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**University of the Highlands & Islands**

**Quality Enhancement and Standards Review**

**Action Plan and Progress Update**

The University was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAA) in May 2024 using the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) method. The University received one commendation and one recommendation. The report published by the QAA can be found on the [University webpage](https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/learning-and-teaching-academy/academic-standards-and-enhancement/quality-assurance/). This action plan sets out the University’s response to the recommendation.

**Recommendation**:  
**Professional development and opportunities for postgraduate research students with regard to teaching:** While recognising that some work has taken place in this area since the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR 4), a number of issues remains to be addressed, including the need for postgraduate research students (PGRs) to have completed training before they teach, very limited opportunities provided for PGRs who want to teach, an inconsistent understanding across the University of training requirements and a lack of clarity around responsibility for addressing these issues. The University is asked to give greater urgency to its work in this area.

| **Actions** | **Activity** | **Proposed timeline** | **Responsible person(s)** | **Responsible committee** | **Progress update** |
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| Discuss recommendation at Research Degree Committee and Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee to agree next steps. |  | September 2024 | Dean of Learning and Teaching | Research Degree Committee (RDC)  Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) | Complete.  Agreed to produce project plan for Designing and Implementing a UHI PhD Teaching Programme. |
| Produce and agree project plan for designing and implementing a UHI PhD Teaching Programme. | Discussion at RDC/QAEC  Agree aims  Scope  Implementation plan | November 2024 | Dean of Student Experience | QAEC | Complete.  Plan endorsed by QAEC on 19 November 2024 and discussed in detail at RDC on 28 November 2024. |
| Implementation of plan for UHI PhD Teaching Programme. | Implementation of the plan  Phase 1 (3 months)  Research and consultation to include benchmarking existing models, survey and interviews with PhD students and consultation with key stakeholders including staff, senior managers, module and programme leaders.  Phase 2 (2 months)  Addressing Barriers such as employment and contractual restrictions, engaging UHI leadership  Phase 3 (4 months)  Programme Design  Phase 4 (6 months)  Roll out pilot with small cohort and collaborate with partners to identify teaching opportunities. | Commencing early calendar year 2025 | Dean of Student Experience | QAEC | Plan endorsed for implementation. |
| 1-day interactive training workshop - Introduction to teaching and teaching techniques for Research Students. |  | Ongoing | Dean of Learning and Teaching  Graduate School Manager | QAEC | These workshops are delivered throughout the academic year on an ongoing basis.  The next sessions are scheduled for 11 December 2024 and 11 February 2025. |
| Further dissemination and awareness raising to PhD student community and staffof relevant teaching practice development sessions offered through Learning and Teaching Academy. | Workshops  Webinars  Seminars | These workshops are delivered throughout the academic year on an ongoing basis. | Graduate School Manager  Head of Academic Practice Development | QAEC  RDC | Ongoing. |
| Further dissemination to PhD student community and staff of professional recognition opportunities (including achieving Associate Fellow with Advance HA). | Taught and peer review opportunities (core module from MEd programme)  Workshops, webinars and mentoring related to portfolio route to Advance HE recognition. | These workshops are delivered throughout the academic year on an ongoing basis. | Graduate School Manager  Head of Academic Practice Development | QAEC  RDC | Ongoing. |