Public Sector Equality Duty Mainstreaming and Outcomes

Report 2023

Contents

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Foreward

I am pleased to present our 'Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2023' which highlights our ongoing commitment to promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment.

At UHI, we believe that every individual has the right to feel valued, respected and supported regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or any other characteristic. Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is not just a moral obligation, but it is also fundamental to our aim of providing flexible and supported learning opportunities.

This report provides an overview of our progress in advancing EDI across all areas of UHI, including:

+ **Raising awareness of gender-based violence through the provision of staff and student resources**

+ **Promoting gender equality through initiatives including the Aurora leadership development programme**

+ **Integrating EDI into day-to-day work, such as through our corporate communications activity**

The report also recognises that achieving equality, diversity and inclusion will require ongoing effort and collaboration. We are committed to continuing our work with staff, students and partners to create a more inclusive environment which embodies our values of collaboration, openness, respect and excellence and where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to our shared values.

Vicki Nairn
Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Vicki Nairn

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Executive Summary

This report is an opportunity to highlight progress made to meet our legislative requirements, including the gender pay gap report, and to demonstrate how equality has been mainstreamed against our outcomes set in 2021 and running to April 2023.

UHI is a progressive and unique tertiary partnership which aims to cultivate a more inclusive learning environment, enriching experiences and collaborating with our communities, staff and students to support, promote and celebrate EDI. UHI is mainstreaming equality within our structures and day-to-day work through eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

Progress against our outcomes set in 2021 is evidenced by specific examples of exceptional work across a wide range of areas including: improved inclusive infrastructure; better understanding our students and staff needs and experiences; promoting inclusive communication; and increasing student support and voice.

A new equality monitoring form is currently available to all staff, and we'll collect and collate this data throughout May. This valuable information will capture the full range of staff protected characteristics and will be published in our equalities action plan by the end of the academic year. Our student data will also be published in our action plan to support our key priorities for 2023 to 2025.

We are in the unique position of 'resetting EDI' and would like to progress towards adopting the new equality outcomes with our academic partners. This would create a more streamlined approach to mainstreaming equalities across our campuses and communities.

Our new EDI journey will incorporate our core values collaboration, openness, respect, and excellence. Each value reflects the essence of EDI, where we aspire for everyone to feel a sense of belonging. This report succinctly highlights our progress on becoming a more inclusive tertiary institution, evidenced by our commitment to integrating equitable practices for our staff and students across all functions.

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UHI

UHI is regional bilingual tertiary partnership encompassing both further and higher education which serves the communities of the Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire. We cover the largest geographical area of any campus-based university or college in the United Kingdom and have one of the largest student populations in Scotland, with over 36,000 students studying with us each year. Our UHI partnership of 12 colleges and research institutions, supported by our executive office, provides seamless pathways and removes barriers for students, allowing them to find their own unique learner journey.

The Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 designates UHI as the regional strategic body responsible for the co-ordinated planning, funding and monitoring of further education across our operating area.

Our diverse and flexible partnership is our greatest strength and empowers us to deliver supported learning from access level to PhD, which suits more people at more levels for more reasons. We are proud of our unique place and deep roots in our communities, with over 36,000 students at the heart of our partnership. This makes our teaching and research more connected to our staff and student's needs.

3.1

Values
Our values sit at the centre of our strategic planning framework, they represent the core beliefs upon which UHI is based and reflect how we operate. We hold the institution and ourselves accountable to these values.

Collaboration
We value people working willingly and actively together on common tasks because we seek to be a more connected organisation.

Openness
We value an environment in which colleagues and students share ideas and communicate clearly. We aim to be approachable and encourage others to contribute and speak up and we ensure others feel their contribution is valued.

Respect
We value others in the workplace, are mindful of each other's capabilities, perspectives, and backgrounds, and are thoughtful about our impact on others.

Excellence
We value a sense of purpose in our work by taking responsibility in our performance and behaviour, and we celebrate collectively in our achievements and those of our students and graduates.

UHI

UHI Shetland
UHI Sealtainn

UHI North, West and Hebrides
UHI a Tuath, an Iar is Innse Gall

UHI Orkney
UHI Arcaibh

UHI Centre for Rural Health Sciences
Ionad airson Saidheansan
Slàinte Dùthchail UHI

UHI Moray
UHI Moireibh

UHI Inverness
UHI Inbhir Nis

Inverness
Inbhir Nis

Aberdeen
Obar Dheathain

UHI Centre for Rural Health Sciences
Ionad airson Saidheansan
Slàinte Dùthchail UHI

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

HTC

SAMS

Dundee
Dún Dé

Perth
Peairt

Stirling
Sruighlea

Glasgow
Glaschu

Edinburgh
Dùn Èideann

UHI Perth
UHI Peairt

UHI Argyll
UHI Earra-Ghàidheal

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Legislative Context

4.1

General Equality Duty

The public sector equality duty (PSED), referred to as the 'General Equality Duty' includes a general duty and specific duties set out in the Equality Act (2010). This legislation ensures public authorities, including further and higher institutions, consider the impact of their decision making on people with different protected characteristics.

The general equality duty requires the executive office of UHI to have due regard to the need to:

+ **Eliminate unlawful discrimination,**
  harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct

+ **Advance equality of opportunity,**
  Between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

+ **Foster good relations,**
  Between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act (2010) states it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their protected characteristics:

+ **Age**

+ **Disability**

+ **Gender reassignment**

+ **Marriage and civil partnership**

+ **Pregnancy and maternity**

+ **Race**

+ **Religion or belief**

+ **Sex**

+ **Sexual orientation**

The Scottish Specific Duties (2012) require the university to fulfil the duty to publish the following:

+ Report progress on mainstreaming the General Equality Duty every two years.

+ Publish and deliver equality outcomes every four years.

+ Gather and publish employee protected characteristic information every two years.

+ Publish gender pay gap information.

+ Publish statements on equal pay.

+ Publish board member diversity information gathered by the Scottish Ministers.

+ Assess and review policies and practice.

+ Publish in a manner that is accessible.

4.2
Academic Partners and Equality

Our UHI partnership includes 12 colleges and research institutions, and not all are listed under the PSED. The following academic partners are required to publish equality information every two years and prepare and deliver equality outcomes every four years:

- ✓ **UHI Argyll**
- ✓ **UHI Inverness**
- ✓ **UHI Moray**
- ✓ **UHI North Highland**
- ✓ **UHI Outer Hebrides**
- ✓ **UHI Perth**
- ✓ **UHI Shetland**
- ✓ **UHI West Highland**
- ✓ **Orkney College UHI**
  Reports employee information with Orkney Council
- ✓ **Sabhal Mòr Ostaig**

Although the Highland Theological College and Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) are not required to report under PSED, both partners are active members of the UHI equality, diversity, and inclusion committee. Recently, SAMS were awarded the Athena Swan Bronze Level Charter. This is a perfect example of how institutions can positively embed EDI, not because of legislative responsibility but because it's the right thing to do.

SAMS Athena Swan Bronze Charter Award

For more information on how our partnership is mainstreaming equality, please refer to each partner's equality mainstreaming report which will be available on their website.

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Governance and Strategy at UHI

5.1
Court

The UHI court is responsible for overall strategic direction and governance. Its many powers and duties are detailed in the university's articles of association. The court can delegate some responsibilities to individuals, committees or groups and is also referred to as the board of governors.

Court includes up to 21 members, including the Chair of Court Alastair MacColl who was elected in 2021; students; academic and support staff; and a majority of independent members, as required by the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

Gender Balance

Gender balance on court has improved, with more females appointed. Current total court composition = 10 female and 8 male directors.

Gender Representation Objective (GRO)

UHI has a legislative requirement to meet the Scottish Ministers' reporting requirements, set out in regulation 2 of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 (Reports) Regulations 2020. Since 2020, UHI has successfully met the GRO.

5.2
Senior Management

The principal and vice-chancellor and the executive team are responsible for the overall operations of UHI as well as relationships with our partnership. Each partner institution is led by a principal or director with responsibilities to their own board. There are currently three females and one male in our senior executive team and five females and nine males in our senior management team.

Senior Executive Team

There are currently three females and one male in our senior executive team and five females and nine males in our senior management team.

+ **Professor Neil Simco**
Deputy Principal Academic and Research

+ **Sheena Stewart**
University Secretary

+ **Lorna Walker**
Vice-Principal, Strategy, Performance and Culture

Senior Management Team

+ **Alison Lochhead**
Director of Corporate Communications

+ **Alison Wilson**
Director of Advancement and Alumni Engagement

+ **Dr Brian Boag**
Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business

+ **Professor Brian Williams**
Head of School of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences

+ **Charlotte Wheatland**
Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions

+ **Gary I Campbell**
Director of Economic Development and Commercial Services

+ **Dr Iain Morrison**
Dean of Student Experience

+ **John Maher**
Director of ICT and Digital Services

+ **Professor Keith Smyth**
Dean of Learning and Teaching

+ **Margaret Antonson**
Director of planning and performance

+ **Max Brown**
Director of Transformation

+ **Professor Michael Rayner**
Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange

+ **Niall McArthur**
Director of Finance

+ **Roger Sendall**
Director of Corporate Governance

+ **Dr Su Bryan**
Dean of the Faculty of Science, Health and Engineering

+ **Sue Johnson**
Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

5.3

UHI 2024's goal is to bring our partnership together on a combined mission to review how we are performing and how we could work better together. With unprecedented support across our partnership, we collectively recognise the urgent need for change so we can become a better and more efficient partnership serving our staff, students, and communities.

UHI's governing body, the UHI court, has requested an update and refresh of our strategy (currently Daring to be Different) and for us to reduce complication and repetition across our operations. That could include streamlining our governance structures, implementing shared services, or delivering a more joined-up curriculum.

UHI 2024 is underpinned by six workstreams, outlined below. Each workstream lead is gathering wider specialist groups of staff from across the partnership to define objectives for each workstream and take forward packages of work. A programme board is overseeing project progress and reports to the UHI court.

UHI 2024 workstream aims:

1. **Curriculum**
To establish a cohesive and cost-effective tertiary curriculum which maximises student recruitment.

2. **Shared Services**
To provide clear recommendations on which shared services should be established across the partnership.

3. **Executive Office**
To establish more focused executive office based on customer need.

4. **Governance**
To create more simplified governance structures, enhancing clarity of where the points of decisions are, a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and enhancing clarity of where accountability lies.

5. **Strategy**
To define an overarching strategy and vision for the UHI partnership.

6. **People and Culture**
To enhance the staff experience and develop a culture of partnership.

EDI will permeate each of the six UHI 2024 workstreams, all of which will have partnership-wide reach. By diversifying our curriculum and student recruitment, as well as having clarity around accountability and a shared vision of equality priorities, our commitment to embedding EDI within UHI 2024 will positively impact our staff and student experience. This will ultimately support and elevate our efforts to cultivate a more inclusive and diverse working and learning environment.

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Staff and Student Equality Monitoring

Staff and Student Equality Monitoring

This part of the report will provide an overview of our Executive Office staff equality monitoring, captured from a survey carried out in early 2023 and Higher Education student equality monitoring for the period of 2021 to 2023. The Scottish Specific Duties (2012) require the university to fulfil the duty to gather and publish employee protected characteristic information every two years.

UHI created a new staff equality monitoring survey to review valuable information on a range of protected characteristics including age, disability, gender re-assignment, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation. Student data covering each of these protected characteristics will also be presented, supporting our legislative requirements while also providing a standard base for future reporting. This will ensure we understand our staff and student needs and will support our ongoing work to becoming a more diverse and inclusive institution. This section of the report will not only meet our legislative requirements, but it will also help UHI understand the profile of our workforce, student demographics and identify priorities and actions for our new equality outcomes.

UHI asked all Executive Office staff to complete a new equality monitoring form. The aim of this form was to collate robust and valuable information on our staff population covering the following protected characteristic's: age, disability, gender re-assignment, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation. At the time of this survey there were 335 staff members, a total of 193 (58%) staff completed the form. Where fewer than 5 responses were received, this information has been redacted to protect the confidentiality of staff.

Future reporting will aim to include job family profiles, contract type, recruitment of successful applicants and leavers. Please note, this survey was completed prior to UHI restructure including voluntary severance and redundancies.

Data

- The survey identifies UHI Executive Office staff age range at its highest between 40-44 years and at its lowest between 16-24 and 65+ years.

- The age range for students aged between 16-20 was highest in 2020/21, this has decreased slightly, the highest age range for 2023 is between 25-34 years.

- 21 members of Staff from UHI Executive Office disclosed a disability, this includes physical or mental impairment, BSL user, health condition or learning difficulty.

- The highest proportion of HE enrolments declared a disability in the form of mental health condition such as depression. The second highest reporting was having two or more impairments or mobility issues.

- The largest cohort of UHI Executive Office staff is made up of women, with 124 compared to 61 males (8 prefer not to say).

- UHI HE student enrolments have been consistent since 2020 with the largest cohort female compared to male.

- Ethnicity declarations at UHI consist of the highest proportion of 52% white Scottish, followed by 28% white British.

- HE student enrolments by ethnicity recognises a disproportionate number of students are white compered to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. Since 2021 until 2023, there has been a decrease in BME student enrolment with a notable difference from 699 to 425.

- The staff survey enabled employees to disclose gender reassignment, however 'prefer not to say' was the only option selected in addition to 'no'.

- The majority of staff have declared they do not hold any specific religious beliefs, the largest group with a recognised faith are Christian.

- This is consistent with HE student enrolments, where no religion was highest, followed by Christianity.

- UHI's profile for Sexual Orientation comprised of 156 staff identifying as Heterosexual, 15 'prefer not to say' and low reporting of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Asexual and in another way.

- HE student Sexual Orientation disclosure continues to report most students as heterosexual, with greater numbers reporting 'prefer not to say' and bisexual compared to compared gay and lesbian.

- UHI Executive Office staff comprise of 151 full time and 37 part time, further reporting on contract type, recruitment and leavers will be captured in future reporting.

Age

Age distribution (%):
- 16-24: 1%
- 25-29: 5%
- 30-34: 5%
- 35-39: 11%
- 40-44: 19%
- 45-49: 14%
- 50-54: 17%
- 55-59: 14%
- 60-64: 8%
- 65+: 2%
- 16-24: 5%

Disability

Impairment
- 161 No
- 21 Yes
- 11 Prefer not to say

Sign language
- 189 No
- 4 Prefer not to say

Gender re-assignment

Trans identity
- 185 No
- 8 Prefer not to say

Gender
- 122 Woman
- 62 Man
- 7 Prefer not to say
- 2 In another way
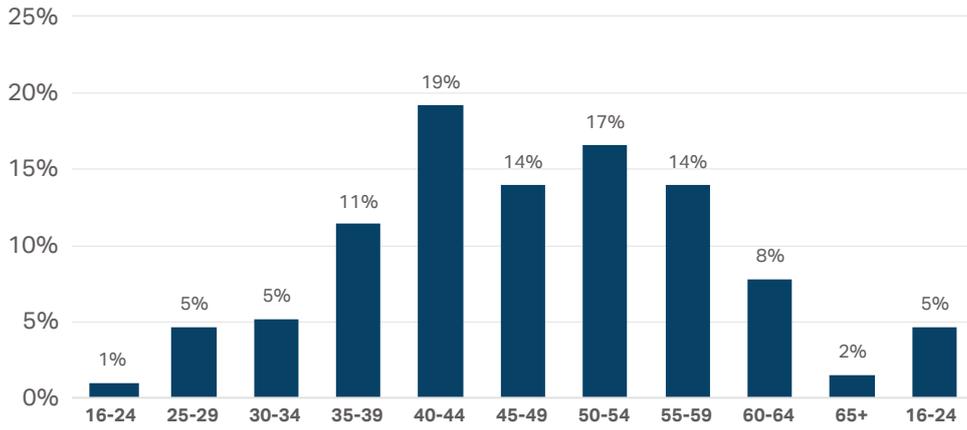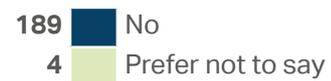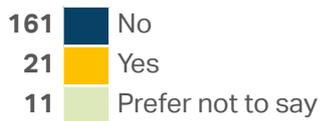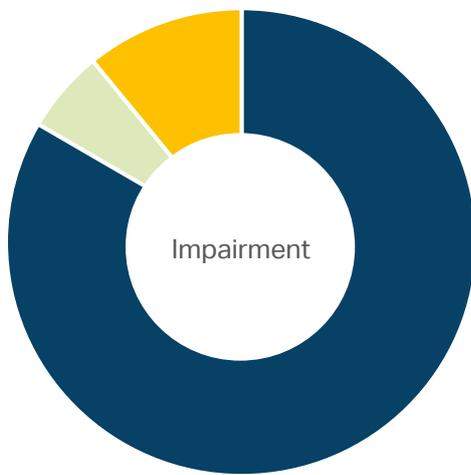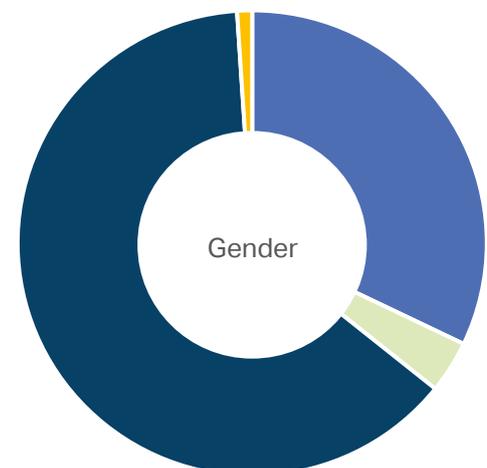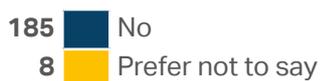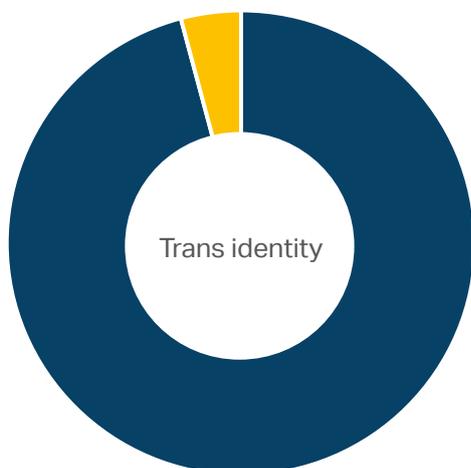
Race
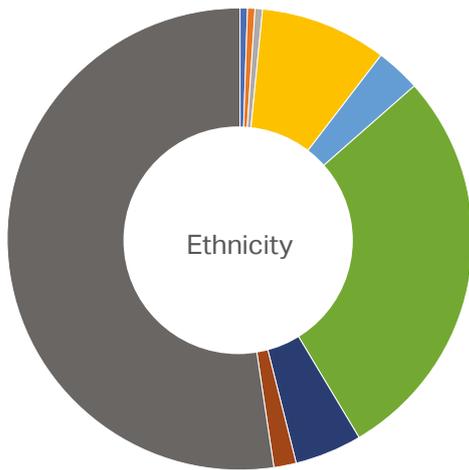
101	White - Scottish
54	White - British
17	Other
9	White - English
6	Prefer not to say
3	White - Irish
1	Black African
1	Asian or Asian British - Chinese
1	Mixed or Multiple Ethnic - White and Black African

Religion
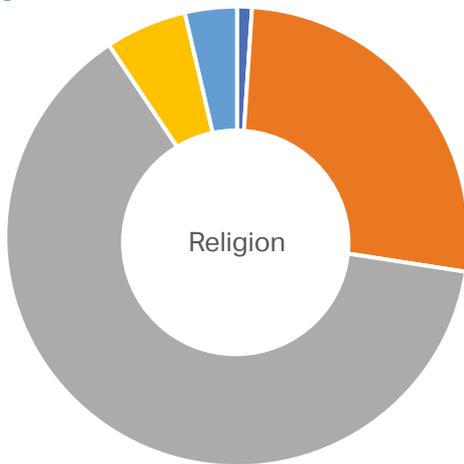
122	No religion
51	Christian
11	Prefer not to say
7	Any other religion or belief
2	Buddhist

Sex
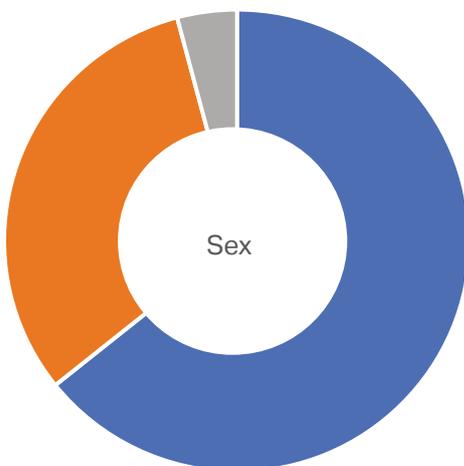
124	Female
61	Male
8	Prefer not to say

Sexual orientation

156	Hetrosexual
15	Prefer not to say
9	Bisexual
9	Gay or Lesbian
2	In another way
1	Queer
1	Asexual

Work patterns

151	Full-time
37	Part-time
5	Prefer not to say
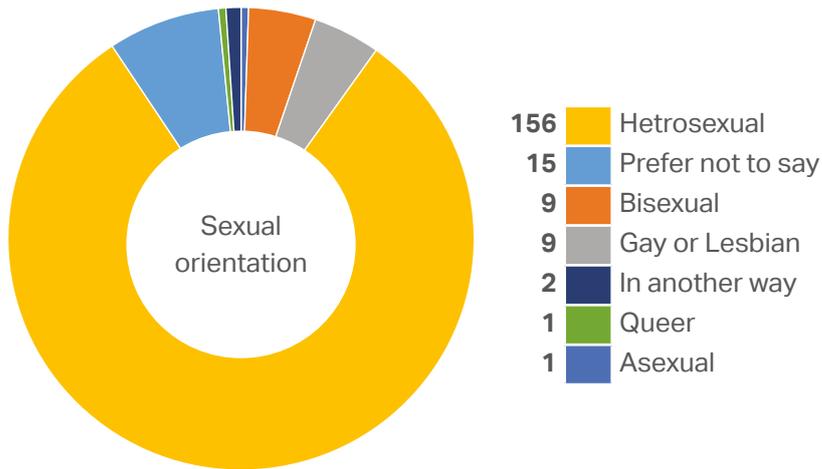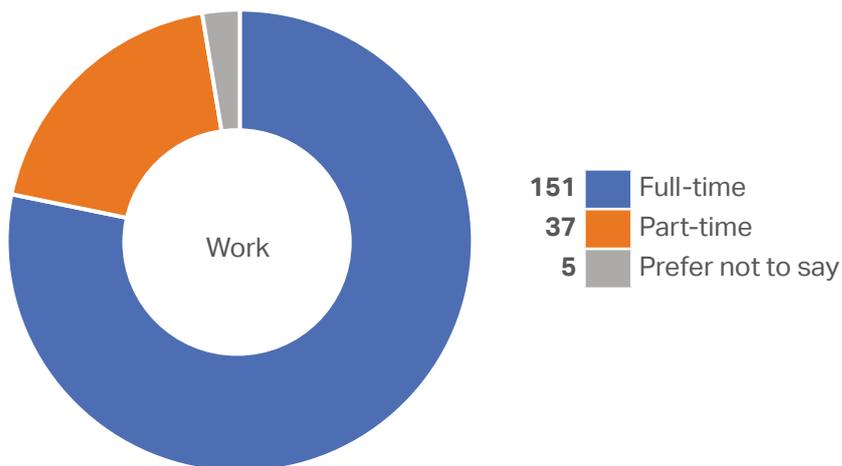
Student Equality Monitoring

HE Enrolments by year and age group

	15 and under			16-20			21-24			25-34			35-44			45-54			55-64			65 and over					
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
ENRs	1	11	9	3398	2993	2731	2387	2453	2188	3261	3287	2935	2436	2536	2432	1669	1698	1581	685	732	722	176	171	193	1	11	

HE Enrolments by year and age group

	Female			Male			Other			Information refused/prefer not to say				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22
ENRs	8694	8711	7887	5249	5106	4827	26	25	39	44	40	34	1	5

HE Enrolments by disability

|		
1439	🟦	You have a mental health condition, such as depression
1137	⬛	You have two or more impairments or mobility issues
766	⬜	You have a disability, impairment or medical condition
457	🟦	You have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia/dyspraxia/ADHD
258	🟨	You have a long standing illness or health condition
113	🟩	You have social/communication impairment such as
71	🟧	You are deaf or have a serious hearing impairment
39	🟫	You have a physical impairment or mobility issue
28	🟦	You are blind or have a serious visual impairment
15	🟨	Learning difficulty
2	⬜	Info refused/not given

HE Enrolments by ethnicity

HE Enrolments by disability

3008	No religion
782	Christian - Other
673	Information refused or not known
652	Christian - Protestant
485	Christian - Catholic
108	Buddhist
77	Muslim
67	Spiritual
46	Hindu
38	Blank
37	Any other religion or belief
26	Pagan
17	Jewish
1	Sikh
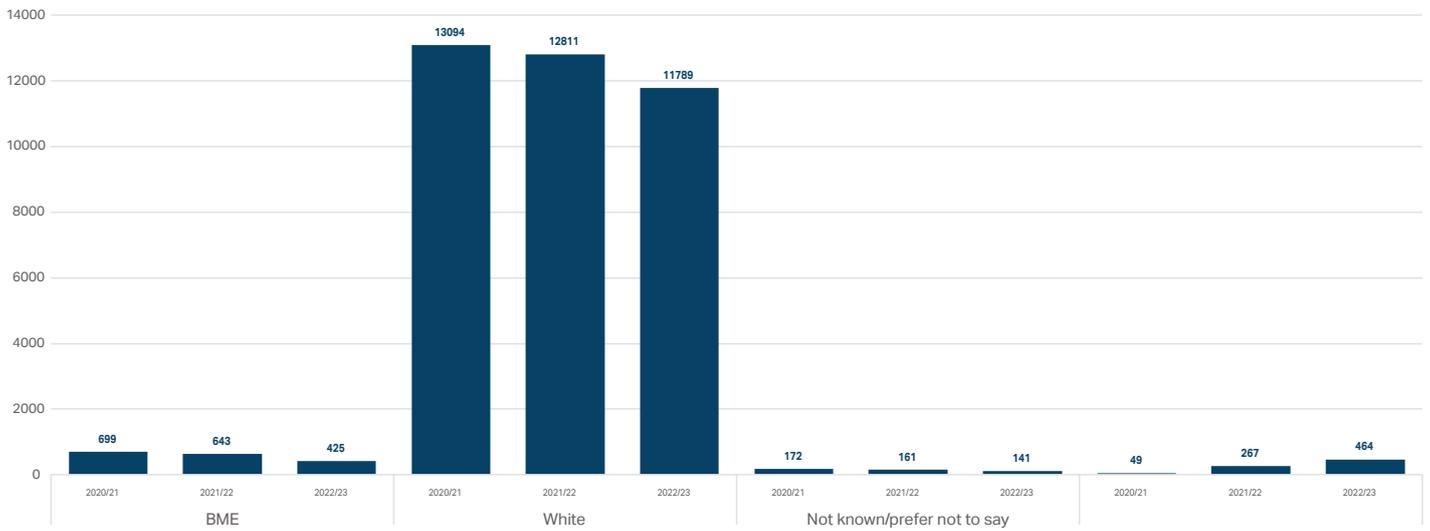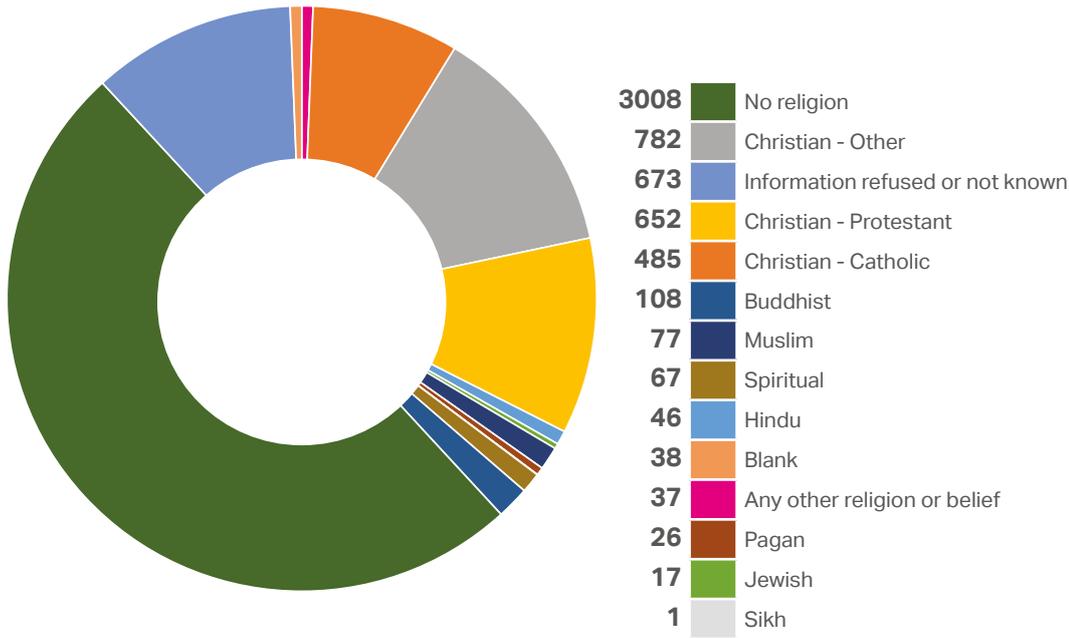
HE Enrolments by sexual orientation

ENRs

	Bi/Bisexual			Gay man			Gay woman/lesbia nH			etrosexual/straight			Other			Prefer not to say			Blank		
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	656	680	647	158	172	180	160	165	144	11611	11117	9927	137	151	175	1233	1342	1291	59	255	428

7
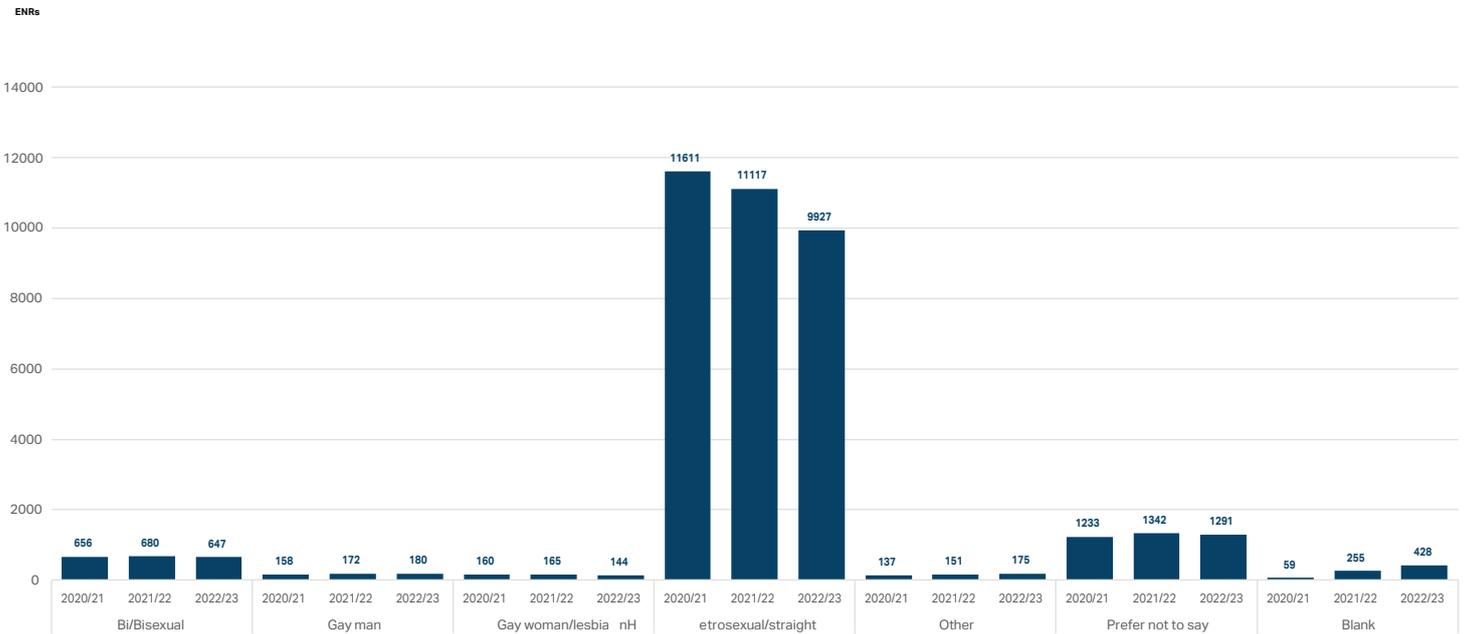
UHI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

" UHI has taken deliberate steps to reflect upon the ways in which we can effectively deliver our PSED for the benefit of all students, staff and stakeholders. A key component of this has been the redesign and launch of our senior equalities forum: the EDI committee.

I am confident that we now have in place the right committee infrastructure to support our commitment to equality of opportunity and non-discrimination in all aspects of work and study. "

Dr Iain Morrison,
Dean of Student Experiences

Purpose

The EDI committee offers a strategically important platform for progressing our EDI agenda at multiple levels across our partnership. The committee is responsible for reviewing, monitoring, and implementing key priorities and actions, particularly those which advance equality of opportunity for all UHI students and staff. As well as this, the committee offers guidance and support to those fulfilling our EDI responsibilities, while facilitating a supportive network to champion best practice and engagement across our complex organisation.

Membership

The EDI committee is composed of 28 members from across our partnership, including those who do not have Public Sector Equality Reporting Duties. Membership is representative of all key business areas from academic and professional services including: performance and culture; governance and policy; HR; EDI; HISA; student experience; academic development; learning and teaching; and corporate communications.

New members can join the committee on request and members can also invite colleagues to join sub groups which have a particular focus or area of priority. For example, a small working group will be formed to support the development of the new national outcomes. This will ensure appropriate alignment and encourage cross-partnership working.

Membership will be reviewed if necessary to ensure fair and equal representation of our staff. If you are interested in participating in our EDI committee or any of its working groups, please contact the committee co-ordinator.

EDI Committee Chair
Lorna Walker
Vice Principal Strategy, Performance and Culture

EDI Committee Co-ordinator
Stephanie Kirkham
Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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Mainstreaming EDI at UHI 2021-2023

Mainstreaming equality is when an organisation integrates equality into the day-to-day working across all functions. UHI is responsible for ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is part of the structures, behaviour, and culture of all our services. This is achieved by having due regard to meet the need to:

+ **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**
  Harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.

+ **Advance equality of opportunity**
  Between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

+ **Foster good relations**
  Between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Evidence of best practice on how UHI is mainstreaming equality across all functions will be demonstrated against the three needs, with one example, as well as noting the protected characteristic most central to the progress made. In some instances, multiple characteristics such as age, disability and sexual orientation are addressed within one example - this is referred to as intersectional. Each example encompasses our values of collaboration, openness, respect, and excellence.

8.1

How UHI is eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act

| Mainstreaming: **Gender Based Violence** | Protected Characteristic: **Sex** |

The UHI student support team is responsible for progressing the gender-based violence (GBV) agenda on behalf of UHI. This work is led by a student support officer for gender-based violence, a new fixed-term full-time post which began at the end of May 2022. Work has focused on meeting sector recommendations such as the Equally Safe in Higher Education (ESHE) Toolkit, and The Emily Test Charter requirements. While UHI has not yet pledged to complete the Emily Test as a whole institution, UHI Inverness hopes to achieve this in Summer 2023.

Key achievements and progress to note include:

+ To empower staff to embed Equally Safe principles, and ensure all 'zones' are applied across the partnership, a UHI GBV network (MS Teams Channel) and UHI GBV SharePoint area have been created. This allows access to hundreds of resources, and ensures updates and support are widely communicated.

+ The UHI GBV Webpages have been refreshed, and are a key resource for staff and students looking to prevent, access support and report GBV. A 'Safe Exit' button was also introduced across the webpages. The ability to search for and find the webpages has been improved – this includes the creation of a graphics suite and QR code. This has resulted in page views increasing from 60 in May 2022 to a high of 468 in November 2022.

+ UHI continues to host a student e-learning module, created by Rape Crisis Scotland, and is working to improve access to this across the partnership. So far 37 students have requested enrolment to this module.

+ The 16 Days of Action 2022 included a partnership-wide itinerary of events, including a performance event at UHI North Highland, and a learning conference at UHI Moray, in collaboration with each partner's respective Violence Against Women Partnership. The 16 Days of Action work served as a good example of awareness raising, the month of November saw the highest number of views of the UHI GBV Webpages, and the highest uptake of the GBV Student e-module.

- On International Women's Day 2023, we launched the GBV Curriculum Zone on SharePoint, which is a new space for staff to share and explore resources, research, and practice examples of gender equality and GBV themes in teaching and learning.

- The student support officer for gender-based violence updated the existing [UHI Staff Guidance for Responding to Student Disclosures of GBV](#), complete with flowchart. This links directly to ensuring students know how to access support about GBV, report their experience and receive quality support where applicable. A series of drop-in sessions, attended by 72 staff, applied the guidance to a series of case studies to ensure staff confidence and awareness. An audio-narrated version of this presentation was also created and remains accessible to all staff via the GBV SharePoint.

This officer continues to work on key areas in this field, with priorities including:

- The launch of a partnership wide GBV policy, highlighting our principles and approach as it relates to students

- The launch of a partnership wide online disclosure tool, providing students with an alternative and accessible means to share incidences of GBV and seek support – or to remain anonymous, and share data which may shape our prevention work. It is anticipated that this tool may then be expanded to include other forms of violence, harassment, and hate, and that the tool may also be used by staff.

The work developed and co-ordinated by the student support officer for gender-based violence and UHI colleagues has been fundamental for the safety and wellbeing of all UHI staff and students. Great efforts have been made collectively to increase awareness of GBV and this will enable staff and students to have accessible information on how to report experiences and access support about violence, harassment and abuse. This example of best practice meets all three needs of the General Equality Duty; however, it explicitly meets the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.

Student
+ Creative
Call-Out

Raising awareness of
#GenderBasedViolence

win up to **£100** cash

Talk about it

How UHI is advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Mainstreaming:
Aurora Leadership Programme

Protected Characteristic:
Intersectional

Aurora is Advanced HE's leadership development programme for women, and those who identify as women across the UK and Ireland. It is a unique partnership bringing together leadership experts, higher education providers and research institutes to take positive action to address the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the sector.

Since 2018, UHI's engagement with the programme has been led each year by the Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA). Participants explore four key areas associated with leadership success: identity, impact and voice, core leadership, politics and influence and adaptive leadership skills.

The application process: past and current aurorans

Applications are considered by a panel composed of five to six aurorans, chaired by Lorna Walker, Vice-Principal Strategy, Performance and Culture and facilitated by Debbie Wartnaby, Organisational Learning and Development Co-ordinator, both Lorna and Debbie are UHI's institutional aurora champions.

Each year since its inception in 2018-19, the programme has been oversubscribed and some colleagues apply multiple times:

Year	Spaces	Number of applicants
2018-19	10	20
2019-20	5	14
2020-21	6	15
2021-22	6	11
2022-23	6	13

UHI has 33 aurorans who have, or are, undertaking the programme from across the academic partners, some have brought their aurora badge from other institutions or professions.

2022-2023 Successful applicants:

+ **Danielle Woods**
  UHI Department of Nursing and Midwifery

+ **Gillian Ford**
  UHI Inverness

+ **Dr Heather Fotheringham**
  UHI Learning and Teaching Academy

+ **Hollie Drever**
  UHI Student Support

+ **Mairi Cowan**
  SAMS

+ **Susan Szymborksi-Welsh**
  Corporate Communications

2021-2022 Successful applicants:

+ **Audrey Decou**
  UHI Curriculum Development Employer Engagement Officer

+ **Mandy Haggith**
  Lecturer, Literature and Creative Writing, UHI Inverness

+ **Denise Maclean Ferguson**
  UHI MIS Manager

+ **Lindsey Moodie**
  UHI Change Implementation Manager

+ **Beth Mouat**
  Island Strategy Director and Joint Head of Marine Science and Technology, UHI Shetland

+ **Marie Porter**
  Physical Oceanographer, Scottish Association for Marine Science

A full list of all aurorans from 2018 to 2023 can be found here

Requirements and achievements:

The LTA supports participants to embed their leadership skills through a range of professional development opportunities including aurora learning sets, taking part in aurora promotion webinars, the panel selection process; mentoring of new participants and presenting at LTA events, webinars, and conferences. Information on past events can be found here.

One of the conditions of a place on the programme is a commitment to producing a short video of their experiences on it. The videos from previous cohorts can be found on the Aurora webpages under each cohort. Participants are also required to attend the Aurora Scotland cohort programme dates set by Advanced HE. Originally the programme was delivered face-to-face in Edinburgh, however since the pandemic this has moved online. For UHI colleagues, this has been beneficial as our staff are from various locations in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. This method of delivery is more inclusive as it ensures women with disabilities and families are better supported and able to participate.

UHI's former Organisational Learning and Development Lead, Ann Tilbury wrote an interesting case study for Advance HE: Leadership development through collaborative learning: Aurora at UHI. Ann offers insight into the importance of working collaboratively across UHI, the impact of which can increase a sense of belonging, particularly as UHI is a complex structure of independent colleges and research institutions. More information on implementing the Aurora leadership programme can be found in the online and printable book 'Gender equality and representation within and beyond the University of the Highlands and Islands: A book in celebration of International Women's Day 2021'

A feature of UHI's International Women's Day celebrations has been a session on Aurora involving current, existing and future Aurorans. LTA Connect: International Women's Day 2023: Celebrating UHI Aurorans and International Women's Day 2022 . Both the video mementos and International Women's Day sessions have inspired and motivated the future Aurorans to apply for a place.

The Aurora leadership programme positively illuminates gender equality across all partners of UHI, it encompasses all our values of collaboration, respect, openness, and excellence.

Empowering a range of intersectional women across the institution to build momentum in their roles and practice, feel a sense of belonging and community as well as project a confident voice for meaningful leadership change.

How UHI is advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Mainstreaming:
Corporate Communications

Protected Characteristic:
All protected Characteristics Considered in addition to Gaelic

The corporate communications team is effectively demonstrating how equality can be integrated into day-to-day workings across all functions and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Corporate communications provide a range of professional services within executive office and across the wider UHI partnership. This includes brand, Gaelic, web and communications (internal, external and digital): a range of activities and initiatives impacting on equality, diversity and inclusion.

> " **Equality, diversity and inclusion are business imperatives which should be considered every day. If we focus on keeping ourselves at the forefront of good communications practice, we can better help and advise others. We want to help UHI to be recognised as inclusive and equitable for all.** "
>
> Alison Lochead,
> director of corporate communications
> talks about the importance of EDI learning
> as a collective and individually

Here are some examples of how the team approaches this:

+ Included key EDI dates into our annual digital calendar available for students and staff

+ Consideration when commissioning or buying stock photography and videography that we fairly represent people who have protected characteristics

+ Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is considered when planning events

+ Social media templates to share with all our partners to promote Black History month, LGBT History month, Pride Month and many more

+ Work collaboratively with our staff on their projects/campaigns to ensure external messaging is accessible in design and also includes Gaelic

+ We are committed with making our materials bilingual and accessible for both print and web use

+ We accommodate requests where the artwork is required as an accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille

+ UHI one-web websites do not discriminate on the grounds of shared protected characteristics

+ Images used across the site encourage diversity and representation

+ We've made the website text as simple as possible to understand and allow the user to:
  • change colours, contrast levels and fonts using tools of the user's choice
  • zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
  • navigate most of the website using just a keyboard
  • navigate most of the website using speech recognition software
  • listen to most of the website using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver)
+ We recently passed an audit from UK Government Digital Services on our accessibility compliance.
+ Detailed departmental commitments around the use and visibility of Gaelic as part of the UHI Gaelic Language Plan.
+ Gaelic conversation circle groups are advertised to all staff are available to anyone wishing to take part.
+ Bilingual newsletters and social media posts are produced for staff, students and alumni.

And samples of their work:
+ Support service webpages to students
+ Social media content:
  • LGBT History Month
  • International Day of People with Disabilities
  • Study tips for dyslexia
  • Supporting local pride events
+ UK Disability Month blog from a staff member
+ 16 Days of Action blog raising awareness of gender-based violence

+ Introducing our new head of EDI in a blog and and outlining our commitment
+ Supporting students with dyslexia blog
+ Gender equality in education blog
+ Green Week campaign
+ Gaelic toolkit available on the UHI website. This resource can be used by university staff, students and the public.

Challenges

There is difficulty to find a true reflective balance of our students and staff demographic representation in video and photography. We hope UHI can identify student and staff working groups for protected characteristics so they can act as 'champions' or ambassadors.

There's an ongoing issue around venues and events more generally and balancing availability of venues against requirements and duties around EDI.

The team continues to build relationships with staff across UHI to raise awareness of our duties regarding our Gaelic Language Plan, however consideration around time and budget while implementing Gaelic into projects needs to be better supported.

Impact

The corporate communications team have proactively mainstreamed equality, diversity, and inclusion in all areas of their work. They demonstrate the effectiveness of using a whole-system holistic approach, meeting all three needs of the Equality Act (2010). Exceptional work around protected characteristics, particularly Disability and LGBTQ+ in the workplace and learning environment are evident.

By fostering relationships across the partnership, the team have successfully captured lived experiences, encouraged participation in campaigns, taken action to improve safety, demonstrated commitment to gender equality and the Gaelic Language Plan, promoted competitions and encouraged funding and best practice awards.

This work is a true reflection of how to mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion across a complex partnership while encompassing our core values.

Widening Access

At UHI we undertake work to support students and help remove barriers for students who are underrepresented in higher education.

UHI is identified as a corporate parent under part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The definition of corporate parenting is:

> " An organisation's performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted. "

Our UHI Corporate Parenting Plan outlines our committed to ensuring care experienced young people are fully supported during their time with us. Work is ongoing to develop a mandatory staff training framework to ensure all employees of UHI and academic partners are aware of their obligations under corporate parenting.

Estranged Students
The Scottish Government have approved the definition as:

> " An estranged person is someone who no longer has contact with their parents or legal guardians, due to a permanent breakdown in their relationship. "

Care Experienced
The Scottish Funding Council reports that care-experienced young people and adults are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society. The term refers to anyone who has been, or is currently, in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked-after.

Carers
Carers Trust Scotland define a carer as:

> " Anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. "

UHI has adopted the Carers Trust Scotland definition.

Widening Access and Inclusive Practice

+ UHI has a wide range of support available including the allocation of a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT).

+ UHI have signed the Stand Alone Pledge, which commits us to supporting students studying without the support or approval of a family network. Access our Pledge letter

+ UHI delivers annual cross partnership development days and information for personal academic tutor support, safeguarding, student support, and inclusive practitioners.

+ UHI has a student maternity and paternity policy

+ UHI participates and celebrates awareness days including National Care Day, Estranged Student Spotlight and Carers week.

+ UHI has a British Sign Language Plan 2021-2024 this outlines our commitment to promoting inclusive practice for BSL users.

9

Progress made: Outcomes 2021-2023

In 2021 UHI set equality outcomes which would be progressed and achieved by 2025. This section of the report will provide an update on progress made to date; each outcome will be supported by an example of best practice.

Outcome 1

Increasing cross partnership activities and collaboration

Example: International Women's Day: University wide International Women's Day Event

Outcome 2

Inclusive infrastructure: Leadership, Governance and Management

Example 1: STEM Outreach Programme

Example 2: Inclusive funding opportunities

Outcome 3

Increase stakeholder engagement and community partnership

Example 1: Inclusion intern experience

Example 2: Student Partnership Agreement

Outcome 4

Better understanding our staff and students: data and disclosure

Example: 2022 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

Outcome 5

Increasing student support, representation, wellbeing, and voice

Example 1: Student mental health and wellbeing support

Example 2: Healthy Body Healthy Mind (Incorporating EDI Dates) Calendar 2023

Outcome 6

Inclusive processes: diversifying and developing our staff

Example 1: The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2022-2026

Example 2: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Training

Outcome 7

Inclusive communication: digital accessibility, Gaelic, BSL and Culture

Example: Education Development Unit (EDU) - accessibility

Due to the development of the new national equality outcomes, this report will bring the outcomes developed for 2021-2025 to a close. From the end of the academic year until 2025, UHI will proceed to advance the new national outcomes.

Outcome 1

Increasing cross partnership activities and collaboration

Example: International Women's Day: University wide International Women's Day Event

From 2018-2022 UHI has delivered a university-wide International Women's Day event. Co-ordinated by the Learning and Teaching Academy, the event was initially delivered in person, then hybrid, to online 2022.

This delivery method brings together individuals from teaching, research, professional services, and students across all our partnerships and enables women, and anyone who identifies as a woman, to celebrate key achievements.

The links below provide information on all events that have taken place over the years, demonstrating our commitment to progressing gender inequality.

International Women's Day 2018

International Women's Day 2019

International Women's Day 2020

International Women's Day 2021

International Women's Day 2022

International Women's Day 2023

> **" International Women's Day provides the opportunity to explore and critically reflect on gender equality in education, including reflecting on the impact of the wider societal contexts and inequalities on our own student body and staff groups. "**
>
> Alex Walker,
> (Professional Development and Recognition Lead)

Over the years, attendance at these events average between 50 to 70 participants, with speakers from various academic partners, departments and external organisations including: the Aurora Leadership Programme, National Union of Students, University of Gloucestershire, UHI Shetland, UHI Inverness, UHI Orkney and Stonewall Scotland.

Outputs from the events include:

+ An online and printable book 'Gender equality and representation within and beyond the University of the Highlands and Islands : A book in celebration of International Women's Day 2021'

+ Think UHI Blog: Gender in Education: What are the challenges and how do we overcome them.

+ Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice: JPAAP Special Issue: 'Breaking the Gender Bias in Academia and Academic practice'

+ The event led to the university funding 10 places on the Aurora Leadership Programme.

+ Interest externally has seen the event reported in local press

  • In 2019 BBC Alba attended the event and reported it in the evening news.

  • In 2022 the organiser, Alex Walker, was invited to do an interview for BBC Alba on the importance of marking International Women's Day and women role-models for students, particularly those in STEM subjects.

The International Women's Day cross partnership events provide the opportunity to discuss what the university and sector is doing to support gender equality and what can be done going forward.

As well as exploring the annual international theme, events such as this offer staff and students a safe place for raising their voice and enabling change to happen collectively.

Outcome 2

Inclusive infrastructure: leadership, governance and management

Example 1: STEM Outreach Programme and funding opportunities

UHI has a wide range of projects, funding opportunities and scholarships which advance equity of opportunity for people with protected characteristic and support the progress of creating an inclusive culture. The opportunities listed below demonstrate our commitment to progressing outcome 2.

Example 1
STEM Outreach Programme

The university's STEM project which has an element of addressing the balance of women in STEM, received more than half a million pounds from renewable energy developer SSE Renewables.

The programme was recently evaluated by the specialist economic development and regeneration consultancy, Ekosgen. The STEM Project Evaluation report by Ekosgen found that the outreach approach adopted by the university has helped to lower barriers to engagement in STEM education and training and generated more peer-to-peer knowledge.

The STEM project is an exceptional example of addressing equity of opportunity at UHI, enriching our culture, building capacity and increasing confidence within our staff, learners and communities.

This imperative work not only promotes STEM subjects, careers and develops our workforce, it proactively and effectively addresses inequalities within the Highlands and Islands.

> " Building skills in science, technology, engineering and maths is vital to the future of the Highland economy, particularly as the number of occupations in this field are predicted to grow and as the future of work changes.
>
> As an institution that provides work-based learning, at both college and university level, we've been able to take a holistic approach to promoting STEM which has allowed us to address the whole education pipeline.
>
> We're pleased that Ekosgen's report has proven the university has achieved effective change; to increase awareness, to influence aspirations and to tackle the lack of diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, and rurality in STEM professions. "
>
> Dawne Bloodworth
> UHI STEM development manager

Inclusive infrastructure: leadership, governance and management

Example 2: Inclusive funding opportunities

Sidney Black Memorial Prize

The Sidney Black Memorial Engineering Award is offered to a graduating female engineering student who has demonstrated a combination of academic achievement, personal attributes or a contribution to society/student life.

The award, given in memory of the Sidney Black, the father of one of our female engineering lecturers, Lois Gray, is to inspire female engineers to achieve their full potential and achieve their career aspirations.

Lois' father, Sidney, was passionate about engineering and encouraged Lois into a traditionally male-dominated career. This award will positively impact the lives of females pursuing engineering and reduce gender inequalities within STEM courses and careers.

The Witherby Publishing Group Charitable Trust

The Witherby Publishing Group Chartable Trust has donated £105,000 to provide scholarships and bursaries to talented individuals across the Highlands and Islands over the next three years.

This bursary has been created to encourage more students from remote and rural areas to consider higher education. Iain Macneil, owner and CEO of Witherby Publishing Group, along with the other trustees agreed to make the award.

Iain was awarded an honorary doctorate from UHI in 2022 and was inspired to explore how Witherby Publishing Group Charitable Trust could support talented individuals from island and rural communities.

> " It was a moving experience for me at the graduation ceremony at Eden Court in September 2022 to see first-hand so many people from the Highlands and Islands being helped to attain further and higher education, regardless of their age.
>
> The potential benefits that are achievable when people recognise that it's not too late to learn or re-skill was something that our charitable trust definitely wanted to get behind and we are delighted to be supporting UHI in this cause. "

Iain Macneil
CEO of Witherby Publishing Group

> " The generous funding from the Witherby Publishing Group Charitable Trust will play an important role in enabling and encouraging people to access UHI courses from their own communities. "

Alison Wilson,
UHI's Director of Advancement and Alumni Engagement

For more information on funding please click here.

Outcome 3

Increase stakeholder engagement and community partnership

Example: Inclusion Intern Experience

The University Careers and Employability team offer services to all students studying at the university and its academic partners.

As a service we are particularly interested in addressing the unemployment gap between disabled and non-disabled individuals by embedding and learning from Inclusion Scotland's 'Social model of disability'.

Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in 2020/21 underpins the motivation to review service delivery and to better consider the support needs of disabled students as navigating the labour market.

UHI | Careers and Employability Centre | Ionad Dhreuchdan agus Freagarrachd Cosnaidh

Background

In 2022 the university employed an Inclusion Scotland Intern for a period of 6 months, with a specific focus on a research project entitled **deconstructing barriers to employability for disabled students.**

The project aim was to explore how the UHI careers and employability centre (CEC) could align its services to meet the needs of a defined group of students, namely those students declaring a disability which falls within a definition of neurodiversity or mental health.

The role of the intern was to design and conduct 3 focus groups to ascertain students' views, needs and expectations; co-design a web-based information page and workshop; as well as design and conduct one student/employer discussion forum.

Research Conclusion and Themes

The project established a clear need for disabilty specific career development support including:

+ **Lack of awareness of CEC services:**
  Students requested improved promotion of support available for specific disabilities in the form of disability confident employers, online resources, and career deveopment appointments

+ **Inaccessible and recruitment practices:**
  Students found job descriptions vague, interviews inaccessible and lack of interest or uptake for alternative recruitment assessments

+ **Lack of confidence:**
  28% of students highlighted a lack of confidence when it comes to applying for jobs as well as disclosing their disability with the fear of unemployment or rejection.

+ **Unmet needs of support:**
  100% of participants in our employer survey mentioned they offered 'soft support' and 57% offered standard work flexibilities. This support was welcomed, however in our focus groups, participants noted that when employing soft support, employers were often untrained and lacked experience.

+ **Ignorance surrounding disability:**
  Students noted that prejudice and stigma affected both the recruitment process and their experience of the workplace.

Outcome 3

Increase stakeholder engagement and community partnership

Example: Inclusion Intern Experience

Recommendations

+ Build stronger external training provider relationships with disability orientated training for the careers and employability centre team.

  • External providers include: Mind, Samh, The Diversity Trust, exceptional individuals, Disability Rights UK, Autism specific CPD: Ambitious about Autism, National Autistic Society offer training courses which provide frameworks used to support autistic students. Into Work, Autism Understanding Scotland.

+ Increased collaboration between student support services, including mental health and CEC.

+ Introduce student declaration of support needs and/or disability specific careers appointments or events.

Promotion and awareness:

+ Cross partnership, accessible advertising of career development support for disabled students.

+ Engage further with external organisations to ensure the publicising of, and sign posting to, disability specific resources.

+ Create a disability specific section to the careers and employability centre website and promote links to organisations with inclusive practices and interactive resources.

  • Examples include: Reasonable adjustments: Neurodiversity

+ Create disability specific job opportunities section on FutureMe and JobShop.

Facilitation

+ Engage in further discussion with employers on promotion of job adverts, expectations, interview best practice and understanding of reasonable adjustments.

+ Build connections with desired employers for networking events.

+ Champion further Inclusion Scotland internships.

+ Enable accessible engagement with disabled students for continuous support and improvement of UHI services.

Request to equality, diversity, and inclusion committee

+ Consider and support where possible, recommendations of this research

+ Advise on or share best practice of existing forums or process cross partnership

+ Consider and advise how actions identified may be subsumed within broader equality and diversity strategic planning moving forward

Outcome 3

Increase stakeholder engagement and community partnership

Example 2: Student Partnership Agreement

The Student Partnership Agreement sets out how students and staff can work together to improve the student experience. The Student Partnership Agreement 2022, was agreed with the university's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) and and Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA).

Representatives of the university and HISA meet on a monthly basis to take forward areas for joint working. This year we are working in partnership on:

1. **Disability support, awareness and accessibility**
2. **Socialising, connectivity and community**
3. **Environment and green sustainability**

Progress has been made towards all these goals, to find out more check out the SPA Progress update

Outcome 4

Better understanding our staff and students: data and disclosure

Example: 2022 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

The 2022 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey illustrates the progress made in better understanding our staff and students. UHI received a score of 95% student satisfaction, rated the best in Scotland. The result means that UHI achieved the highest rating of any Scottish university and has been ranked fourth out of the 91 participating institutions across the UK.

Coordinated by Advance HE, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey invites students to have their say on taught postgraduate university programmes. Students are asked about areas including teaching, assessment and support. Over 120 students from across UHI completed this year's survey.

Respondents rated UHI particularly highly for organisation, engagement, teaching, assessment and support.

" **These are exceptional results. Students are the best judges of what makes a good education and to be rated highest in the country is to the great credit of our wonderful staff. Coming so soon after our extremely high undergraduate student satisfaction results, this survey confirms that UHI really should be the first choice for anyone considering postgraduate study this year.** "

Dr Iain Morrison,
UHI Dean of Student Experience

UHI's postgraduate courses reflect the unique environment, culture and heritage of the Highlands and Islands and are often linked to academic research carried out by its staff and students. Courses are taught locally from the UHI region but are also available to study online across the world. More information about the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.

" **Everything about the MLitt matched my interests. I liked the fact that I could fit the qualification around my work schedule as a special needs teacher based in Manchester.**

I had the freedom to take units at my own rate and it took me just over three years to complete the MLitt. It reignited my interest in academia and has opened new opportunities for both teaching and further study. All of this is thanks to a well-designed course and a very supportive staff team. "

Adrian Allan graduated from UHI's MLitt History of the Highlands and Islands in February 2022.

" **These results represent a clear direction of travel for postgraduate students and their experience at UHI. UHI hasn't stood still on the important work that goes into creating a community for our members and developing their academic experience. These results are certainly something to smile about. We're looking forward to another great year where we'll be welcoming postgraduate students back for the start of session and also to the important partnership work with UHI to make their experience even better.** "

Heather Innes,
President of the Highlands and Islands Students' Association

Outcome 5

Increasing student support, representation, wellbeing, and voice

Example 1: Mental health and wellbeing support

UHI offers a wide range of student support services including, but not limited to; inclusive learning, financial support such as foodbanks, digital support and bursaries as well as and wellbeing and mental health. This example specifically demonstrates the progress made in supporting students' wellbeing and mental health.

Our professional service of mental health and counselling practitioners recognise that experiences of mental health problems vary across different groups and communities.

At UHI we are mindful of the importance of diversity and inclusion and, in addition to the protected characteristics, we also ensure that we can support students who identify with the following areas: LGBTQ+, ethnicity, neurodiversity, family background (e.g., adoption or non-conventional family background), culture, regional differences, first language, and complexities of societal privilege.

Our counsellors work to professional standards set by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and ascribe the ethical framework by respecting and valuing all clients and their experiences as a unique. This ethos is adopted not only by our counsellors but by our mental health professionals, where fair and impartial treatment of all clients is fundamental to the ethical principle of justice and beneficence, a commitment to promoting the client's wellbeing.

We believe we have a duty to our students to have an awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion, and as a team we engage in regular professional learning and development which consists of relevant themes and topics including mental health, unconscious bias, and cultural relativity. This practice is often shared across partnerships, as is the digital mental health service togetherall and student assisted programme Spectrum Life.

I feel depressed/upset and I don't know who to talk to.

What are my choices?

UHI

Where can I get help for my mental health when the college is closed?

UHI
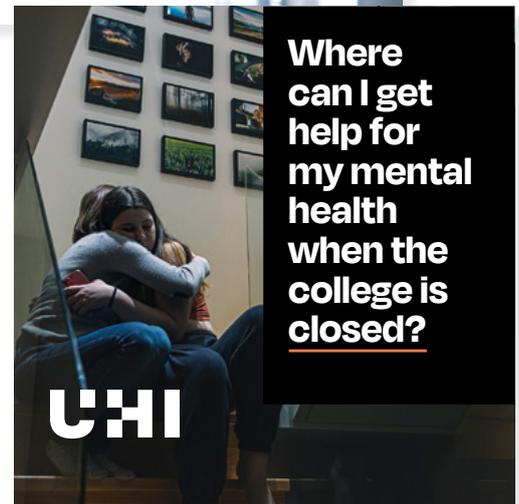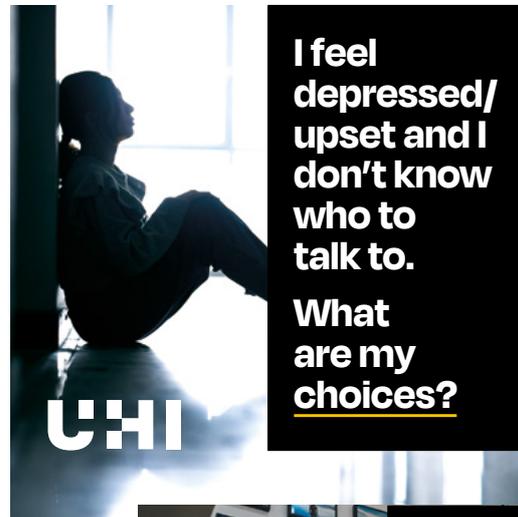
UHI support services are accessible in a variety of formats from face-to-face through local academic partners, by email, video conferencing (camera on or off) or instant messenger, to ensure we can find a way of working which meets the needs of our students. Being acutely aware of our geographic structure and transport issues, our online counselling provision has been running since 2014 for this very reason, to ensure accessibility and flexibility towards any student looking for support. Our out-of-hours provision also offer support and has an interpreter service if required.

This example succinctly demonstrates the progress made to increase wellbeing and mental health support for students.

Increasing student support, representation, wellbeing, and voice

Example 2: Healthy Body Healthy Mind Calendar 2023 – Incorporating key equality, diversity and inclusion dates
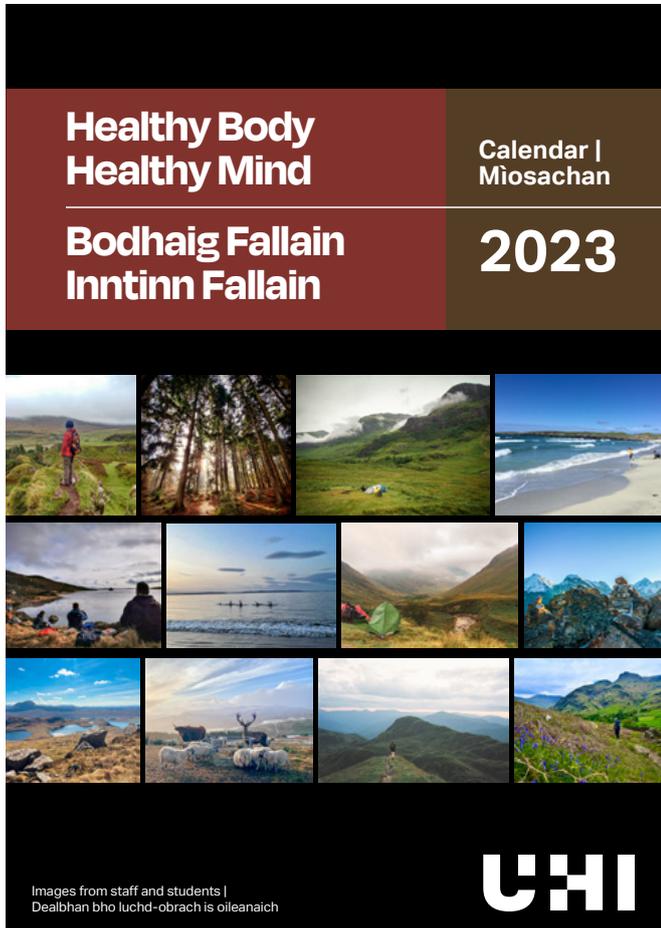
One of the themes of Healthy Body Healthy Mind is the annual photography competition where all UHI staff and students can submit photos of what 'healthy body healthy mind' means to them. The competition runs in February/March every year, in conjunction with the national University Mental Health Day. There is the opportunity for entries to be included in the annual calendar and the winner also receives a £50 National Book Token, which can be used online or in store.

At UHI it is equally important to support the wellbeing and mental health of our staff as it is for our students. Healthy Body Healthy Mind supports colleges and universities in improving student and staff wellbeing and inspires positive changes on campus.

In 2020/2021 UHI, supported by HISA, achieved the bronze award in the national Healthy Body Healthy Mind scheme. In receiving an award, institutions demonstrate how they are encouraging sport and physical activity, a smoke-free culture and good mental health. The scheme is run by Scottish Student Sport, in partnership with ASH Scotland, NUS Scotland, and SAMH.

[The Healthy Body Healthy Mind Calendar](#) includes spectacular photography from staff and students across UHI and incorporates key equality, diversity, and inclusion dates. This approach demonstrates inclusive practice with a genuine desire to be a collaborative, diverse and supportive institution.

By bringing wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion together, staff and students can learn, raise awareness, celebrate, and come together to share experiences on key dates such as LGBTQ+ History Month, Autism Awareness Month, Pride Month, Scottish Refugee Week, Menopause Awareness Month, Black History Month, Disability Month and so much more. #UHIEDI - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Matters.

Outcome 6

Inclusive processes: diversifying and developing our staff

Example 1: The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2022-2026

UHI has a new, collectively developed Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES) that has been designed to guide further innovation and good practice in learning and teaching across the university partnership.

The new strategy was developed and co-designed in direct consultation with staff and students across UHI. At the heart of the strategy are a set of ten learning and teaching enhancement values to be embedded in learning and teaching and experienced by all of our students in their time at UHI, whatever they might be studying, however they are studying, and where they are studying.

The value **'supporting the learner as an individual'** defined as 'our learning, teaching and assessment practices will ensure all students have the opportunities and support they require to succeed, and that diverse and individual student needs are met through inclusive and equitable approaches to curriculum design and delivery'. Going forward, this and all the values will feed into staff professional and curriculum development.

This strategy underpins the importance of embedding equality, diversity and inclusion within the design and delivery of learning and teaching. All values and enabling practices authentically encourage active collaboration, enriching the experiences of staff and students by supporting open education approaches which celebrate diversity.

The Learning and Teaching Academy have actively created opportunities for staff and students to come together, empowering diverse voices through the following initiatives:

+ **The Learning Lab**
+ **The ALPINE framework**
+ **University Mentoring Scheme**
+ **University Women's Network**
+ University Women's Network and Reading Group
+ Menopause Support Group for Staff and Students

The University Women's Network was established in 2018 to allow colleagues to debate the current challenges facing women in further and higher education, and to plan initiatives to address these challenges. The group is open to anyone who identifies as a woman and is currently seeking to appoint a new chair. The network meets a few times per year and invites internal and external speakers to share their experiences. Currently, the network mailing list sits at around 71 colleagues, members have commented:

> " The women's network brings together an inspiring community of colleagues from across the partnership... I took so much from the recent interactive session with Dr Irene Garcia on exploring the topic of imposter syndrome that I've tried to embed in my day-to-day. "

> " UHI women's network - a positive, empowering, supportive network of like-minded people. I always come away from the events, thinking I can make a difference. The group has helped me build my own network within UHI and to the welcoming nature of the network I would have no hesitation in contacting any of the members for support/advice and would welcome the same in return. "

UHI Women's Network and reading group is open to anyone from across the university, the Women's Network Reading Group brings colleagues together to discuss books, journal articles and any other texts which explore aspects of feminism or women's experiences.

The development of the Women's Network and reading group has encouraged women from across UHI to collaborate and engage with activities, it is this group which has been behind the success of International Women's Day celebratory events from 2018-2023.

Outcome 6

Inclusive processes: diversifying and developing our staff

**Example 2**: Research Excellence Framework (REF)

The REF represents the single biggest routine assessment exercise, conducted UK-wide, it is used to benchmark the sector and to allocate research funding to UK Higher Education Institutions. The result of the exercise determines research funding to universities from the UK government for a six-year period.

Nearly three quarters of UHI research submitted for review to the 2021 Research Excellence Framework achieved the top two grades: world leading or internationally excellent. Our REF 2021 results reflect the importance of community connection and our unique place and deep roots in our communities demonstrate how successfully UHI collaborates and engages with researcher locally and across the world.

At UHI, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion is weaved through our world-leading research. The REF Steering Group regularly participates in equalities training to ensure fair and equitable selection of research outputs.

Recently, 20 members of the REF Steering Group, from 10 different assessment areas, such as Archaeology, History, Education and Theology, took part in Unconscious Bias Training (UBT). The refresher training was delivered by the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion and explored: equality and diversity overview, UB impact on others, UB in the workplace and how to mitigate UB in relation to the REF Framework. Overall, the refresher was welcomed, though staff are fully aware that UBT alone does not change behaviours and recognise the need for continuous EDI training, engagement, and guidance.

Further evidence of how EDI is implemented and promoted through research can be found in the 2022 REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel report.

Outcome 7

Inclusive communication: digital accessibility, Gaelic, British Sign Language and culture

Example: Accessibility - Education Development Unit (EDU)

Over the years the Educational Development Unit (EDU) has designed and developed inclusive practices which support learning and teaching across the partnership. Versed in the latest trends in digital pedagogy, design and learning technologies, the EDU supports the drive for equality through instructional design and development for others.

Equality, diversity and inclusion examples of instructional design and development:

+ Dyslexia booklet - an information booklet about dyslexia for teaching education students who are themselves dyslexic, created at the request of Professor Morag Redford, Head of Teacher Education, is currently being developed.

+ Dignispace – an online learning space promoting dignity in practice through a human rights lens, designed to support healthcare professionals. The collaborative project includes partners from UHI, University of Strathclyde, University of Dundee and The University of Edinburgh.

+ Gender Based Violence – mandatory training for staff on Brightspace.

+ Mental Health Toolkit – an internal partnership-wide project for staff which provides resources and information on mental health conditions, wellbeing warning signs and signposting.

+ Inclusive practice toolkit – an internal project designed to support staff across the partnership to take a consistent approach to assessing students' needs.

+ Project management development and processes to ensure accessible documentation, inclusive language and consideration of protected characteristics.

EDU also runs workshops which engage staff in learning activities to enhance teaching practice, the curriculum and, ultimately, the student experience. Staff can attend in person, by video conference or online. Steps taken include inclusive and diverse resources and imagery, inclusive language in accessible formatting and appropriate support for accessible venues.

The Accessibility Project

This project, located on SharePoint, is designed to help all staff ensure their learning and teaching content is accessible and compliant with accessibility regulations. Providing access to a range of best practice resources, this project not only ensures staff are compliant, but are able to enrich and improve the learning experience for students with disabilities. Examples of best accessible practice includes:

+ The roll-out and support of Blackboard Ally, the accessibility checking, remediation and reporting tool embedded in Brightspace.

+ The academic partner accessibility champions' forum

+ The student accessibility forum

+ The accessibility communications site

+ The staff accessibility support module in Brightspace

+ Support staff embedding UHI accessibility standards

+ Support academic staff embedding accessibility in taught programmes and professional development/accreditation.

Outcome 7

Inclusive communication: digital accessibility, Gaelic, BSL and Culture

Example: Education Development Unit (EDU)

Impact

The impact of the extensive programmes developed and run by UHI Learning and Teaching has led to successfully increasing the Brightspace content accessibility score. The score increased from 74.6% in 2021/22 to 76.7% in 2022/23. The scores are generated by Blackboard Ally, an accessibility programme running in Brightspace. Ally identifies materials that are not accessible and helps staff improve them, ensuring they are compliant.

EDU has effectively embedded EDI through the design and practice of digital accessibility. Challenges such as time and access to content may be overcome by building in protected time for staff to engage with support and development. This will increase knowledge and confidence for staff, ensuring their digital content is accessible.

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Gender Pay Gap 2023

Introduction and Summary

UHI is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for its staff. Our strategic aim is to create an environment with attracts and fosters the very best employees, and where all staff feel their achievements are equally valued and rewarded.

Since 2009 we have seen our gender pay gap steadily reduce from 32% in 2017, 22% in 2019, 17.59% in 2022 and again to today's level of 13.31% and 11.09% (median), but we believe we can and should be doing better.

We have actively tried to provide an environment which has helped us to increase our female workforce by delivering on the promise to improve our flexible working practices available to staff. In 2017, our female workforce constituted 57.8% of our overall workforce, in 2019 it was 64.3%, in 2022 it was 62.44% and, now in 2023, is at 63.32%.

In the last year UHI has undertaken a review over its executive team and the total number of employees at this level has been reduced. However, at the same time, the total percent of female employees at this level has now increased to 75% of the total (three females to one male).

Our gender pay gap data is detailed below with a commentary on our aims, challenges and plans. We believe we can build on the sound structures we have in place to continue to reduce and ultimately eliminate our gender pay gap and fully deliver our equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.

Report Detail

This data is based on a snapshot date of Friday 31 March 2023. It is calculated using the standard methodologies set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017). .

Total Employees

UHI has 349 employees in total. The split by gender is given below.

3.6 out of 10
employees are Male

6.4 out of 10
employees are Female
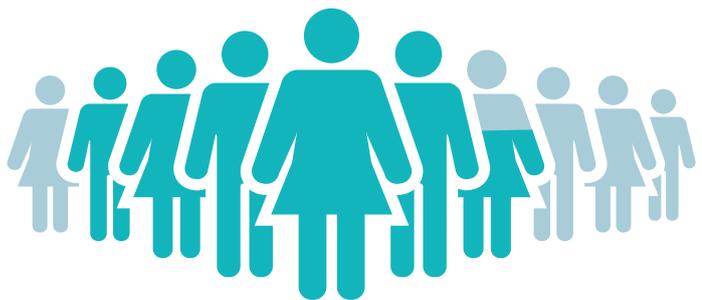
Gender Pay Gap

This is the percentage gap in the average (mean) and middle values (median) of salaries of male and female employees based on all salaries being converted to standard hourly rates of pay:

Metric	2022	2023
Mean Gender Pay Gap	17.59%	13.31%
Median Gender Pay Gap	11.09%	9.52%

Pay Quartiles

This is the proportion of male and female employees in each of four pay bands, where the lowest quartile represents the lowest salaries and upper quartile represents the highest salaries:

Upper Quartile

Male: **49%**
Female: **51%**

Upper Middle Quartile

Male: **36%**
Female: **64%**

Lower Middle Quartile

Male: **38%**
Female: **62%**

Lower Quartile

Male: **23%**
Female: **77%**
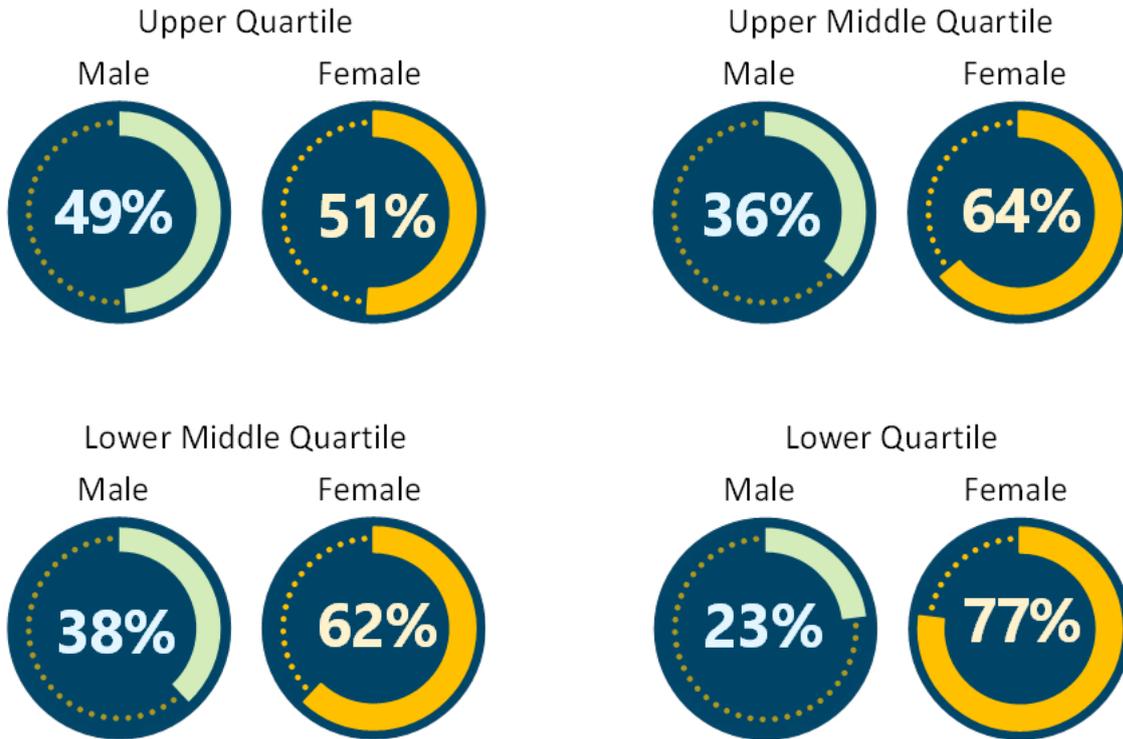
Bonus Pay Gap

In the period between **1 April 2022** to **31 March 2023** no bonus payments were made to any executive office employee.

Completed Measures

As an institution, we know that there is a long road ahead to achieve our goals to reduce and ultimately eliminate our gender pay gap and fully deliver our equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.

Over the last few years, we have implemented the following measures:

Engagement with the renumeration committee to ensure there is full transparency on how members determine senior staff salaries.

Plans to review academic role profiles and career pathways to ensure they are not contributing to any increase in pay gaps.

Supporting the career progress of female employees through the Aurora leadership development programme.

Continuing to review flexible working practices. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that working from home and flexible working can be leveraged for both employees' and UHI's benefit. Employees can request a home working contract.

Ongoing Measures

It is clear from this report that UHI still has a challenge to achieve pay equity. At present we are entering a programme of transformation (UHI2024) where this will be a key factor.

Further to this, the following actions are being undertaken:

+ Continuing to focus on professional and personal development, with increased emphasis on women's leadership development, working both within the UHI network and with external partners.

+ A new senior role was created to manage and improve our EDI performance, to show a genuine push for equality across our workforce.

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New National Outcomes

The recent publication: Tackling Persistent Inequalities Together by the Scottish Funding Council presents new national equality outcomes (Appendix 1) agreed in partnership with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the national equality regulator. The report outlines how the Scottish tertiary system can make progress on persistent inequalities together, by contributing to a set of national equality outcomes.

The UHI equality outcomes action plan will be created by the end of the 2022/23 academic year to consider the newly published Equality and Human Rights Commission and Scottish Funding Council national outcomes guidance.

UHI is in the unique position of 'resetting EDI' and would like to progress towards adopting the new equality outcomes with other academic partners. This would create a more streamlined approach to mainstreaming equalities across our communities, learning centres and academic partners. This approach is pending discussion and formal confirmation and will be updated within our new equality action plan.

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Resetting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at UHI and Next Steps

Vision

Our staff, students and the communities we serve are central to our future planning and vision of becoming a connected and diverse organisation. Enhancing equality and inclusion will ensure all staff and students can be the best version of themselves, regardless of their socio-economic background or protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation).

UHI is fully committed to resetting and developing a new EDI journey which incorporates our core values collaboration, openness, respect and excellence. Each value reflects the essence of EDI, where we aspire for everyone to feel a sense of belonging. Although each partner has different values, they all place our students and staff at the heart of learning. By working together, we can create a positive and inclusive learning environment for all.

Membership

As of 2023, UHI is a member of the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, a UK-based organisation which helps employers build and maintain diverse teams and inclusive cultures through training and consultancy services.

UHI obtained the essential level membership, which is a digital self-service that provides access to a range of resources, including webinars, case studies, employer guides, tool kits and quick guides.

This membership is one of the many steps UHI will take in becoming a more inclusive employer. It offers UHI the opportunity to participate in TIDEmark self-assessment. This provides a roadmap for us to focus on areas which will have the greatest impact and measures where UHI stands in relation to other members.

Membership will be promoted in May to encourage all UHI staff with a UHI email account to access the available resources.

For UHI to achieve our vision of becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation, the following steps will be taken in conjunction with the new equality outcomes.

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Resetting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at UHI and Next Steps

Next Steps

Over the last year, UHI has experienced a significant restructure of staff and recently developed a new post of head of equality, diversity and inclusion. This strategic decision will allow more focused, cross-partnership working on EDI programmes.

> " **UHI aims to cultivate a more inclusive learning environment, enriching experiences and collaborating with staff, students and stakeholders to support, promote and celebrate EDI. New developments are already underway covering a range of areas such as compliance, engagement, awareness and culture.** "
>
> Stephanie Kirkham,
> Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Employee Data Collection

Due to the limitations of our current data collection system, a new equality monitoring form has been created on SharePoint. This form is currently active with a deadline set for 9 May 2023. It is hoped that this will capture a true representation of our employee characteristics. This valuable information will be published in our action plan by the end of the academic year and will support our priorities for 2023-2025.

New National Outcomes

The EDI committee has created a small working group to support the development and implementation of the new equality outcomes. Academic partners who wish to adopt the new outcomes by the end of the academic year will be part of this group. This will support a more joined up approach and increase partnership working to advance EDI collectively.

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Resetting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at UHI and Next Steps

Athena Swan

The new Athena Swan Charter framework, which has been updated and will be referred to as the [Transformed Athena Swan Charter](#), must be implemented by UHI. It includes enhancement around principles, award criteria, application materials, panel process and guidance.

UHI has been working closely with Athena Swan to set out our key priorities for preserving the award. UHI will proceed to establish a new self-assessment team, analyse data which is in the process of being gathered, evaluate our policies and culture, and create a new action plan.

The Athena Swan Charter is a priority for UHI. It is a catalyst for change for gender and intersectional equality within research and education. The Charter enables UHI to be part of a global community with shared goals and principles of addressing gender inequalities and embedding inclusive cultures. Going forward, the award principles and criteria will be weaved through all our EDI developments.

Training and resources

We will be sourcing and creating new training for staff which will cover general equalities, equality impact assessments, unconscious bias and inclusive leadership. A wide range of resources will be made available on the equality, diversity and inclusion SharePoint page and UHI website. These developments will be available for the start of the new academic year.

Equality impact assessments /EDI policy

We will renew the equality impact assessment process with guidance and training available for staff. The EDI policy will be reviewed and developed for students and staff, reflecting our commitment to Athena Swan principles and protected characteristics.

UHI is fully committed to resetting and developing a new EDI journey which incorporates our core values collaboration, openness, respect and excellence. Each value reflects the essence of EDI, where we aspire for everyone to feel a sense of belonging. Although each partner has different values, they all place their staff and students at the heart of learning. By working together, we can create a positive and inclusive learning environment for all.

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Conclusion

This report highlights progress made against our 2021-2023 outcomes as well as mainstreaming activity across our services. The evidence of exceptional work presented in this report reflects our ambition of becoming a more inclusive tertiary institution. Our commitment to integrating equitable practices for our staff and students across all functions has been noted as has our aspiration to do better.

By 'resetting' equality, diversity and inclusion at UHI, we are acknowledging that our progress can be advanced and, by taking the next steps listed above, we can achieve our vision of becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation.

Our UHI equality outcomes action plan will be created by the end of the 2022/23 academic year to consider the newly published Equality and Human Rights Commission and Scottish Funding Council outcome guidance. This report will present our employee and student data, representing age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This data will support the development our key priorities for 2023-2025.

14
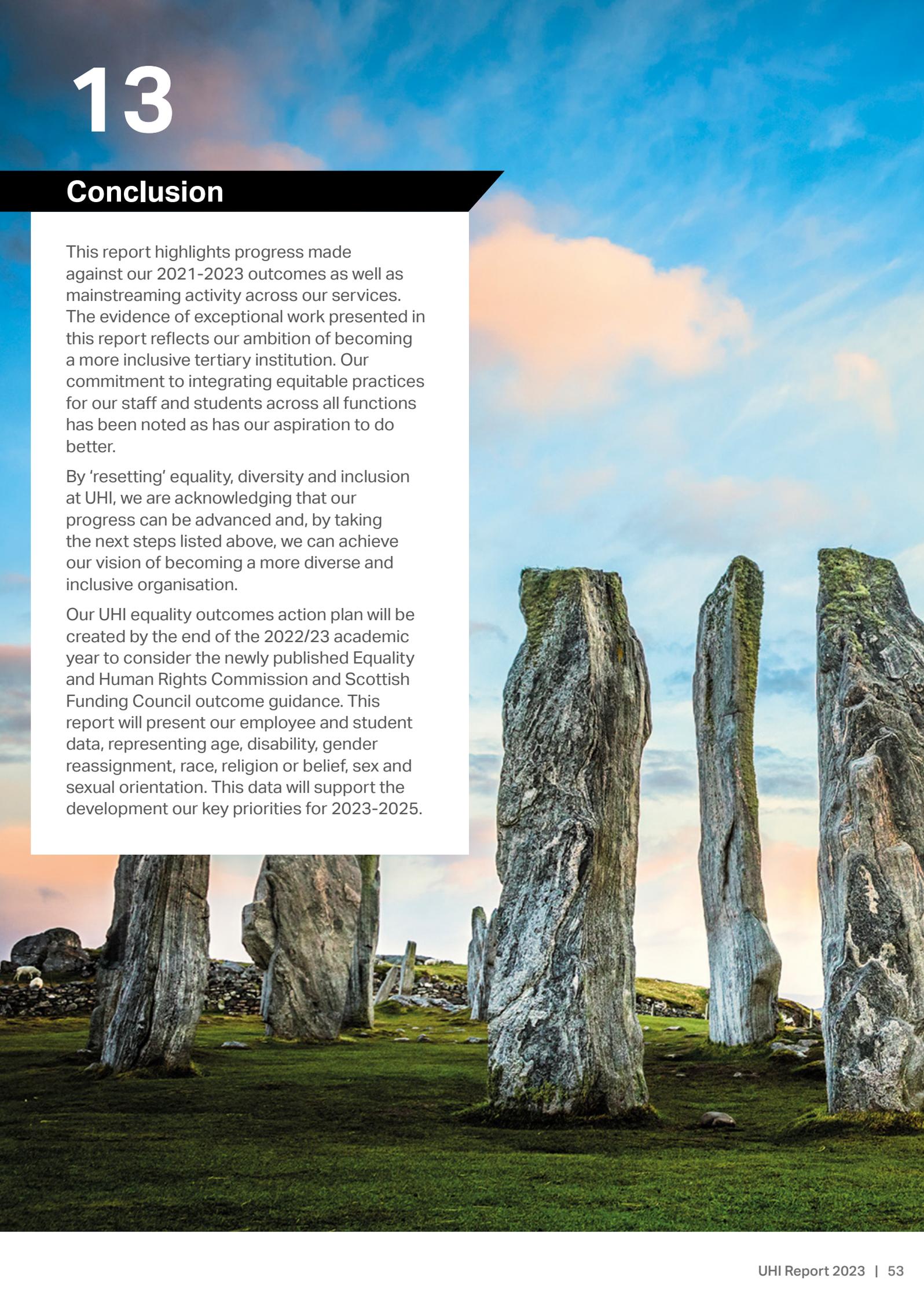
Glossary of Terms: Protected Characteristics

Age
Refers to a person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year-olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30-year-olds).

Disability
A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment
The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership
Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Pregnancy and maternity
Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race
Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief
Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex
A man or a woman.

Sexual orientation
Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

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Appendix 1: new national outcomes

Protected Characteristic	Persistent Inequality
Age	The retention outcomes for university students aged 25 and over will improve.
	The success rates for college students aged under 19 will improve.
Disability	The success and retention rates of college and university students who declare a mental health condition will improve.
	Disabled students report feeling satisfied with the overall support and reasonable adjustments received, including from teaching staff, while on their course.
	Disabled staff and students report feeling safe in the tertiary system.
	Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant population, increase the representation of disabled staff in the workforce and on college Boards and university Courts.
Gender Re-Assignment:	Trans staff and students report feeling safe to be themselves in the tertiary system.
Race	Staff and students feel supported and safe and are confident that complaints of harassment or bias on the grounds of race will be dealt with appropriately because complaints procedures are fit for purpose and offer effective redress.
	Institutions should also have regard to attainment levels by racial group and ensure that their curriculum is diverse and anti-racist.
	Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant population, increase the racial diversity of Court members and address any racial diversity issues in college Boards.
	Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant population, increase the racial diversity of teaching and non-teaching staff to align with student representation in the sector.
Religion or Belief	Students and staff report that they have confidence in institutional report and support mechanisms because they are fit for purpose.
Sex	Staff and students know how to access support about violence, harassment and abuse, report their experience and feel properly supported in doing so because the services are fit for purpose.
	Institutions can evidence approaches that prevent and respond to violence, harassment and abuse.
	Men (staff and students) know how to access mental health support (recognising intersectionality within that group).
	Institutions will have regard to significant imbalances on courses and take action to address it.
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual staff and students report that they feel safe being 'out' at university and college.

UHI
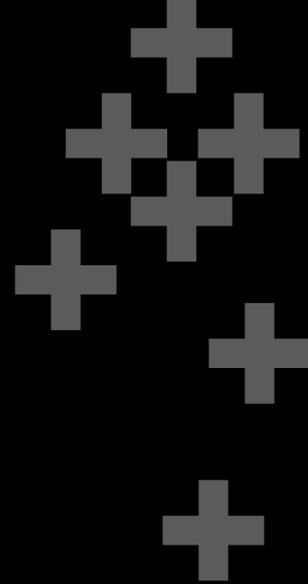
Public Sector Equality Duty Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2023

If you need information on this document in a different format such as large print, easy read, audio recording or braille:

Contact: stephanie.kirkham@uhi.ac.uk