**Introduction and Context**

West Highland College UHI (WHC) is one of thirteen University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) partner colleges operating in a multi college regional structure through a single outcome agreement. Created in 2010, this operates through ten college centres in a remote, rural and economically challenging environment.

West Highland College UHI was the first college to engage in Education Scotland Progress Visits. Education Scotland found that the college had achieved all 2018/19 actions outlined in the WHC enhancement plan and is continuing to make good progress against all development points from the college 2017 Evaluative Report. The progress report highlights many areas of positive progress and acknowledging best practice. There is only one action requiring further progress around more fully mainstreaming the professional standards within college systems, including self-evaluation and performance review. The college has organised these actions under the following six themes:

• Quality enhancement

• Curriculum design principles

• Staff development

• Student engagement

• Stakeholder engagement

• Digital college

**Regional Context**

West Highland College UHI (WHC) continues to engage well in the harmonisation of quality enhancement approaches and in the sharing of best practice and expertise through regional fora including Quality Forum (QF), Senior Manager Curriculum Team (SMCT) and the Further Education Regional Board. WHC senior managers engage proactively in the development of single policy and procedures, involving input from students, staff, the Board of Management and stakeholders. In addition college staff are involved in other regional collaborative work streams. For example, a college senior manager continues to lead a regional team to conduct two single partnership-wide student surveys. Another senior manager is leading the coordination and administration of the ESOL Community Partnership (Highland), to ensure learner enrolments are recorded and returned to SFC.

**Recruitment**

The college achieved both its core credits and ESIF in 2018/19. Recruitment of full-time students fell in 2018/19, but increased in 2019/20 almost matching 2017/18 enrolments. Limited availability of affordable accommodation for incoming students impacts on recruitment, particularly in Skye because the island has become such a popular tourism destination.

School link recruitment, particularly for FAs was not as anticipated based on discussions with a few schools. The volume and proportion of credits delivered to students aged 19 or less fell as did the volume and proportion of delivered within the "school-college" provision. During 2018/19, the college strengthened school and parent engagement, tying in with key messages from Skills Development Scotland and as a result, recruitment increased this year (2019/20). There has been a significant increase in Foundation Apprenticeships this year. The college is a key partner in driving forward the ambitions of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) in the local area. The college works well with the DYW Co-ordinator for the West Highlands. The DYW Operational Partnership Group is making progress with the local and national DYW agenda.

There are only a few identifiable deprived areas within the WHC catchment, however there was a slight increase in the proportion of credits delivered to these students. The figures do not reflect the engagement that the college has with students who are none the less rurally deprived. The proportion of credits delivered to female students rose significantly. There was also an increase in the volume of credits delivered to mature students aged 26 and over which could account for this increase. Demographics suggest that females are more likely to be in part time work and therefore potentially have the time to take up learning opportunities.

**Retention**

College full time student retention rates increased and is the highest it has been over a five year period. Progression boards helped by putting in place early intervention. A pilot guidance model was also a contributing factor. Regional curriculum working groups are beginning to support an increased understanding of issues relating to withdrawals and low attainment and thereafter collectively agreeing actions to support improvement.

**Attainment**

Both full time and part time attainment rose slightly in 2018/19. However, partial success increased, with poor exam results impacting on this figure. The college is currently reviewing the design of curriculum alongside learning and teaching. This work will take account of the student voice, as well as employers and market intelligence. The college has reinforced its self-evaluation process with further quality enhancement dialogues to support a college-team approach to more targeted actions for lower performing courses.

**Progression**

There was a 1% decrease in (2017/18) students moving into a positive destination. The two percent of unknown student destinations has influenced this figure. There continues to be a rise in students continuing to study full time and most of these students remain within the college or UHI.

**Student Satisfaction**

Student satisfaction remains high at the college, well above the sector benchmark across all ten survey statements. Furthermore, the college achieved a high return rate (70%), indicating that satisfaction figures are representative of most of the student population. This demonstrates the good relationships between staff, student reps and students.

**College Publications**

<https://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/about-us/facts-and-figures/publications/> (The Progress Visit Report will be published on this page by the 5th of November 2019)

<https://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/>