College Context

Orkney College UHI is one of the few colleges in Scotland not incorporated under the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992. The college is governed through Orkney Islands Council who are responsible for the provision of Further Education (FE) in Orkney. The college’s Higher Education (HE) provision is delivered through its membership, as an academic partner, of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). The College Management Council is a sub-committee of the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee (ELH) of Orkney Islands Council (OIC). There are 5 elected members and 8 non-elected (4 business and 4 community / third sector). The College Management Council Sub-committee is currently chaired by an elected Councillor who is also vice chair of ELH.

The College provides opportunities for learners across all 12 of the SCQF levels in Scotland, and for the past three years has featured in the top percentile of high performing Colleges across Scotland. This report focuses on the further education aspects of the College, covering all aspects of the learner experience from SCQF Level 1 to Level 6. The college was last externally reviewed by Education Scotland in March 2014. The report showed the college had in place effective arrangements to maintain and enhance the quality of its provision, and outcomes for learners and other stakeholders.

At the heart of our vision for Orkney College UHI is our commitment to the highest quality of learning and teaching in order that all of our learners can achieve their potential. This year our College enhancement plan will focus on three main priorities, our partnership working, our learner engagement and our rigorous approach to self-evaluation. These three priorities align well with our analysis of the themes within the Education Scotland quality indicators, with our historical drive towards improvement and they link well to our mission statement, vision, strategic aims, and key local and national priorities.

Locally we have a major role to play in delivering the ‘Orkney Offer’ and ensuring the local agenda for “Developing the Young Workforce” is fully embraced. These dual roles reflect the emphasis from the Skills Investment Plan for Orkney (2017), to ensure all of our young people have in place effective pathways for learning, progression and employment. The local labour market intelligence provides us with direction in ensuring our key curriculum areas of Agriculture, Art & Design, Business, Construction, Computer Science, Early Education, Engineering, Hairdressing,
Health, Hospitality, Inclusive Practice, Maritime and Social Care, continue to meet sector needs in Orkney. Although with unemployment now well below the national average, key matching to employment opportunities remains essential.

Partnership working is key to the success of the College in securing the best possible outcomes for all our learners. Our close working with both secondary schools and all three junior high schools to provide complimentary senior phase learning opportunities is a significant strength in our local education provision. The partnership working with Skills Development Scotland and employers through our advisory groups continue to ensure we are meeting the aspirations of employers, young people and their parents. The advent of a new “Developing the Young Workforce Orkney Regional Board” will enhance even further the partnership working between the community and the College, and is timeous as the College continues to increase the number of Modern of Apprenticeships and burgeoning development of Foundation Apprenticeships.

This report seeks to evaluate how good the College is in providing further education in Orkney.

**Methodology**

The College has in place a detailed calendar of self-evaluation events, situated within a reporting cycle which takes place throughout the academic year. However, these are supplemented by the professional dialogues of Curriculum and support teams and their constant drive to reflect and action change, in order to create the most effective opportunities for their learners.

The introduction by the Highlands Islands Student Association of a deputy president, situated in each of the academic partners with a clear mandate to span both Further and Higher education has had, and continues to have a significant impact on improving student engagement and therefore influencing the life and work of College. Their role, along with class representation from each class group has contributed significantly to the evaluation of the College.

Evaluation of the College is undertaken using a variety of methods (see Appendix 1 Evidence base) and triangulated from the perspectives of learners, employers and staff. Learners provide highly effective means of feedback on their experiences of learning, teaching and support. Staff self-evaluation is based on both learners and employer feedback and crucially on their professional dialogues within their Curriculum teams and robust analysis of relevant data.

The methodologies currently used in the evaluation process include, annual student surveys of early experience, on course experience and end of course experience, these are supplemented by student curriculum review, student contribution to course review meetings and their verbal feedback at the end of each class. Staff also use other highly effective techniques of biannual evaluation including “stop, start, and continue”. This method seeks to identify and feedback to learners what is working well and what needs to be improved within each semester of the class.
Staff produce annual course reports, which provide detailed evidence of how their course is performing, each annual course report carries an action plan for improvement, and these are shared with learners. Curriculum teams can access in real time these reports which exist in a shared online space and are available for all staff to add evaluative comments in real time. The reports require detailed analysis of course key performance indicators which they currently benchmark against national data, these benchmarks include the analysis of three year trend data. Curriculum Leaders collate course reports in an annual department self-evaluation report, which ultimately details the action plan for improvement at department level. These self-evaluation plans receive feedback from the College Management team congratulating teams on areas of success and highlighting areas for further development.

Curriculum teams operate across departments and this interdepartmental engagement is key to the level of professional dialogue and reflection which results in improvement for learners. Staff and students also engage in the “Practice and Pedagogy” sessions which are open to all. These sessions explore approaches to learning and teaching which are deemed to be innovative practice within the College and worthy of exploration by all. Coupled with staff from all departments taking an active role in cross College Committees and engaging in peer observation of learning and teaching then the College ethos of continuous self-improvement is a natural aspect of the daily operation of the College, for all its staff and learners.

Outcomes of evaluation

Leadership and Quality Culture

1.1 Governance and leadership of change

- The College Management Council Sub-committee is engaged in the strategic planning of the College, and staff at all levels are engaged in the operational planning of the College.
- The Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing within Orkney Islands Council adopts a very proactive stance in relation to the College and its role within the Community.
- The College Senior Management team have effective engagement with senior staff across the College ensuring they are included in both operational and relevant strategic planning.
- The Principal attends all class representation meetings, ensuring the student voice is heard and acted upon.

1.2 Leadership of learning and teaching

- College staff are committed to reflect and improve all their classroom activities, this is well evidenced, through their reflective dialogues, self-evaluation activities and student engagement.
The regular meetings of the Practice & Pedagogy group, led by an Assistant Principal, is a creative platform for the sharing of successful approaches to learning and teaching.

The linkage of the professional development strategy to the learning and teaching strategy, which ultimately identifies professional development needs in the Professional Development and Review (PDR) system is key to improving the practice of all staff.

Learners in a number of curriculum areas confidently lead their own learning, effectively support by Curriculum teams.

1.3 Leadership of services to support learning

The strategic engagement of the Assistant Principal in the Opportunities for All (OFA), Orkney wide group ensures consistent approaches are being applied for all young people in Orkney

The engagement of staff from the College in the operational sub group of OFA, ensure all young people at risk of disengagement have planned pathways in place prior to leaving school and accessing College.

The Curriculum Leader for Inclusive Practice is exemplary in ensuring all learners have appropriate support for learning, and this approach is extended and shared with staff both in the College, and in schools in relation to senior phase pupils. This member of staff effectively supports all staff and learners across the College.

Staff teams in Registry, Admissions, Student Finance and Management Information System (MIS) provide a consistently high level of services to all students and this is well evidenced through their annual self-evaluations and learner feedback.

1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement

The College continues to perform above the National Sector Key Performance Indicator (KPI) data in terms of successful retention, achievement, and attainment for almost all part time and full time FE provision.

Curriculum teams have a good understanding of their programme portfolios and issues which impact on learner retention, attainment and achievement.

Curriculum teams and learners engage in course evaluation and department self-evaluation, which result in clear action plans for improvement.

Learners and staff are fully engaged in a variety of methodologies which are applied and analysed in real time, rather than at the end of a course.

Curriculum teams engage in professional dialogue within and across curricular areas in order to enhance practice and create stimulating learning.

Learners were instrumental in the further contextualisation of the core subjects (communication, IT and numeracy) within their chosen subject areas.

The Student class representatives were highly successful in engaging staff in improving the outcomes for all learners by further developing the whole College ethos of inclusion, this was evident by the increased number of joint events held throughout the year.

All departments can provide examples of where the student voice has had a positive impact on curriculum delivery or approaches to assessment e.g. in care
department students worked with staff to redesign the tracking of the mandatory units within the Care higher.

Areas of positive practice

- An example of learners leading their own learning in Hospitality stems from the learners at the start of their academic year planning the sequence of their professional cookery and hospitality service to match Curriculum for Excellence outcomes. This also involves decision making in terms of restaurant service, projects, planned visits etc.
- A subsequent example from Construction where learners supported the restoration of HMS Tern, a WW2 airfield, by planning, constructing and fitting the windows and doors of the existing WW2 fire station.
- Another example from Business Studies where the office Administration students plan their entire curriculum around the creation and operation of an enterprise company. This requires cross curriculum close working involving staff from a number of departments to support the creative and innovative approaches required to sustain this.

Areas for development

- The Orkney College UHI College Management Council has only just started their self-evaluation of the board, this process needs to be completed and resulting action planned and scheduled within the board cycle of meetings.

Delivery of Learning and Support Services to support learning

2.1 Safeguarding

- The College has in place robust safeguarding procedures. The safeguarding procedures in the College are exemplary, due in part to the highly qualified staff, both of whom have social care backgrounds who administer the system, but their close links directly into the Social work department of the local authority coupled with the sharing of at risk cases with schools, means there is a high degree of awareness and sharing of appropriate information. Early intervention strategies are shared and in particular where there is concern regarding any young person’s mental health the College works closely with both the CALMHS team, and the social work department.
- The Assistant Principal worked closely with Orkney Islands Council (OIC) to develop and deliver WRAP and PREVENT training both within the College and across OIC departments. This led to detailed sharing and ultimately the development of plans, in relation to looked after children and care experienced learners. All College FE and support staff have undertaken both WRAP and PREVENT training.
• The College approach to its responsibilities for Corporate Parenting benefits from the close working with OIC where information is shared and needs of care leavers are effectively responded to.

2.2 Curriculum

• Staff and learners work closely with LMI, employers and stakeholders in order to provide the required curriculum.
• The College offers a wide curriculum which currently matches very closely to key economic drivers in Orkney.
• The further education curriculum is changing as more Modern apprenticeships are created and the introduction of Foundation Apprenticeships becomes familiar.
• Curriculum planning for the senior phase offering is jointly reviewed and planned in conjunction with curriculum teams and senior managers in all secondary schools.
• Curriculum teams have a good understanding of their programme portfolios and issues which impact on learner retention, attainment and achievement.
• The Orkney Islands Skills Investment Plan was published in January 2017. Currently Orkney has a population of 21670, with 9.5% aged between 16-24, and an unemployment rate of 0.8 %. This plan is key to ensuring the needs of employers in Orkney are being met and is a key document in relation to College curriculum planning.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

• The College continues to perform above the National Sector KPI data in terms of successful retention, achievement, and attainment for almost all part time and full time FE provision.
• These performance levels have been consistently above the National KPI’s for the past three years.
• College staff are committed to reflect and improve all their classroom activities, this is well evidenced, through their reflective dialogues, self-evaluation activities and student engagement.
• Curriculum teams analyse their data carefully and implement strategies for improvement in real time.
• Learners in a number of curriculum areas effectively plan their learning, supported well by curriculum teams.
• Feedback from learners on their learning experiences is evaluative and constructive.
• The open door nature of the College reinforces the quality of teaching and learning, evidenced through peer observation and team teaching.
• Staff use a range of methods in supporting learners, but feedback and feedforward are prominent.
• The student progression record requires input from learners, staff and employers, this acts as a catalyst for self-improvement.
All learners are prepared well for summative assessment with formative assessment and per review being well embedded.

### 2.4 Services to Support Learning

- The College has well developed coherent services to support all learners, including those who require additional support, hardship funds etc. the close working of the support staff and the academic staff is a significant strength to ensuring all learners access the relevant support services.
- Front line staff including lecturers all provide learner guidance, this ethos of ‘we are all responsible’ prevails throughout the College, resulting in a nurturing, caring environment.
- The student engagement officer is proactive in organising social media news feeds, planning public events, and working closely with the student association has been key to increasing the public awareness of the College in the community.
- The student progress report which is discussed individually with all learners three times per year, assists learners to plan goals and to identify their way forward.
- Staff make effective use of Skills Develop Scotland careers advisors to ensure all learners have clear pathways for progression whether into employment or further and/or higher education.
- The self-evaluation process of the College engages all learners in contributing to the College agenda for improvement.
- The sustained drive for improvement by the Inclusive practice Curriculum leader has had a significant impact in ensuring all learners are fully aware of all the support within the College which is readily available.

### 2.5 Transitions

- The real strength to learner transition exists in the close working of teams within the College and all secondary schools, who share information on a weekly basis.
- Transitions from school through the senior phase are effective due in part to the close working relationships by staff. This is well supported through the operational group which operated under the Opportunities or All group where information on individual learners is shared in a professional context.
- Transitions within the College from senior phase through further education onto HN and degree programmes is a seamless transition due the tertiary nature of the College. An example of this would be student who has undertaken a higher in Early Years with the College whilst still at school, progressing to either NC or HNC, then on into year two of the degree in Childhood Practice and ultimately into our Professional Graduate Diploma In Teacher Education (Primary).
- College staff join with school staff to provide collaboratively designed presentations to parents and senior phase learners.
- College staff attend all schools parents’ information evenings from S1 to S6.
College advisory groups have staff representation from subject teachers within schools relevant to the Curriculum area.

Subject teachers within schools have close links to the College through their acceptance of local UHI Secondary teaching students, this has also worked in reverse with subject teachers seeking opportunities for learning within the College.

2.6 Partnerships

College staff engage with a significantly high proportion of external agencies and have developed strong partnership working, both locally and nationally.

The College works closely with Skills Development Scotland, Voluntary Action Orkney, Job Centre, various employability groups, key sector industries, community planning and a number of sub committees of the local authority.

College staff working closely in new areas of sector/industry development e.g. hydrogen training, working with Orkney Fishermen’s Association, European Marine Energy Centre, Orkney Ferries, Orkney harbours, Orkney Construction Training group, Orkney Childcare Partnership, Kirkwall Townscape Heritage Initiative, The North Isles Landscape partnership project, Orkney quality Food and drink, Orkney Arts Forum etc.

A significant strength is the close working between schools and the College, this is a key element of the ‘Orkney Offer’. The College is fully engaged in both the Strategic and operational planning and evaluation of the Orkney offer.

Areas of positive practice

Curriculum teams working with industry partners in new areas of new development have been sector leading e.g. the Maritime Studies department developed recognised hydrogen training for all those employees working on internal ferries, in response to the development of hydrogen from wind farm production. The hydrogen being used to power new ferries, but initially used to generate electricity to reduce harbour running costs.

The integration of subject teachers from within local schools into advisory boards, working with student teachers and ultimately school staff seeking opportunities to learn within the College e.g. Technological Education staff working on lathes, band saws etc. are key to the close partnership working which exists.

Where an issue of great concern regarding a young person’s wellbeing has been raised then, Educational Psychologists, medical professionals, parents and guidance staff in schools working together and sharing information with College staff to ensure all young people, regardless of which education institution they are aligned to, have appropriate support in place, has been significantly successful.
Areas for development

- The newly appointed Developing the Young Workforce officer is key to the continued success of how the College responds to employers, in particular in addressing the areas of employment related to Science Technology, Engineering and Maths.
- The Orkney Islands Skills Investment Plan enquires further analysis at both strategic and operational levels of the College.

Outcomes and Impact

3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- The College Gender Action plan and Equalities report is comprehensive and detailed.
- The College has strong partnership working with a number of counselling services and health promotion services including the CALMHS team and these services are made freely available to all learners.
- Learner mental health awareness is a key action for Orkney as a whole, and the College has been proactive in ensuring awareness raising and appropriate responses are in place.
- The College continues to work closely with OIC Social Work department including its day service provision to ensure all service users can access a curriculum suited to their stages of development and their learning needs.
- The College has been particularly successful in two areas, increasing the numbers of men into care career pathways and providing social enterprise designed learning for young adults with more complex needs.
- The fortnightly College newsletter actively promotes opportunities to celebrate diversity and this has led to whole College and department events.

3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners

- The College continues to perform above the National Sector KPI data in terms of successful retention, achievement, and attainment for almost all part time and full time FE provision. In 2015/16 74.3% of all fulltime FE enrolments completed successfully, compared to the Scottish average of 65.5%, and the UHi average of 69.4%. This trend of FE attainment has been maintained at or around this level since 2011.
- The college KPI data places the College in the upper quartile nationally and this has been the case for the past three consecutive years.
- All curriculum teams engage learners in evaluating the College provision, creating detailed self-evaluation course reports and summary departmental evaluations.
- College staff are acutely aware of the current environment in Orkney as regards to issues surrounding Mental Health and Young people. The front line guidance provided by staff is key to ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners.
• The College Gender Action Plan is comprehensive and is well supported by the College Equalities report
• The implementation of PREVENT and WRAP training for all staff, and increased training on Corporate Parenting has led to, collectively, all staff being fully aware of their responsibilities.
• The holistic approach adopted by both academic and support staff in ensuring all learners’ academic needs are met, but also their support needs beyond that of financial and hardship needs, to include mental health and wellbeing.
• The care department has been proactive in securing funding to undertake research in “Men into Care”, as a result they have witnessed an increase in male numbers, particularly in relation to Health & Social Care

Areas of positive practice

• The development of curriculum to support learners with more complex needs has been innovative in its design, taking learners on a two year pathway through an access course, progressing on to a designed programme featuring their own day care service under the auspices of Skills for Social Enterprise which has now resulted in a group of learners undertaking a Scottish Vocational Qualification in Hospitality Services with offers of supported employment from private individuals and NHS Orkney.
• Providing access to Senior Phase curriculum for learners from the most remote isles in Orkney to access curriculum through close partnership working with Kirkwall Grammar School, their own local Junior High schools, the College and the provision of overnight accommodation has enabled a number of learners to access otherwise inaccessible curriculum, including the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills.
• With regard to the senior phase offering in schools, the alignment of the school’s curriculum planning, meshed with the College curriculum planning, allows for cohesive information to be shared with young people and their parents in timeous manner.
• The Men into Care, couple with the development of the ‘generic worker’ role at NHS Orkney has resulted in a highly successful course recruiting Modern apprentices into the NHS.

Areas for development

• The ‘Orkney Offer’ plans to bring together the cohesive literature for learners within the senior phase, in one brochure for all young people in Orkney regardless of which school they occupy. This collective approach will enable learners and their parents to make informed choices about their individual learning pathway regardless of the institution in which the young person is currently enrolled.
• Continuing to ensure Mental Health awareness and support remains a priority for learners and staff.
## Appendix 1. Evidence base

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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| **1.1 Governance and leadership of change** | • Governance and leadership  
• Developing a shared vision, values and aims  
• Planning for continuous improvement | • Strategic and Operational planning  
• Minutes of CMC  
• Minutes of CMC Quality Group  
• Minutes of LTQC  
• Dept. action plans for improvement  
• Dept. & Course SED’s |
| **1.2 Leadership of learning and teaching** | • Leadership for learning and teaching  
• Leadership of staff  
• Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL)  
• Learners leading learning | • Practice & pedagogy  
• Staff development strategy  
• 90% lecturing staff hold teaching qualification  
• Professional dialogues  
• PDR system  
• Stop Start Continue  
• Learning & Teaching Strategy  
• CPD Strategy  
• PDR system linked to L&T strategy  
• 97% of staff teaching further education have achieved relevant teaching qualifications. |
| **1.3 Leadership of services to support learning** | • Leadership of staff  
• Account of current and projected needs of learners  
• Internal arrangements for delivery of services to support learning  
• Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL)  
• Partnerships with other agencies | • Partnership working with SDS  
• Opportunities for All group  
• Support staff self-evaluations  
• Learning Support procedures  
• CPD strategy  
• Planning and delivery of legislative training jointly with OIC |
| **1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement** | • Analysis and evaluation  
• Collaborative approaches to evaluation and data sharing  
• Impact on learners success and achievements | • Course reports  
• Departmental self-evaluation  
• Stop Start Continue  
• Curriculum evaluation  
• MIS staff included in committees  
• Support staff self-evaluation |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Subsections</th>
<th>Details</th>
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| 2.1 Safeguarding             | • Arrangements for safeguarding                                            | • All policies in place  
• Records kept systematically  
• Majority of current Staff undertaken  
  Corporate parenting, PREVENT & WRAP |
| 2.2 Curriculum               | • Rationale and design  
• Development of the curriculum  
• Learning pathways  
• Skills for learning, life and work | • Learners with work experience  
• Learners progressions to work, training, or learning  
• Embedding of Skills for LLW  
• Clear progression routes  
• Joint Curriculum planning  
• Local Skills Investment Plan |
| 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment | • Learning and engagement  
• Quality of teaching  
• Use of assessment  
• Evaluation of the learner experience | • Peer observation  
• Learners engaged in the QE process through Stop Start Continue & committee/course members  
• Learner evaluations  
• Learner progress reports  
• Curriculum evaluations  
• Practice & Pedagogy sessions  
• Course team minutes  
• EV Reports |
| 2.4 Services to Support Learning | • Management of services to support learning  
• Services which contribute towards attainment, achievement and progression  
• Services which contribute to progression to a positive destination | • HISA  
• Student reps  
• KPI data  
• Front line guidance  
• Learner support plans  
• Evidence of hardship, child care funding etc.  
• Learner progress records  
• Self-evaluation of L& T and services  
• Student surveys  
• Staff working with external agencies i.e Y People, OCAS, SDS & Job centre |
| 2.5 Transitions              | • Collaborative planning and delivery  
• Arrangements to support learners | • School/College Liaison  
• Orkney offer  
• Student support system  
• Working with SDS  
• Front line guidance |
| 2.6 Partnerships             | • Strategic links  
• Collaborative arrangements to support learning | • CPP  
• Orkney Offer  
• Senior Phase  
• Advisory groups minutes  
• YES Strategy group OIC  
• Key stakeholder group meetings e.g. NHS, OCTG  
• Department minutes of employer |
| 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion | • Statutory duties  
• Inclusion and equality | • Minutes Access & Inclusion Committee  
• Attendance at legislative training records  
• College news items, relating to MH events  
• Equality Impact assessments |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners | • Learner success over time  
• Essential skills including skills for life and work  
• Equity for all learners | • KPI data  
• Essential skills data  
• College news items |