

Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee Meeting, Quarter 3, 2023-2024

Wed 21 February 2024, 16:30 - 18:30

Attendees

Chair

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

Prescribed Board Members

- Souter Gary (Regional Student Director)
- Simon Clarke (Teaching Staff Director)

- Absent: Keith Massey (Local Student Director)

Other Board Members

- Claire Christey (Independent Director, Absent from 1, 2, 3, 5)

- Absent: John Goodlad (Independent Director)

Ex-Officio

- Jane Lewis (Principal - Shetland UHI)

Management Team Member

- Laura Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary)

Staff In Attendance

- Matt Sierocinski King (Board Secretary)

Also In Attendance

- Kevin Briggs (Head of Student Experience)
- Roxane Permar (Research Fellow, Present for 6)
- Simon Varwell (Director of Student Engagement and Representation of HISA, Present for: 1-5)
- Rachel Burn (Chief Executive of HISA, Absent from 9, 14, 15, 16)

Apologies

- Valerie Nicolson (Independent Director)
- Daniel Lawson (Independent Director)

Meeting minutes

Introductory Items

1. Welcome, Apologies, and Announcements

Ms Hall (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ms Nicolson (Independent Director) and Mr Lawson (Independent Director).

Ms Christey (Independent Director) left the meeting temporarily.

2. Declarations of Interest

Ms Hall (Chair) asked members of the Committee if they have any declarations of interest to make with regards to matters upon the agenda. No such declarations were made.

3. *Terms of Reference

Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary) updated the Committee on the changes to the Terms of Reference based on the committee assignments made by the Board of Management, and the prescribed membership of Mr Massey (Local Student Director) to the Committee.

Decision: The Committee approved the name changes to the Terms of Reference.

Action: The Board Secretary shall add the Terms of Reference to the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of Management for approval.

Student Experience

4. HISA Presentation - Elections, Update, and Intro, etc.

This agenda item was taken after agenda item five.

Mr Varwell (Director of Student Engagement and Representation - HISA) introduced the presentation gave an introduction to HISA, including on Senior staff, Regional Officers, Local representation, and the Advice Service. He also introduced Mrs Burn (Chief Executive - HISA) who was present, and detailed their roles.

The Director of Student Engagement and Representation spoke to the paper and the activities that HISA led on at UHI Shetland, the learning experience, and explain the aim of HISA for students was to leave with more than just a qualification. He also spoke about the Student Learning Experience model, and the strengthening of the Student Voice Rep system with updating of training and enhance the benefits to reps for serving as reps. The Chief Executive of HISA introduced herself and her background in the education sector.

The Committee discussed the context of student engagement across UHI with the focus on what the strengths and opportunities are. Both the HISA Director of Student Engagement and Representation, and the HISA Chief Executive responded to the discussion, and placed links to HISA's current work in the Teams chat.

The HISA Director of Student Engagement and Representation left the meeting at the end of this agenda item.

5. Senior Staff Presentation - ESES Presentation

This agenda item was taken after agenda item three.

Mr Briggs (Head of Student Experience) introduced the results of the ESES survey, and clarified that the response rate was about 19% compared to the target of 50% response rate. He set the response rate in context of events of the time of when the survey was open, and highlighting past return rates of previous years. He highlighted that the satisfaction rate was 100%, with 94% reporting that it was easy to enrol upon their courses. He also highlighted areas of success (70% and over), and areas that were not deemed successful (under 70%).

The Head of Student Experience explained to the Committee the actions arising in response to the results, along with elements of positive comments, and local changes such as the functionality of the bike shed. He also spoke about the number of surveys that students take throughout their academic year.

The Committee discussed the results, with a focus on response rate. The Head of Student Experience spoke that the survey was required by the SFC. Mrs Burn (Chief Executive - HISA) spoke about the support that HISA can bring for survey promotion to students. Dr Clarke (Teaching Staff Director) suggested that it was worth filtering the results by age and gender to assess and see if there were trends in the results. He also highlighted pool of students who could fill in the ESES to the Committee.

Ms Christey (Independent Director) returned to the meeting during this agenda item. The Head of Student Experience left the meeting at the end of this agenda item.

Action: The Head of Student Experience, as required, may utilise the offer of help from the Teaching Staff Director, for filtering on JISC to assist analysis.

Scholarship and Research

6. Senior Staff Presentation - Research

Professor Permar (Research Fellow) joined the meeting for this agenda item only.

The Research Fellow gave the presentation on Art of Place, with overview of her research practice. She introduced herself, her background the concept of structural art, and socially engaged art. She talked about the process of social engagement through the creation of links between people and places. She spoke about her integrated approach of research and teaching. She gave examples of her research projects, her teaching, and the events that she led upon. She spoke in detail regarding Island Power linking Shetland with islands in Norway, amongst other projects, with an environmental connection between all the projects she spoke about. She concluded by highlighting the aims of her research.

Mrs Burden (Teaching Staff Director) commented on the advantages of academics sharing their research with the Senior Management Team. Professor Lewis (Principal) also spoke to the powerful nature of the projects to which Roxane was leading upon. Dr Clarke (Teaching Staff Director) gave a suggestion on who the Research Fellow could get further support from with regards to recording impact for research funding.

Committee Matters

7. Minutes of the last meeting

Ms Hall (Chair) asked members of the Committee to review the Confidential minutes of the previous meeting for matters of accuracy. The Chair also asked members of the Committee to review the Non-Confidential minutes of the previous meeting for matters of accuracy.

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

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

8. Matters Arising

8.1. Input of Results and Industrial Action

Professor Lewis (Principal) updated the Committee on the pay dispute, with confirmation that EIS-Fela and Unison have not accepted the pay offer presented. She also confirmed that both unions had balloted members for strike action, with EIS-Fela to take strike action on 29th February 2024. She also confirmed that EIS-Fela had also achieved a mandate for Action Short of Strike, which was planned to include a marking strike.

The Principal relayed the sectoral guidance on the marking strike, which included a 100% deduction of pay for results not being entered by the deadline, with a view to discourage such industrial action. She stated that she meets with Union colleagues generally, and had encouraged the trade unions to accept the offer. The Principal stated that she was happy to receive and respond to questions on this matter.

The Committee discussed the matter.

Decision: The Committee wished to be kept informed of the developments of the industrial action, and therefore wished for this item to return the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary) shall add the topic of industrial action to the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee.

9. Vice-Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee

This agenda item was taken after agenda item 11. Mrs Burn (HISA Chief Executive) left the meeting at the start of this agenda item.

Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary) spoke to the matter of the role of Vice-Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee, the context of why the Board of Management had requested this agenda item, emphasised the importance of continuity planning, and clarified the point on who could take on the role.

The Committee discussed the matter.

Action: The Board Secretary shall email Independent Directors on this Committee asking for expression of interest in the role of Vice-Chair of Learning, Teaching and Research Committee.

Action: Ms Christey (Independent Director) volunteered to fulfil the role of Vice-Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee on the provisos that: no other volunteers come forth, and she is not elevated to the role of Chair of Audit Committee.

Performance Monitoring

10. Risks 1 and 2 - Student Numbers

Mrs Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary) spoke to the Committee about both risks via a Powerpoint presentation She detailed the Further Education student enrolments of Full Time and Part Time students, along with the current Credit levels of Full Time and Part Time students. She confirmed that Shetland UHI recorded 4028 credits, and reminded the Committee that the 2023/2024 Academic Year target was 4118. She stated that her expectation was that Shetland UHI would exceed its credit target.

The Depute Principal Tertiary moved on to speak to the Committee regarding Higher Education student numbers, highlighting that the picture was less positive, when compared to Further Education recruitment. She reminded the Committee that the Shetland UHI Undergraduate recruitment target for Shetland UHI is 140.4FTE (Full Time Equivalents) for the 2023/2024 academic year, with the current level, as of January 2024 was 117.7FTE. This compares to 138 at the same point last year. She also highlighted that Taught Postgraduate FTE for January 2024 was 15.7, compared to 10.3 in January 2023.

The Depute Principal Tertiary concluded that the residual risk level for risk one can be considered both red and green. She stated that it could be considered green as the recruitment levels exceed the target, while it could be considered red as Shetland UHI does not receive additional money for over recruitment. She also confirmed that the residual risk level for Higher Education recruitment was red.

The Committee discussed the risks and what action could be taken, with responses given by the Depute Principal Tertiary and Professor Lewis (Principal).

The Depute Principal Tertiary also updated the Committee on the recruitment of Skills for Work students, with 180 applications received, and that Shetland UHI had received an additional 30% of income from Shetland Islands Council for the delivery of Skills to Work courses.

Action: The Depute Principal Tertiary shall give a further update to the Committee regarding the context and impact of over recruitment.

11. FES Audit

This agenda item was taken after agenda item 13.

Mrs Burden (Depute Principal) spoke to the Committee about the FES Audit and the resulting recommendations of 1 medium priority recommendation, and 7 low priority recommendations. She detailed the corresponding actions to the recommendations made.

No questions were raised.

12. Education Scotland Feedback - Additional Learner Needs

This agenda item was taken after agenda item 10.

Mrs Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary) presented to the Committee on the Education Scotland feedback regarding Additional Learner Needs. She highlighted to the Committee the areas of development, and examples of highly effective practice, as detailed further in the report.

13. SQA Verification Audit Report

Mrs Burden (Depute Principal Tertiary) presented to the Committee on the topic of the SQA Audit. She spoke to the Committee about the recommendation made in the Audit and the example of good practice.

The Committee commented positively on the SQA Audit.

Policies

14. Table of Updated Policies

Noted: The table of Updated Policies was noted.

Concluding Items

15. Any Other Business

Professor Lewis (Principal) promoted space day held at the Scalloway Campus in conjunction with Dynamic Earth.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 29th May 2024

Agenda Item	Action	Responsible	Progress
3	Add the Terms of Reference to the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of Management for approval.	Board Secretary	Complete
5	As required, may utilise the offer of help from the Teaching Staff Director, for filtering on JISC to assist analysis.	Head of Student Experience	
8.1	Add the topic of industrial action to the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee.	Mx Sierocinski King (Board Secretary)	
9	Email Independent Directors on this Committee asking for expression of interest in the role of Vice-Chair of Learning, Teaching and Research Committee.	Board Secretary	
9	Ms Christey (Independent Director) volunteered to fulfil the role of Vice-Chair of Learning, Teaching, and Research Committee on the provisos that: no other volunteers come forth, and she is not elevated to the role of Chair of Audit Committee.	Ms Christey (Independent Director)	Superseded
10	Give a further update to the Committee regarding the context and impact of over recruitment.	Depute Principal Tertiary	