



University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd  
agus nan Eilean

Highlands and Islands  
Regional Tertiary  
Interim Outcome Agreement  
2020-21



## HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS REGIONAL TERTIARY INTERIM OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2020-21

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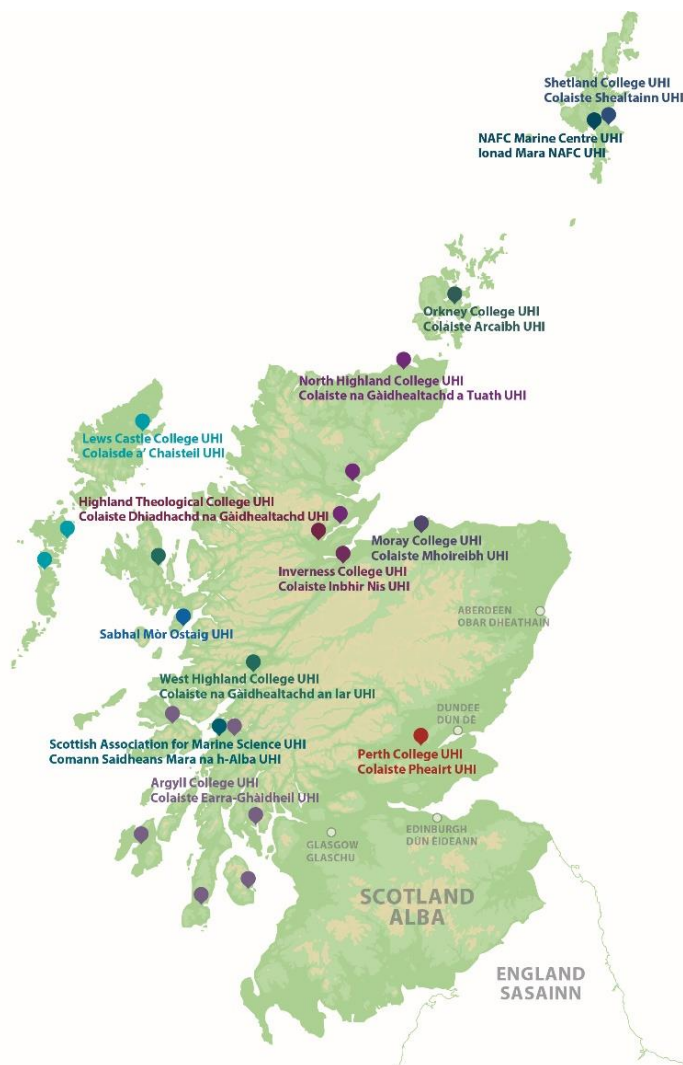
## Introduction

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. *Our mission is to have a transformational impact on the prospects of our region, its economy, its people and its communities.* 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 undergraduate and postgraduate 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. Some are relatively large colleges in the urban centres of the region such as Perth, Elgin and Inverness; others are smaller institutions, including those in island communities and specialist institutions. Most also provide access to further education, while some have a primary focus on research. All, however, have a student-centred culture and individual approach to student learning.

*We are locally based, regional in structure and aim for national and international reach.*

Our regional, tertiary partnership:



The university partnership celebrated its tenth birthday on 1 February 2021 and has had many notable successes during this time. 2020-21 has however been a challenging year with significant impacts across the partnership on staff and students, including issues of digital poverty, support for good mental health, consistent and timely communications, and curriculum delivery adjustments in much of our tertiary provision. These challenges started during the first COVID-19 lockdown in the second semester of 2019-20 and, with uncertainty over any easing of restrictions, will continue throughout 2020-21. Our priority throughout this time has been to ensure the safety of our students and staff. A key focus for the partnership has been to support our students to complete and achieve their qualifications, while having the best educational experience possible in difficult circumstances.

The financial impacts on our university partnership have been and will continue to be significant. Across the partnership income has been reduced from student residences, and from commercial, research and education/training contracts among other areas. A significant issue for our FE college partners is the scale of potential disruption to further education courses and additional costs in either extending provision beyond the end of the academic year or employing additional staff to increase activity during semester two. While additional funding to cover the costs of extending provision is clearly part of the solution, there are other significant challenges to completing delivery. Additional funding and flexibility to ensure that the backlog of deferred students can be accommodated in the next academic year when restrictions might be less problematic will also be necessary. The university is supporting work being done by Colleges Scotland to quantify the scale of potential deferred students across Scotland and make a case for additional support to ensure that dealing with deferred students does not impact on the ability to recruit and teach new and progressing students on 2021-22.

The University of the Highlands and Islands will play a pivotal role in the economic recovery and growth of the region following the impacts of the pandemic. We now have the largest student population in Scotland with nearly 40,000 on further and higher education courses each year and have been pioneers in connecting communities through blended learning for over 20 years. Our extensive range of research, 69% classified as 'world leading', and collaborative innovation projects with international connections, strengthen the region's position. This was highlighted in an economic impact assessment undertaken by BiGGAR Economics in 2020, which concluded:

- The university partnership contributes £560 million to the Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire economies every year and supports 6,200 jobs - for every £1 spent £4 is put back into the economies of the communities we serve.
- Through the university, the region has greater control of its own economic and social future which will be especially important in helping its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Benefits of the university extend beyond the significant gross value added and jobs measures to supporting sustainable and inclusive economic wellbeing, heritage and culture, and social development.

As part of the tenth anniversary celebrations, the university is hosting a series of seminars focusing on our role as an economic driver for the region and how we can help lead the region to recovery post-COVID and towards the next decade. The seminars will cover:

- Leading communities and economy
- Leading the blue economy
- Leading rural health
- Leading learning
- Leading health research and innovation.

## 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.

The tertiary nature of our provision and the student-focused approach of each academic partner give us a unique opportunity to offer access to education for all, regardless of background and previous educational attainment. 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.

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.

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.

#### 1.1 Impact and response to COVID-19 on access and transitions in 2020-21

Following the initial lockdown in March, the potential impact on access and progression in 2020-21 was evident as existing students adjusted to online study and applicants had to contend with uncertainty over school exams and a potentially different study experience. Applications for both FE and HE programmes were affected and by April/May were well down on the previous year. A partnership-wide recruitment and engagement plan was quickly developed using new online platforms to engage with potential students where traditional face-to-face interactions were not possible. This was particularly important once the decision was made to suspend exams and use teacher assessed grades and, specifically for higher education, through the Clearing period. This activity was successful in reversing the earlier application decline.

During the recruitment campaign, social media sites were used extensively to promote the support available to applicants and students, both within the university and externally, in particular to ensure priority groups were aware of the dedicated web resources relevant to them. This included care-experienced and estranged students and student carers.

Student and applicant communication has been particularly challenging as guidance and restrictions levels changed, most recently with different protection levels across our region. Communication of the changes to course delivery and travel advice were key priorities and our efforts have received some positive feedback from students. Added to this has been the support required for EU students and applicants as impacts of Brexit became clear during the academic year.

## 1.2 Continued commitment to key policies, priority groups and targets

### *HE and FE student targets*

In higher education, the university achieved substantial growth in non-controlled funded numbers from 2012-13 to 2017-18, plus the successful introduction of nursing and midwifery and teacher education programmes and increases in our taught postgraduate recruitment. However, over the last few years, we had been experiencing a challenging recruitment environment linked to demographic shifts and consequential increased competition across the sector. As highlighted, the initial COVID lockdown affected recruitment mid-way through the 2020-21 cycle. However, the partnership-wide recruitment and engagement plan produced positive results and current forecasts suggest we will exceed the funded FTE target of 5683 by around 400, a significant increase compared to 2019-20.

Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants: it should be noted that some unstructured part-time provision was re-coded in 2018-19 to reflect the course aims more accurately. This resulted in a reduction in the number of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants as defined by SFC for the outcome agreement national measures. Consequently, some targets were adjusted to reflect the impact of this change based on 2018-19 actual data. Analysis of 2019-20 data showed that entrant numbers had fallen. However, it is expected that this year will return to close to the 2018-19 baseline.

In further education, prior to 2019-20 when the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on recruitment, retention and completion of FE students, the university partnership has routinely met our student activity targets, despite facing some significant geographical challenges and a rapidly changing profile of recruitment.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily halted this positive trend and is expected to continue to impact FE activity in 2020-21 and the following academic year, we remain committed to contributing effectively towards key policies, priority groups and targets for our region during this challenging time. This commitment also recognises some of the specific priorities for our region, including 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 rural and remote region.

For the 2020-21, a partnership priority is supporting the significant number of COVID-19 impacted deferred students from the previous academic year to return to complete their qualifications, alongside trying to ensure the delivery of programmes to our 2020-21 cohorts. The partnership has reacted quickly and positively to the challenges, continually adapting delivery and assessment models as the COVID-19 situation has evolved, to minimise disruption to student progression and outcomes. Despite this, significant challenges remain for those programmes with mandatory work-based and practical elements such as care, construction, engineering, hair and beauty, and hospitality. While mitigating measures continue to be developed and implemented across all these programmes, challenges remain from the increasing backlog of practical delivery, ever reducing and uncertain timescales for a potential return to workplaces and optimum capacity workshops and college facilities. This is combined with an increasing level of student fatigue and potential disengagement, all of which means a level of non-completion and significant deferral into the 2021-22 academic year is expected.

### *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, making us a highly accessible institution to all groups of prospective students, irrespective of background or life circumstances. When considering applications, we look beyond grades achieved to find the right option for each individual.

Additionally, contextual data is used to assess an applicant's prior attainment and potential to succeed in higher education. This applies to applicants who do not meet the standard entry requirements for the course, or where there is competition for places. We aim to take a longitudinal approach to tracking the impact on recruitment and retention of the contextualised admissions processes to allow for sufficient data and trends to emerge. Care-experience is one of our contextualised indicators. However, where applicants disclose and they meet all the minimum requirements of the programme, we commit to offering a place.

Our published entry requirements are already set at the minimum required to successfully complete the programme and do not present an unnecessarily high (selective) barrier for applicants. Therefore, publishing a set of lower 'access thresholds' for widening access applicants would not be appropriate. It is important that we can make our distinctive position clear as promotion of access thresholds in Scottish universities grows and sector reporting mechanisms are explored.

We also accept a wide range of equivalent qualifications to increase access to our provision. We recognise that there is a variety of routes through which qualifications can be gained and ways in which readiness for higher education may be demonstrated. We make extensive use of recognition of prior learning (both formal credit bearing and experiential) in our admissions processes. We have committed to ensuring that access thresholds are considered during any proposal to increase requirements for a programme, or for new programmes that may have a more selective position in terms of applicant pool and therefore where standard entry requirement may be set at a higher level, where this is in our control.

### *Articulation*

Students achieving a higher national qualification from any Scottish FE college may apply to the University of the Highlands and Islands for entry to a relevant degree programme with advanced standing. The university is very experienced in this type of transfer as much of this activity comes from progression of our own HNC/D students through seamless routes through our top-up degrees and relevant credit transfer into other degrees. Our students also enjoy a well-developed support and learning infrastructure along this journey, reducing some of the institutional barriers experienced by learners moving from college to university.

Significant progress has been made in increasing the visibility of the full extent of articulation at the university through the National Articulation Database. This has been possible due to the considerable efforts of Dr Scott Montgomery, SFC senior policy/analysis officer, and our student records team. The most recent articulation report included a wider articulation measure incorporating our internal HN to degree progression:

- The main articulation measure: sector 55% coming from college with the HNC/D to degree at university with advanced standing, University of the Highlands and Islands 69%
- Wider articulation measure: sector 57%, University of the Highlands and Islands 79% (with 60% of our degree entrants coming from a college/HN route).

The university remains committed to investigating additional articulation arrangement with Scotland's colleges.

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

As has been reported many times previously, 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. These quintiles account for only 2.4% and 5% respectively of the working age population. We already perform well in recruiting from these areas compared to the population living there and our targets have been set accordingly. 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.

**SIMD20 students (HE):** In 2018-19 we exceeded the target of 8.2% for full-time first-degree entrants from SIMD20, achieving the target set for 2020-21 of 10%. This level was maintained in 2019-20 (10.3%). We are cautious however about increasing this target as the numbers are small and quite limited changes can see significant fluctuations in percentages. While it is likely that the pandemic has affected the behaviour of applicants generally, and of specific groups, we would anticipate maintaining the 2018-19 position for this year.

**SIMD10 (FE):** targets have previously been set to maintain the proportion of credits delivered to students from SIMD10 areas. The level of activity delivered is 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.

#### *Care-experienced*

The university [corporate parenting plan](#) is available on our website, along with information on our commitments and support resources. Academic partner plans reflect their local context and are also linked from the university website. A survey of care-experienced students was launched in November 2020 with support from the local Highland CHAMPS organisation. Headline results showed a positive position with most respondents declaring their status at application or enrolment and being aware of the support on offer, even during the COVID restrictions on campus access. Specific actions have been identified for further improvements.

In higher education: the proportion of care-experienced entrants has increased from 1.0% in 2014-15 to 1.5% in 2018-19. In 2019-20, the proportion fell back slightly to 1.4%. While the full extent of the impact of the pandemic is still to be measured, support services were promoted strongly to applicants and students during recruitment for 2020-21. The 2018-19 baseline of 1.5% continues to reflect our ambition to maintain access and transitions for care-experienced learners.

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. In 2018-19, success rates for care-experienced students improved by 10 percentage points, which was a positive result. Although the impact of COVID-19 is still evolving and unclear, our commitment to the principle of continued improvement remains.



### *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. In 2018-19 this had risen to over 4% of total activity.

Work to support the further enhancement of existing school/ college partnerships continues through the development of a coherent university partnership school curriculum accessible to all schools in the region.

School/college provision has been one of the hardest hit areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have 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. While engagement and progress have varied during this time, particularly depending on the subject areas and individual circumstances, disengagement of some school students has been inevitable. Colleges have received feedback that students understand why changes have been necessary but that practical and group-orientated experience has not been as they hoped or expected. College staff have worked tirelessly 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 has been most challenging.

Significantly however, the university partnership has expertise and a track record of blended learning and online delivery, such as through the already established 'Virtual School Timetable' in Highland. This has enabled a relatively positive and smooth experience for students in many instances, particularly where the practical or work-based requirements have been low.

During periods of lockdown or limited access to workplaces and facilities, the partnership's focus has been on prioritising completion of the theoretical aspects of senior phase programmes and working to adapt those aspects of the more practically based elements that can be achieved through alternative virtual, reflective and simulated delivery models. The high level of vocational, work-based and/or practical senior phase provision delivered by colleges in our region has not made this easy, particularly with some regulatory/accrediting body restrictions on what can be adapted, such as care qualifications regulated by the SSSC.

The level of restrictions, especially through the latter part of 2020, has been varied in our region. Island regions have experienced significant periods of lessened restrictions which has enabled a higher level of physical college attendance and delivery than in other parts of the country. In contrast, Perth and Kinross has experienced significantly more challenging restrictions.

The further measures announced by the Scottish Government at the start of 2021, including the reclosure of schools, have increased the levels of school and student disengagement. This is combined with reduced time left for those programmes with 'backlogged' practical or work-based requirements to complete before the end of the academic year, placing a high level of risk on some programmes not completing. Colleges continue to liaise with local authorities and schools during this time to try and make arrangements for the remainder of the academic year, despite the continued uncertainty. This has led to some innovative partnership approaches, such as in Moray where an extension to the school timetable for this current academic year alongside the start of the next academic year has been agreed which will, assuming relaxing of restrictions by then, increase the time available for students to complete their qualifications.

## 2. Quality learning, teaching and participation

Students get 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.

We are a regional tertiary institution with almost 40,000 further and higher education students at the heart of our university partnership. With 13 academic partners and 70 learning centres located across the region, we make full use of a range of approaches and technologies to maximise participation and optimise delivery.

The University of the Highlands and Islands has over 20 years' experience of delivering a personalised learning experience through blended learning and supporting students studying in this way. This expertise, particularly in moving curriculum online, was crucial during the pandemic as all levels of provision needed to be adjusted to align with the Scottish Government's restrictions. This crucial, time-sensitive work still required significant staff resource and continued input as government guidance and restrictions changed throughout the pandemic.

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 a pioneer in using this approach to deliver education across our region and beyond and is considering further developments in our pedagogical approaches. For example, we are progressing a framework for the development of open educational practices. In addition to the widely recognised benefits open practices hold for institutions, the framework looks more widely at the benefits to students, communities and businesses of using collaborative open spaces, co-creation of learning, graduate attributes and digital skills for employment. Development of the framework has been received positively from other institutions and external bodies who are interested in how, as a geographically and digitally distributed university, we might progress open education within and outwith the region.

Supporting student mental health and wellbeing is crucial to providing safe and supportive learning experiences. The university and HISA, the Highlands and Islands Students' Association, are committed to ensuring students have access to appropriate support. This includes the partnership mental health strategy, green button online counselling service and involvement in Scottish Student Sport's Healthy Body Healthy Mind (HBHM) and NUS Think Positive's Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA). Together, a 24/7 online mental health support service, was launched in April 2020.

The university also developed the first open access resource to support the implementation of gender-based violence training for all staff in Scottish colleges and universities. The course was developed using the expertise of our Educational Development Unit and was launched in November 2020. It builds on the work of the Scottish Government's Equally Safe in Higher Education Toolkit and was carried out in partnership with Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (Scotland). The university led this initiative, which was supported and funded through collaboration with sixteen other Scottish HEIs, and the online course is available to support staff at colleges and universities across Scotland.

## 2.1 Impact of and response to COVID-19

### *Student mental health and wellbeing*

Throughout the pandemic, the university partnership and HISA have made support for student (and staff) mental health and wellbeing a priority. Work on our mental health strategy and wider mental health agenda has continued through the year, with priorities adjusted to support students through the impacts of Covid-19 which has increased vulnerabilities.

The work that had previously been done in strengthening and enhancing the mental health provision across the partnership, including the Student Mental Health and the Counselling Network Practitioner groups has been invaluable in sharing of resources and support as the impacts of the pandemic became clear. Both the mental health strategy and the practitioner group have been highlighted as good practice in research carried out for the NUS entitled 'Improving mental health and wellbeing support of Scotland's students 2020'.

The additional SFC counsellor funding has enabled our academic partners to grow their vital student counselling services. The UHI Online Counselling Service has continued to offer support to students and many counsellors across the partnership have undertaken additional online counselling training qualifications to ensure students can access counselling support through a variety of methods. This service has seen high demand from students that will be addressed through use of specific funding allocations. Essential in-person student wellbeing and support has continued to be provided within the Scottish government guidance.

During this time, the university has also been developing a new suicide prevention strategy and has refreshed fitness to study procedures.

There is evidence of a growing prevalence of gender-based violence and domestic abuse during the pandemic. As a result, the university partnership has agreed to make the online training course, which we developed, mandatory for all staff. At the start of the pandemic, an awareness campaign was launched through social media specifically highlighting support services available to students who may be at risk or were victims of gender-based violence.

### *Student hardship and digital poverty*

Many students have experienced financial hardship during the pandemic, for example where household incomes has been affected by redundancy or reduced working hours, or where part-time work has ceased to be available. As learning moved online, there were also digital connectivity issues across our diverse region and a requirement for access to devices to study from home. The university partnership has collectively made use of the hardship funding and additional digital poverty Government funding to address these issues for as many students as possible, along with funding secured by the university development office from donations and funding bid applications. These funding sources have enabled us to allocate around 500 laptops to students in need in 2020-21 from our partnership centrally. In addition, some academic partners have invested their own resources in this activity. We are now planning support for future students. Most recently we were successful in a bid for £100,000 from Barclays 100x100 UK COVID-19 community relief fund to support student financial hardship and mental health services.

### *Curriculum delivery and assessment adjustments*

A significant amount of resource has been committed at all levels of the curriculum to adjust the curriculum delivery and develop alternatives to practical work and placements where possible. The university's established expertise in developing blended learning approaches to connect our student communities, including the work of our Educational Development Unit, has been valuable in facilitating the move online for curriculum which has not traditionally been offered in this way. Changes have also been made where possible to assessment processes and deadlines and mitigating circumstances procedures to support students. As mentioned above, the main concerns are around FE courses and some HN provision where work experience is required to complete and achieve required professional competences. Discussions are continuing with SQA on mitigation.

### *Student voice*

As a means of gathering student feedback on changes implemented as a result of COVID-19, and to gather student views on potential new changes to learning and teaching methods, the university has established a student panel. This group of students is called on to comment on specific proposals and provided feedback on student engagement activities. Topics have included assessment and exams, student communication, overview of positive and negative experiences of studying during the pandemic, and a review of the new quality area for students on SharePoint.

### *HISA*

Supporting and representing students during the pandemic have not been without their challenges for the Highlands and Islands' Student Association (HISA), although there have been some unforeseen benefits. Undoubtedly, many students are missing the opportunity to socialise and participate in clubs, societies and student activities on campus. However, HISA adapted quickly and moved all operations online. This has enabled HISA to provide a wide range of online activities including quizzes, local video tours for student induction, treasure hunts, exercise classes, comedy nights and as well freshers to support students.

While some individual activities have attracted quite small numbers, one of the unexpected benefits has been greater student engagement in events across the university. For example, the numbers participating in HISA's annual student conference, a five-day online event, were double those participating last year. HISA was also successful in engaging students in the Nature Explore Project. The project, aimed at improving mental health and physical well-being, provided students with explorer packs and encouraged them to go out to their local green areas and send photographs, which were posted on the HISA website.

Throughout the pandemic, HISA has worked closely with the university and local partners. This has enabled the association to be fully involved in the decision-making affecting our students. Furthermore, this partnership approach has assisted HISA to enhance the support provided to students who are experiencing digital poverty, financial hardship and poor mental health and well-being.

## 2.2 Commitment to national measures targets

### *Retention (HE)*

The baseline for Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants in 2017-18 returning for year two is 83.2%. The 2019-20 underlying data for the HESA non-continuation PI will be made available in

February. It is anticipated that the overall retention may be down slightly but not as a statistically significant shift from the 2018-19 baseline. Initial enrolment analysis suggests that more students continued their studies into 2020-21. However, the continuing disruption to students' home and study situations is starting to show in withdrawals during semester two, which will affect this measure next year.

#### *Qualifiers (HE) – a new national measure*

The number of qualifiers in 2019-20 was lower than the baseline provided by SFC for the previous year, but at this stage it is difficult to assess possible impacts on this measure in 2020-21. Although retention increased into 2020-21 with, for example, more ordinary degree students continued to honours, this is likely to be balanced by in-year withdrawals. All efforts are being made to accommodate students who may be struggling with, for example, extensions to assessment deadlines and the mitigating circumstance process.

#### *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, recover the position of 2018-19 and incrementally improve beyond that. This would include targets to maintain our high levels of part-time further education student success.

However, as has been 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 for this year must be viewed through a very different lens.

As stated, for the 2020-21 academic year a particular partnership priority is supporting the significant number of COVID-19 impacted deferred students from the previous academic year to return to complete their qualifications, alongside trying to ensure the delivery of programmes to our 2020-21 cohorts.

#### *Satisfaction (HE and FE)*

In higher education: the university had some notable successes in student satisfaction in 2018-19. The NSS result consolidated the improvements made the previous year, with overall satisfaction at 84.5%, 0.7% above the benchmark. Although not a national measure, the university scored well for overall satisfaction in both the postgraduate taught and postgraduate research student experience surveys (PTES/PRES). The result in the PTES placed the university thirteenth out of the 57 HEIs who took part, with a score of 85% satisfaction. The PRES result, with overall satisfaction of 85%, was 4% above the level for all participating institutions, 4% above participating Scottish institutions and 5% more than the Post-92 institutions.

The NSS overall satisfaction measure in 2019-20 was 82%, which met the benchmark but was below the previous year and the Scottish average (85%). Within this positive responses compared to the sector were seen for learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, academic support and the student voice. The fieldwork for the 2020-21 survey is taking place during the pandemic and the potential impact is difficult to estimate as these students have experienced disruption to their study and lives across the full academic year. Within this uncertainty, the target of achieving the benchmark would be more appropriate.

In further education: as with HE, there are many external factors and challenges outwith our control that may impact on students' experience and overall feeling of satisfaction this year.

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. As the SFC student satisfaction and engagement survey did not run last year there is no sector data for comparison; however, our own early student experience survey had generally positive feedback.

### 3. Learning with impact for students

Students are equipped to flourish in employment, further study and to lead fulfilling lives.

**Linked to: outcomes for economic recovery**

**Work-ready** graduates are ready to meet employer needs: students are equipped to take up employment and succeed when the job market opens up

The university provides resources for students to explore and reflect on the skills they have developed based round five graduate attributes – academic skills, self-management, social awareness, communication and interpersonal skills. The graduate attributes were developed through extensive consultation with staff, students and employers and are intentionally broad to accommodate diverse subject areas, levels of study, academic partners and employers. Students are encouraged to reflect on relevant attributes for their own personal development planning.

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. Activities include:

- Career management workshops within the curriculum
- Career and employability sessions incorporating employer input
- Future Me online career management platform, including job search through the JobShop.

Our team of curriculum development employer engagement officers (CDEEOs), posts created through ESIF funding, support the integration and delivery of careers and employability services through the curriculum, including:

- Subject mentoring programmes, with employers and industry specialists
- Guest lectures networked across the partnership including collaborative events with other universities, subject events and employer input into employability sessions such as CV workshops
- Creation of 30 short videos from 12 employers in a new Employer Insights Video suite.

Through relationships established with employers, the CDEEO team has also contributed to growth in placement and work experience opportunities, resulting in a number of successful placements and subsequent job opportunities for students across all subject networks.

#### 3.1 Impact and response to COVID-19

##### *Student employability skills and support*

As the pandemic has our limited face-to-face interactions, prioritising online activities and events has allowed us to continue to engage and connect our students and graduates with employability and resilience support. Examples include:

- The launch of a new podcast series in November 2020 aimed at helping students and graduates navigate their future career and employment options. In each episode, guest speakers unpack their career and share varying perspectives on the world of work
- 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 Graduate Scheme for Collaborative Artists and High Life Highland Student Ambassador programme
- Alternative remote/virtual activities to ensure that student external collaborations can continue despite the hold in non-critical placements.

*Curriculum - providing graduates with the appropriate skills for the labour market. Including examples of new higher education curriculum and specific impacts on delivery of apprenticeships*

- Computing/digital

The university recruited the first cohort of students in September 2020 to the new fully online BSc (Hons) Applied Software Development in collaboration with IBM. The degree addresses the skills gap in emerging technologies and students have access to IBM's resources for cloud development and coding. In November 2020, although only in their first few months of study, the students were celebrating success in an international coding competition hosted by IBM, beating competition from over 900 students from 100 universities across the world. The university entered three teams and took two first places and a second place in the competition.

A new MSc Data Science started in September 2020, focused on enabling students to develop key data science skills while using open-source software widely used in industry.

- Health/allied health

The BSc (Hons) Optometry was launched in 2020-21, with the first cohort starting in Inverness. The degree has been co-created with the industry through a two-year funded secondment from Specsavers and significant investment committed by the Federation of (Ophthalmic and Dispensing) Opticians to equip the clinical skills labs Inverness College UHI and Moray College UHI. The degree has an innovative regional delivery model, developed in response to workforce requirements, particularly in remote and rural areas. The curriculum development was funded by the European Social Fund and Scottish Funding Council as part of the Developing Scotland's Workforce in the Scotland 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Programme.

In 2020, sixteen nurses became the first cohort to graduate from the university's innovative midwifery pilot programme designed to meet the workforce demands and needs of communities across the north of Scotland.

- Teacher education

Teacher education is now well established within the university. Our PGDE provision is focused on meeting identified demand within the local authorities in our region where staff recruitment can still be a challenge. A BA (Hons) Moral and Philosophical Studies with Religions Education is currently recruiting for 2021-22 in response to the Scottish Government's prioritisation following identified teacher shortages in this subject. This

programme will work on a similar model to the BA (Hons) Food, Nutrition and Textiles Education developed to meet shortages in home economics teachers.

- The apprenticeship family

The UHI Work-Based Learning Hub is now well-established with contractual responsibility for the management of foundation, modern and graduate apprenticeships across the region. This approach has helped to identify work-based learning pathways and to encourage collaboration in development and delivery of these programmes. There is a continued appetite for growth across all programmes and the university partnership will continue to develop and promote these pathways, as far as funding allows. However, during 20-21 recruitment across the apprenticeship family has been particularly disrupted by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within Foundation Apprenticeships, achieving the work-based requirements for the healthcare and children and young people frameworks, the two most popular frameworks in our region, has been the most challenging. During this time, the hub has worked closely with academic partners to facilitate the required discussions with SDS, SQA and SSSC in attempts to mitigate and find alternative ways to deliver.

The engineering FA is another framework with specific challenges around the practical requirements of the Performing Engineering Operations (PEO) SVQ. Staff are working hard to try to timetable the backlog of necessary workshop time as and when restrictions allow to ensure completion.

The other FA frameworks, while still challenging, are relatively easier to adapt delivery and assessment models around virtual delivery and employer engagement to achieve the required outcomes, and the partnership has again utilised its experience and expertise in blended and virtual delivery to achieve solutions. Despite this, the continued engagement and commitment of schools and their FA pupils to complete their FAs, particularly with the schools currently closed and Higher exams cancelled, continues to be a challenge in some instances.

Within Modern Apprenticeships, the impact of COVID-19 on the many employers has caused significant disruption across recruitment, progression and completion. Some Modern Apprenticeships have been less affected, relatively speaking, such as some land-based frameworks and business administration where working practices have continued in a way that has allowed the evidencing and assessment of units to continue, even if through virtual means. However, other areas have experienced major disruption, particularly through the closure of workplaces and furloughing of staff. These include in areas such as hospitality, hairdressing, construction and automotive. Other sectors where workplaces have continued to operate through the pandemic have still seen significant disruption as employers and staff continue to face extremely high competing workplace demands, such as in healthcare.

Throughout this time the partnership has worked hard to ensure that all modern apprentices are supported and has adapted delivery and assessment wherever possible to minimise the disruption of progress and to ensure that any additional support available, such as the Adopt and Apprentice scheme, is provided.



Despite this, the partnership remains firmly committed to the continued growth of modern apprenticeships in the long term and is optimistic that recruitment to these programmes will recover as restrictions begin to be removed.

Within Graduate Apprenticeships, recruitment to both our Civil Engineering and Early Learning and Childcare programmes has been impacted by COVID-19. Nevertheless, both programmes were able to run new, smaller than planned, cohorts. Progression of existing apprentices has also been hampered, with some civil engineering apprentices being granted extensions to their studies, and early learning apprentices focussing study this year on theory and knowledge, moving much of their practical and work-based activity and assessment into the next year.

Throughout this time, as has been the case across all provision, academic staff have worked closely with employers and students to ensure continued support and progression, and to minimise disruption.

The priority focus for the remainder of 2020-21 is to continue to support current FA and GA students through their qualifications as restrictions allow, and to urgently clarify future funding and delivery arrangements with SFC and SDS in order that future ambitions and commitments can be confirmed.

### 3.2 Commitment to national measures targets

#### Student and graduate destinations (FE and FE)

Baseline data has been provided by SFC for both the HE and FE national measures from the graduate outcome survey and the college leaver destination survey. In both cases, the circumstances facing students and graduates in 2020-21 will be considerably different to the previous year. Employment is likely to be harder to find in many subjects/sectors and the ability and appetite of some students for further study alongside other pressures may be affected should the current restrictions persist. We are committed to continuing to support our students prepare for the job market and facilitate further study through our flexible progression routes. However, we challenge the validity of comparing measures with the baseline year.

For the Graduate Outcome survey in particular, the baseline is from the first running of the new survey so there is no trend data to consider. Also, the current survey is for 2018-19 graduates who are being surveyed on their destination 15 months after graduation; for some their employment situation may have affected recently during the pandemic.

## 4. Equalities and inclusion

The university partnership has historically collaborated to inform the development of local equality and diversity and access and inclusion strategies. Work started in 2019-20 towards greater coherence in this work, bringing partners together to develop a standard approach, building into this process the required level of assurance regarding compliance with SFC guidance and an informed distribution of associated funding. The university is committed to equality and inclusion across our diverse student body and staff, and relevant university policies have an equality impact assessment completed and published.

The university's equality, diversity and inclusion compliance team (EDICT) was formed in the summer of 2019 and has early sight of planned work in areas such as buildings and course

design, sectoral/ legislative developments, events and anticipated resource issues. It provides a foundation for effective forward planning and knowledge-sharing. A central equality and diversity policy was developed in 2019, replacing multiple local-owned policies. All APs were represented and provided feedback on effectively mapping the policy to local contexts.

The university has an institutional gender action plan (iGAP) for staff and students, with individual APs producing their own in respect of local staff, FE students, governance, culture and environment. A cross-university group was established to collectively review and develop content and plan future methodology to ensure we met updated guidance from SFC. As the requirement for the updated iGAP has been postponed indefinitely, we will apply this approach to PSED reporting, integrating GAP actions accordingly. PSED reports will be published April 2021 and we will look to organise outcomes including specific protected characteristics to ensure appropriate equitability of strategic commitment.

Our Equality Outcome Agreement and Mainstreaming Report 2017-21 focused on six key themes across the partnership in respect of staff and students. A review has shown extensive progress and areas for improvement have been identified in relation to these six areas. These will be fully reported in April 2021 in line with Scottish Specific Public Sector Equality Duties.

*Some specific initiatives:*

In 2019, the university partnered with *EQUATE* Scotland to facilitate eight STEM Champions (*UHI STEM Femmes*) to increase engagement, assertiveness, resilience and employability. We won *EQUATE Scotland National Student-Institution Partnership Award (2020)* for our innovative model, with champions from seven academic partners, six subject areas and four study levels. We have expanded and extrapolated the model this year to perform a wider regional function across the Highland Satellite STEM Hubs, working with schools and employers.

Following the success of UHI STEM Femmes, we have also funded *UHI Minority Men* in 2020-21 to recruit champions to increase outreach, role modelling, student-staff mediation, and undertake targeted project work across key under-representation areas in health, early years, social care, beauty and complementary therapies, hairdressing, nursing and psychology.

The university funds activities and promotion of International Women's Day, showcasing inspirational speakers from across the UK and UHI partnership. The university recognises that identity is heterogeneous and looks to incorporate intersectional contexts into gender equality work, including presentations on LGB and Trans experiences and events discussing 'Cross Cultural Communications' (race; gender and faith).

*Data analysis:*

We are committed to improving management information regarding equalities priorities. A new reporting dashboard platform is being introduced and development of E & D student data reporting has already been piloted in support of on-going equality initiatives and our Athena Swan application due in November 2021.

## Section 2: Outcome for economic recovery

### 5. 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. Our Island Strategy was published in 2020 and aligns closely with the Islands Deal proposals.

#### 5.1 Impact and response: upskilling and reskilling existing workforce

##### *Regional FE approach*

In response to the continuing impact of COVID-19 and in anticipation of a substantial increase in the number of people in our region becoming unemployed, or at serious risk of unemployment, the university partnership is developing a range of support and provision. The specific target group for this support is slightly different than for usual types of employability provision, in that it is anticipated that the people effected by COVID-19 will be largely 'work-ready', with strong CVs and experience, and a range of transferable skills to offer. The focus for this support will therefore be less on the development of basic employability skills, and more on aspects of needs analysis, careers guidance, support and confidence building for the recruitment process, digital upskilling, and identifying specific skills needs and training to support transition into new work sectors.

The partnership is taking a regional approach to the development of a portfolio of provision and support that can be clearly and consistently marketed across our region, providing a clear entry point for those people in need of support. We are identifying opportunities to make further adaptations to provision that is likely to meet the needs of this target group where required to enable online delivery and support across our region wherever possible. This regional development will link directly into the wide range of existing curriculum and support provided by our academic partners to meet their local needs and changing demands and will align with other initiatives, funding streams and support, such as PACE, Young Persons Guarantee and National Transition Training Fund.

Separate to our provision and support aimed at individuals, 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. A significant partnership marketing and communications effort is underway and employer liaison staff across the partnership are in regular contact with our employer partners.

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*

- Digital skills

The university partnered with ScotlandIS, the sector body for digital technologies, in a successful bid to the Digital Start Fund responding to identified reskilling needs in the sector. Funding was secured to deliver 40 credits at either SCQF L9 (cyber) or 11 (data), with the guarantee of a job interview on completion. The programme starting in January 2021.

Various CPD opportunities have been developed over 2019-20 and 2020-21 to upskill primary and secondary teachers in delivering computer science. The additional teaching qualification in computing for secondary school teachers came from an identified shortage of qualified computer studies teachers in Highlands and Islands secondary schools and we recruited the first cohort in 2019-20. This was followed with a CPD award for primary teachers in response to demand from Education Scotland and the British Computing Society.

- Creative industries

Creative industries is a key growth sector in the Scottish economy and is also important to the Highlands and Islands where it is characterised by small and micro businesses and self-employment. The university is increasing provision with specific focus on developing entrepreneurial skills and communities of creative practitioners (including our alumni), utilising connection with XPONorth, Pier Arts, Mareel, Ann Lantair, Taigh Chearsabagh, and WASP facilities in Inverness and Perth.

In November, the university hosted a 'live music tour' to support our music alumni community which has been affected during the pandemic by limitations on live performance. All performers received a performance fee with costs covered by donations from several individuals and companies organised by the university's development office.

- Use of SFC Upskilling Fund

Using national skills publications and intelligence from our business development practitioner colleagues, four key skill areas were identified covering the main areas of demands from employers across the region. The four areas were digital skills; business, leadership and management skills; health sector support; and mental health and wellbeing awareness. An initial grouping of nine modules was offered at the start of semester two and will be following with additional CPD awards over the next couple of months. Demand has been high for the first set of modules, with promotion through social media and using the network of employers developed by our CDEEO team. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact on the economic and personal situations of many of our business contacts, the CDEEO team has worked closely together to undertake a regional employer 'health check', proactively staying in touch with key industry contacts to ensure the university can adequately meet their needs and provide support as required.

*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. An outline business case was submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2020 and currently (Jan 2021) the project is in RIBA stage 1, moving into RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design) in March 2021. Key stakeholders include Boeing Defence UK and the RAF.
- 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. The project complements the MAATIC project and Perth College UHI, who have delivered aircraft engineering programmes for several years, has also supported the developed of that business case.
- 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. It will be a flexible and inspirational space with resources for business support that will allow the co-location of Moray's key business support agencies, with both university and practitioner-led training and research support for innovation and enterprise. The project has articulated clear linkages to support spinouts and business growth arising from the MAATIC, MICM and Digital Health Moray Growth Deal projects. The outline business case was submitted in December 2021.
- Hospitality skills project (Tay Cities 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.
- Opportunities Cromarty Firth consortium: the university is involved in this collaborative partnership. It aims to maximise exploitation of direct and indirect opportunities from floating offshore wind growth and corresponding green Hydrogen production. The consortium has announced plans to open a global centre of excellence on the North Highlands College UHI Alness campus aimed at developing innovative applied research and development and acting as a specialist educational hub for children, students and workers interested in renewable energy sectors.

- Advanced manufacturing challenge fund (AMCF): West Highland College UHI is setting up an Advancing Manufacturing Centre to support SMEs and micro businesses 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
- Advanced manufacturing challenge fund (AMCF): Inverness College UHI is part of a Construction Scotland Innovation Centre led project aimed at increasing research and innovation in engineering manufacturing SMEs, with a focus on construction manufacturing and modern methods of construction. This AMCF project ‘Make it Smart Hub’ was launched in October 2020.

## 5.2 Response to climate change emergency

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 document details actions to reduce the use of plastic and paper, improve recycling and reduce the amount of carbon released across the partnership. We will work with local staff and liaise with public, private and third sector organisations to deliver the plan.

The university partnership covers the largest geographical area of any campus-based university or college in the UK and has the largest student population in Scotland, with nearly 40,000 students each year. By working together to reduce our carbon footprint and promote behaviours which benefit our planet, the plan aims to can make a significant contribution to environmental sustainability.

### Section 3: Outcomes for research and innovation

Research excellence and research sustainability: ensuring world-leading research programmes are protected against the impact of COVID-19  
 Innovation: contribution to Scotland’s economic recovery

Our research and innovation activities and profile are growing. We aim to produce a wide range of impactful world-class research outputs in areas of particular benefit to our region’s economy and communities, as well as having international connections and significance. We also aim to strengthening active collaboration with other institutions to enhance sustainability.

The breadth and diversity of the university partnership adds strength and impact to our main research themes at the local level, often based on our unique regional characteristics. They permit a growing multi- and cross-disciplinary approach that enriches our research and allows the university to collaborate at the highest levels.

The university is very supportive of developing links between further education, higher education, research, innovation and wealth generation. This aligns with the governing principles of our tertiary organisation, which include an ambition to support and inspire the development a knowledge-based regional economy.

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 – along with greater integration with the main research themes. Nationally, the university is involved in UIF cluster activities and is a member of the Innovation Cluster steering group with the University of Aberdeen and the University of the West of Scotland.

### **Impact of and response to Covid-19 and economic recovery:**

#### **Research**

The impact of COVID-19, from the initial lockdown in semester two of 2019-20 through into 2020-21, has been significant for the university's research work, but throughout this time a considerable effort has been made to mitigate the effects. Where possible research schedules have been reworked during periods where labs have been closed and fieldwork was not possible. Arrangements for online vivas have been developed. Where possible, work schedules have been rearranged for research projects and extensions negotiated with funders where appropriate.

The university received £918k of COVID related research uplift funds, and around £145k has been used to support funded extensions for PhD students, where it was not possible to secure this from other sources. This funding and a small additional sum from UKRI have helped to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on our research students.

In relation to research projects and knowledge exchange activity it was not possible for all activities to progress according to schedules established prior to COVID-19. Some researchers, especially where laboratory work or distant fieldwork was required, were not able to undertake empirical work, particularly during the full lockdown period. A complex picture emerged with different projects being funded using different funding sources. Funded extensions were achieved for some projects and about £272K of the SFC research uplift funds was allocated to support staff costs.

The university has been involved in several funded COVID-19 related research projects, especially through its Institute of Health Research and Innovation, and in collaboration with a number of other universities and health boards. As part of the university's commitment to researching the impacts of COVID-19 on individuals, the economy and society, about £500k of the SFC research uplift funds was used to support a mix of pan-regional research projects and specific projects within individual academic partners of the university. Further detail on the use of the REG uplift funding will be provided as part of the scheduled reporting to SFC. Case studies showing the use of SFC research funding to achieve or work towards research excellence, sustainability of the research base and contribution to economic recovery will be provided at the end of the academic year as part of SFC's impact reporting.

It is relevant to note that the university's research work also has a significant dependency on European funding of various kinds and that Brexit has created a great deal of uncertainty. Two examples illustrate the point. Firstly, of the approximately 165 research students, nearly 50 are European funded, and the university is currently looking for alternative funding streams. Secondly, the university is a key partner in the Inter-reg funded Bryden Centre in the field of energy, involving institutions in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. During 2019-20, we diversified our research degree portfolio by adding a number of new MREs awards, and active discussions were held to position the university for engagement with the arrangements for 'Bryden Centre 2', once the current round of funding ends.

Work is progressing to define a medium-term strategy related to COVID-19 impacts (and post-Brexit recovery) during April 2021 – July 2023. This has four main components: enhancing research and knowledge exchange activity that impacts the regional economy and society; enhancing interdisciplinary place-based research; enhancing outward looking international research that impacts the challenges of our time (for example zero carbon); and deepening stakeholder engagement for economic recovery. The university will build on and strengthen purposeful collaboration with other universities, especially where this collaboration has an impact for our region.

The university has also received an COVID-19 uplift of about £127K for research capital, which is being used as an additional contribution to position the research infrastructure for future growth.

We are continuing at pace with REF2021 preparations across all areas, making adjustments where COVID19 has had specific impacts, especially some case studies where corroboration of evidence of impact has stalled.

### **Innovation**

The 2020-21 UIF plan has been reviewed to determine impacts on activities and targets from COVID-19. However, this resulted in relatively minor changes to targets for this year, which have already been communicated to SFC. We have received a positive response to the changes and recognition with institutional plans were likely to be affected by the pandemic. The changes mainly relate to face-to-face events and meetings moving online as well as some business-led development projects being delayed, put on hold, or cancelled because of the COVID restrictions.

A copy of the revised UIF plan for 2020-21



# Paper 1 - UIF funded KE projects: plans, targets and key performance indicators for 2020-2021

RKEC UIF steering group are requested to consider revised targets to ensure they are appropriate and aligned with UIF strategic aims.

Any proposed revision to the original KPIs are colour coded **green for a proposed increase**, **red for a proposed decrease** and **blue for any proposed new/additional activity/target** with the original figures in brackets.

**N.B. The KE sectoral groups have an overarching target to increase yearly income into the university partnership by at least the value of the grant awarded to each project.**

Relevant alignment to SFC's priority outcomes (see table 1 below) are indicated. The university has confirmed to SFC in the outcome agreement that all outcomes will be strived for but that outcomes 1 to 4 will be prioritised.

## SFC Desired Outcomes for University Innovation Fund AY2017-2021

- 1. Outcome one (demand stimulation):** working with Scotland's enterprise agencies, Scottish Government, business networks, Interface, and others, Scottish HEIs will have helped to increase the demand and quality of engagement from businesses and the public sector for university services.
- 2. Outcome two (simplification / commercialisation):** in partnership with the Enterprise Agencies (EAs) and Interface, Scottish HEIs as a sector will have demonstrably simplified business access to the knowledge and expertise in Scottish universities.
- 3. Outcome three (simplification / greater innovation):** in partnership with the EAs and Interface, Scottish HEIs will, at a national level, have made strategic use of their sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy (including beyond non-STEM).
- 4. Outcome four (entrepreneurialism):** Scottish HEIs as a sector will have made a significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff, and businesses.
- 5. Outcome five (international):** in partnership with Scottish Development International, Connected Scotland and others, Scottish HEIs will have pooled their knowledge and networks, and shared good practice to promote and engage Scotland internationally (operating under Scotland's International Framework).
- 6. Outcome six (inclusive growth and social impact):** Building on current and good practice Scottish HEIs will have scaled up their support of the Scottish Government's ambitions for inclusive growth
- 7. Outcome seven (equality and diversity):** Building on current and good practice HEIs will have ensured positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff and all who are affected by the use of the UIF.

## KESGs with proposed changes to targets 2020-21 (Energy, Entrepreneurship Group, Scottish Rural Health Partnership SRHP)

Energy				
Overarching yearly income target for sector related KE activity = £100,000				
To provide at least one application, for at least one of the categories, for the Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards				
Aims/Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Impacts	Notes
<b>Demand Stimulation/simplification</b>				
Aim to facilitate trans energy hub understanding of political and economic drivers at UK wide and devolved government levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain up to date knowledge of policy landscape post Brexit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved quality intelligence-sharing</li> <li>Reduced time for staff in chasing background information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better quality proposals</li> <li>Identification of innovation needs driven by policy and regulation</li> </ul>	
Aim to understand challenges - problems and issues for key industry sectors – both energy generation and high energy users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed intelligence gathering via workshops, round tables etc of development and pressures focussing on potential business opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefing notes, conference proceedings, seminar summaries - posted on Sharepoint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification business opportunities</li> <li>Improved quality and focus of proposals</li> </ul>	
Aim to expand relationships with Scottish businesses to facilitate collaborative problem-solving approach using UHI innovation and academic expertise;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networking/exhibitions/contributions at industry focused events and international conferences;</li> <li>Attendance/promotion of UHI Energy Hub with Enterprise agencies, Scottish Government, business networks and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Attendance at up to 5 industry events) – Attendance at up to 5 online industry events</li> <li>(Early stages discussions with &gt;30 businesses) Early stages discussions with &gt;20 businesses</li> <li>One to one meetings with key individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of business network</li> <li>Ability to respond to business needs with solutions</li> <li>Optimisation of UHI uptake of EA facilitated info</li> </ul>	
Aim to facilitate engagement across UHI centres to delivering large collaborative R&D projects with business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange internal forum for horizon scanning / brainstorming /team building in key capabilities /discuss key issues for energy staff eg CRM</li> <li>Regular TC for Energy forum to update and share information; One to one TC / VC to discuss leadership and engagement around key business opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearer strategic focus for business development, better information sharing</li> <li>Improve cohesion across UHI topic teams</li> <li>Improved engagement / facilitation and intensity of communication across the energy team as a whole</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optimising resource use across UHI</li> <li>Builds team spirit and collective responsibility</li> </ul>	
Aim to expand and develop strategic partnerships with other Scottish universities with complementary expertise to improve successful collaborative R&I proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance at ETP seminars – and follow up of key potential academics with complementary expertise</li> <li>Expand network of potential collaborators by building on existing relationships eg. sharing resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved success in developing collaborative R&amp;I projects involving strategic partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broadens capability and ability to respond to funding calls</li> <li>Increases income from collaborative R&amp;D projects</li> </ul>	

<b>Simplification/commercialisation/ innovation</b>				
Facilitate development and delivery of commercial research and collaborative R&I with businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh and re engage Enterprise Agencies / SDI</li> <li>• Maintain up to date information on share- point of innovation calls / funding opportunities</li> <li>• Publicise and mentor staff through Challenge Fund applications to optimise outputs from investment</li> <li>• Ensure UHI has pre qualified to tender for commissioned research with key relevant organisations</li> <li>• Develop a portfolio of commercially relevant case studies to improve engagement and interest of SMEs</li> <li>• Develop a refreshed social and media presence via diverse media and twitter feeds as appropriate</li> <li>• Expand programme of site visits and 'show and tell' to develop shared approaches / relationships between academics and businesses</li> <li>• Identify where need exists for training in IP management and protection, techniques such as horizon scanning,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~quarterly update meetings key staff</li> <li>• One stop shop easy access for all staff</li> <li>• &gt;5 challenge fund applications</li> <li>• &gt;1 opportunities to tender for commissioned research</li> <li>• ~ 3 case studies</li> <li>• Better coordination across energy KE - regular presence on twitter</li> <li>• (&gt;3 per year) <b>Site visits on hold until C-19 restrictions allow</b></li> <li>• (&gt;5 individuals improved capability in these areas) <b>&gt;3 individuals improved capability in these areas</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date intelligence</li> <li>• Save time and effort for staff</li> <li>• Kick starts novel relationships around innovative services / science</li> <li>• Potentially more income from this route</li> <li>• Communicates science capabilities / innovation from the coalface</li> <li>• Relationship building and shared approach to problem solving</li> <li>• Staff more confident of being involved in innovation funding calls</li> </ul>	
<b>Entrepreneurialism</b>				
<i>Aim to ensure staff and post docs with entrepreneurial attributes and interest in working with businesses, are connected with government measures to develop appropriate expertise and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and foster staff and student engagement with role models from business and industry.</li> <li>• Flag up KE fellowship schemes, KTP etc</li> <li>• Engage with Converge challenge and promote amongst staff and students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring PG / PDRA – optimise internship opportunities</li> <li>• (&gt;1 KTP or KE fellowship) <b>Aim for at least one KTP or KE fellowship</b></li> <li>• &gt;1 submission to each of Feb / Oct calls</li> </ul>		
<b>Internationalisation</b>				
<i>Aim to facilitate engagement of UHI Energy Hub staff with international opportunities for commercial research, KE, education and innovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure alignment with UHI internationalisation strategy including engagement with SDI and others re potential to join international missions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (&gt;3 Challenge fund applications involving international partner) <b>&gt;1 Challenge fund applications involving international partner</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expands business collaborator pool and potential income</li> <li>• As above also builds confidence in team</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;1 large collaborative project involving international partner</li> </ul>		
<b>Inclusive growth and social impact</b>				
Aim to engage with island business hubs to ensure UHI research, training, commercial expertise is highlighted in remote and peripheral communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update shared on-line communication and working platform for the Energy hub to support UHI researchers and island businesses in rural / remote locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raised awareness of energy capability at UHI in island business hubs as means of engaging with ongoing activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for development of large collaborative projects</li> <li>Projects directly emanating from the particular problems of these communities</li> </ul>	
Aim to prioritise development of projects which involve collaborators from businesses in the region and which use UHI science capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult and identify energy related issues / problems for businesses in the HIE region across all energy sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery ~2 industry facing workshops in rural or island locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with new stakeholders with potential energy issues to identify support available through UHI</li> </ul>	
<b>Equality and diversity</b>				
Aim to reinforce awareness and implementation of equality and diversity objectives right across all project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify training and awareness raising needs across staff and students in Energy sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff to undertake EDI training where possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raised awareness across all domains of activity – whether proposal development or interaction with business, policy or other stakeholders.</li> </ul>	

## Entrepreneurship project

The first amendment asked for is to increase the prize fund from UHI for the Business Competition by £500 and you have already agreed to this.

Other changes requested would be to amend the SEE Programme from a 3-day residential to individual training days along with a one-day virtual conference. This has been costed out with an indication on hours required by four members of staff, along with the additional cost of £500 to be added to the business competition prize fund and this equates to an **underspend of £11,150**.

The proposal is to use the underspend as follows:-

1. Business competition –to undertake a further 32 contact hours to deliver up to 128 class shouts – this would cost £2,575 less a current underspend of £100 = £2,475;
2. Enterprising Educator – a further £2,000 to cover the extra hours we will need to make amendments;
3. Catalyst (see below for details of this proposed addition) – to develop and add to Brightspace – this would cover up to 42 standard hours for - £2,041.20;
4. £4,550 to cover up to 70 hours (10 days) of senior staff time across all projects.

These amendments would add up to and **overspend of £11,066.20**.

Summary	Current budget	Proposed budget
Business Competition	£22,750	£23,250.00
Class Shouts		£2,475.00
SEE Programme	£30,500	£18,850.00
Enterprising Educator – Tertiary development	£9,000	£11,000.00
Catalyst		£2,041.20
Total project management time (VJ)		£4,550.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£62,250</b>	<b>£62,166.20</b>

## Catalyst

Catalyst is made up of 6 modules and, when piloted previously, it got great feedback. To enable us to use these modules, we need to first update the information on them and then add them to Brightspace – they were previously on another system that the college doesn't use any more. These modules can then be run independently of each other and would be of interest to Researchers, academics, students as well as the community in general.

### Modules:

- **You and Your Business or Developing your Mindset for Growth**
  - This introductory module will encourage you to reflect on your own mindset and ambitions for your business. We will look at what kind of mindset you have along with evidence on how mindset impacts on small business development.
    - *“Learning to focus on a positive mindset has made a huge difference to me!”*
- **Your Business Model or Building an Effective Business Model**
  - Introduction to mapping and assessing your current business model. This workshop will identify and assess options for greater productivity and growth.
    - *“An invaluable tool for keeping team members focussed on what we are doing and why we are doing it.”*
- **Effective Leadership or Being an Effective Small Business Leader**
  - Introduction to leadership involving employees and partners. This workshop will look at delegation, setting the future business direction and vision as well as action planning.
    - *“I have a much better understanding of the difference between leadership and management and I now recognise that I ‘am’ a leader!”*
- **Design and Innovation-Led Thinking or Building an Innovative Business**
  - Introduction to and application of innovative thinking to your current business and market challenges. This workshop will encourage growth of new ideas in your business by building an innovation culture.
    - *“Innovation and design-led thinking is something I would never have thought to apply to my business. I am now aware of different ways to solve problems and improve products, services and the way my business operates.”*
- **Your Business Opportunities or Identifying and Developing New Business Opportunities**
  - Introduction to opportunity awareness and assessment, this workshop will exploit opportunities via proactive customer engagement and developing greater confidence and effectiveness in sales.
    - *“The company has initiated and implemented changes in the services and products we offer now catering for a completely different client.”*
- **Building Networks or Building Networks and Collaboration for Growth**
  - Developing relationships and alliances – this workshop will look at networking for growth as well as entering new markets.
  - *“Sometimes the solution to a problem won't be found in your own industry but in a completely different one – that struck a chord with me so going forward I'd like to grow my network outside my industry.”*

<b>Scottish Rural Health Partnership (SRHP)</b>				
<b>Overarching yearly income target for sector related KE activity = £70,000</b>				
<b>To provide at least one application, for at least one of the categories, for the Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards</b>				
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Impacts/Outcomes</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Demand Stimulation - to increase the demand and quality of engagement from businesses and the public sector for university services</b>	Raise awareness of SRHP and our values and objectives and increase membership through further engagement with companies/HEIs/NHS & Social Care and Voluntary sector organisation	Engagement leading to Increased SRHP membership to (200) <b>180</b>	<b>Membership Number reaches 180 in Y4</b>	Investigate use of postcode data for location metrics to evidence rurality of membership Scotland wide
	Deliver focused events on remote and rural health & wellbeing through co-ordination of a programme of seminars, including ecosystem meetings and conferences (4 events in Y4).	Run a minimum of 2 Highlands and Island Ecosystem meetings bringing together a range of stakeholders including at least 1 being in remote or island location  Co-ordinate with partners to host event within the wider UHI campus	(Deliver 8 events in Y4) <b>Deliver 4 events in Y4</b>  Deliver at least one workshops in Rural or island locations	
<b>Simplification &amp; Commercialisation - demonstrably simplified business access to the knowledge and expertise in Scottish universities</b>	Continue to develop our web and social media presence including links to literature database and dedicated researcher window  Production of newsletter exclusively for members	Develop dedicated researcher window and links to database  Website review every quarter and keep active at least twice per week on social media platforms and increase running up to events  Produced quarterly members only newsletter	Demonstrate increased 'hits' or 'likes' metrics from utilisation of social media and website.	Investigate and agree social media metrics, e.g. unique IP hits.

	Enable & broker new collaboration and proposal for funding across the partnership & ecosystem.	Through our participation, increase the number of bid submission and 'regional' success.	Minimum of 6 collaborations or Grant/Funding submissions	
<b>Simplification &amp; Innovation - Strategic use of sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy</b>	KTPs/SFC innovation Vouchers/KePPs		Minimum of 4 Expressions of interest submissions	
	Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards	Submit at least one application	Minimum of 1 application submitted	
	Identify and develop projects with partners and evidence network connections with external income and Scotland innovation centres.	Connections with 3 of Scotland innovation centres. DHI (steering group member), The Data Lab (joint funding application) and CENSIS  Increased links to industry and stronger relationships including site visits and meetings with relevant organisations	Minimum of 20 (10) meetings around collaborative or developmental opportunities	
<b>Entrepreneurialism - positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff, and businesses</b>	Alignment with Entrepreneurial Academy initiative.  Staff and students to attend UHI relevant training.	SRHP attend monthly Rural Health and Wellbeing team meetings, keeping up to date on the research activities of the department.  Receive communications from the general rural health and wellbeing and make connections to others either completing research or for information.	Entrepreneurial mind set established across the UHI research community  Entrepreneurship incorporated into KE initiatives	
<b>International - pooled their knowledge and networks, and shared good practice to promote and engage Scotland internationally (operating under Scotland's International Framework)</b>	Continue to build connection through Global Collaboration for Rural Mental Health & Rethinking Remote conference.  Continue to interact with FRRHC, within RCSEd	Provide support to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> International Rural Mental Health Conference (Feb 2021) as required.  Provide planning support for rescheduled 3 <sup>rd</sup> Rethinking Remote in 2021  Participate in Faculty steering group and advisory board. Contribute to and disseminate Faculty's capabilities framework. Shared networks and interlinked communication channels	2 <sup>nd</sup> International RMH Conference February 2021 – <b>Delayed</b>  Rescheduled Rethinking Remote Conference 2021 – <b>TBC in 2022</b>	
<b>Growth and social impact scaled up their support of the Scottish Government's ambitions for inclusive growth</b>	Continue to build connection with counterparts across the UK, Europe and Internationally utilising evidence-based practice and knowledge transfer.  Aspiration to Develop the National Centre for Rural Health and Care (NCRHC) in Scotland. Requires alignment with Scottish Government proposal and next steps to be clarified.	Building from existing SRHP networks develop international platform for regional, national and international engagement and promote Scotland's success in rural health care. Disseminate learning from other countries with successful rural healthcare models.		
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity - ensured positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff and all who are affected by the use of the UIF</b>	Increase awareness of E&D issues with staff	UHI Staff and student E&D training undertaken	Awareness of the E&D plan for UHI	

## KESGs with no proposed changes to targets 2020-2021 but with notes added to activities (Aquaculture, Water Quality Innovation Group WQIG)

Aquaculture				
Overarching yearly income target for sector related KE activity = £100,000				
To provide at least one application, for at least one of the categories, for the Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards				
Aims/Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Impacts/Outcomes	Notes
<b>Demand Stimulation/Simplification</b>				
Raise the profile of UHI and increasing aquaculture industry's ease of access to UHI knowledge, expertise, and opportunities (which includes training and education)	Attend, contribute and exhibit at industry relevant events	<b>5 UHI Aquaculture Hub staff to attend industry relevant events/meetings/etc.</b> to interact with aquaculture businesses	Increased understanding of capabilities, skills and programmes at UHI as demonstrated by <b>records of direct industry interactions (25 recorded links)</b> at events/meetings/etc. and <b>records of distribution of promotional materials</b>	Online meetings. Due to the size of the industry, newly recorded links are more difficult to achieve. The focus is to shift to direct links, making new links where possible and maintaining links where relevant.
Increase engagement with relevant public sector stakeholders including HIE, Innovation Centres (e.g. SAIC), Interface, etc.	Attend/promote UHI Aquaculture Hub with Scotland's enterprise agencies, Scottish Government, business networks, Interface, Scottish HEIs and others	<b>8 meeting/events attended</b>	<b>1 initiative</b> between UHI Aquaculture KE Hub and relevant public sector stakeholder	Online meetings
Increase innovation within the local, regional, and international business sector through the uptake and use of UHI knowledge and expertise	Run a <b>workshop</b> for aquaculture businesses and related organisations (e.g. relevant public sector bodies) to facilitate networking and improve quality of engagement between businesses and UHI Aquaculture Hub members (and other relevant UHI staff)	Deliver <b>1 UHI Aquaculture KE Stakeholder Event</b>	<b>1 research project</b> demonstrating a better internal integration of partners' expertise to address industrial related needs	Activity already captured through Shell-volution workshop and developments
<b>Simplification/commercialisation</b>				
Increase economic activity for Scottish SMEs as a result of increased collaboration between UHI Aquaculture KE Hub and SMEs	Promote and coordinate the fourth round of the <b>UHI Aquaculture Industry Engagement Fund</b> to the UHI Aquaculture Hub and stakeholders	<b>2 projects funded by UHI Aquaculture Industry Engagement Fund</b> (project may include follow-on projects)	<b>2 case studies</b> published (promoted via UHI Aquaculture website pages as a minimum), which demonstrate the economic benefits of collaboration and/or potential for future commercialisation	
Develop and update marketing and communications using tools - web/social media presence	1) Involve UHI Aquaculture Hub members to update the content on the <b>UHI Aquaculture web pages</b> on the UHI websites (and links to partner websites) in order to: - improve clarity over opportunities that businesses can access from the UHI Aquaculture Hub - increase profile and accessibility of UHI and UHI Aquaculture Hub to a range of stakeholders including	1) Maintain <b>3500 web views p.a.</b> across the UHI Aquaculture webpages  2) Increase excellence in online communications through <b>training 2 hub members</b> and increasing access to quality materials and resources	Increased profile and UHI Aquaculture Hub brand awareness as demonstrated by increased metrics in social media.  Improve social media content (e.g. consistency, output) and evidence increasing engagement online through metrics platform	

	general public and industry partners 2) Continue to develop <b>social media</b> presence	3) Maintain social media output <b>&gt;100 tweets p.a.</b>		
Increase access to case studies that demonstrate and/or promote collaborative working opportunities between the UHI Aquaculture Hub and the sector	Search for appropriate projects, both past and present, and work these up into case studies that demonstrate collaborative working	Publish <b>5 case studies</b> on website (and/or other appropriate promotional platforms).	A <b>minimum of 3 of these case studies</b> will demonstrate good practice in post project referral protocols.	
<b>Simplification/ Innovation</b>				
Increase the number of sectoral-based business-led research and development projects	1) Identify and reassess strengths and develop suitable projects with industry partners 2) Attend/promote UHI Aquaculture Hub at industry focused meetings and company/site visits	1) submit <b>5 funding applications</b> that support innovation in the aquaculture sector, with some potential development assistance made available via the UHI Aquaculture Hub AIEF and Challenge Fund. 2) make <b>15 site visits/meetings</b> with aquaculture industry-relevant companies	1) Clarity around strengths, capacity and focus for UHI Aquaculture Hub to promote specialisms 2) Increase innovation in the aquaculture sector by securing at least <b>£100,000 funding</b> 3) <b>R&amp;D projects with 3 organisations in addition to the Aquaculture Industry Engagement Fund.</b> Demonstrating increasing confidence within the industrial sector in engagement with academic research partners	Online meetings
<b>Entrepreneurialism</b>				
Increased awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities within UHI staff	1) Liaise with UHI CREATE Group and Promote "UHI Enterprising Researchers Programme" to UHI Aquaculture Hub staff and related students 2) Identify and foster student and staff engagement with relevant aquaculture role models. UHI Aquaculture Hub to liaise with UHI Employability Team to help identify and arrange aquaculture guest speakers. 3) Continue liaison with UHI Careers and Employability Team	1) <b>3 staff</b> complete <b>UHI Enterprising Researcher programme training</b> , or similar 2) <b>5 guest speakers</b> from industry, or relevant public sector organisations, to showcase their business and/or work activity to UHI students/staff. Sessions to be recorded/documented (where possible) to develop a portfolio of aquaculture entrepreneur's 'journeys' that will be used for internal and external promotion of aquaculture entrepreneurial opportunities	Greater understanding of entrepreneurialism (e.g. skills, barriers, needs, timescales, failures, etc.) to assist development of new businesses or commercial activity through UHI Aquaculture Hub  Promotion of aquaculture as a STEM career and opportunities for businesses as well as identifying opportunities for collaborative working, etc.	Steering group to explore entrepreneurial skills training
<b>International Activity</b>				
Embed UHI Aquaculture KE Hub engagement with international groups across research, education, and innovation	1) Scope opportunities for International Engagement through identifying existing and potential UHI Aquaculture Hub extended networks that have international collaborators (including education links) 2) Link opportunities with UHI International Engagement Strategy 3) Develop contacts with international business and/or institutions	1) engagement with <b>2 (5)</b> international groups or businesses 2) the setup of an Internationalisation Challenge Fund to support mobility of staff for 1 event that has clear Knowledge Exchange opportunities (e.g. industry attendance)	<b>1 international collaborator on new UHI project.</b> To promote UHI's knowledge and expertise to support Scotland's International Framework with one international group collaborating with the UHI Aquaculture Hub	This target will be challenging to achieve without travel and traditional networking at events (e.g. a lot was planned around the EAS at Cork)
<b>Inclusive growth and social impact</b>				



Facilitate knowledge exchange and research in rural/island locations	Review and update shared on-line communication and working platform for the aquaculture hub to support UHI researchers in rural locations	1) Develop and assess a shared online platform that open to all UHI Aquaculture KE Hub members actively used by sectoral group staff (e.g. SharePoint)	Increase UHI activity in rural areas relating to aquaculture by providing an active, sectorial based network to increase the exchange of knowledge and opportunities across the UHI regions such that at least 2 projects are held by partners in a rural/island location	
	2) Deliver industry-focussed workshops in rural or island locations	1) Establish contact with UHI partners that currently do not have membership in the UHI Aquaculture Hub, but are likely to have aquaculture activity in the respective region  2) Delivery of 2 industry facing workshops in rural or island locations	10 rural businesses helped with advice and information. Development of the rural knowledge-based economy and to facilitate knowledge exchange and allow direct access to UHIs knowledge and expertise outside of city environments.	10 may not be possible unless able to communicate online.  We will be exploring options for around Aquaculture UK (assuming that is still going ahead in May 2021)
	3) Review existing KE and research impacts in rural and island locations that are made through current aquaculture CPD provision and opportunities for new CPD needs  4) Promotion of UHI public lectures/events that are relevant to aquaculture sector	Assessment of overall numbers of student engagements through aquaculture courses	Demonstrable input of UHI Aquaculture Hub to ongoing advice for careers choices and continuing professional development within the aquaculture sector	
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>				
Develop awareness of equality and diversity with UAH staff	Support UHI Aquaculture Hub staff in engaging with relevant training and/or events that promote equality and tackle inequality (e.g. "Women in Scottish Aquaculture")	1) All UHI Aquaculture Hub staff to undertake equality and diversity training  2) Development and monitor equality and diversity plan for UHI Aquaculture Hub	Increased understanding of Fair Work, closing the attainment gap and tackling inequality	
		3 staff attending event(s) with information fed back to UHI Aquaculture Hub members and industry partners (where relevant)	Increased awareness of equality issues and opportunities for within the aquaculture industry	Online meetings

## Water Quality Innovation Group

Overarching yearly income target for sector related KE activity = £56,000

To provide at least one application, for at least one of the categories, for the Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards

**No changes to WQIG 2020 – 2021 Targets -but some contextual notes added**

Aims/Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Impacts	NOTES
<b>Demand stimulation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop and up-date a focused WQIG UHI sectoral web presence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review, up-date and implement any new web communications strategies;</li> <li>Up-date and continuous review of web presence for the sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplified business access with &gt; 100 hits per year from August 2020 - July 2021</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased engagement with the sector. Engage with 6 new water quality businesses through the website in Year 4</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Simplification/commercialisation/innovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an increased internal KE awareness and cohesion within the UHI’s sectoral focused research communities, drawing in increased membership to the theme and informing new recruitment</li> <li>• Increased impact case studies in order to promote collaborative working opportunities to the sector</li> <li>• Increased interaction between the sector’s businesses and community groups and UHI researchers and academics to help build longer-term relationships and partnerships.</li> <li>• Increase engagement with relevant public sector stakeholders including HIE, SFC, Innovation Centres, Interface, Innovate UK (IUK), etc.</li> <li>• Increase engagement with industry and community partners/ stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 2 innovation workshops per year on business engagement, innovation and skills</li> <li>• At least 2 workshops per year on funding fore-sighting and proposal writing for industry led projects</li> <li>• Review and up-date the shared, on-line communication and working platform for the sector for both internal and external clients</li> <li>• Search for appropriate project both past and present and work up into case studies</li> <li>• Attendance/contribution/exhibit at industry focused events</li> <li>• Attendance/promotion at industry focused meetings</li> <li>• Attendance at sectoral stakeholder related events meeting and workshops</li> <li>• 10 events/meetings per year (includes meetings with key stakeholders)</li> <li>• Design and hold at least 2 events per year which are industry/community focused to allow researchers and academics to engage with industry partners</li> <li>• Implement a post project planning meeting structure and carry out with at least 5 new industry partners in Year 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 academic and research staff per year trained</li> <li>• An additional promotional tool created for the sector with at least 5 case studies per year</li> <li>• 6 industry events per year</li> <li>• 12 industry meetings per year</li> <li>• Increased understanding of the needs of the sector and all its stakeholders</li> <li>• 5 new university and businesses links per year</li> <li>• Increased generation of ideas for new project proposals</li> <li>• At least 2 follow on project (application made) Innovation Vouchers per year</li> <li>• At least 2 industry recognition award applications in Year 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 newly recorded university and business links per year;</li> <li>• At least 16 businesses /year helped with advice and information</li> <li>• At least 2 new business led projects per year</li> <li>• Sectoral businesses have Increased awareness of university services stimulating the demand for university services.</li> <li>• Network and relationship building between university and businesses/ local community groups leading to:</li> <li>• 10 newly recorded university and businesses links per year;</li> <li>• At least 10 businesses per year helped with advice and information;</li> <li>• 2 business undertaking innovation/ R&amp;D projects</li> <li>• Input into the development of new sector-wide initiatives</li> <li>• At least 16 businesses per year helped with advice and information</li> <li>• 8 businesses assisted with high level support</li> <li>• 4 businesses undertaking innovation/ R&amp;D projects</li> </ul>	<p>Trial and pilot events will be discussed and undertaken to assess what activities (and in what format), will optimise outputs and impacts in the Covid environment. This must recognise changes in the sector specific and general business landscapes.</p> <p>We have established a WQIG ‘Steering Group’, which will keep these matters under collective review (every 6 weeks) and seek to be as responsive as possible to changing sector needs, challenges and opportunities.</p> <p>Membership of this group includes members from the UHI KE Team and other sector groups to ensure effective sharing of knowledge.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of sectoral based business-led research and development projects.</li> <li>• Increased regional economic development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased business engagement, demand stimulation and relationship building aimed at developing business ideas for new products and processes</li> <li>• Identify and promote current and past case studies within the WQI sectoral group.</li> <li>• Various economic outputs will be monitored on a yearly basis and compared against targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 KTP/KEPPs</li> <li>• ~£20k of “other” won KE project funding.</li> <li>• Associated economic target outputs include:</li> </ul> <p>Year 4:  Number of new products 1  Number of new processes 1  Number of new services 1  New company formation 0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least £60k /year increased investment in business R&amp;D in the sector</li> <li>• It will take a number of years for full impact of R&amp;D to be shown in sales of new products, processes and services</li> </ul>	

<b>International</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased international development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various international outputs will be monitored on a yearly basis and compared against targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will establish continued contact with 2 international businesses by the end of year 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input into the development of potential new products with international organisations by the end of year three</li> </ul>	
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## Active Health and Wellbeing Group

### Leadership and Budget 2019/20 and 2020/21

Leadership for the Active Health and Wellbeing Group shifted to the University's Institute for Health Research & Innovation at the end of 2019 and a challenge fund was immediately set up, identifying three research projects with local sports clubs. Unfortunately, COVID-19 entirely prevented the commencement of these studies in Spring 2020; they are still all on hold because social distancing prevents the face-to-face activity associated with this type of activity. As a result, the 2019/20 budget was not spent and the budget has rolled over to 2020/21, with an additional £25k budgeted for this year. The compulsory break in activities driven by COVID-19 has facilitated a re-assessment of the programme, with a view to addressing the revised guidelines issued by SFC relating to the role of UIF in aiding recovery from COVID-19 and Brexit. This particular UIF is well-placed to deliver in this area, particularly with respect to recovery post-COVID.

### 2020/21: changes from previous plan

The key proposed changes from the previous plan are as follows:

- Lead academic (Prof Ian Megson) appointed as KE Group Chair;
- Roll-over of unspent 2019/20 budget (£19k), spend of which became impossible on account of COVID-19;
- 2019/20 budget to be added to £13k of 2020/21 budget in the Challenge Fund.

Active Health & Wellbeing	2020-21*
KE Group Chair (0.05 FTE)	6,000
Marketing materials	1,000
Entrepreneurial training	5,000
Challenge Fund	13,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,000</b>