Access and Inclusion Strategy

2017-2022

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University of the Highlands and Islands
Perth College

Version Control History

Version Number	Date of Change	Summary of Revisions Made
1.0	April 2017	First version. The Strategy defines our aspirations for accessible and inclusive services, how we monitor effectiveness and impact, and also sets out future priorities and outcomes linked to other relevant strategies and plans.

Contents

Purpose

The Access and Inclusion Strategy defines our aspirations for accessible and inclusive services, how we monitor effectiveness and impact, and also sets out future priorities and outcomes linked to other relevant strategies and plans. It outlines top level expenditure on specific services in Appendix 1. Perth College UHI is fully committed to ongoing development of an inclusive college culture and improving its accessibility. This aims to improve the positive outcomes and the lives of all the people in our learning communities.

Context

Perth College UHI, has its main campus in the city of Perth which is located within 50 miles of 90% of Scotland's population, in the fast growing local authority population of Perth and Kinross. Its tertiary curriculum serves the needs of its local area, as well as the wider Highlands and Islands Region and beyond. Our Strategic Plan 2016-21 drives forward the Highlands and Islands Regional Outcome Agreement as well as ensuring full participation in Perth and Kinross Single Outcome Agreement measures, Locality Outcome Improvement Plans and Community Planning priorities. The principles of access and inclusion are embedded throughout this strategic plan and our operational planning for delivery of this.

Vision

To be an inspirational partner in economic and social transformation.

Mission

To change lives through excellence in education, research and innovation, developing knowledge and skills and the experience to succeed.

Perth College UHI offers learning opportunities to a wide range of learners across our local learning communities. Our learning portfolio is offered and delivered in a range of study modes and at different study levels. Modes of study include, full-time, part-time, online learning, distance learning, block release, day release, short courses and leisure classes. Study levels are tertiary and cover Access level all the way to Post Graduate study (SQFC levels 3- 12), with progression routes mapped throughout levels and a curriculum that is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets local and regional need.

Perth College UHI also provides a service to rural communities in Perth and Kinross, through a range of learning opportunities at College Learning Centres in Blairgowrie, Crieff, Kinross and Pathways (in Perth city centre). The centres offer a range of provision which supports access and inclusion, For Example, courses which support the development of a range of core skills whilst at the same time providing a supportive and friendly environment in which to learn.

As well as leisure classes which are often the first step on a journey for those furthest from mainstream provision, the centres offer accredited provision at a range of levels and offer progression from non-accredited CLD provision.

We work in partnership with all our secondary schools to deliver appropriate learning experiences, transitions, qualifications, and progression routes particularly in S3 – S6. We are also involved in the development of the Children's University in Perth and Kinross, where we aim to engage with parents and younger pupils particularly with schools with current attainment gap plans.

Key Principles

Our Values of Ambition, Integrity and Respect underpin this plan.

Our Strategic Aims will deliver our broad access and inclusion ambitions, namely:

1   Inspire and empower our students, regardless of background, to recognise and achieve their potential.

2   Work in partnership to foster and drive positive change and growth in local, regional, national and international economies.

3   Provide dynamic learning and research experiences within a curriculum that meets economic and societal needs and aspirations.

4   Optimise the sustainable use of our systems, processes and resources to provide the best possible student experience and outcomes.

5   Have talented, confident and inspirational staff who contribute to and make a vital difference to the success of students, the life of the College, the University and our communities.

Whole college joint working, regional planning and partnership with students and stakeholders will be core. We will work in partnership with Perth College UHI Students Association, Perth and Kinross Community Planning Partnership, and other relevant stakeholders to deliver positively on informed and shared priorities.

We will continue to mainstream equality and diversity into all aspects of our operations and in doing so provide a learning and working environment which is founded on key principles of fairness, opportunities and respect for everyone.

We will proactively support and contribute to the relevant outcomes within the Highlands and Islands Regional Outcome Agreement.

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Themes and Activity

Perth College UHI has in place comprehensive support structures at all stages of the student journey (from pre-entry through to pre-exit and destination stage); our access and inclusion approaches are integrated into this journey.

1   **Estates**

The college main campus comprises four buildings, a Nursery and student accommodation on Crieff Road, Perth. These range from new build facilities, to a renovated 1960's ex Council secondary school. The campus is situated on a large site with mature trees, with public access through the grounds and buildings spread over a hilly site. The estate has been well maintained over the years with considerable investment in new builds, infrastructure and accessibility measures. However, the two main buildings are over 30 years old and the hill between the two has natural constraints on some aspects of accessibility. An ongoing campus maintenance and Equality and Diversity Plan continue to develop facilities and improvements as funding permits.

To contribute access and inclusion, the College has Learning Centres in Blairgowrie, Kinross and Crieff which offer both geographic and curriculum inclusion opportunities. The Learning Centres work closely with local communities and schools to ensure appropriate development and use. The Learning Centre at Pathways in the centre of Perth also offers a space for learning and transition which is welcomed by a range of users, including students who may be challenged by coming to the main campus.

2   **Curriculum Map**

We plan our core curriculum offering to provide a flexible and progressive learning and qualifications routes which can be work based or college based. We map our curriculum to meet local and regional needs of employers, as well as taking cognisance of national specialisms where appropriate. Students who need supported with personalised advice, are guided to appropriate access routes to achieve their desired goals. Qualifications routes are planned from SCQF3 through to SCQF 12 with appropriate entry and exit points at each level. We have grown our curriculum provision at SCQF 3 and 4 with both Funding Group 5 in SVS and New Opportunities to improve access and inclusion opportunities.

3   **Personal and Vocational Skills Curriculum**

This curriculum sector includes a range of courses developed to ensure appropriate and inclusive early access points to students. The New Opportunities curriculum area supports learners facing challenges in accessing education, who may not yet be ready for courses in a specific curriculum area. The needs of students with additional and complex needs are supported with curriculum is delivered under the Price Group 5 category in the SVS curriculum area. Below is a brief summary of provision.

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New Opportunities

- Next Steps 2 Learning: Full time: 16 – 24 year olds who need to gain more qualifications to access a curriculum area or who need to gain confidence and the skills to be a successful student.
- Return 2 Learn: Part Time: 25 + and been away from education for some time.
- Community Learning: Short courses responding to community need and delivered in community settings. The focus of these course are on softer skills, core and essential skills, confidence building, life skills, personal development and employability. SQA level 4 qualifications are included.
- Princes Trust; Full time × 12 weeks 16 – 24 year olds facing barriers to education or employment.
- Connect: part –time provision over 16 weeks. For those over 16 with experience of mental ill health.
- Moving On: Full Time: for 15 – 17 year olds who have experienced challenges in school and may have had difficulties in attending. Focus like above is on confidence building, employability, and personal development – including working with others, work experience etc. A range of qualifications are included including SQA at level 3 and 4 and ASDAN.

SVS

The Social and Vocational Skills sector works in partnership with support agencies and employers to provide a range of appropriate and progressive learning and qualification experiences for students in the price group 5 category. Students attend college on a part-time or full –time basis and work towards a range of awards including SQA, Asdan, John Muir, and Duke of Edinburgh. There are five flexible routes offered including Stepping In, New Skills 1, New Skills 2, New Skills 3 and Stepping Out.

4   **Recruitment and Admissions**

Selection and recruitment of students for courses at Perth College is done using a new process that was introduced in 2014-15. Our aim was to develop a fairer, more transparent and consistent student selection process. The new process is used with all FE applicants (all FE students and applicants up to HNC level).

The system also ensures that staff are supported and confident in making decisions on student applicants. The new process was developed initially through of a project called 'Equitable Admissions' where the ECU (Equality Challenge Unit) worked directly with specific FE colleges (Including Perth College) to evaluate and develop their current systems for more equitable admissions purposes. Those students who are not successful (rejected) in their applications are followed up (where possible and practical) by College guidance staff to ensure all applicants are aware of other relevant opportunities at College and elsewhere.

Relevant information disclosed by the applicant is stored in the college systems but appropriate information is passed to relevant staff and departments to be acted on

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(and considered) as part of our support for student and applicants including at selection stages.

We are introducing a more focused and structured contextualised admissions system in partnership with other UHI colleges. This process will specifically support four categories of applicant including care experienced, and those with no previous FE/HE experience in the direct family.

5   **Transitions**

Transitions Support: Perth College has a comprehensive set up for supporting students who need additional assistance on their journey to College. We set – up Enhanced Transition Plans to those identified by local schools at ASN and post 16 meetings. This also includes bespoke provision for those young people identified as needing extra assistance in adjusting and coping with College life. We enrol students on our pre-induction program 'Get ready for College' (referrals from external local agencies) and other programs include a Study Skills pre- induction program: Prepare to study.

The College Transition Officer develops a transitions Plan and passes relevant information on those needing enhanced transitions to appropriate College support staff or departments connected with selection and interviewing. The Transition Officer also picks up on information declared or disclosed in application or directly to college that would involve a transitions help eg a disability that creates an issue for access and/or living -in college residences.

As a tertiary organisation, students progressing within the college are supported seamlessly in terms of their support mechanisms and knowledge of curriculum progression and opportunity.

6   **Student Support Services**

Student Services: play a key role in the 'Access and Inclusion' agenda. Providing a range of specialist services, support, provision and staff expertise to manage and support all students and applicants. Student Services have specialist expertise and support from the pre-entry stage; this continues throughout college and on to the pre-exit stage. Student Services offer support at every stage of the student journey. Staff expertise include for those students' who require a Personal Learning Plan (PLSP), or for students requiring reasonable adjustments to ensure they can access all College facilities. This can include adjustments to student residences and across the campus.

Perth College UHI, have a specific support team for students with Mental Health conditions or related issues and likewise for anything related to Student Funding.

Overall, demand for these services remains very high (growing year on year) and is straining with the support services resources we have to offer. Refining models and smarter working practices have been implemented to stream line processes and improve effectiveness. However, it is not changing the fact that demand is way higher than support resources currently available.

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7 Support for Learning, Achievement and Progression

- PAT system: every student at Perth College UHI has a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) allocated to them. The role of the PAT is to deal with issues related to the student's study or academic performance, it can involve some pastoral issues and advice. PATs work very closely with Student Services Support Teams and issues are recorded and managed appropriately. PATs are offered regular training on a broad range of issues affecting students.
- Learning Zone and Learning Mentors: The Learning Zone offers students dyslexia screening services, and one to one support as directed by a PLSP and similar. This includes a range of support provision to those with or without a PLSP and at all levels of study including: note taking, presentation skills, exam preparation, communication skills, revision techniques. Due to increasing need for student skills for some students as part of their PLSP requirements, we can face some capacity issues in house at times of high demand. To help with this we use a range of external agencies to supply these services to students who need them; however,
- Inclusive teaching practice: Inclusive learning approaches are encouraged and developed by lecturers throughout all courses at Perth College UHI. These approaches are encouraged so that all learners have the best chance of success on their course, and that teaching and learning is developed in a student centred manner. These approaches are promoted through the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy which includes the Take 5 Principles of:

  1 Active learning.
  2 Assessment and feedback for learning.
  3 Peer support.
  4 Making it personal and relevant.
  5 Using digital resources and skills effectively.

  Learning Mentors are used as a targeted resource to provide extra learning support for specific students or classes as indicated by levels of support need. This covers a range of subjects and levels.

- BRAG (Blue Red Amber Green) system: is an online College system that monitors the attendance and academic performance of every FE student class by class, course by course. It is an early intervention system linked to class registers and to relevant support and student funding team staff. The college can identify early any student who is either not attending regularly or not achieving academically and who may potentially be a risk of not achieving or staying at college. The BRAG system enables academic and support staff to work in partnership to benefit those students identified as at risk as part of an early intervention approach.
- Progression: – Each student will have Personal Development Planning time built in to their course, which supports discussion around career aims, progression routes, skills development, CV development, and a range of activities around employability. Work experience, placement or volunteering opportunities are built in to nearly all FE level courses. We work closely with SDS and our in house Progression and Careers advisory team to target

appropriate support to ensure positive destinations wherever possible. Progression Boards/Exam Boards are held twice a year to consider student progress and next steps to support attainment or other appropriate next steps.

- ESOL – The College has a British Council accredited language school offering a range of provision to those groups where English is not their first language. It attracts a lot of applicants from local migrant and refugee populations, some of whom use the program as a stepping stone to study on mainstream courses. Our target groups include: EU nationals resident in Perth & Kinross area. Students wishing to progress on to further study within the college; mothers with children attending nursery/ primary school; older students wishing to find employment in areas they have experience of in their home countries; EU residents applying from abroad; people wishing to upskill and return to their own country for employment; students on Semester Abroad programmes; Students with larger study abroad groups; students who have places on courses but need their English skills to improve before commencing. The Language School works closely with other departments in College and with core skills teams to aid progression and attainment.

8   ICT

Our core ICT infrastructure, network, Virtual Learning Environment, video conference facilities, student records, and libraries system are provided by UHI, with a local college based service supporting desktop services, local networks, learning technologies, and assistive technologies. Where possible, all college PC's are imaged with assistive technology software to enable full access across all IT suites. Students can access files and core software remotely via the web.

9   CPD

The college invests heavily in providing relevant CPD opportunities to equip our staff to contribute to strategic aim 5, "Have talented, confident and inspirational staff who contribute to and make a vital difference to the success of students, the life of the College, the University and our communities." In terms of access and inclusion, we have supported a range of academic and support to staff to complete a range of qualifications from 1 day programmes to Masters level qualifications in skills from Mental Health First Aid to MSc's in Counselling or Autism Support. All staff complete mandatory training in a range of topics including Diversity in the Workplace, Safeguarding in FE Colleges, Equality Impact Assessment and Mental Health.

Our Equality and Diversity Adviser runs regular sessions and also works one to one and with small groups on moving forward specific issues. The Learning and Teaching Leaders work with new staff at induction, through their probation, peer review of teaching, special interest groups and recommending workshops internally and externally, and with the UHI Learning and Teaching Academy to ensure ongoing development of inclusive teaching and learning practice. Our annual June Staff Conference offers an opportunity to share good practice across a range of subjects, including access and inclusion research and practice, and whole college conferences in November and February focus on key topics with internal and external speakers for example, the February 2017 conference had an external speaker from the Equalities Unit and focussed on Access and Inclusion in operational planning.

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Base Measures

We evaluate the effectiveness of access and inclusion measures through ongoing in year planning, reflection of key performance indicators, engagement with students and key stakeholders, self-evaluation processes and joint partnership planning. Further enhancement going forward will include improved data reporting in specific access and inclusion measures, and resultant focus in self-evaluation and action planning on understanding this data and acting on it.

The following tables outline key current data in establishing forward plans and priorities:

1   **Gender**

Male and female students both attain above the sector average.

Males do tend to outperform females at sector level and this is more noticeable for Perth with a difference of 8.6% whilst at sector level this is only 4.6% (but this has grown from 2.3% last year).

Females tend to be more successful with full-time courses (71%) than part-time courses (57%). Males tend to be more successful with part-time courses (83%) than full-time courses (76%). This would align with part-time provision that is sponsored by employers or sponsors where the predominant gender is male (eg construction and engineering) and where a full qualification is a recognised occupational requirement.

Evaluation and action planning to fully understand and address gender issues in course choice and success is ongoing within the developing Gender Action Plan. We currently have significant gender differences in recruitment to courses such as Engineering, Motor Vehicle Engineering, Audio Engineering, Early Years Practitioners, Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy.

2   **Care Experienced Admissions**

Number of students indicating on application they have a care experienced background.

	FE	HE	Total
2014-15	74	17	91
2015-16	78	43	121
2016-17	114	53	167

Number of students enrolled each year: that highlighted a care experienced background.

	FE	HE	Total	Application to Enrolment Conversion Rate
2014-15	64	17	81	89%
2015-16	71	24	95	78%
2016-17	60	25	85	51%

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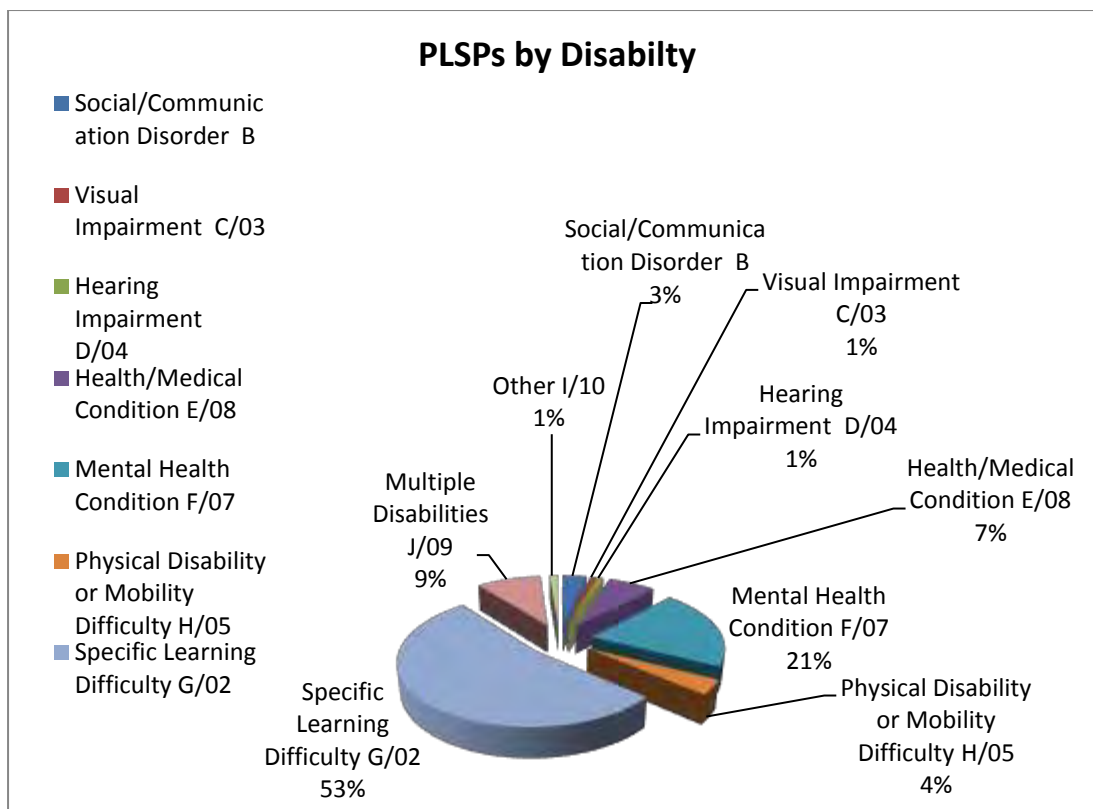QUAL116/RO/EF   8   Perth College UHI

We have been working closely with partners to increase applications from care experienced students, and also with students to disclose that they are care experienced. This has meant a higher rate of application, and also a higher disclosure rate. The above figures demonstrate a downward trend in the success of application conversion this group of students. We are working to understand this trend in the statistics reported and to put in place actions to address this including through our Corporate Parenting Plan, enhanced engagement and contextualised admissions processes.

3 Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSP)

PLSPs Per Academic Year

2012-13	359
2013-14	387
2014-15	408
2015-16	510
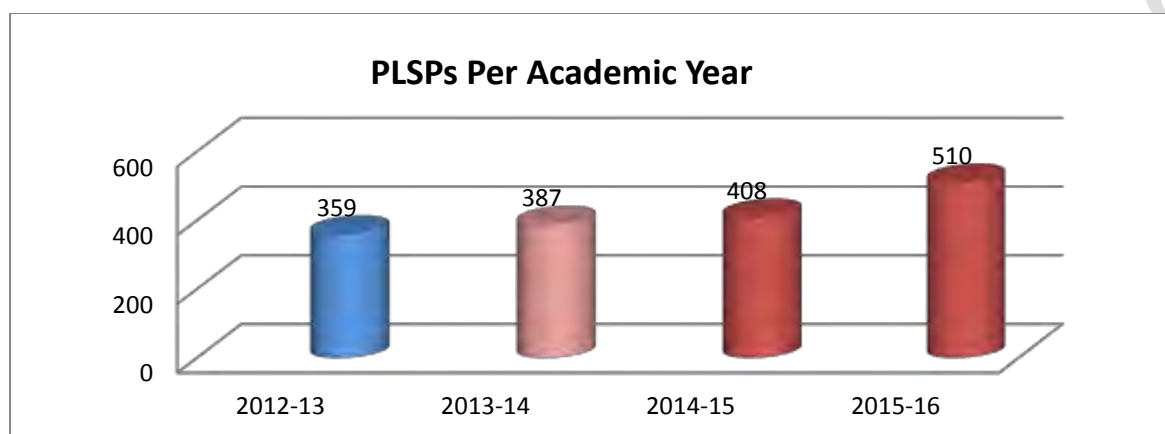
The number of PLSP's is growing year on year, as both student numbers grow and work with students improves those coming forward to discuss support needs. We are also very aware that there is an increasing need to work with a growing number of students who are vulnerable and less resilient for a number of reasons, but not falling within the PLSP system. From the graph below, it can be seen that 53% of PLSP's concern 'specific learning difficulties' such as dyslexia. One of our actions going forward is to consider new models for supporting all students currently with PLSP's and an early priority will be those presenting with specific learning difficulties.

PLSPs by Disabilty

Legend:
- Social/Communication Disorder B
- Visual Impairment C/03
- Hearing Impairment D/04
- Health/Medical Condition E/08
- Mental Health Condition F/07
- Physical Disability or Mobility Difficulty H/05
- Specific Learning Difficulty G/02

Pie chart segments:
- Social/Communication Disorder B — 3%
- Visual Impairment C/03 — 1%
- Hearing Impairment D/04 — 1%
- Health/Medical Condition E/08 — 7%
- Mental Health Condition F/07 — 21%
- Physical Disability or Mobility Difficulty H/05 — 4%
- Specific Learning Difficulty G/02 — 53%
- Multiple Disabilities J/09 — 9%
- Other I/10 — 1%

Summary Attainment Outcome Data for Key Priority Groups

The following table shows that overall the college position is positive in terms of trend for attainment in students from key priority groups, with all being above sector level. However, we wish to understand these trends more thoroughly and proactively plan with our partners to continue to improve these trends.

Key Group	Perth College 15-16	Perth College 14-15	Sector Level 15-16
10% most deprived areas.	77.3	71.1	65.7
20% most deprived areas.	73.5	69.2	65.4
Ethnic minority.	72.7	68.3	71.8
Disability.	67.5	66.7	65.4
Year of study greater than first year.	94.4	89.8	81.3

Key Forward Priorities

In consideration of current base measures and local need, legislation and government priorities, and outcome agreement measures we will continue to work towards an excellent student experience for all our students, regardless of background, and to positive opportunities, success and destinations.

However, we will work to specifically address priority action groups including access and inclusion with respect to potential and current students in areas of social urban and rural deprivation, catchment schools with attainment challenge, protected characteristic groups, students with learning disability and complex needs, students with additional and extended learning support needs, care experienced students, young carers.

1   Implement use of enhanced SFC data reporting tools for focused analysis and planning, and explore wider measures of rural and urban deprivation appropriate to our context.
2   Review, explore and design future delivery and embedding of effective and efficient inclusive student support models throughout the student journey.
3   Work with regional and college colleagues in respect of considering the inclusiveness of ICT systems.
4   Enact priorities and plans within college Gender Action Plan, Corporate Parenting Plan and Equalities Outcomes, and improving measures contained within these.
5   Further enhance joint planning with care experienced and young carer students, improving support, retention, attainment and positive destination to maintain at least parity with baseline whole student population outcomes.
6   Continue to develop contextualised admissions processes and relevant support mechanisms.
7   Further enhance whole college student engagement and voice, specifically with priority action groups.
8   Continue to develop appropriate and focussed CPD for all staff, Board of Management, and Perth College UHI Students Association to ensure access and inclusion is embedded within all actions and planning.
9   Continue to develop enhanced transitions and joint planning through key groups such as the Schools Strategy Group, CPP Locality Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Outcome Delivery Groups, SDS shared planning.
10   Contribute positively to the achievement of the overall Highlands and Islands Regional Outcome Agreement.

Implementation and Review

These priorities will be enacted through operational planning processes, and review built in to self-evaluation, outcome review and our Strategic Plan Balanced Scorecard measures which are considered and reported on through committees to the Board of Management. This will then also be considered at a regional level through appropriate committees.

Related Documents

Perth College UHI Strategic Plan 2016-21

UHI Strategic Plan

Highlands and Islands Regional Outcome Agreement

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2017-22

Student Engagement Strategy 2017-22

Corporate Parenting Plan

Gender Action Plan

Equalities Mainstreaming Outcomes 2017–2020

BRAG Attendance and Performance Monitoring Procedure

CPD Strategy, Policy and Procedures

Discretionary and Childcare Funds Policy

Discretionary and Childcare Funds Procedure

E-Safety Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Equality Mainstreaming Report 2015 (PDF)

Equality Mainstreaming Report 2015 (PRINT)

Extended Learning Support Policy

Extended Learning Support Procedure

Fitness to Study Staff Guidelines

Guidance Policy

ICT Acceptable Use Policy for Staff and Students

Mitigating Circumstances Procedure

Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme Policy

Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme Procedure

Safeguarding Policy Protecting Children, Young People, Adults at Risk and Staff

Safeguarding Procedure Protecting Children, Young People, Adults at Risk and Staff

Skills for Life, Learning and Work Policy

Student Charter

Student Mental Health, Wellbeing Policy

Student Mental Health, Wellbeing Procedure

Student Partnership Agreement

Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Procedure

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Appendix 1

Access and Inclusion 2015-16 Spend*

Student Support Team – Guidance and Counselling	Staff	340,575
	Non Staff	19,223
Additional Support Planning	Staff	83,098
	Non Staff	22,500
Learning Zone	Staff	165,502
Equality and Diversity, Learning and Teaching Support	Staff	99,477
Student Engagement	Staff	60,859
New Opps and Core Skills	Staff	663,543
	Non Staff	5,617
SVS/Group 5	Staff	291,550
	Non Staff	6,847
Language School	Staff	275,876
	Non Staff	22,461
Learning Centre	Staff	231,680
	Non Staff	78,142
CPD	Non Staff	82,063
TOTAL		2,449,013

- As access and inclusion activities are integrated into all of our activity, these figures represent key specific aspects of college expenditure. It does not include Personal Academic Tutor costs, costs attributable to the College Nursery or costs such as IT including directly supported through the UHI network.