

**WEST
HIGHLAND
COLLEGE
UHI**

**Business Development
Strategy and Plan 2019-2022**

West Highland College UHI

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN 2019-22

ELT manager	Director of Finance & Resources
Responsible officer	Business Development Manager
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Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action / Impact	BoM

CONTEXT

West Highland College UHI operates within an increasingly challenging and changing environment, which includes capped or reducing SFC funding for both its FE and HE course provision, declining school rolls and a shift in demand from full-time to part-time study.

It is also operating within an economic environment which offers a range of opportunities linked to the Lochaber growth plan (Fort William 2040), related to the Liberty alloy wheel plant development, new hospital builds and harbor developments.

The College operates within a regional context, working with a range of partners and stakeholders across the Highlands and Islands. As an academic partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), it contributes to regional initiatives to build and secure opportunities for the benefit of all partners of the University and reduce duplication and internal competition. This includes working with the UHI Work-based Hub to plan, develop and deliver the suite of apprenticeship qualifications and planning and delivery of training under the Flexible Workforce Development Fund.

At local level, the College also works with partners and stakeholders across the West Highlands to ensure it responds to the opportunities for both itself and the community in which it operates. The College works closely with local employers and the community to ensure it aligns its curriculum and services to their needs.

The purpose of this strategy is to outline how the College intends to develop its business development activity in order to help meet the challenges and opportunities. The strategy aligns closely to the College Curriculum Strategy and Marketing and Communication Strategy, underpinned by College curriculum and business development plans.

The key aim of the strategy is to increase the College's non-SFC funded income and surplus through planning and prioritising activity and resource, proactive engagement with customers, responding to demand in an agile manner and delivering excellent customer service.

The 4 key objectives of the strategy are:

- 1. To diversify and increase non-SFC funded net income**
- 2. To support the economic growth and sustainability of the region**
- 3. To build the College's brand and reputation in the area**
- 4. To support achievement of the College's credit funding target**

The strategy is underpinned by the College's ethos of '*Excellence for All*' and commitment to a high- quality customer service and experience. It recognises the role that West Highland

College UHI will play in the future economic growth of the area and its part in encouraging innovation and improving the health and wellbeing of the West Highlands.

In order to achieve the objectives laid out in this strategy, we will:

1 Develop and implement an annual business development and stakeholder engagement plan

The business development and stakeholder engagement plan will lay out the focus of activity for new commercial business generation and growth and contribution to the College's credit funding target on a sector and cross-sector products and services basis. This will be based on robust market intelligence and stakeholder engagement and ensure our activity is focused on those areas of greatest opportunity and return for the College.

The plan will concentrate on new business growth and funding, increased business with existing key stakeholders and development of partnership working to deliver new products.

Areas of initial sector focus will be the Hospitality, Adventure Tourism, Care, Business Administration, Maritime, Construction, Digital and Acquaculture.

2 Develop a partnership approach

We will seek out meaningful partnerships for the development and delivery of our activity, building on existing partnerships and establishing new ones where there is real value in a collaborative approach. This includes partner colleges within UHI and external partnerships such as the Lochaber Chamber of Commerce.

3 Align planning of all College products and services

This will involve developing a sectoral approach to planning to ensure full alignment of commercial, work based and academic and vocational programme offering.

4 Develop our portfolio of commercial products and services

This will involve maximising the potential of existing College programmes, services and resources for meaningful income generation and creating new products and services appropriate to our customers and new market opportunities.

The scope of programmes includes accredited FE and HE programmes, industry and professional body programmes, tailored College devised training and CPD packages, leisure courses and community-related programmes.

The scope of services will include the Café and property/facility services.

The focus for products and services will include customer service, digital and IT skills (including cyber security) and workbased qualifications - MAs and SVQs.

5 Establish a planned approach to community and leisure course offer

This will involve a planned approach to our community/leisure offering across our College centres, based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Meets local demand
- Is commercially viable
- Is linked to the College's curriculum
- Is likely to result in future business
- Supports community engagement and promotion of the College

6 Establish a 'value proposition'

This will involve creation of 'packaged' offerings to customers through a planned use of College services/facilities to add value and improve the attraction of our programmes.

A planned approach will also be taken to the use of incentives to encourage uptake of business as well as repeat business. For example – 1 free training place for every 10 paid place etc.

7 Develop our approach for setting income and surplus targets

This will involve establishing a College-wide target in addition to team targets, based on financial needs and which are realistic and achievable. These targets will both influence plans and be set in line with plans.

8 Develop our pricing and costing model to improve margins

This will involve establishing a pricing model which is flexible and appropriate to our markets. In addition, we will seek to improve processes and models of delivery to control costs.

9 Establish a clear branding, marketing and promotion strategy

This will be developed in line with the College Marketing and Communication Strategy.

10 Develop the College CRM system

This will involve further development of our existing CRM system or adopting a new system. Work will be undertaken to embed use of the system beyond the Commercial Training Team to ensure it becomes a College-wide tool.

11 Implement an opportunity assessment approach and pipeline reporting

An opportunity assessment approach will be implemented to ensure we capture and respond to new opportunities or opportunities which require shift of team resource. In addition, a pipeline reporting tool will be implemented to record, track and monitor business development activity and ensure opportunities are resourced and realised. An excel-based report will be used initially with the intent to develop this functionality within the CRM system.

The roles and responsibilities involved in delivering the Business Development strategy and plans are outlined in the Business Development Process document.

BUSINESS PLAN

Analysis of the market for West Highland College

The College's business development plan sets out the key customer engagement and commercial activity for the period, set against the key economic priority areas outlined in the SDS Regional Skills Inverness Plan and Assessment and NOMIS Sector Skills Reports. The plan also reflects key government priorities and feedback from regional and local stakeholder engagement.

1. The Market for West Highland College UHI

The market for West Highland College UHI is largely made up of small-medium enterprises and a small number of medium-sized organisations.

The Lochaber area is currently experiencing a period of economic growth. The Lochaber 2040 plan outlines plans for a number of large-scale housing and transport projects in response to economic growth plans of a number of organisations in the area ranging from the Liberty aluminium wheel plant, the new Belford hospital and the Corpach Harbour development. On Skye, growth plans include continuing developments by Mowi, a planned new hospital in Broadford and the Skye Connect initiative for the food and drink sector.

The growth sectors in the area are:

- Health and social care
- Adventure tourism
- Hospitality
- Construction
- Engineering
- Maritime (including aquaculture)
- Transport and logistics
- Food and drink production and management
- Retail

The key employers in the area are:

- Liberty
- BSW
- Mowi
- Corpach Harbour Trust
- Mallaig Harbor Authority
- Ullapool Harbour Trust
- Robertsons
- Fergusons
- Highland Council
- NHS Highland

- Calmac
- TSL
- Nevis Range
- Outward Bound

In addition, there are a range of smaller organisations in the care, tourism and hospitality areas, which are key customers of the College.

The main competitors for the College include:

- Commercial training providers such as On-Track, Ipowerboat, GTG and STS and VLE
- Other colleges in the region
- Other universities
- Online training providers
- Professional qualification bodies

2. Business Engagement

Our approach will be to:

- a) take a sectoral approach to employer/stakeholder engagement and meet needs on a sector by sector basis
- b) take a cross-sector approach to determining the need for qualifications, training and services and curriculum development and delivery

3. Business Plan

Based on our analysis of the market for the College, the focus of our engagement and development activity will be as follows:

3.1. Sector Engagement

Over the first 12-18 months, we will focus on the following 5 sectors:

- Health and social care
- tourism and hospitality
- construction
- maritime (including aquaculture)
- Engineering

The second set of priority sectors will include transport and logistics, food and drink and other sectors informed by ongoing market research and employer engagement.

3.2. Products and Services

We will develop and deliver the following cross-sector key products and services:

- Digital and IT, including cyber security
- Customer service
- Health and safety, working safely
- Leadership and management
- Budgeting/finance

3.3. Qualifications

We will develop and deliver the following cross-sector qualifications:

- Apprenticeships
- Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs)
- College accredited short course training
- Awarding/Industry Body qualifications

This plan will be implemented via an annual business and stakeholder engagement plan, underpinned by pipeline reporting against plan and targets.