**Outcome Agreement self-evaluation report 2018/2019**

**Shetland Tertiary Education Sector**

**Context:**

Shetland Tertiary Education Sector is comprised of three organisations; Shetland College UHI, Train Shetland and NAFC Marine Centre UHI, who work in partnership to deliver tertiary education and SFC credit funded programmes across Shetland. A decision was made by key stakeholders in December 2018 for the three organisations to merge into a single entity and work has been progressing towards this aim with a vesting date being set for January 2020. The vision of the new single organisation is to be an inspirational hub of innovation and learning designed to meet the needs of the people of Shetland.

**Recruitment.**

Shetland’s tertiary education sector continues to meet and exceed its credit target, with 4,499 credits delivered in 2018/19, 4.4% over target. While there has been a reduction in 2018/19, this is the fourth year Shetland has delivered credits in excess of target. The imminent merger within Shetland will provide further opportunity for growth with the pulling together of operational resources and sharing of expertise, resulting in continued potential overtrading moving forward as an independent single organisation.

We have seen a decrease in the number of credits being delivered to senior phase pupils through 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19, this is partly due to a change in programmes being delivered and also falling school rolls. Work continues with key stakeholders in education, Skills Development Scotland and local industry to provide opportunities for young people as part of our Senior Phase offering. Currently two foundation apprenticeship programmes are being offered, with a total of 6 enrolments for 2019/2021 and a further 11 senior phase pupils studying bespoke programmes better suited to industry and pupil needs locally. Work with education in agreeing delivery for 2020/2022 will see a third foundation apprenticeship being offered to pupils across Shetland.

Overall delivery to students at S3 and above as part of our school-partnership has increased from 10.6% in 2017/18 to 11.9% in 2018/19, for 2019/20 we see a steady number of enrolments with the inclusion of an additional programme offering computing to this student group for the first time in 2019/2020.

Within 2018/19 we saw several changes is the number of credits delivered to students from different characteristic groups. Greater opportunities to declare at application stage enables students within a characteristics group to identify themselves as they begin their learner journey. This enables support teams to engage with students and work together to provide the right level of support. We have seen an increase in both student enrolments with ability needs from 17% to 21.7% and care experienced students from 0% to 2.17%. A challenge within the small community of Shetland is ensuring that the appropriate support is made available and at the correct level, while maintaining student confidentiality and wellbeing.

**Retention.**

Shetland continues to engage with senior phase pupils, although due to small numbers on programmes and competing pressures from school timetables we have seen a decrease from 100% in 2017/18 (2 pupils enrolled), to 50% in 2018/19 (2 pupils enrolled) in the number of senior phase pupils successfully completing a vocational qualification. With the introduction of additional foundation apprenticeship programmes for 2020/2022 we are predicting an increase in the number of senior phase pupils recruited which should result in a positive impact on retention. While small classes sizes can be an advantage, pupils in classes numbering 3 or less can become more vulnerable with reduced peer support and interaction.

Through 2018/19 we have seen an increase in the number of full-time students aged between 16-19 years enrolling and achieving recognised qualifications, moving from 71.4% in 2017/18, to 74.3% in 2018/19. A programme of events supported by the student engagement team and Highlands and Islands Association (HISA) provides additional wellbeing support for students, providing opportunities and widen their interests in the college and promoting student engagement and commitment to their learner journey.

**Attainment.**

Shetland is delighted to have a high percentage of learners achieving recognised qualifications, with 71% full-time success and 92% part-time success, with a combined overall success rate of 91%. This is 11.63% above UHI and 17.14% above national achievement rates. While Shetland continues to achieve high success rates these were affected in 2018/2019 by bedding in of additional changes to National and Higher qualifications. Continued changes to these qualification over several years have not enabled students or delivering teams to fully embed or internalise the new demands. 2019/2020 should see a more stable year for these qualifications with no changes expected and supportive scrutiny from SQA through verification and CPD opportunities being made available to staff.

**Progression.**

Here in Shetland we continue to work closely with industry to support students enrolled on college programmes with valuable work placements. These provide work experience in preparation for progression into industry or to further/higher education. 65.6% of students on full-time programmes engage, with a substantial work placement as part of their programmes. A challenge faced by students in Shetland, as a small community, is a limited number of suitable placements. As we see an increase in student numbers on programmes with substantial work placement, we are facing increasing difficulty in ensuring the required number of industry placements. In addition, we have a total of 130 students working with industry towards modern apprenticeship programmes. While this is positive for industry links and supports the development of the young workforce to mitigate against an ageing workforce, additional strain on industry can make placing full-time college students a challenge.