

Annual Engagement Visit Report

UHI Perth

16 April 2024

College Principal	Dr Margaret Cook
Annual Engagement Visit Date	20 February 2024
College Nominee	Catherine Etri
Lead HMI	Joe Mulholland

1. Background

Annual Engagement Visits (AEVs) are planned collaboratively between the college, HM Inspectors and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). During the AEV, the team focussed on the progress made on improvement priorities and the outcomes of previous engagement with HM Inspectors. HM Inspectors met with staff, learners and other stakeholders. This report outlines the findings from the visit and includes aspects of positive practice, aspects for improvement and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the college Principal, college Board of Management and/or Regional Strategic Body. An accompanying short report will be published on Education Scotland’s website.

During the AEV the team explored the following overarching themes: learner progress and outcomes, approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching, including professional updating and learner engagement.

The team also reviewed progress against actions identified during our engagement in AY 2022-23.

2. The college and its context

UHI Perth is an academic partner within the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). The college works in partnership with local and regional stakeholders to deliver provision to meet the skills needs of Tayside and the wider UHI region.

The college offers a broad curriculum from levels 2 to 12 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) across four faculties: Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM); Applied Life Studies; Business Management, Computing and Leisure; and Creative and Cultural Industries.

Further education (FE) level provision also includes delivery of Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programmes. The college works with the local authority and secondary schools to deliver Foundation Apprenticeships in Business, Creative and Digital Media, Early Years, Engineering and Health Care to school-age learners.

3. Summary of findings

3.1 Learner progress and outcomes

Summary of key performance indicator information

- The rate of successful completion for learners on full-time FE programmes has been consistently above sector average for the last five years. College-derived data indicates that the full-time FE successful completion rate has increased for AY 2022/23.
- The majority of curriculum areas have successful learner completion rates above the sector norm for full-time FE programmes.
- The successful completion rate for learners on part-time FE programmes has declined significantly in the past year and is lower than the sector average. However, college-derived data indicates that successful completion has increased for AY 2022/23.
- Successful completion rates for learners who declare a disability, or are care experienced, are above sector averages.
- Withdrawal rates for full-time FE learners are significantly lower than sector average. College-derived data for AY 2022/23 indicates rates of learner withdrawal from full-time FE programmes remain steady.
- Withdrawal rates for part-time FE learners are significantly higher than the sector average. However, college-derived data for AY 2022/23 suggests that this has improved.

Evaluative commentary

Equity, attainment, and achievement for all learners (QI 3.2)

Areas of positive practice

- Managers lead self-evaluation arrangements well and engage staff effectively in analysing learner progress and outcomes to identify areas requiring improvement. Teams work well together to take forward actions from meetings, including making changes to the curriculum portfolio. This has resulted in examples of different subject areas working together to create new programmes and remove or replace outdated programmes.
- College transitions officers work well with local secondary schools to ensure school-age learners transitioning to college programmes receive information about the range of support services available to them. They collaborate well with college support staff to provide new learners with a smooth transition into college programmes.
- Teaching staff contextualise activities to ensure learners are developing skills for the workplace. Curriculum teams provide learners with good opportunities to develop meta skills through project work, volunteering in the workplace and collaborating with industry partners to influence future planning of programme content.

- Mental health support staff facilitate regular drop-in sessions for learners with additional support needs or specific barriers to learning. They host regular informal meetings to support learners to build confidence in engaging with staff and peers and remain on their programme.
- Data sharing arrangements between the college and the local authority, and its schools, is enabling college support staff to plan effectively the needs of school-age learners. As a result, college staff are able to coordinate arrangements to ensure learners have access to support from the start of their programme.
- Personal academic tutors (PATs) support learners well. They engage with learners to monitor progress and signpost access to support services when required. Learners value one-to-one engagements with PATs and feel that they support them well to succeed.

Areas for development

- Successful completion rates for learners from the most deprived backgrounds, or from an ethnic minority background, are below sector average.
- Arrangements for monitoring and tracking learner outcomes are not applied consistently by staff across all curriculum areas.

3.2 Approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating

Leadership for improvement of learning and teaching (QI 1.2)

Areas of positive progress

- Most teaching staff use regular team meetings with managers to review productively learners' progress and to tailor learning and teaching to meet their individual needs. Staff comment that these arrangements enable interventions to be put in place quickly to support retention.
- The majority of teaching staff hold the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) or equivalent and all staff undertake an annual professional review to identify their professional learning requirements. Staff are supported well to identify pedagogical skills needs through these arrangements.
- Learner student voice representatives (SVRs) meet regularly with curriculum managers to contribute their views about their learning experience. They value opportunities to discuss suggestions for improvement and feel that managers take good account of their feedback.
- The majority of curriculum managers involve staff, learners and stakeholders in activities to enhance learning and teaching across the college. This includes raising staff awareness of new programmes and awarding bodies, coordinating guest lectures by employers and hosting events that extend and enhance the knowledge and skills of teaching staff.

Areas for development

- Some teaching staff are not provided with sufficient opportunity to engage in activities to enhance their approach to learning and teaching.

Learning, teaching, and assessment (QI 2.3)

Areas of positive progress

- Throughout the academic year staff use a variety of effective approaches to capture the views of learners. These include student satisfaction surveys, analysis of end-of-semester evaluations and drawing on feedback from student forums and information from PATs. There are many examples of curriculum staff adjusting and enhancing programmes as a direct result of learner feedback.
- All teaching staff use the college's self-evaluation arrangements to reflect on learning, teaching and assessment approaches; and identify areas for improvement. They feel their managers listen and that they are enabled to make suggestions.
- Teaching and support staff provide a range of flexible support facilities to help learners overcome challenges and ease anxiety. These facilities help learners to build confidence to participate more fully in their programme.

Areas for development

- A significant increase in the number of learners requesting alternative assessment arrangements has impacted the college's capacity to meet demand. Teaching staff should improve planning arrangements to timeously meet specific learner support needs.

3.3 Learner Engagement

Learners leading learning (QI 1.2)

Areas of positive progress

- The Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA) take care to ensure that training for SVRs meets the needs of learners with ASN and learners whose first language is not English. This includes simplifying language, making use of infographics and adjusting the pace of delivery. This is helping to ensure a more inclusive and diverse student voice.
- HISA use 'You said, we did' to publicise improvements to the learner experience as a result of learner feedback. Examples include: instalment of microwaves on all campus buildings to allow learners to prepare their own meals; identifying and resolving clashes in assessment schedules; and adjustments to programmes to ease stress for learners.
- HISA works closely with local businesses to gather donations for the Big Project and provides cost-of-living support by distributing food and toiletries to all learners who require it. All learners are encouraged to utilise this facility.

Areas for development

- None identified

Evaluation leading to improvement (QI 1.4)

Areas of positive progress

- College managers participate productively in evaluation arrangements. Reports are collated well by senior managers and used effectively to contribute to planning for college-wide enhancement activities.
- Support staff engage effectively in evaluating the services they provide for learners. Support teams draw on findings from an early student experience survey to assess the impact of learner application, enrolment and induction arrangements. They use learner feedback well in self-evaluation activities to plan actions for improvement.
- All PATs monitor learner attendance and engagement continuously and effectively. Senior managers access an online system regularly to review enrolment, retention and progression data and take action to initiate interventions where required.

Areas for development

- None identified

Learning teaching and assessment (QI 2.3)

Areas of positive progress

- Most curriculum teams engage effectively with employers to promote, contextualise and enhance programmes. They draw constructively on this collaboration to support teaching staff to keep up to date with current and emerging industry needs.
- Almost all learners speak highly of the academic and pastoral support they receive from PATs. During programmes, PATs schedule individual meetings with learners to provide guidance upon work placements and employment and progression opportunities. Their positive engagement with learners is fostering supportive staff-learner relationships.
- All learners are provided with the opportunity to become a mental health ambassador. Student Services deliver training that includes input from charitable bodies to provide insight into the range of specialist external support agencies. Some learners value this training to complement their vocational qualifications.

Areas for development

- A significant number of SVRs have not engaged with training to help them undertake their role.

3.4 Update on previous Education Scotland evaluative activities AY 2022-23

The college has made appropriate progress since our last visit. Staff have acted upon the areas for development identified in relation to supporting new learners to access digital devices. Induction activities have been revised to make activities appropriate for new and returning learners and the number of emails learners receive has been reduced to address the high volume they were receiving from staff.

The amount of full-time FE learners entering a positive destination has increased and is now above the sector average. The withdrawal rate for part-time FE learners is significantly higher than the sector average. However, college derived data for AY 2022/23 suggests that this has improved.

4. Main Points for Action

None identified.

5. What happens next?

We are confident that the college has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve. We will continue to monitor progress through ongoing engagement with the link HM Inspector.

Joe Mulholland
HM Inspector

Annexe 1 Evaluative Terms

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

Annexe 2 Full-time FE

College			
	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully
2018-19	22.90%	9.70%	67.40%
2019-20	20.30%	12.70%	67.00%
2020-21	26.30%	11.10%	62.60%
2021-22	25.00%	9.90%	65.10%
National sector performance			
	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully
2018-19	24.70%	10.10%	65.20%
2019-20	20.80%	13.20%	66.00%
2020-21	27.30%	11.70%	60.90%
2021-22	29.30%	11.70%	59.00%

Part-time FE

College			
	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully
2018-19	11.70%	15.40%	72.90%
2019-20	9.60%	9.80%	80.60%
2020-21	11.70%	12.60%	75.60%
2021-22	15.10%	13.20%	71.80%
National sector performance			
	Withdrawal	Partial Success	Completed successfully
2018-19	9.30%	11.00%	79.70%
2019-20	9.50%	12.50%	78.00%
2020-21	10.20%	13.50%	76.20%
2021-22	10.70%	13.00%	76.30%

Outcomes on courses lasting 160 hours or more

UHI Perth	2021 -2022			
	Enrolled	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal
10% Most deprived postcode areas	92	57.6%	10.9%	31.5%
20% Most deprived postcode areas	227	60.4%	12.8%	26.9%
Care Experienced	124	61.3%	12.9%	25.8%
Disability	752	65.2%	12.4%	22.5%
Ethnic minority	93	64.5%	12.9%	22.6%
FE Females	824	60.1%	12.9%	27.1%
FE Males	891	71.7%	10.4%	17.8%

Scotland	2021 -2022			
	Enrolled	% Completed Successful	% Partial Success	% Withdrawal
10% Most deprived postcode areas	21,327	60.1%	13.7%	26.3%
20% Most deprived postcode areas	39,849	60.8%	13.5%	25.6%
Care Experienced	7,887	52.5%	17.8%	29.6%
Disability	30,671	61.6%	14.4%	24.0%
Ethnic minority	12,999	68.9%	13.7%	17.5%
FE Females	47,435	61.9%	13.6%	24.5%
FE Males	46,808	68.5%	13.1%	18.4%
HE Females	19,528	67.0%	10.7%	22.3%
HE Males	16,537	63.1%	16.2%	20.7%