

UHI | PERTH

**Gender Equality Plan
September 2024**

Executive Summary:

UHI Perth's Gender Equality Plan

UHI Perth is committed to advancing gender equality across its learning, teaching, research, and work environments. This commitment aligns with the European Commission's gender equality strategies, as outlined in Horizon Europe, and is embedded in UHI Perth's Strategic Plan (2022-2027). The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) highlights UHI Perth's key actions in support of gender equality, including published strategies, institutional leadership, and dedicated resources for implementing equality measures. Key components include:

Strategic Plans and Actions: UHI Perth regularly publishes reports, such as its Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Reports, and is developing a new Gender Action Plan for 2024/25.

Leadership and Resources: Gender equality efforts are championed by senior leadership, supported by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team, Equality Champions, and a dedicated EDI committee.

Data Monitoring: Routine collection and analysis of gender and equality-related data ensures informed decision-making and progress tracking.

Training and Capacity Building: A comprehensive range of training programs is available for staff and students on EDI issues, including core courses on diversity, gender-based violence, and leadership development.

Thematic Focus Areas: The plan addresses key areas such as work-life balance, gender balance in leadership, recruitment, and measures against gender-based violence, while also focusing on disability and menopause in the workplace.

UHI Perth remains committed to ongoing review and reporting of progress, ensuring continuous advancement in gender equality across its institution.

UHI Perth's ongoing commitment to gender equality: Gender Equality Plan

Introduction

UHI Perth is committed to advancing and achieving equality of opportunity in its learning, teaching, research and working environments, and to ensuring these environments support positive relations between people and a culture of respect. As a provider of employment and education, we value the diversity of our staff and students and are committed to supporting everyone to realise their full potential, as woven throughout our Strategic Plan 2022-2027. Our commitment to equality includes a focus on advancing gender equality. Our work in this area aligns with the European Commission's and Horizon Europe's gender equality strategy and plans, and resonates strongly with the Commission's broader 'Union of Equality' vision.

UHI Perth welcomes the European Commission's requirement for public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments participating in Horizon Europe to develop a Gender Equality Plan. As this document will outline, at UHI Perth there are:

- Published strategies, with clear goals and detailed actions and measures that have been agreed by senior management;
- Institutional leadership and dedicated resources for the design, implementation and monitoring of gender equality activity;
- Embedded arrangements for data collection and monitoring which informs activities and targets, allows for ongoing evaluation and ensures an evidence-led approach;
- Training and capacity building to support the UHI Perth community to understand and work towards our collective goals of gender equality.

This document brings together and summarises UHI Perth's ongoing activity to advance gender equality in the key strategic, operational and thematic areas identified by the European Commission.

Dr Margaret Cook

Principal and Chief Executive

August 2024

About this document

UHI Perth welcomes the European Commission's requirement for all institutions participating in Horizon Europe to develop a Gender Equality Plan (GEP). This document outlines the intersecting strands of our work to advance gender equality in the key strategic, operational and thematic areas identified by the European Commission / Horizon Europe.

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1: University of the Highlands and Islands Context

The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) is a globally recognised tertiary institution providing innovative further and higher education for over 40,000 students across 70 campuses and learning centres spread across the Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire. UHI offers much more than a traditional university or college. Its mission is to provide a transformational impact on the people, communities, and economy of the regions we serve through a rich blend of academic programmes from access level to PhD.

The fundamental part of our mission is to drive cocreated education and research, enhanced by our unique landscape, heritage and cultures, ensuring that learning outcomes are second to none. We are also committed to affirming all of the languages, dialects and cultures throughout our regions, including Gaelic language and culture. Across the UHI operating area we have centres of excellence and world-class thinking that are pushing the boundaries of academic and applied knowledge where staff, students, industry and communities are collaborating to drive innovation and new ways of thinking.

The partners within the UHI partnership are: UHI Argyll, UHI Inverness, UHI Moray, UHI North, West and Hebrides, UHI Perth, UHI Shetland, the University, and three specialist partners, Highland Theological College (HTC), Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) alongside UHI Orkney. Each of these partners is independent but together form the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership and there is shared resources and services as well as networked courses etc.

2: Existing strategies and action plans

Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Reports: Producing these reports is a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duties (Scottish Specific Duties). The reports contain significant analysis of equality data, and detailed actions on advancing equality of opportunity at the University, developed in consultation with our staff and students. These reports are published online and are publicly available.

- Mainstreaming Equality, Equality Outcomes, and Workforce and Student Profile 2021
- Mainstreaming Equality, Equality Outcomes and Workforce and Student Profile 2023

Gender Action Plan: This is no longer required by the Scottish Funding Council, however as part of UHI Perth's commitment to Gender Equality we are looking to create a new Gender Action plan during the 2024/25 academic year to support advancing gender equality and addressing underrepresentation in key subject areas.

Institutional Athena Swan: UHI Perth does not currently hold an institutional Athena Swan award, but as part of its partnership with the University of the Highlands and Islands, UHI Perth is committed to achieving this at the earliest opportunity.

Equal Pay: UHI Perth carries out a biannual Equal Pay Report and this includes Gender Pay Gap reporting. There are some limitations as to the actions that UHI Perth can carry out to reduce our Gender Pay Gap due to national bargaining for both our academic and professional services staff. As part of this there are national agreements in place with regards to the placement and progression of academic staff within their respective pay scales, and for our professional services staff there is an ongoing national job evaluation project which means we are unable to adjust our pay structure at this time, which is one option to address the gender pay gap in this area.

Real Living Wage: UHI Perth is an accredited member of the Living Wage Foundation. This voluntary accreditation means that no member of staff, including student interns and apprentices earn less than the rate set which is based on the cost of living. This accreditation has meant that at times our lowest paid staff who are predominantly women have had their salaries increased whilst pay award are being agreed at a national level.

3: Leadership and Resource

3.1 Leadership

UHI Perth's Principal and Chief Executive is the College's Equality and Diversity Champion. Dr Cook's role is to advocate the equality agenda and strategy and support the Director of HR and Organisational Development and the Equality and Diversity Advisor in developing and implementing policy and practice on campus. On a day to day basis Dr Cook has delegated the Chairing our the UHI Perth Equality

and Diversity Committee to the Director of HR and Organisational Development. The Director of HR and Organisational Development also represents UHI Perth at the UHI Partnership Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. There is regular updates between the Principal and Chief Executive and the Director of HR and Organisational Development so that matters can be raised across the UHI partnership within the UHI Partnership Council.

3.2 Dedicated resource

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor: UHI Perth has dedicated resources for equality and diversity, including gender equality. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor works to advance equality and inclusion for both staff and students and is formally part of the HR and Organisational Development Team but has strong links with the Student Experience Directorate.

In addition, UHI Perth has a group of Equality Champions, who are volunteers from across UHI Perth whose role is to actively promote all aspects of equality and diversity within their area of work and department, supporting the sharing of information and working as part of a team of EDI Champions guided by the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Advisor. This group provide regular updates to the UHI Perth EDI Committee.

Over the last academic year UHI Perth also had a student intern complete a placement with a focus on EDI as part of their Masters programme. This allowed the student to gain real life insights into EDI practice within UHI Perth whilst achieving credits for their Masters programme.

3.3 Equality, diversity and inclusion committee

UHI Perth has a range of committees and working groups to oversee, monitor and take forward equality, diversity and inclusion work (including gender equality).

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI): EDI is the Committee overseeing UHI Perth's compliance with its equality and diversity obligations. The Committee is convened by the Director of HR and Organisational Development and meets formally four times a year. Minutes from this meeting go to the Finance and Resources Committee of the Board for review.
- Shortlife working groups are created as needed to support specific themes, and in the 2022/23 academic year the theme was disability and a comprehensive Disability Review was undertaken. In 2021/2022 the theme was Anti Racism and a Board led review was undertaken with a resulting action plan (published on our website)
- Shortlife working group as part of the UHI partnership looking at British Sign Language
- A shortlife working group has been created to review the national equality outcomes set for the Further Education and Higher Education sector by the

Scottish Funding Council/Equality and Human Rights Commission, with a view to a number of these being selected for implementation from April 2025.

- UHI Perth as part of the UHI partnership has a partnership wide gender-based violence policy and reference to this is built into our student code of conduct.
- UHI Perth are putting in place actions to support our new duty to prevent sexual harassment including a risk assessment, new training etc.
- UHI Perth has contracted an external supplier to provide period products to students directly, so that they are able to access these in whatever manner/route they prefer

4: Data collection and Monitoring

Routine data collection and monitoring: UHI Perth routinely collects, monitors and publishes equalities data via our equality outcome and monitoring reports. UHI Perth has taken the decision to combine our mainstreaming report, equality outcome report, workforce profile and student profiles into one report. These reports are publicly available on the UHI Perth website.

- Pay Gap Report 2024 (published online every 2 years)
- Mainstreaming Equality, Equality Outcome and Workforce and Student Profile 2023 (published online every 2 years)

5: Training and Capacity-Building

Courses on a range of equality, diversity and inclusion topics: UHI Perth offers staff access to e-learning on a range of EDI issues and topics. There are identified 'core' courses that staff are expected to undertake as part of induction, and then on a regular basis as a refresher. Further courses staff are expected to undertake are role specific. The EDI e-learning course list for 2024/25 is:

Core staff courses:

- Diversity in the workplace
- Bullying and Harassment Part 1
- Let's Talk About Race
- Gender Based Violence

Courses for staff with specific roles and responsibilities:

- Bullying and Harassment Part 2 (for line managers)
- Recruitment and Selection
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Reasonable Adjustment Passport Training

Staff courses for additional learning and development:

- Disability Processes
- Mental Health Toolkit

- Pronoun Training
- Trans awareness Training
- Gender Equal Play: breaking down stereotypes
- Connecting Young Carers e-learning modules

Core student courses:

- Diversity for Students

Other available support for students

- Perth Autism Support
- UHI Perth Neurodiverse Group
- UHI Perth LGBTQ+ and Allies Group
- VoiceAbility drop in (weekly)
- RASAC drop in (weekly)
- Mindspace – 1:1 Peers Support for Students (weekly)

UHI Perth has a team focused on Teaching, Learning and Quality Enhancement, whose focus is the ongoing improvements in Teaching and Learning from the start of an academics employment with us up to and including when they decide to leave. This includes supportive observations during probation through to advising on innovation in academic practices. The Director of this team represented UHI Perth in the Partnership wide development of the UHI Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy.

As part of the University of the Highlands and Islands Partnership, UHI Perth staff have access to the Learning and Teaching Academy provided by UHI which includes access to exemplars of good practice such as:

- Inclusive environments / diversified and decolonised curricula
- Reducing Unconscious Gender Bias in Engineering Education
- International Collaboration

As part of this partnership UHI Perth also has access to the **Aurora Women's Leadership Development Programme**: Aurora seeks to support women and their institutions to fulfil their leadership potential through thought-provoking activities, collaborative problem-solving and motivating stories supported by inspirational women role models. Aurora is for women staff (up to senior lecturer level or the professional services equivalent) who would like to develop and explore issues relating to leadership roles and responsibilities. Participation embeds strong networks of early career women across the sector to share best practice, insights and experiences. Aurora is administered by Advance HE and UHI centrally funds places annually which staff from across the partnership can apply for. A number of UHI Perth staff have been through the programme.

Additional training and capacity building: The University provides a range of additional training and capacity building on topics relating to gender equality, and is constantly reviewing and extending our offerings in this area. More recent relevant additions to our learning and development opportunities include gender-based

violence training, gender-based violence first responder training, and menopause awareness sessions. UHI Perth is also a gender-based violence reporting site.

6: Thematic Areas

In this section, we outline 7 key thematic areas in which we work to address inequalities and advance gender equality. This includes the 5 core thematic areas for advancing gender equality as identified by the European Commission, and 2 further thematic areas in which UHI Perth is taking forward innovative work to advance gender equality.

The core thematic areas identified by the European Commission are:

6.1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

6.2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making;

6.3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression;

6.4. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;

6.5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

In addition, we will also discuss the following further thematic areas in which we are taking forward gender equality work:

6.6. Disability in the workplace

6.7. Menopause in the workplace

6.1 Work-life balance and organisational culture: Key to this is Strategic Aims 1-4 within the College Growth and Ambition part of our Strategic plan 2022-2027, where UHI Perth commits to embedding our values, so developing a culture that drives high-performance behaviours enabling an advancement in our journey to excellence. UHI Perth recognises that the staff are the foundation of the learner experience and that with a shared sense of purpose, UHI Perth will engage with and develop their staff to empower them, actively enhance their opportunities to reach their full potential and support their resilience and wellbeing.

UHI Perth is committed to cultivate an empowered team, agile, and creative, responsive to the local and national educational priorities and challenges. Through enhancing and improving our systems and processes, this will drive high quality outcomes. This in turn will address the evolving ambitions to ensure UHI Perth is innovative, agile, and distinctive in a way which adds significant value to the learners, staff and communities of UHI Perth.

UHI Perth considers itself a fair work employer and looks to ensure that every staff member will have a stable contract, fair and equal pay, a safe and secure working environment, and an opinion that matters.

UHI Perth offers a range of flexible working and family friendly policies and procedures as well as a range of policies and procedures to support dignity, respect and collegiality within our working and learning environments. All professional services staff have the option to be considered for hybrid working as a voluntary arrangement as opposed to a more formal flexible working arrangements. Academic staff have the ability to work off-site for one day per week as part of their nationally agreed terms and conditions.

6.2 Gender balance in leadership and decision-making: Two of the three members of the College Senior Leadership team are women, being the College Principal and Chief Executive and the Depute Principal, Operations. There are also more women on the Perth Leadership Group than men, being the Director of Student Experience, Director of Information Services, Director of HR and Organisational Development, Director of Curriculum – Arts, Humanities and Education, Transformation Lead, Director of the Centre for Mountain Studies. The Board of Perth has more women as independent board members than men.

6.3 Gender equality in recruitment and career progression: The Colleges' Mainstreaming Equality, Equality Outcome and Workforce and Student Profile report reviews progress in this area. UHI Perth continues to target initiatives in student recruitment to advance equality of opportunity in subjects such as women in STEM.

UHI Perth employs more women than men, more women hold permanent contracts compared to their male counterparts and there are more women in management positions than men.

6.4 Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content: UHI Perth is committed to gender integration into research and teaching by embedding gender equality principles across all levels of its curriculum. This is achieved through a systematic approach, which includes integrating gender-sensitive perspectives into our course content, research methodologies, and student projects. We actively promote gender balance in our research activity and ensure that all research outputs and case studies are analysed through a gender lens. To further underscore our commitment, we will introduce regular staff training on gender mainstreaming, along with rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These measures will be implemented to continuously assess and enhance gender equity in both teaching and research activities.

This approach ensures that all research conducted at UHI Perth aligns with fostering an inclusive academic environment that recognizes and addresses gender-related disparities, as an example the following principles of gender equality are embedded in the research practice of the Centre for Mountain Studies:

- During the design of research projects, measures are taken to ensure that research teams are mixed gender where possible. This is of particular

relevance in the design of larger project consortiums where we endeavour to ensure that project delivery teams are gender balanced.

- Gender equality is a key consideration during the design of project methodologies and delivery. Methodologies are designed to be gender-sensitive to the geographies and research contexts of focus.
- Data is collected on gender participation and if necessary, project activities are adapted to ensure equality of participation.
- All research is subject to ethical approval by UHI. Approaches to gender equality are considered as part of this process

This approach is supported by the work we do in recruiting women to stereotypically male programmes of studies/careers. We work proactively with employers and undertake taster sessions and marketing through schools to dissuade this viewpoint. We have been successful in this endeavour and deliver a schools programme for subject such as STEM, which has seen an increase in female students in this area.

6.5 Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment:

Collectively UHI Perth and the wider partnership takes a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) and works to ensure a safe learning and working environment which embraces equality, consent and mutual respect. UHI was one of 17 university partners who came together in 2020 to create an online training course to raise awareness of gender-based violence in colleges and universities. This remains a mandatory training for all staff. Work has also been done in considering cyber security and gender based violence. Specific policies related to gender based violence also in place. UHI Perth remains a reporting centre for this and acts as a conduit for allegations to be made in a safe space.

UHI Perth as part of the partnership is working to jointly implement the new duty put on public sector bodies to prevent sexual harassment. We are currently reviewing our staff and student policies in this area as well as looking at additional training and measure we can implement to support this pending piece of legislation.

UHI Perth works in partnership with external organisations to continually refresh this area of work, including organisations such as the Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre located in Perth and they regularly hold sessions for students.

UHI Perth also has trained counsellors on site as well as support workers who are able to signpost staff and students in this area if necessary.

Additional thematic areas

6.6 Disability at work: UHI Perth conducted a disability review in 2023, which was led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This review included a survey, focus groups and 1:1 meetings with staff with lived experience of how well the College supported our disabled workers. UHI Perth has more female disabled

workers than men. There were elements of good practice recognised such as we saw less disabled leavers than expected based on the organisational staff profile. It was recognised that UHI Perth gives supports our students with disabilities and additional need.

6.7 Menopause at work: UHI Perth is advancing work to improve understanding of and support for menopause in the workplace. We have a Menopause policy in place to help ensure that all staff affected by menopause are empowered to ask for support or necessary adjustments, are able to manage their symptoms at work and are supported through this transitional stage in their lives. Through the updated policy and the ongoing provision of webinars and info sessions by external specialists, UHI Perth is working to ensure that staff and managers are provided with the tools to enable colleagues to meet their full potential at work. We also held a number of menopause café's in 2022 and 2023 which were externally facilitated to allow staff the opportunity to share experiences and support each other. UHI Perth has a reasonable adjustment passport process in place to support staff who may need adjustments in this area, and this has been used for staff affected by menopause.

7: Our commitment to reviewing and reporting progress

This Gender Equality Plan document will be reviewed annually via our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and updated as needed. Progress towards key aims and indicators will continue to be monitored via the existing procedures and reporting mechanisms outlined throughout this plan including our Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming report.

8: Contact

For questions about the content of this document, contact **Katy Lees, Director of HR and Organisational Development**, katy.lees.perth@uhi.ac.uk