:

- adjustments to learning and teaching approaches, as appropriate
- use of alternative assessments, such as 'open book' exams through Brightspace
- mitigating circumstances process - in the event of illness or other reasonable cause
- individual advice and guidance via personal academic tutors or local student support services

The university is fully engaged in QAAS engagement and review work commissioned by SFC e.g., enhancement themes, Focus On project scoping and participation and review of quality frameworks arising from the SFC Coherence review recommendations.

Following submission of the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) reflective analysis 2021, we have had review visits through the year with the main visit schedule for week commencing 22 November and expect early outcomes will be available in December.

2.3 Student mental health and wellbeing

Supporting student mental health and wellbeing is crucial to providing safe and supportive learning experiences. We have experienced an increase in demand and heightened complexity of student mental health and counselling needs during the pandemic. The university mental health and counselling team, supported by practitioners across the partnership, offer a range of services to share good practice and train staff and support our students.

Following the announcement of additional SFC funding, a regional mental health co-ordinator role will be established. This role will free up partnership teams to focus on increasing their own mental health and wellbeing provision locally. The college sector funding received for 2021-22 equated to almost seven counsellors across the partnership. The mental health and counselling manager is supporting our academic partners in the Partners in the recruitment, training, and support of this additional resource. There is a need however to focus on how to make all the additional counsellor posts sustainable going forward.

The university will begin work on a single policy for mental health and counselling across the partnership, with the recognition of the impact if the pandemic on student mental health, a single partnership policy will help us further develop our services, practices and procedures to enhance the student experience and safeguarding.

In recognition of the additional pressure PGR students can operate under, we delivered a series of workshops in last year and are now working on online modules aimed at PGR students and supervisors, relating to mental health.

The university has achieved the Bronze Award with the Health Body Healthy Mind Campaign (HBHM) run by Scottish Student Sport (SSS). With a change in lead organisation and criteria and the impact of the pandemic the HBHM campaign has been challenging. However, we are continuing to look at how we can meet the criteria for the silver award going forward within a virtual world, in partnership with HISA.

The university published a suicide and risk intervention policy: protecting our students from harm in June 2021. The pandemic prevented any training relating to Applied Suicide Intervention Skills training (ASIST) and the Scottish Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) as the bodies which oversee this training felt that such person-centred training should not be delivered online. SMHFA courses have now been given the go ahead from November 2021 and a plan for ASIST training delivery will be rolled out as soon as possible.

We are continuing to raise awareness of Togetherall, our 24/7 mental health support platform for both students and staff. At the start of 2021/22, we added Spectrum Life, student assistance programme to our offering of mental health support. This is a new 24/7, 365 telephone support service and portal. Not only can students access a phone line to speak to a trained counsellor, but they can also access a portal and then download an app for their phones which has a range of wellbeing information and content.

Working with Rape Crisis Scotland, further gender-based violence staff training will be rolled out in 2021/22. This 'first response' training provides staff with skills to respond effectively to any disclosures they may receive.

An online student module, created by Rape Crisis Scotland, will be offered to our student body. This contains information on what GBV means, consent, healthy relationships and how to safely intervene if they witness any inappropriate behaviours.

The university is in the process of purchasing a reporting tool to allow staff and students to report incidents of GBV. It is hoped this will be implemented before the end of the academic year.

Working alongside other local agencies, we will be a key partner in the Highland 16 Days of Action campaign which is being run by Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland (RASASH) and the Highland Violence Against Women Partnership. We will also promote the White Ribbon campaign which encourages men to be part of the conversation in tackling GBV.

2.4 Student support

We anticipate that many students will continue to experience financial hardship and digital poverty in 2021-22 due to on-going impacts of the pandemic.

While some teaching has moved back on campus, the requirement for access to devices to use at home, or on campus, and digital connectivity issues will continue across our diverse region to access the virtual learning environment and video-based classes. The university partnership is collectively making use and source additional student hardship and digital poverty funding.

Student hardship:

- The additional funds from SAAS and SFC to support students in financial hardship due to the pandemic have been welcomed and spend is monitored regularly by a hardship group which meets monthly to support partnership practitioners in making any challenging decisions in awarding funds.

- Work continues to ensure our processes are streamlined across the partnership with various staff and student guidance created. An action tracker and FAQ staff document are now also available.
- Promotional activities will take place to highlight hardship funds on offer to students at key points throughout the academic year i.e., start of term, before and after Christmas and Easter.

Digital Poverty:

- The university partnership has purchased additional laptops to support digital poverty in this academic year.
- A digital poverty group was formed last year and continues to meet regularly to monitor requirements across the partnership. This is supported by key digital poverty contacts within each academic partner.
- It is expected further funds will be provided by SFC which is welcome as demand for equipment continues to rise and this will allow us to build the stock available for distribution to those in need.
- Priority access is provided to those from low-income households and staff guidance has been created which allows local digital poverty/support contacts to make decisions on eligibility.

The university development office secured new student funding support for 2021-22, including:

- Sidney Black Memorial Engineering Award
- The Peter May Fiction Prize
- John Preston Music Awards
- Student Book Fund

2.5 Core national measures targets

Retention (HE)
At the time of writing, the latest available data was for 2018-19 entrants and shows non-continuation rates into 2019-20. The measure for proportion of SDUE returning to year two was 85%, up from 83.2% the previous year. From the HESA student return, we anticipate that will have fallen back again to closer to 83% for 2019-20 entrants continuing to 2020-21 and would look to maintain this for 2020-21 entrants returning in 2021-22.

Qualifiers (HE)
The number of qualifiers in 2020-21 was 2544 a similar level to 2019-20. This was, however, much lower than previous years. With our range of different curriculum across the SCQF levels and numerous exit and progression points, this is quite a complex measure to understand trends and set targets. To add to this, for 2019-20 and 2020-21, adjustments were made to assessment processes in light of the impacts of Covid, and we will be reverting to the normal processes in 2021-22. The impacts of 2021-22 recruitment and continuing students is likely to make the position even more complex. With all this uncertainty, a target has been set at a similar level as 2020-21.

Success (FE)
The full-time further education student success rate for the region typically surpasses the national norm, sitting approximately two percentage points above, with some partners achieving the highest student success rates in the sector. In 2018-19, full-time student success fell slightly,

mirroring a sector-wide pattern. Under normal circumstances the region's commitment would be to build on the implementation of a Strategy for the Enhancement of Further Education Attainment to recover the positive position and upward trend achieved prior to 2018-19 and incrementally improve beyond that.

However, as has been previously outlined, the unprecedented and continually evolving challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the impact on student engagement, deferral and completion, and the challenges presented to the partnership to complete provision within the restrictions and guidelines, means that measures of success since 2018-19 are likely to have been affected by these factors.

We anticipate that there will be reduced levels of disruption in 2021-22 with respect to learner experience, progression and achievement. Our commitment for 2021-22 is one of stabilisation, achieving the same levels reached in the last 'normal' year prior to the pandemic, 2018-19, therefore are targets for Full-time and part-time students successfully achieving a recognised qualification will be **68.6%** and **82.1%** respectively

Satisfaction (HE and FE)

In higher education: In the 2021`NSS, there was a decrease in the university's score for overall satisfaction to 77.6%. This is above our benchmark of 75%, but below the Scottish sector average of 80%. We experienced a smaller decrease in overall satisfaction than 11 of the Scottish universities. We went up one place in the overall satisfaction ranking and closed the gap on those above us. We are in a group of seven universities separated by 1%. For 2021-22, we have set a target of 2% above benchmark, which was the target measure set in our previous strategic plan.

Despite the challenges of COVID during 2020-21, significantly our students rated us positively in our response to the pandemic. The university performed significantly above average in both the Scottish and UK sector in all questions relating to COVID, of our students who responded:

- 88% agreed they were able to access the resources they needed for their course during the pandemic, compared to 78% of respondents at other UK universities
- 88% agreed the university had taken steps to protect their physical safety, compared to 80% of respondents at other UK universities.
- 84% said they had received useful information about changes to their course, compared to 73% of respondents at other UK universities

Although not a national measure, the university again scored well for overall satisfaction in the latest postgraduate taught student experience surveys (PTES/PRES). The result in the PTES placed the university placed the university sixth out of the 88 higher education institutions which took part in the survey with a score of 87% satisfaction.

In further education: as with HE, there have been many external factors and challenges outwith our control that have impacted on students' experience and overall feeling of satisfaction during the pandemic.

Despite these challenges, and the difficulty they place on the university partnership in projecting how student satisfaction will be affected, we remain committed to ensuring the best possible experiences, outcomes and student satisfaction across our FE provision. We are working hard to support the needs of our students and adapt in response to feedback wherever possible.

We also anticipate that, whilst there will be some continued disruption to the learner experience and student satisfaction during 2021-22, we will be in a much stronger position than the previous year. Our expectation is that the percentage of students overall satisfied with their college experience will therefore move back towards our previous high baselines, with an aspirational target of **92%** for 2021-22.

3 Partnership, participation, and student experience

Students find it easy to participate, have their voice heard and valued, and influence their educational and student experience.

3.1 Student voice/student representation

We have recently significantly revised our student engagement vision and strategy, to take account of the university's new strategic plan and providing better clarity links to the student partnership agreement, local academic partnership work, and how all are reported.

Student Partnership Agreement (SPA):

We have worked closely with our students' association, HISA, to address some areas of improvement in the SPA, including HISA using the SPA more as an opportunity to work in partnership with the university. We recognise that there are capacity challenges to HISA fully participating in outcomes from the SPA. Therefore, we are adjusting the mechanism by which key themes are identified for the SPA to guide student reps towards those that provide most opportunity for partnership working. To address capacity challenges, we have will run the SPA over a calendar year rather than an academic year. This will remove the difficulty of new HISA reps needing to help form the SPA during their busiest part of the year, and when they are new in office. It will also mean that there is continuity between years as new officers will continue work on the existing SPA before helping to form the new work themes.

3.2 HISA focus for 2021-22

- Student Voice Rep (SVR) system – continuous development in partnership with the university partnership, integrating insight from our students and best practice case studies nationally. Current key goals: improve data recording, monitoring and analysis to inform development; create an MS Teams area for all Student Voice Reps to easily communicate; where possible standardise approach to SVR system across the academic partnership for consistency and equity for all UHI students, allowing local contextualisation.
- Student partnership agreement (SPA) - working in partnership with university to develop and deliver the SPA including holding the SPA/Loop conference to enable student input to the agreement.
- Policy Change – Ideas to Action – continuous development, including awareness raising with students through workshops, social media and development of clear systems and supporting procedures
- Residences – working with the university partnership to improve residence life for students and student representation in residence accommodation
- Board of Management and Committee student officer representation – additional training provided during officer induction in 2021, linked to ongoing project reviewing practice across

the academic partnership, identifying best practice to share benchmarks of good practice standards in key areas of the process

- Advocacy and student advice – recruitment of student adviser with key skills and experience, together with appropriate supporting indemnity insurance
- HISA Awards – these annual awards are delivered in partnership with university to recognise and thank staff and students who have 'made a difference' to others during the academic year, this process also provides a basis for sharing good practice and enhancing the student experience.

4 Learning with impact for students

Students at all levels are equipped to flourish in employment, further study and to lead fulfilling lives. **Relates also to outcomes for economic and social recovery: confident and highly capable - work-ready - graduates** Work-ready graduates are confident and ready to secure success in their career, meeting employer needs and making a positive contribution to our economy and society: Students are equipped to take up employment and succeed when the job market opens up.

4.1 Supporting student employability

The university careers and employability team, along with academic partner colleagues, support students and graduates to develop their employability skills and the resilience needed to position themselves in a changing world of work. Services are available to all students regardless of level of study, and as such the team utilises an innovative range of delivery methods and platforms to reach a widely dispersed student body. Engagement with industry is also a vital element of the team's work. The voice of the employer is now regularly used to engage students in future thinking, provide them with current labour market intelligence, and enhance their commercial awareness.

Following the publications last year of the Scottish Government's, Scotland's Careers Strategy: Moving Forward, it is encouraging to note that the service we provide as a partnership is already clearly aligned with key delivery principles. As a widening access institution, the diversity of our student population and the inherent challenges our students face in a rural labour market mean we already adopt a more holistic approach. The traditional notion of 'career matching' has never been representative of our service which is underpinned by reflection, encouragement, motivation, community knowledge, sharing of experience and a belief that actions, even small ones, can change things. Our 'Graduate for Life' offer recognises that change is inevitable and underlines our commitment to students throughout their working life.

We are committed to improvements however and a recent review of the delivery of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) support to students across the university partnership, identified some key actions to take forward over the next five years including the development of a quality assurance framework and the implementation of a continuous development programme for both academic and support staff. Further integration of careers and employability within the curriculum, and the delivery and deployment of skills and attributes, will feature as core objectives in the strategic service delivery planning.

Key to this is our team of curriculum development employer engagement officers. During 2021-22 the team are continuing their proactive approach to keeping in touch with industry contacts

which has been impacted by the pandemic. Re-engaging through all the pre-pandemic mechanisms, when it is safe to do so, while continuing to use the alternative virtual activities developed during 2020-21. Examples of employer engagement activities which will be developed further in 2021-22 include:

- The Level Up! initiative with XpoNorth which offers creative industry degree students access to a unique free-to-use range of support and activities as they look to start their careers. The programme started as a pilot in 2019-20, the model further developed through the pandemic, and in 2020/21 was nominated for a Herald Higher Education Award under the category: Outstanding Business Engagement and won the UHI student support initiative award. For 2021/22 there will be a focus on two delivery streams - one open to all students at all stages of their programme of study, and a more intensive programme for those in their final years and preparing to enter the labour market.

- The university mentoring programme: in 2021/22 the programme has been offered to all subject networks, which has increased the number of students involved from six last year to 60. They are all linked with a formal programme to an industry mentor.

4.2 The apprenticeship family

The apprenticeship family of Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships continues to play a vital part within our tertiary education offer across the region.

As with other provision, the focus for apprenticeships in 2021-22 is one of recovery, particularly given the disruption caused by the pandemic to employment and placement settings within our work-based learning programmes.

Throughout this time the partnership continues to work hard with employers, school and students, adapting delivery and assessment wherever possible to minimise the disruption of progress and to ensure that any additional support available, such as the Adopt an Apprentice scheme, is provided.

Care, construction and built environment, engineering, hospitality, hair and beauty and automotive related apprenticeships have been particularly disrupted, and the focus within these areas will be re-establishing progression through learning and portfolios, particularly where furlough, temporary business closures or disruption to accessing college facilities has caused delay.

Within our schools' provision, Foundation Apprenticeship recruitment for 2021-22 has been lower than was initially anticipated this year, not helped by the lack of access into schools to promote these programmes face-to-face. It is also expected that some schools, parents and pupils may have perceived practical or work-based programmes to continue to carry a higher level of risk of further disruption in 2021-22 due to the uncertainties relating to potential restrictions.

In response to this, our efforts throughout 2021-22 will be to continue to develop our partnerships with schools and employers towards continued recovery across our apprenticeship family into 2022-23.

4.3 Commitment to national measures targets

Graduate destinations (HE)

The graduate outcome survey is still relatively new. The first running was for 2017-18 graduates who were surveyed 15 months after graduation and results reported in 2020. The 2018-19 graduate outcome survey reported in 2021. Graduates in both surveys were surveyed during the pandemic. The latest data shows 95% of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers who responded to the survey were in a positive destination, compared to 95.5% the previous year. This target has been maintained for 2020-21 and 2021-22 graduates. Using the SFC's revised data, in the latest survey, 51.4% of graduates in employment were in professional level occupations, an increase from 50.8% the previous year, again this target is maintained for 2020-21 and 2021-22 graduates.

Student destinations (FE)

Within FE, whilst disruption is expected to continue in 2021-22, it is expected that to some degree employment related outcomes will enjoy recovery owing to the greater levels of employment opportunity currently being experienced in our region, particularly for key sectors such as construction, healthcare, tourism, hospitality and food and drink which have traditionally relied on high levels of migrant and EU workers. It is also expected that access to further training or study as progression from FE programmes will face minimal disruption in 2021-22.

It is therefore our expectation that the proportion of full-time college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying will return to our 2018-19 baseline of **93.8%.** In headcount term, when applied against an anticipated overall reduction in the number of FT enrolments in 2021-22, we expect this to equate to **1,960**

5 Equalities and inclusion

Within our new strategic plan 'Daring to be Different', equality and diversity is recognised as a key enabling theme that cuts across all activities. Our work around equality and diversity has focused on building capacity, visibility and infrastructure for better mainstreaming into all aspects of our structure, ensuring our partnership is well supported to meet our duties and contribute expertise to E & D activities. Specifically:

Streamlining equalities infrastructure:
Our approach has aimed to reduce multiple reporting, duplication of action plans and meetings, as well as increasing the potential for impact. This has involved collating all equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) specific action plans and reports into the public sector equality duty reporting process. Growth of student champion programmes have allowed the design of more sophisticated and ambitious student-led projects and cross-partner activities.

Increasing specialised capacity:
Increasing our dedicated equality and diversity staffing has allowed an initial injection of capacity to undertake planning activities, establish project work, identify areas of high impact etc. To help meet our plans, an additional full-time position has been created, we will also continue increasing student and staff champions, and exploring secondment opportunities for academic staff to gain EDI qualifications.

Increasing partnership cohesion:

Over the period, 2017-21 the university partnership has replaced 11 SFC Gender Action Plans with a single partnership report, increased the number of partners participating in Athena SWAN from four to eight, established a senior partnership EDI committee (EDICT), and produced a collaborative cross-partner EDI policy.

Developments for 2021-25:

We have reframed our EDI outcomes under seven revised areas and set more flexible actions that allow us to adapt to available resource, capacity, and opportunity. The seven themed outcomes will be supported by 'outcome owner groups' of key staff championed by a senior outcome leader.

The seven themed outcomes are:

- Increasing cross partnership activities and collaboration
- Inclusive infrastructure: leadership, governance and management
- Increase stakeholder engagement and community partnership
- Better understanding of our staff and students: data and disclosure
- Inclusive processes: diversifying and developing our staff
- Inclusive communications: digital accessibility, Gaelic, BSL and culture

Section 2: Outcome for economic recovery and social renewal

6 Responsive institutions

Institutions are responsive to employer and industry needs and to current and future skills requirements.

The university and academic partners have always worked closely with industry, but this is increasingly with a strategic and regional focus. Strategic curriculum development is being shaped by regional opportunities through city/region and island deals and underpinned by regional skills assessments, Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland Enterprise, and Skills Strategic Board (ESSB) plans. The university is a key partner in the Island Deal, effectively the 'anchor' institution, recognising our obligation to support economic and social development in the Western and Northern Isles. The university is leading on a number of key Islands Deal projects across the region, in areas such as work based learning to support the transition to net zero and creativity and wellbeing, which aim to have a transformational impact for island learners, businesses and communities. Our Island Strategy was published in 2020 and further cements the commitment of the university to the island communities that we support throughout the region. With key outcomes relating to skills, research, languages and pan island activity, the strategy is being implemented within a partnership approach with key stakeholders to ensure that the activities are aligned with the needs of our island communities. Key activities include an island skills audit and subsequent gap analysis, to assess academic provision with respect to employer and community needs, and support for islands-based research.

A strategic curriculum review, one of the university's change programme workstreams, aims to make our curriculum more sustainable, helping to support our learners, staff and communities and ensure the sustainability of our partnership.

We will review all our further and higher education curriculum and establish new structures to ensure continuous curriculum review takes place in the future. Our curriculum will be agreed and resourced in a fully integrated and regional manner and will be managed and delivered at the appropriate level in the partnership. Responsiveness to employer needs and current and future skill requirements is also a driver for repositioning our curriculum and the associated planning and funding mechanisms.

6.1 Upskilling and reskilling the workforce

Regional FE approach

In response to the continuing impact of Covid-19 and in original anticipation of a substantial increase in the number of people in our region becoming unemployed, or at serious risk of unemployment, the university partnership has made efforts to make available a range of support and provision, including in upskilling and reskilling, but also with regard to digital skills, employability support and careers guidance, and aligning with other initiatives, funding streams and support, such as PACE, Young Persons Guarantee and National Transition Training Fund.

However, what has become increasingly clear to us, including through the impact of the extension to the furlough scheme through 2020 and 2021, is that the original premise behind SFC credit guidance – i.e., to spread our credits across as many people as possible because there might be a rise in demand – did not reflect what happened in our region. For that reason, we have focussed on how we use the available credits to best serve current students to ensure that they are ready to progress into the workplace or to higher level of education as quickly as possible.

Upskilling and reskilling continues to be a high priority and focus, and work continues to support our region's employers during this crucial time. Work has already taken place to ensure that the range of provision and support we are involved in delivering is effectively communicated across the region. This includes Flexible Workforce Training Fund (FWDF), CPD, upskilling and reskilling, Kickstart, Skills for Growth and the Apprenticeship Employer Grant.

Partnership working with other key stakeholders has also been crucial, with regular liaison with local authorities, chambers of commerce, HIE, SDS and DYW groups to ensure a joined-up approach to provision, support and funding streams.

Higher Education - examples of response to employer skill demand and the recovery challenge

- STEM and digital skills

  During 2021 the university's development office led engagement with the Deepwind cluster, delivering a webinar to 49 industry attendees on the university's energy-related activities, from early years through to research and innovation. The main call to action was for expressions of interest in working in partnership with us on the creation of a University of the Highlands and Islands Energy Industry Fund, aligned to our emerging energy, STEM and skills development strategies and plans. Detailed discussions and negotiations concluded in two MOUs and a gift agreement between the university and three main consortia groups for significant funding and partnership working, should consortia be successful in their Scotwind bids. Further curriculum-related opportunities were resulted from this industry engagement including guest lectures, internship opportunities, mentoring and course enquiries.

The Highlands and Islands STEM partnership, chaired by our dean of the faculty of health, science and engineering, is working on baseline activity reporting along with the ESP pilots to determine a methodology which will work across our large and complex area. The partnership held a data sharing workshop hosted by SDS in September 2021 starting a workstream to share intelligence on STEM aspirations and uptake, and sector skills needs across the Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire.

In response to demand from secondary and primary schools, the university has developed a portfolio of IT and cyber security CPD awards for primary and secondary teachers which now includes the CPD awards – additional teaching qualification in computing, computing studies for teachers and introduction to cyber security.

- Teacher education: the university recruited the first cohort on the BA (Hons) Moral and Philosophical Studies with Education in 2021-22 which aims to increase the secondary school teacher numbers in religious education.

  In response to demand from the sector, we also developed two TQFE (teaching qualification for further education) courses following national consultation and Scottish government approval. The two courses offered at SCQF level 9 and 11 give maximum accessibility to the qualification for those teaching at further education level.

- Health/allied health

  To support the health sector particular through the impacts and outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic, the university has further developed the range of CPD awards in consultation with the sector for delivery 2021-22. This includes a suite of integrative health awards developed using the 2020-21 SFC upskilling funding

- Use of SFC Upskilling Fund

  Following the successful approach to the upskilling funding in 2020-21, we will again focus on the key sectors identifies from our market intelligence and skills publications - digital skills; business, leadership and management skills; health sector support; and mental health and wellbeing awareness. We will enhance the package of upskilling courses this year with CPD options relating to net zero.

Examples of strategic developments in response to employer and industry needs:

- Life sciences innovation centre (Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal): the centre received planning permission for building on the Inverness campus in December 2020, along with the elective care facility being developed on the campus; these initiatives are forecast to create around 190 jobs. The innovation centre will help the university to increase research and provide greater support to the region's life science sector.

- MAATIC (**M**oray **A**erospace, **A**dvanced **T**echnology and **I**nnovation **C**ampus) is one of the flagship projects of the Moray growth deal. The campus will be a training, innovation and research development facility that will focus on aerospace, advanced technology and innovation, and will support aerospace and manufacturing developments in the area. This growth deal project aims to encourage more young people to consider a STEM related career. This is important because the nature of work is changing, in the future there will be less

traditional manufacturing and retail jobs and more high-level technology-based occupations. Making this change is important to ensure that the Moray economy is resilient in the future.

The project has completed RIBA stage 2 and is now engaged in RIBA stage 3 as the business case is considered by Scottish and UK governments. We are already developing research (low carbon flight) and developing teaching contracts with Boeing for apprenticeships. We are now co-locating with HIE who will be building incubator units to create jobs from the outputs of the MAATIC development.

- Aviation Academy for Scotland – AAS (Tay Cities Deal): Perth College UHI is leading the AAS project in partnership with Tayside Aviation and Air Service Training (Engineering) Ltd. The project aims to create the infrastructure to integrate local, regional aviation education and training to develop a skilled workforce of aircraft engineers, air traffic controllers and new pilots to address the global economic recovery of the aviation, renewable and clean energy markets. This project also has a STEM outreach element including working with the RICS to implement young STEM leaders in schools.

- Hospitality skills project (Tay Cites deal project): This project covers the hospitality and cultural tourism industries that have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. This project will contribute towards the economic recovery of the sector by addressing new business models to enable diversification across these industries, providing upskilling, reskilling and a strong pipeline of future workforce.

- Business enterprise hub (Moray growth deal project): the hub is intended to promote inclusive economic development in Moray (and the wider region), primarily by supporting scale-up of existing small and micro-businesses, as well as providing support to start-ups, university spinouts and inward investors.

- Opportunities Cromarty Firth consortium: this collaborative partnership aims to maximise exploitation of direct and indirect opportunities from floating offshore wind growth and corresponding green Hydrogen production. Plans include the development of the new PowerHouse research, development and education facility hosted by North Highland College UHI and supported by the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland and SDS. The PowerHouse will act as a specialist educational hub to provide field studies and modules for school children, students and workers interested in the renewable energy sectors, throughout the Highlands and beyond, to ensure people across the region have the skills and experience to take advantage of these nationally significant projects being constructed in the region.

- Advanced manufacturing challenge fund (AMCF): West Highland College UHI opened the new advanced manufacturing centre in Fort William in August 2021. The centre offers support to SMEs and microbusiness in:
  - Adoption of new technology and processes
  - Accessing a range of advanced manufacturing technologies in a ‘sand pit’ environment where they can become familiar with the equipment and test out new ideas
  - Encouraging innovation and growth
  - Small scale R & D and product development.

7 Climate emergency

Institutions take urgent action to help reduce or halt climate change, avoid irreversible damage, and support environmental sustainability measures.

The university's new strategic plan 'Daring to be Different' recognises the importance of this activity and has identified climate change as an enabling theme cutting across all activities and plans. Through the different sections of this outcome agreement various activities relating to climate change and sustainability have been highlighted. Work is continuing on a proposed university net zero hub to bring greater strategic alignment and integration across our education, research, enterprise and engagement activities to deliver higher impact net zero carbon outcomes.

As the UK hosted the 26th Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021, the university had the opportunity to highlight our work around the climate emergency as the global focus turned again to these issues. Our academics are contributing their expertise across the sciences and arts and humanities, advising on oceans, uplands, peatlands and wetlands. We are making contribution on meteorology, climate science, archaeology, coastal erosion, human experiences of landscape and the future of travel at national and international events including presentations within the 'Green Zone' at COP26.

Contribution at COP26:

- Mark Shiner, a curriculum leader for maritime studies at Orkney College UHI, was invited to present his work in creating and delivering the world's first government recognised training course for crews of hydrogen powered vessels. The course, which was developed by the college's maritime studies department, was completed by five crew members from Orkney Ferries earlier this year. Green hydrogen, which is produced using renewable electricity, can be used as a fuel for heat, power and transport.
- Professor Jane Downes, director of the university's Archaeology Institute and an expert on climate change and heritage, presented on the role of archaeology and heritage in addressing climate change for the Dalrymple lecture series. Delivered over four evenings and live streamed online, the lectures considered how island archaeology - from Rapa Nui in the Pacific to Orkney - contributes to our understanding of sustainability and living with climate change now and in the future.
- Professor Roxane Andersen, a senior research fellow at North Highland College UHI's Environmental Research Institute in Thurso, delivered two lectures as part of the United Nations Environment Programme's Peatland Pavilion events. Peatlands play an important role in soaking up harmful carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, helping to regulate climate change.

Events around the university partnership highlighting the climate change emergency:

- Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs, a world-renowned economics professor, bestselling author and global leader in sustainable development, delivered the University of the Highlands and Islands 2021 annual lecture in September. Ahead of the COP26, Professor Sachs' lecture explored the role universities can play in tackling the climate crisis and promoting sustainable development.

- Staff and students from the university's environment and sustainability group organised a 'green week' in early November. The event included online sessions on environmental topics, a creative writing competition, an active travel challenge as well as video and blog content from students.
- A low carbon transport event brought together many agencies at the Inverness Campus in October. Part of the PeddleSmart green emission tour, the event allowed local organisations to showcase low carbon transport to students, local businesses and the general public.
- Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Centre for Mountain Studies at Perth College UHI, the 'Challenging upland future' forum was held in Perth in October. The event addressed upland management and land use challenges.
- Dr Neil Fraser from the Scottish Association for Marine Science contributed to the 'Scotland's Climate Change Science and COP26' event organised jointly by the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Royal Meteorological Society. Dr Fraser spoke about oceans and climate change.
- Arts and humanities staff and students also contributed to the environmental theme. Contemporary art practice students at Inverness College UHI displayed their responses to COP26 on campus, this exhibition will be included in a Human Rights Day in December. Mandy Haggith, a lecturer in creative writing and literature at Inverness College UHI will have her work published in 'Gorwelion Shared Horizons', an anthology of writings for COP26 from Welsh, Scottish and Indian writers. There are also contributions in the form of a poetry event, an exploration of folklore's contribution to sustainability and a play linked to COP26, directed by one of our drama graduates.
- It is vital that young people and our wider communities are informed and engaged in these issues. Our experts are working with films and short stories to demystify COP26. Many of our students have been linking their studies to climate change. Supported learning students in Gairloch have been undertaking weekly climate challenges and community link students in Inverness are highlighting the nature that lives alongside them on campus as part of a biodiversity project.

Research and the climate change emergency:

The university is contributing to combatting the climate emergency through a strong research portfolio routed in our geography, examples include:

- Peatlands and carbon storage
- Effects of climate change on ocean ecology
- Impact of wild seaweed stocks on carbon sequestration
- Net zero aviation region - developing technologies for low or zero emission flights
- Hydrogen energy solution for remote and rural communities

Curriculum and climate change emergency:

One of the objectives of the university's net zero hub is to concentrate resources to help our communities, building on our existing strengths and fulfil our pledge to not only raise the awareness but embed the principles of carbon management and the immediacy of the climate emergency in all levels and courses of our curriculum. We already offer a number of modules at different levels in our curriculum relating to climate change and net zero.

At programme level, the university has a suite of fully online courses designed to provide graduates to support the renewable energy sector and specifically promoting community sustainability:

MSc Net Zero Communities
MSc Sustainable Energy Solutions
MSc Sustainable Rural Development
MSc Sustainable Mountain Development
BA (Hons) Sustainable Development

In August 2020, the university partnership published our first ever regional carbon management and sustainability plan. The plan, which covers the period from 2020 to 2023, sets out the university's commitments towards the environment. The first workstream, which has been completed, was the development of a regional carbon footprint and this will be refreshed with new data at the end of November to cover emissions for academic year 2020-21.

Inverness College UHI and Shetland UHI have joined the Race to Zero global campaign against climate change and reduction of greenhouse emissions. Our college academic partners are also part of the Scottish Colleges' statement of commitment on the climate change emergency to deliver ten key actions with the aim of speeding up efforts to achieve net zero.

8 Knowledge exchange and innovation

Institutions focus and prioritise their knowledge exchange and innovation activity on Scotland's economic and social recovery.

Our knowledge exchange sector groups remain focused on regionally important sectors – aquaculture, energy, rural health, active health and well-being, tourism, creative economy, and water quality innovation. We will have an increased emphasis on supporting local, regional and national recovery from the impacts of the pandemic as well as adjusting to the anticipated impact from reduced access to European structural funds post Brexit.

The university will continue to actively engage with each of the national University Innovation Fund (UIF) clusters. Much of the national collaborative activity has been on hold during the pandemic but activities are expected to resume during AY 2021-22.

A new 'modern universities' group was convened during the summer of 2021, made up of the post-92 Scottish universities and chaired by the UIF Collaboration Manager.

Two areas have been highlighted by this group to further explore during AY 2021-22. The first is the development of a shared IP commercialisation support resource. The other is to expand the University of the West of Scotland economic support hub initiative to all the modern universities to extend the support for SME across Scotland in their economic recovery.

Within our region, the university will continue during 2021-22, to maintain and expand our operational knowledge exchange network across the UHI partnership. The UIF outcome grant will focus on aquaculture, energy and health (active health and well-being and the Scottish Rural Health Network), as well as the UHI entrepreneurship development project. Additional support through core platform grant funded resource has also been employed to develop KE activities in the creative economy, tourism, and water quality innovation. A new digital technologies hub has also been established and funding is being used to develop research and KE projects across the partnership.

Innovation vouchers:

The university aims to maintain the challenging target of completing ten Innovation Vouchers during 2021-22.

The 2021-22 UHI UIF summary and detailed plans are provided as appendices to this document.

Section 3: Outcomes for research

Research excellence Research sustainability: institutions ensure they protect their world-leading research programmes against the impact of COVID-19.

9 Research excellence and sustainability

Our research and innovation activities and profile are growing. We aim to produce world-class research outputs that benefit our region's economy and communities, as well as having international connections and significance. We also aim to strengthen active collaboration with other institutions to enhance sustainability. The following diagram shows our current world-wide reach in research projects and partnerships with academia and beyond.

Figure 6. International Research: selected indicators of our global reach and impact

(Diagram produced by Stuart Knight)

It is anticipated that the impacts of COVID-19 and Brexit will be felt for some time to come. The university aims to adopt a strategic approach to dealing the medium-term impacts of the pandemic while responding effectively to the priority concerns around Brexit and the climate change emergency. Research and knowledge exchange will be critical for economic recovery and social renewal within a place-based approach for the Highlands and Islands as well as nationally and supporting other regions of the world e.g., using our island networks.

In 2020-21, the research uplift funding allocated to the university was used to mitigate impacts of the pandemic and to support research in response to it. The Challenge Fund projects were particularly useful in identifying issues and opportunities and the funding has allowed us to re-evaluate our research strategy and develop new interdisciplinary areas of research and new collaborative networks.

The following selected case studies reflect the great diversity and geographical reach of the universities research projects particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

AISEAG: Culturally relevant pedagogy for post-Covid educational recovery in Gaelic medium education

Led by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI

AISEAG is a collaborative project bringing together the academic expertise of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI and the cultural heritage initiative Tobar an Dualchais|Kist o Riches (TaD|KoR) to understand and support the role of cultural education in post-lockdown educational recovery in Gaelic Medium educational settings. It will build on recent academic exploration of 'culturally relevant pedagogy', creating and analysing the effects of location-specific cultural and heritage curriculum provision for schools in Gaelic speaking communities, strengthening intergenerational exchange and giving both young people and the wider community a deepened understanding of the value of their own cultural inheritance, contributing to community resilience, and building capacity for future educational and cultural initiatives.

Through innovative resource development, dedicated training provision, and pilot project work, AISEAG aims to establish a model of best practice in delivering cultural and heritage education in Gaelic educational settings, and to make a significant contribution to educational recovery in the post-lockdown academic session.

Biomarkers for predicting COVID-19 severity

Led by Centre for Health Sciences UHI

One of the enduring mysteries surrounding COVID-19 is the diversity of impacts on infected individuals, from no symptoms at all, mild flu-like symptoms, severe respiratory dysfunction, thrombosis, through to multi-organ failure and death. Researchers at the University of Edinburgh have an invaluable set of plasma samples taken from patients with a wide range of symptom severity and have transferred a number of these samples to the University of the Highlands and Islands for us to determine levels of lipid inflammatory mediators that might underpin many of the symptoms associated with COVID-19. The samples are undergoing mass spectrometry analysis to simultaneously measure a wide range of these inflammatory mediators to subsequently compare to symptoms in each individual patient. The project is one of many being conducted using these invaluable samples and we anticipate rapid publication of a high impact output, should interesting results accrue.

SFC/Covid project: 'Scale-calibration of underwater 3D models ('3DCalib')'

Led by SAMS UHI

The marine growth which occurs on man-made structures placed in the sea alters their hydrodynamics and mass distribution. SAMS have prototyped two state-of-the-art methods to improve the accuracy of marine growth identification and volume estimation.

In a related project SAMS are developing machines (artificial intelligence, AI) to identify marine growth. A UHI collaboration with the University of Svalbard, has successfully built/3D-printed and prototyped a hyperspectral imager (saving £80k) and are using this to determine the 'spectral fingerprint' of key marine growth taxa that we have collected.

As we come out of Covid-19- restrictions, these innovations will enhance SAMS ability to commercialise ground-breaking, innovative methods for assessing marine growth while delivering substantial cost-savings to industry.

Exploring patients' help-seeking decisions in remote and rural Scotland during the COVID Pandemic

Led by Lews Castle College UHI

This study seeks to explore the lived experiences of health service users who seek help for non-COVID-19 related health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we are seeking to understand how health service users in remote and rural Scotland perceive how their help-seeking at self-referral services might have changed during the pandemic.

The challenges of seeking help in remote and rural areas has long been recognised. Whether or how the COVID-19 Pandemic has exacerbated these challenges is not understood in a remote and rural context. By seeking to understand the lived experiences of health service users seeking help in remote and rural Scotland, we aim to better understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on this already challenging help-seeking environment.

Note: Narrative submission date, 30 November 2021.

SFC MEASURE	MEASURE DESCRIPTION	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21*	2021-22 Target	Target comment
MEASURE A	Credits delivered (all)	114,264	116,642	116,777	114,915	114,212	109,571	95,698	**118,883**	Based on original SFC 119,123 FE credit target minus 240 credits for SMO FA delivery subsequently removed. **Note: revised forecast of 107,000 as per SFC communication 14.10.21**
MEASURE B	Volume of credits delivered to learners in most deprived 10% postcode areas (SIMD10)	4,026	3,758	3,851	4,134	4,230	3,944	3,944	**3,959**	Based on achieving same % baseline as 2018-19 (3.7%) against revised 21-22 credit forecast of 107,000
	Proportion of credits delivered to learners in most deprived 10% postcode areas (SIMD10)	3.5%	3.2%	3.3%	3.6%	3.7%	3.6%	4.1%	**3.7%**	Achieving 2018-19 baseline
MEASURE C	Volume of credits delivered to care-experienced learners	770	920	2,997	2,498	3,669	4,848	4,950	**3,424**	Based on achieving same % baseline as 2018-19 (3.2%) against revised 21-22 credit forecast of 107,000
	Proportion of credits delivered to care-experienced learners	0.7%	0.8%	2.6%	2.2%	3.2%	4.4%	5.2%	**3.2%**	Achieving 2018-19 baseline
MEASURE D	Number of senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	473	402	940	983	1,050	1,226	1,219	**1,050**	Achieving 2018-19 baseline
MEASURE E	Proportion of enrolled students successfully achieving a reconised qualification: Full-time	67.6%	69.4%	67.5%	70.3%	68.6%	69.3%	63.7%	**68.6%**	Achieving 2018-29 baseline
	Proportion of enrolled students successfully achieving a reconised qualification: Part-time	82.1%	82.4%	84.7%	84.9%	82.1%	84.3%	79.5%	**82.1%**	Achieving 2018-29 baseline
MEASURE F	HNC/HND measure - not applicable for UHI FE									
MEASURE G	Number of full-time college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	2,735	2,663	2,536	2,486	2,324	2,101	n/a	**1,960**	Based on achieving same % baseline as 2018-19 (93.8%), but against an anticipated reduced total number of FT enrolments for 2021-22 .
	Proportion of full-time college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	94.4%	94.0%	94.8%	95.1%	93.8%	91.8%	n/a	**93.8%**	Achieving 2018-19 baseline
MEASURE H	SSES Survey - The percentage of students Overall, satisfied with their college experience		94.4%	94.4%	N/A	94.3%	N/A	89.6	**92.0%**	Moving back towards 2018-29 baseline, but still with some negative COVID impact.

Sources:
Measure A-H, 2014-15 to 2019-20 taken from SFC 'College Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data' (except Measure G & H 2019-20)
Measure G 2019-20 taken from SFC College Leaver Destinations 2019-20 CLD Dashboard tool

* 2020-21 data added retrospectively (June 2022) at request of SFC. 2021-22 targets remain as set at time of original ROA submission.

University Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: National measure historical data, targets and comments for 2021-22.

	Measure	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21*	2021-22	Target - comments
A	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Entrants	3,325	3,405	3,546	3,608	3,190	3,015	3,235	2,900	Note: coding changes in 2018-19 mean that data before this point is not comparable.
B	Total number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes	0	116	91	112	135	136	142		
	Number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing	0	85	60	61	93	109	91		
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing		73.3%	65.9%	54.5%	68.9%	80.1%	64.1%	75.0%	Revised in light of 2020-21 data becoming available, which shows an impact from COVID related issues on HNC/D students articulating with advanced standing, 2021-22 target set on the basis of expanded number of articulation agreements.
C	COWA measure: Total number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants	520	578	590	703	738	667	709		
	COWA measure: Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas	57	46	43	58	74	70	61		
	COWA measure: Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas	11.0%	8.0%	7.3%	8.3%	10.0%	10.5%	8.6%	10.0%	Target maintains pre-pandemic levels.
D	Number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	32	33	51	50	47	41	60		Target maintain the position within an uncertain recruitment period on the basis of the increased focus and activities with this group.
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	1.0%	1.0%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%	1.4%	1.9%	1.9%	
E	Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants	2,239	2,333	2,270	2,230	2,375	2,345	2,221		
	Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants returning to study in year 2	1,798	1,989	1,925	1,862	1,975	1,994	1,823		
	Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants returning to study in year 2	80.3%	85.3%	84.8%	83.5%	83.2%	85.0%	82.1%	83.0%	Target reflects impacts of the pandemic.
F	The difference (+/-) from the individual institution benchmark figure for students satisfied with the overall quality of their course of study in the National Student Survey	-4	-3	-4	2	0.7	-0.4	2.4	2.0	The institutional benchmark changes each year on the basis of previous performance, target continues to be maintaining 2% above the benchmark.
G1	The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey				1,446	1,435				
	The proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination				1,398	1,371				
	The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination				96.7%	95.5%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	Target to maintain the latest known data due to the continued uncertainty caused by covid.
G2	The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment				240	294				
	The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment in professional employment				122	151				Revised in light of data revision following changes to the measure calculation for previous years by SFC.
	The proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment in professional employment				50.8%	51.4%	51.5%	51.5%	51.5%	Target to maintain at latest known data due to continued uncertainty caused by covid.
H	Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Qualifiers	2,445	2,980	3,147	2,867	3,019	2,551	2,655	2,500	This number is a more complex measure for UHI given our multiple entry, exit and progression pathways. 2021-22 will also be impacted by COVID.

From SFC - please note that 2018-19 and 2019-20 figures for measure G2, 2019-20 figures for measures F and H and all 2020-21 figures are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and may not be directly comparable to other years
All entrants measures will be affected for 2020-21 and 2021-22 by COVID and impacts on the other measures will continue into 2020-21 and 2021-22.

* 2020-21 data added retrospectively (June 2022) at request of SFC. 2021-22 measures B and G2 revised in light of updated analysis from the national articulation database and methodological changes to the graduate outcomes calculation.

UHI UIF plans 2021-22

During academic year 2021-22, the University of the Highlands and Islands plans to continue to use UIF in our ongoing sector-focused approach but with an increased emphasis on activities aimed at supporting local, regional and national recovery from the impacts of COVID-19, as well as adjusting to the anticipated significant impact the university is likely to experience for the reduced access to European structural funds post Brexit.

Engagement nationally

The university plans to continue to actively engage with each of the Universities Scotland Research and Commercialisation Directors' Group's (RCDG) national UIF clusters, confirming our willingness to participate fully in the monitoring framework.

However, because of the pandemic, much of the national collaborative activity through the RCDG clusters had been put on hold. Activities are expected to resume during AY 2021-22 and we aim to continue to play an active role in each of the cluster groups, with a special focus on the innovation cluster including:

- Steering the national innovation cluster group in partnership with Aberdeen University and University of the West of Scotland
- Overseeing the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) group's collaborative activities aimed at maximising Scottish universities involvement in UKRI "grand challenge" consortia, bids and awards
- Inputting into the development of a collaborative national training course(s) to enhance researchers' skills for business engagement
- Participating in the key SME demand stimulation strand activities including:
    - Mapping the SME innovation journey
    - And SME demand stimulating events.

A new 'modern universities' group that been formally convened during the summer of 2021, made up of the post-92 Scottish universities and chaired by the UIF Collaboration Manager. Two areas have been highlighted by this group to further explore during AY 2021-22.The first is the development of a shared IP commercialisation support resource/group that would allow members of this new group to access and share expertise/advice from other modern university group members with the relevant expertise and resource.

The other initiative identified was to expand the UWS SME Economic Support Hub initiative to all of the modern universities and for the modern universities to champion this to all Scottish universities going forward. It is planned that this will support SME across Scotland to develop and grow during the post pandemic 'recovery years'.

Engagement at local level

For each of the SFC UIF priority outcomes, the university will continue during 2021-22, to maintain and expand its operational knowledge exchange network across the UHI partnership and our region. This operates through nodes into the different sectoral grouping. Each theme has a named 'champion', who guides the activities, including interaction with other HEIs, local companies and organisations, local authorities, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and the Scottish and UK Innovation/KE landscape, e.g., Interface, the KTP programme, the Scottish Innovation Centres, Converge Challenge, Innovate UK, UKRI, etc.

For this academic year, as with previous years, some initiatives will be funded primarily from the Outcome Grant element of UIF, these are focused on key sectors for our region. These are aquaculture, energy, and health (Active Health and Well-being and the Scottish Rural Health Network).

The UHI entrepreneurship development project will also be funded from the Outcome Grant.

Additional support through core Platform Grant funded resource has also been employed to develop KE activities in the creative economy, tourism, and water quality innovation.

Each of the UIF funded projects have their own internal targets and key performance indicators aligned with SFC's seven desired priority outcomes. These aim to provide sectoral hubs with business development and coordination resources as well as funding for business engagement activities such as events, promotions, meetings, and a challenge/seed corn fund.

Each group has produced individual plans, targets and budgets for 2021-22 (see appendix 2).

In-year progress against targets will be reviewed (March/April 2022) by the university's UIF Steering Group (a sub-group of the UHI Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee).

In addition, quarterly reports from the Sectoral KE groups are submitted to the UHI Research and KE Committee (RKEC) and the UHI Research Cluster groups. This includes details on engagement with companies/organisations, events, training, funding opportunities/ideas/proposals/ and awards.

UIF Priority Outcomes

We are committed to contribute to the implementation of each of the national UIF priority outcomes (***O 1-7***), while at the same time acknowledging that institutions need to contribute in a way that makes best use of resource, meaning that each institution may be involved in a different combination of work. The University of the Highlands and Islands has therefore prioritised SFC UIF *outcomes 1-4*.

Demand stimulation (***O 1***)

Making more businesses across the Highlands and Islands aware of the expertise, support and opportunities available through working collaboratively with the university to e.g., develop new innovations, products, and processes in collaboration with local, national and international businesses.

An example is the university's energy KE group's plans for 2021-22, to develop a Net Zero Carbon Hub within the university. The Hub will promote and provide a range of activities and services to meet the region's businesses net zero carbon needs, building capacity in institutional structures across different sectors and developing a placed-based approach to the climate emergency. The aim is to place the university in a prominent high-profile position within the net zero agenda.

Simplify business access (***O 2***)

Ensuring greater engagement with business is supported through increased outreach activity by KE/Innovation staff working closely with sectoral skills assessment staff to promote easier access, to university research expertise.

An example of this is the UHI Creative Economy KE group, who are planning to pilot a new 'Adopt a Business' programme across the Highlands and Islands for the Creative Economy sector during 2021-22. This follows on from the successful adopt a business scheme for the tourism sector, that was led by Interface and which the UHI's Tourism KE sector group were actively engaged.

Simplified access will be achieved through Interface connecting businesses directly to relevant university experts who have agreed to aid and advise, initially at no cost to the business, in order to help local businesses recover from the impact of lockdown caused by COVID-19 through diversifying their businesses and adapting to the new post -COVID-19 economic environment.

Simplification/Greater Innovation (***O 3***)

Plans for greater innovation during 2021-22, include the development of a new IP commercialisation support service and framework. This will be in combination with a series of events workshops and IP audits aimed at changing the university culture around intellectual property and research commercialisation through greater awareness raising of the opportunities.

We are also planning to employ UIF funding to enhance our interaction with our innovation partners in the region that will hopefully result in greater innovation.

An example is the Cromarty Firth Powerhouse partnership project. The Cromarty Firth PowerHouse is a new applied research centre, dedicated to developing Floating Offshore Wind (FoW) and green hydrogen technologies (https://opportunitycromartyfirth.co.uk/). This collaboration includes other Scottish universities as well as the enterprise agencies, Scottish Government, business agencies (e.g., DeepWind (https://www.offshorewindscotland.org.uk/ deepwind-cluster/), Interface and training bodies such Skills Development Scotland.

The plan is to optimise strategic use of sectoral knowledge and resources to promote greater innovation in the green economy by identifying industry priorities for research and innovation needed for Floating Offshore Wind and hydrogen development and deployment. The project will also identify industry priority needs and gaps in training and skills development options at all levels including the potential for CPD working collaboratively with Powerhouse academic partners.

Entrepreneurialism (***O 4***)

We plan to continue to play an active role in several of the strands being developed by the RCDG entrepreneurship cluster, now called the Enterprise Support Group. At the local level the UHI-wide Scottish Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Educators programme (SEE), will continue in 2021-22, adapted for online access as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This programme will continue to train our academics to become entrepreneurial role models, equipped to drive change in their institutions and surrounding communities. The training course raises awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities as well as the potential for additional outputs from research.

In addition, our 'Enterprising Researcher' training course will also continue but has also been adapted to online delivery, post COVID. This course will be delivered in collaboration with external innovation partners including Interface, the North of Scotland KTP Centre and Converge Challenge.

The university leads the Highlands and Islands Business Ideas competition, which is open to all staff and students as well as Highlands and Islands business and local community groups and individuals. Competition finalists (staff and students) are encouraged to forward their proposals to the national Converge Challenge competition.

In addition, 'Catalyst' is a 2021-22 initiative providing a suite of six modules aimed at start-ups and SMEs who wish to develop themselves and their business. Through Catalyst we plan to support entrepreneurship and greater innovation in the economy post COVID and post Brexit, to improve and increase the universities engagement with industry and strengthen our business relationships. The Catalyst training and skills development will focus on key aspects for Highlands and Islands businesses

during the 'recovery years' (i.e., you and your business, innovation-led thinking, opportunities, business models, building networks, effective leadership and action planning).

During 2021-22, the university also plans to collaborate with the regional development agency and Converge Challenge through an innovation steering group. The group will oversee the develop of additional workshops and events aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship and enterprise among the university's post-graduates and early career researchers as well as more senior staff. The aim is to influence the research culture to encourage more staff and student to come forward with innovative ideas that would feed the pipeline of applicants to the UHI Business Idea competition as well as Converge Challenge, RSE Enterprise Fellowships and other innovation-focused support programmes.

Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF)

The university will continue to fund through UIF our own ISCF post and an associated internal challenge fund (to encourage and support academics to take part in 'grand challenge' consortium building and bid development). This post is likely to be made a core resource during 2021-22.

The expected impacts include growing commercial outputs including increasing income from industry and the UKRI and other funders both through the initial funding awards as well as through potential, on-going, income from the actual commercialisation of the research outputs. We would plan during 2021-22, to increase the number of applications submitted and hopefully awarded.

Innovation Vouchers (IVs)

The university aims to maintain the challenging target of completing ten Innovation Vouchers during 2021-22.

As last year, we plan to use some of the UIF outcome grant to supplement newly won IVs with an additional £2,500 per voucher (for the first ten Vouchers awarded) to cover pre-grant award activities such as business engagement, project planning and application writing. This approach appears to be working as a means of incentivising researchers to submit more project proposals.

Funding, metrics, equality and diversity

The University of the Highlands and Islands (and our academic partners) intend to match the KE spend of the platform grant.

Through all the activities described above we intend to secure a sustained KE income exceeding £10 million by 2021-22. This is the same target as last year but is considered even more challenging due to the anticipated ongoing impact of COVID-19 and Brexit. We are expecting Brexit to have a disproportionally high impact on grant income due to our past successes in winning EU structural funding.

The University of the Highlands and Islands is committed to equality of opportunity and non-discrimination in all aspects of our work and study. We accept our obligations to fulfil the statutory requirements relating to equality and diversity and will take steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and foster good relations between people from different groups, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education

Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba
A' brosnachadh foghlam adhartach agus àrd ìre

Outcome Agreement between the University of the Highlands and Islands and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2021-22

On behalf of the University of the Highlands and Islands:

Signed: Todd Walker

Print name: Todd Walker

Position: Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Date: 2 June 2022

Signed:

Print name: Alastair MacColl

Position: Chair of Court

Date: 9 June 2022

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On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:

Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 28 July 2022