

**WEST  
HIGHLAND  
COLLEGE  
UHI**

**Marketing Strategy 2019-2022**

## West Highland College UHI

### MARKETING STRATEGY 2019-22

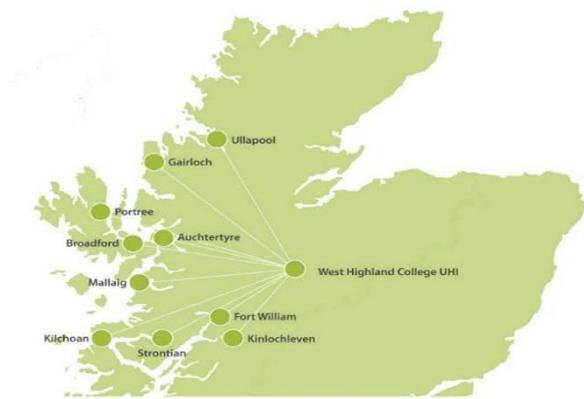
ELT manager	Principal & Chief Executive
Responsible officer	Marketing & Communications Manager
Date first approved by BoM	17 December 2019
First Review Date	November 2022
Equality impact assessment	Completed September 2019
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action / Impact	BoM
C MacRae	Sept 2019	Created in line with new WHC Strategic Plan and including reference to all college teams and their marketing responsibilities.	

## Context

West Highland College UHI (WHC), is a partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) operating in a multi college regional structure through a single outcome agreement. The college, created in 2010, is one of the smaller colleges in Scotland, operating through ten college centres in a geographically and economically challenging environment.

The area of Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross (population circa 40,000) is almost half the size of Wales and includes significant areas of extreme remoteness and dispersed populations. Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) classifies this area as 'economically fragile'. Infrastructure is fragmented; there are poor public transport links, broadband is patchy and bandwidth is insufficient in many locations. A lower percentage of the population in the area go into full time further and higher education, compared to the rest of Scotland. The area can be classified as one of rural poverty, where there is underemployment largely in seasonal tourism and hospitality work, high fuel prices, migration of young people out with the area and an increasing incoming older population.



In this context, the college's vision, mission and strategic aims set out to achieve a transformational and positive impact on the local prospects of the area. The college developed and implemented a flexible operating model to deliver relevant curriculum and to provide access to education through ten distributed and distinct college centres, which are firmly rooted in their communities. The college delivers a fully tertiary curriculum (SCQF 1 through to SCQF 12), aligned with the economic skills needs of the region and local employer needs.

The college already specialises in adventure and tourism in response to local need and significant sector growth in Scotland. We have also worked with UHI to build capacity in order to achieve our ambitions for STEM and, in particular, to implement a new engineering and 'industry 4.0' curriculum in line with a planned new Centre for Science and Technology.

## Branding and Positioning within the University of the Highlands and Islands

In consultation with other Academic Partners of the University of the Highlands and Islands, considerable opportunities and challenges regionally, nationally and internationally have been identified for the partnership going forward. It was agreed that a holistic review leading to a revitalisation and re-positioning of the brand and reputation would bring added value to all of the partners individually as well as to the organisation as a whole.

A process has now begun to investigate the different layers of brand, experience and culture across the partnership and to combine them to build our desired reputation. This is about developing a culture-led brand.

The first phase in 2018-19 was an internal values-led campaign inviting staff and students to contribute opinions and also to conduct surveys of various stakeholder groups. Following this exercise, a pilot clearing campaign was conducted for August 2019 and the learnings from this will inform a project to create an overall strategy plan including positioning, messaging, implications for brand architecture, visual/verbal identity and external communication planning.

**The Marketing Strategy 2019-21 links to the College’s Vision:**

*“To be the education provider of choice delivering leadership and excellence in learning, training and support for all students, businesses and rural communities”*

The purpose of the marketing strategy is to outline how the College will engage with and promote itself to its external customers and stakeholders to ensure its role and services are visible, well understood and meaningful to them. It is closely linked to the Communications Strategy for the college and is designed to enable the college to meet its student recruitment targets, its future growth strategy and to support organisational development through enhanced awareness of its activities and operations locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The Strategy has 3 key objectives:

**1. To promote awareness of West Highland College UHI in all of its geographies and to all of its stakeholder communities**

- Develop and enhance the West Highland College UHI brand in line with the overall branding of the University of the Highlands and Islands and to ensure it is reflected in all of our communications and campaigns.
- Build awareness of college centre locations and supporting Centre Managers in community engagement and local marketing activity.
- Create a planned approach to identifying, sharing and supporting appropriate events and celebrations to raise awareness of the college.
- Fully implement the Gaelic Language Plan for the college.

**Our priorities to achieve this objective over the next two years will be shared with the college management group and key enabling teams within the college to:**

	<b>Main Enabling Teams</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a culture which captures and disseminates good news stories of student success and college performance to gain local and regional and national coverage where possible in order to positively impact on stakeholders and influencers.</li> </ul>	Curriculum, College Centres, BDO & Commercial CRTR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the effective targeting of engagement events and marketing activity</li> </ul>	Curriculum, BDO & Commercial CRTR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise our main vehicles for engagement: our website, our prospectus, our social media platforms and print advertising and ensure that they are evaluated positively by our target audiences.</li> </ul>	All Teams
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalise and implement directional road and building signage at all centres, particularly Portree.</li> </ul>	E&F, College Centres
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a plan of ongoing annual events and a method of sharing with all college teams.</li> </ul>	Curriculum, Centre Staff, BDO & Commercial

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop capacity of college centre managers to build local promotions with access to effective promotional materials and provide clear branding and signage to for all centres.</li> </ul> | <p>CRTR<br/>College Centres, SLD E&amp;F</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop schedule of Gaelic social media posts and utilise Gaelic titles and language in main publications where possible.</li> </ul>   | <p>Gaelic Officer, Centre Staff</p>          |

## 2. Deliver sustainable student applications and enrolments to meet recruitment targets

- Create messaging which is in line with the college’s overall strategic plan, delivering messages of local and regional opportunities, excellence of student support, accessibility and flexibility of learning styles for all levels of study including school college partnership courses, apprenticeships, Further and Higher education.
- Ensure engagement with the student body (HISA) to ensure that students from our key demographics can identify themselves with our college experience.
- Develop and implement targeted campaigns based on the Curriculum Strategy and utilising market intelligence from curriculum teams
- Encourage applications from under-represented groups through targeted campaigns, events and partnership activities.
- Contribute to UHI planning to attract greater numbers of RUK and International applicants

**Our priorities to achieve this objective over the next two years will be shared with the college management group and key enabling teams within the college to:**

- |   | <b>Main Enabling Teams</b>                     |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish student recruitment campaigns utilising agreed messages eg “study can look like this”, “courses that lead to careers”, “study anytime, anywhere”, “your future”.</li> </ul>              | <p>ELT, Curriculum, UHI Marketing</p>          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on building recruitment in areas identified for growth by the Curriculum Strategy ie STEM, Tourism &amp; Hospitality, Adventure related study</li> </ul>                                     | <p>Curriculum, Centre Staff, UHI Marketing</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively engage with and capture student input through the use of profiles, imagery and celebrations of success to ensure a recognisable but aspirational image for potential students.</li> </ul> | <p>Curriculum, College Centres,</p>            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission research and resource to increase recruitment to the School of Adventure Studies via both direct entry and articulation routes.</li> </ul>  | <p>SOAS UHI Marketing</p>                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide web and print materials, social media campaigns and support for events to drive recruitment to the college’s High School curriculum plan</li> </ul>  | <p>Curriculum Manager College Centres</p>      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop appropriate themes for local, national and international recruitment campaigns.</li> </ul>   | <p>Curriculum, UHI Marketing</p>               |

### 3. Increase commercial and non-Scottish Funding Council income for the college by

- Establish a defined sub-branding for the Business Development and commercial teams.
- Define a sectoral approach to business opportunities and support engagement/marketing activity by all teams and by business sector, so that income targets can be met.

Support the creation of a schedule of leisure classes and holiday activities to create further engagement and recruitment opportunities

**Our priorities to achieve this objective over the next two years will be shared with the college management group and key enabling teams within the college to:**

	<b>Main Enabling Teams</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create materials and campaigns which will attract a range of businesses and employers to appropriate training and development opportunities</li> </ul>	<hr/> BEST BDO Curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the Business section of <a href="http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk">www.whc.uhi.ac.uk</a></li> </ul>	BEST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the development of a stakeholder engagement plan</li> </ul>	BDO BEST Curriculum CRTR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create materials available to all college centres to promote greater awareness of leisure and holiday activities.</li> </ul>	BEST Curriculum Centre Managers

#### Key Reference Documents

- WHC UHI Communications Strategy 2019-21
- Marketing Operational Plan & Calendars
- Marketing Activity Reporting (CMG)
- Curriculum Plan
- Curriculum Plan – Schools
- Stakeholder engagement plan