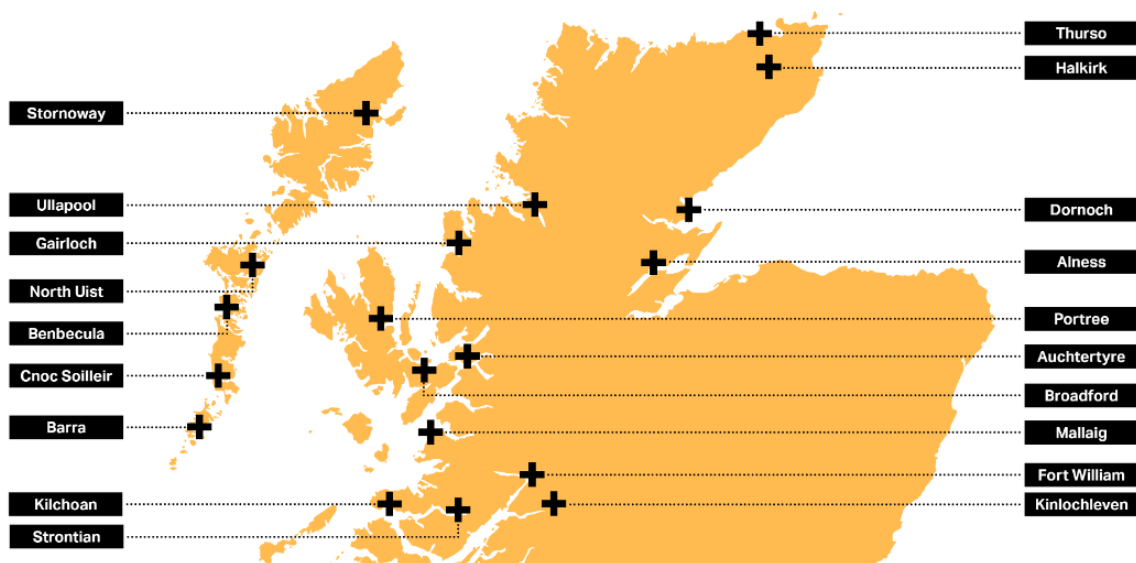


Impact assessment summary: UHI North, West and Hebrides Curriculum change of service in Year 1 (Academic Year 23/24)

Version 1.1, Friday 22 November 2024

College Merger

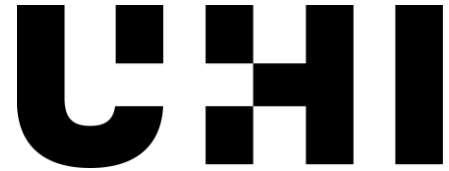
On 1st August 2023 three colleges in the University of the Highlands & Islands (UHI) partnership – UHI North Highland (NH), UHI Outer Hebrides (OH) and UHI West Highland (WH) – merged to create a single college: UHI North, West & Hebrides (UHINWH). The merger was pursued by the 3 college boards of management because, despite their collective successes, their future viability was at risk given major financial and demographic challenges. The boards voted unanimously in favour of merger in November 2022, and the Merger Proposal & Business Case was ratified through the Scottish Parliament in June 2023, paving the way for legal vesting of the new College.



Map of UHI North, West & Hebrides campuses

Curriculum Ambitions of the Merged College

The curriculum and student-related strategic goals of the new College include plans to: increase the learning offer, widen access through multi-modal delivery models, provide up-to-date and relevant curriculum for communities, and increase the viability of programmes. This overall approach aims to create more opportunities for people to learn with UHINWH by providing options for people to study from home, or work, within its rural and island communities; and/or attend on campus; or learn from anywhere in the world.



Immediately following merger the College implemented a Curriculum Review to reorganise the range and delivery of the curriculum inherited from the 3 legacy colleges for academic year 23/24. This *change of service* affects staff, students and communities associated with all 19 UHINWH sites, illustrated above. This includes several island communities: the Isle of Barra, Isle of Benbecula, Isle of South Uist, Isle of North Uist, Isle of Lewis and the Isle of Skye.

Scope of impact assessment

Given the UHI's obligations as a 'Relevant Authority' under the [Islands \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#), the University of the Highlands and Islands has compiled an impact assessment that evaluates the impact of the change of service resulting from the updated UHINWH Curriculum for academic year 23/24 – *Year 1 of the newly merged College* - across the College's geography. From an islands perspective the assessment follows the steps outlined in the [Island Communities Impact Assessment](#) process to determine whether a full assessment is necessary. These steps are:

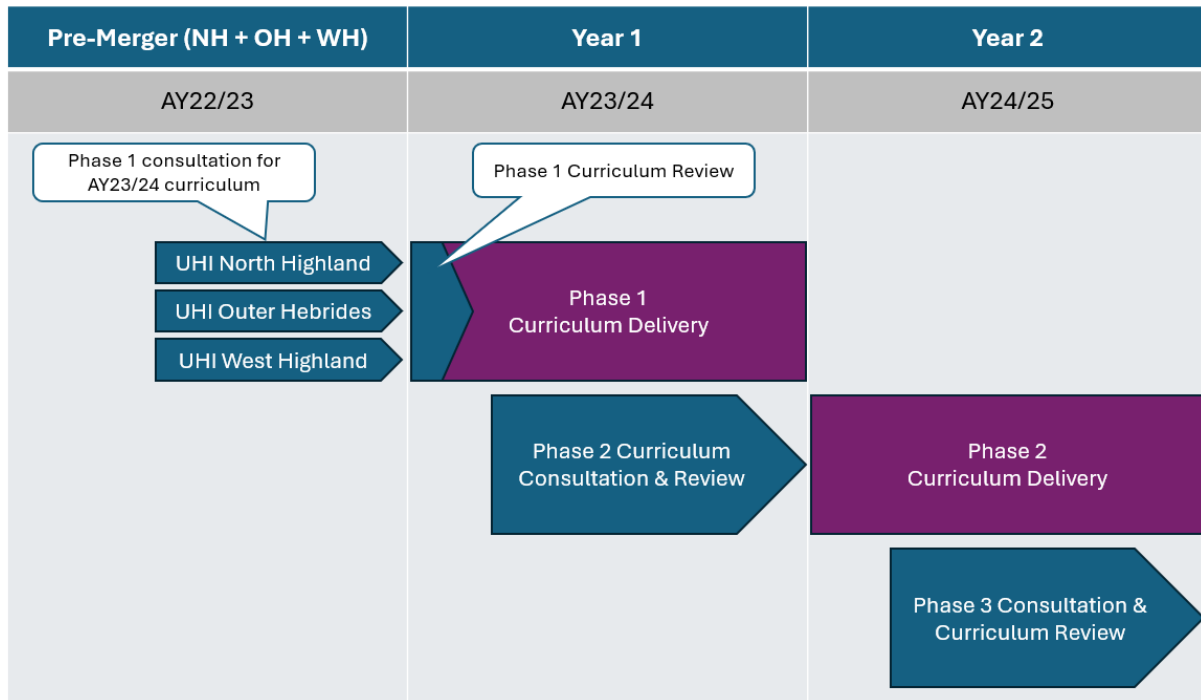
1. Clearly defining the objectives
2. Collecting data and identifying stakeholders
3. Conducting consultations
4. Assessing the need for an ICIA
5. Preparing the ICIA, if required, or proceeding to step 6
6. Making necessary adjustments to the strategy
7. Publishing the ICIA.

This impact assessment is focused specifically on the updated UHINWH Curriculum for Year 1 of the merged College's operation (academic year 23/24). The College's Organisation Design strategy has been addressed in a separate impact assessment.

This executive summary of the impact assessment shall be published externally in English and Gaelic, on the UHI and UHI North, West and Hebrides websites. The full impact assessment report will be published internally, and if you would like to read the full document please [contact the University here](#).

Assessment Findings

The Curriculum Review process implemented by the merged College involved consultation with stakeholders followed by evaluation of every course against criteria that assessed demand, delivery model, viability, performance and need (ie market demand). This standard methodology was applied to all courses at all delivery locations. UHINWH's Curriculum Review approach is illustrated overleaf.



Phases of the Curriculum Review process at UHI North, West & Hebrides

The impact assessment has evaluated the Curriculum Review activities that underpinned the delivery of curriculum in Year 1, including the change of service resulting from the modified curriculum offering delivered that year. The assessment demonstrates that there is not a significantly different effect on any of the College sites, including islands-based sites, due to the following:

- Curriculum review is a perpetual process undertaken by colleges across all locations to evaluate which courses to stop, start, modify and/or continue.
- In planning its Year 1 curriculum offer, UHINWH applied a standard review methodology across all courses at all delivery locations.
- Consultation with stakeholders (especially staff, students, schools and Board members) relating to the AY23/24 curriculum offer took place during the year before merger by the legacy colleges across their respective regions.
- The delivery model for a small number of courses was changed from in-person delivery to online delivery affecting courses previously delivered in-person at Stornoway (Isle of Lewis), Thurso (Caithness) and Ainess (Easter Ross).
- Changing specific courses to online delivery increased their accessibility to a much wider range of students residing in rural and island locations.



- All UHINWH sites remained available to all students to use their academic and support resources and facilities.
- Where courses were withdrawn, credible and relevant alternatives were offered in all cases.
- One course which was paused for review of its viability was retained after consultation with the local community. The course has been replaced for AY24/25 with an improved alternative.

In conclusion, the University believes that the changes resulting from the UHI North, West, & Hebrides revised curriculum for academic year 23/24 will not have an effect on any island community which is significantly different from the effects on other communities (including other island communities) and on this basis a fuller and more detailed Islands Community Impact Assessment is not required.

Adjustments

Further work being undertaken or planned by the College includes continuation of the Curriculum Review process for academic year 25/26 onwards, further highlighting the availability of resources and support available for student use at all sites, and trend monitoring of student home locations across courses.