Lews Castle College UHI
31 January 2014

A report by HM Inspectors on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council

Full report
The external review process

HM Inspectors undertake an independent review of the quality of provision in Scotland’s colleges on behalf of the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC) under a service level agreement between the council and Education Scotland. External review teams include HM Inspectors, associate assessors and a student team member.

The review took place in accordance with the protocol on quality assurance of University of the Highland and Islands Millennium Institute and the SFC-funded colleges which are academic partners of UHIMI (March 2009). Under this protocol, which was agreed by SFC, Education Scotland and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the review focused solely on Further Education (FE) provision.

During external reviews, members of the review teams observe learning and teaching and hold discussions with learners, staff and stakeholders. They consider information on learner attainment and evaluate learner progress and outcomes. They meet with members of the Board of Management and obtain feedback from community groups, partners and employers who work with the college.

The purpose of this report is to convey the main outcomes arising from the external review, to acknowledge the college’s strengths and to provide a clear agenda for future action to improve and enhance quality.

This external review results in judgements of effective or limited effectiveness or not effective that express the external review team’s overall evaluation of high quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture.

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1. Introduction

The external review

The external review by Education Scotland took place during the week beginning 18 November 2013.

We examined learning and teaching and other important activities that impact on the quality of the learner experience. We evaluated these against the three key principles of high quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture, using the 13 reference quality indicators outlined in External quality arrangements for Scotland’s colleges, updated August 2013. We also included QI 2.2 How well do programmes and services meet learner needs? to support our evaluations. We used information from previous visits to the college to decide the scope of the review.

We found an example of excellence which we describe in this report on page 16.

The external review team talked with learners, staff at all levels in the college, members of the Board of Management, employers, external agencies and other users of the college.
2. The college and its context

In carrying out the external review of Lews Castle College UHI, Education Scotland took the following college context fully into account.

Lews Castle College UHI is one of the smallest colleges in Scotland.

In session 2012–13 the college enrolled over 1,500 FE learners. The age profile of the learners shows that 16% of learners were aged under 16; 20% aged 16 to 19, 11% aged 20 to 24; and 53% aged 25 and over.

The college serves the whole of the Outer Hebrides, which extends from Vatersay and Barra in the south to Ness in the north of Lewis, with a land area of over 3,000 square kilometres. Most programmes are delivered at the Stornoway campus on the Isle of Lewis. Other programmes are delivered at learning centres based in Benbecula, Barra and Lochmaddy.

The economy of the Outer Hebrides is dominated by small and micro enterprises, with a significant number having fewer than five employees. Firms with over 50 employees account for a smaller proportion of employment than in the rest of the Highlands and Islands area.

Lews Castle College UHI is an Academic Partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). The college’s higher education provision is delivered through this partnership. The college is currently involved with its partner institutions and stakeholders in establishing the arrangements for the regional governance of FE provision in the Highlands and Islands region.

The college offers a range of FE programmes from introductory level to an Access to Higher Education Programme at the Scottish Certificate and Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 3-6. It has recently reviewed its curriculum and has introduced programmes for learners at all levels, including school pupils and learners in need of more choices and more chances. The college also offers programmes in the Gaelic medium.

In 2012-13 the college’s contracted level of activity from the SFC for non-advanced programmes was 8,427 weighted student unit of measurement (WSUM). Full-time FE provision at the college represents 67% of WSUMs and 11% of funded enrolments. Part-time FE provision represented 33% of WSUMs and 89% of enrolments. The college’s operating budget is approximately £4.8 million, with SFC grants accounting for about 74% or £3.6 million of the total.
3. Outcomes of External Review

Judgement of Effectiveness

Section A: Overarching judgement

Lews Castle College has in place effective arrangements to maintain and enhance the quality of its provision and outcomes for learners and other stakeholders.

This judgement means that, in relation to quality assurance and enhancement, the college is led well, has sufficiently robust arrangements to address any identified minor weaknesses, and is likely to continue to improve the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders.

Section B: Supporting statements

Learner progress and outcomes

The majority of learners complete their programmes and gain relevant qualifications. In some subject areas, success rates are amongst the best in the sector. However, as a result of learners leaving their programme early to gain employment, the completed successfully rate fell to 63% in the last year. The college is aware of the issues affecting attainment in a few low performing subject areas and has taken appropriate steps to address these. The range of FE programmes is appropriate and meets learner needs. Most full-time learners progress to further learning or employment. Most learners develop their core and essential skills during their programme of study and many achieve more widely through participation in work experience, volunteering and charitable activities. Learners are very satisfied with their college experience.

Learning and teaching processes

Programmes take good account of learner requirements to ensure provision of high quality learning experiences which meet the needs of the local economy. Many include high quality, work experience placements. Almost all learners are motivated and demonstrate independent learning skills. Most teaching staff plan lessons well. However, a few lessons do not engage all learners sufficiently well. Teaching staff plan and schedule assessments well and learners have good access to a wide range of college support services. Programme teams analyse key aspects of performance indicator evidence accurately and effectively. However, some self-evaluation reports are overly descriptive and do not focus sufficiently on learning and teaching approaches.
**Learner engagement**

Learners feel welcome and their views are appreciated by the college. Overall, they engage well in enhancing their own learning, and the life and work of the college. Learners are supported well and develop their employability skills including enterprise skills for running a small business. Their views are valued by college staff and acted upon. An effective Students Association encourages learners to participate in a range of activities, and is actively promoting employability across the curriculum. FE learners achieve a range of additional skills, promote their college enthusiastically, and are well represented on college committees.

**Leadership and Quality Culture**

The college’s strategic plan aligns well with Scottish Government priorities and has a clear vision to provide high quality education and training. The Board of Management works closely with the principal and the Senior Management Team (SMT) to set an appropriate strategic direction for the college. The principal and the SMT have established an emerging quality culture through which staff share expertise and work collectively. Staff are committed to the college’s drive to improve the quality of the learning experience. However, self-evaluation reporting is not sufficiently comprehensive in the coverage of learning and teaching and action planning deriving from these reports is inconsistent.

**Section C: Areas of positive practice**

- The college’s strategic plan aligns well with Scottish Government priorities and has a clear vision to provide high quality education and training.
- The Board of Management works closely with the principal and the SMT to set an appropriate strategic direction for the college. The principal provides highly visible and supportive leadership. Senior managers have established an emerging quality culture which encourages staff to share expertise and work collectively.
- Almost all learners are committed to their studies, are motivated and engage well during lessons. They participate well in a range of learning activities and are enthusiastic about their learning experiences.
- Learners feel welcomed, and engage well in enhancing their own learning, and the life and work of the college. College services have an effective team-based approach and leadership for support services is strong.
- The majority of learners complete their programmes and gain relevant qualifications. Completed successfully rates in some subject areas are amongst the best in the sector.
- Most learners develop their core and essential skills during their programme of study and many achieve more widely through participation in work experience, volunteering and charitable activities.
- Early withdrawal rates for FE programmes are lower than, and further withdrawal rates are level with the sector performance. Further withdrawal rates for
part-time programmes are consistently very low and well below the sector performance level.

- Successful completion rates for full-time programmes are well above the sector performance level for the last three years of published data. Completion rates for part-time programmes are very high and improving.
- An effective Students Association encourages learners to participate in a range of activities, and is actively promoting employability across the curriculum.
- Programmes take good account of learner requirements to ensure provision of high quality learning experiences which meet the needs of the local economy.
- Staff are committed to the college’s drive to improve the quality of the learning experience. Programmes where attainment is low have been redesigned sensibly to ensure that completion rates improve.
- Most teachers plan lessons well. They schedule assessments effectively and learners have good access to a wide range of college support services.

Section D: Areas for development

- Some actions in the operational plan are insufficiently specific which makes it difficult to measure the progress that has been made.
- Not all staff consistently promote equality and diversity in learning and teaching activities.
- One third of staff have not undergone appropriate safeguarding training.
- Self-evaluation reporting is not sufficiently comprehensive in the coverage of learning and teaching and action planning deriving from these reports is inconsistent.
- In a few lessons, teaching approaches are dominated by teacher-led exposition and a few learners become passive.
- The completed successfully rate for full-time provision in 2012-13 fell to 63%.

Section E: Main points for action

- The college should improve attainment rates where they are low.
- The college should ensure that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding training, promptly.
- The college should ensure that self-evaluation reports are less descriptive, focus sufficiently on learning and teaching activities and lead to measurable actions for improvement.
4. **How well are learners progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?**

*How effective is the college at achieving and maintaining high levels of retention, attainment and progression?*

Early withdrawal rates for FE programmes have been lower than the national sector performance level for the last three years. Further withdrawal rates have been improving over the last three years and are now level with the sector performance level. Part-time further withdrawal rates are consistently very low and well below the sector performance level.

Successful completion rates for full-time programmes have been well above the sector performance level for the last three years. However, the overall success rate in 2012-13 for full-time provision fell to 63%, which is just below the sector performance level. Many learners leave their programme early to gain relevant employment. Most full-time learners progress to further learning or employment on completion of their programme. Successful completion rates on part-time programmes have been consistently high over time, are improving and are well above the sector level performance.

In art and design, care, hospitality and special programmes, full-time learner success is at, or above, the level of the highest performing colleges in the sector. The college is aware of the issues which result in some low performing subject areas and has introduced measures to address these. These include changes to the timing of work placements, amendments to programme content and levels and the inclusion of additional support sessions for learners in core skills.

There are good examples of learners who gain apprenticeships as a result of their college work placements in construction, and those who progress to successful degree-level study, both within the college and other universities on the mainland.

*How well do programmes and services meet learner needs?*

The college offers a suitable range of FE programmes from SCQF levels 3 to 6 that is appropriate and meets learner needs. Most programmes have clear progression routes to other FE or higher level programmes, including degrees from UHI. Programmes are delivered in locations across the Western Isles, which allows learners to learn while remaining in their communities.

The college offers an extensive range of programmes to approximately 140 school pupils each year. These programmes have very high levels of success and approximately 50% of these learners progress onto full-time college programmes when they leave school.

The college has increased the volume of access level provision at SCQF level 4 to prepare learners better for progression and support improved attainment. Where subject areas do not extend beyond SCQF level 6 and no progression routes exist, learners are supported well to enter employment or gain a modern apprenticeship with local employers.
The Student Association is developing partnerships with external organisations to help learners develop their employability skills in meaningful work placements. For example, the Student Association provides placements through the ScotGrad initiative and is instrumental in establishing the Hebridean Engineering Society.

All learners are aware of next steps in their learning and opportunities to progress to employment. Many learners have an integrated work experience session with local employers which helps them to develop their essential skills. Local employers are positive about the college and the provision of placement opportunities for learners.

**How well do learners make progress, attain qualifications and achieve more widely?**

Learners are very satisfied with their college experience. They find their college experience interesting, motivating, and challenging.

The majority of learners attain nationally recognised qualifications. Most learners make good progress and acquire appropriate skills which prepare them well for employment or further learning. The majority of full-time learners and almost all part-time learners achieve their qualification aim. The completed success rate for full-time learners in 2012-13 is 63%, with 15% completing with partial success.

In almost all curriculum areas, learners achieve more widely through participation in volunteering awards, competitions and citizenship projects. Through these activities, learners develop a range of essential skills.

For most learners, achievement of core skills units is high. Increasingly, learners develop these skills through integrated and contextualised approaches and recognise the relevance of them to their chosen vocational area.

Most subject areas develop employability skills well through work experience and work placement opportunities. However, this is not yet consistent across all subject areas.

Most learners benefit from maintaining a *personal progression portfolio*. This approach helps them to understand the importance of developing essential skills and helps learners to develop them.
5. How effective are the college’s learning and teaching processes?

How well does the college design and deliver programmes and services to meet the needs of learners from all backgrounds and circumstances?

Programmes take good account of learners’ backgrounds and needs and ensure provision of high quality learning experiences for learners from a range of different circumstances. However, not all staff consistently promote equality and diversity in learning and teaching activities.

Programmes meet the needs of individuals and the local economy well. For example, many school-age learners gain vocational skills and qualifications and progress onto college programmes. In other examples, programme teams have reviewed and amended programmes to improve access to programmes and support increased achievement of qualifications.

In most programme areas, core skills are contextualised for vocational relevance within subject areas. As a result, core skills lessons are interesting and relevant to most learners.

The college has developed specialised programmes to meet the learning needs of specific groups of learners. These include programmes in Gaelic, horticulture, maritime studies and an art and design programme delivered to learners in Benbecula.

Many programmes include work experience placements. For example, care learners benefit from placements in care homes across the Islands. Learners in hair and beauty programmes gain valuable work experience through placements at local salons.

The college has developed specialist provision in partnership with the local National Health Service (NHS) therapy team to support learners with additional needs to engage in horticulture activities.

How well do learners learn?

Almost all learners are committed to their studies, are motivated and engage well during lessons. They participate well in a range of learning activities and are enthusiastic about their learning experiences.

Learners make good use of information and communications technology (ICT). Most learners make good use of a range of electronic resources to access learning materials and communicate effectively with each other and teaching staff. They use learning materials and industry-standard equipment competently, with support from teaching staff, to develop technical skills required in the workplace.

Learners make good progress, producing high quality work and develop a range of appropriate skills. Learners demonstrate independent learning skills as they progress through their programmes. During lessons, learners work collaboratively and support each other. Through individual and group learning activities, learners reflect on their progress well and demonstrate an understanding of the skills and attributes they are acquiring.
How well do planning, teaching and the use of resources ensure effective learning?

Staff utilise a range of teaching approaches and activities which keep learners interested and engaged. Most teaching staff demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge and vocational expertise which they use effectively to enhance learners’ learning experiences. Most teaching staff plan their lessons well. However, on occasion, teaching staff miss opportunities to promote learning through the use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Most teaching staff make good use of questioning techniques to reinforce learning and build learner confidence. They encourage learners to work to high standards and learners respond positively to increasing levels of challenge. Relationships between learners and teaching staff are very positive and supportive and are based on a culture of mutual respect and partnership working. However in a few lessons, teaching approaches are dominated by teacher-led exposition and as a result some learners remain passive.

A recent internal poster campaign in the college promoted to staff and learners the benefit of developing appropriate essential skills. However, some staff do not consistently signpost these skills within their programmes and a few learners have limited awareness of how they are developing essential skills.

How well is assessment used to promote effective learning?

Teaching staff plan and schedule assessments well and ensure that learners are informed of deadlines for submitting work. Staff assess learners’ progress well through use of on-going formative assessment, final summative assessment and targeted questioning.

Learners receive helpful feedback from staff on their individual and group performances when they are making presentations or completing individual activities. Staff routinely provide advice and supportive commentary to inform learners about their progress. Evaluative commentary on learners’ written assessments confirms the standards they have achieved and any areas for further improvement.

Learners with additional support needs benefit from provision of a range of equipment and services to meet their assessment needs. They are supported well through the use of college-devised personal learning and support plans.

How well are potential and current learners provided with information, advice and support?

Learners value and make good use of responsive, additional learning support services to reduce barriers to learning. Learners benefit from supportive and inclusive admissions and application arrangements.

Teaching and support staff are informative, approachable and helpful. Learners receive accurate pre-course information, guidance on progression opportunities and information relating to the college’s range of personal and financial support services. For example,
prospective learners receive information about college programmes through attendance at Open Evenings, Parents’ Evenings and during events held in local schools.

Recently introduced *personal progression portfolios*, used by learners in guidance sessions, work well and support learners to reflect on their progress and construct targets for improvement.

Learners are supported well by college support staff to access learning services and materials when working in the library or across the college campus. For example, lunchtime numeracy skills classes are well attended by engineering learners which helps them to develop and improve their numeracy skills.

The college has effective links with local schools and regular meetings with staff in schools and the local authority ensure effective planning for future provision and the transfer of relevant information for school-based learners.

*How well does the college sustain continuous enhancement of learning and teaching through self-evaluation and internal review activities?*

Programme team meetings are well organised and teams gather feedback systematically from employers, learners and other stakeholders to identify strengths in provision and identify further improvements to programmes.

Programme teams analyse key aspects of performance indicator (PI) evidence accurately and effectively. Staff know their learners well and provide helpful commentary in programme team reports relating to learners who leave their programme early or do not complete it successfully.

Teaching staff reflect on their practice through a range of evaluative processes. They share and explore teaching approaches during formal team meetings and informal discussions. However, many self-evaluation reports are overly descriptive and do not focus sufficiently on evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching approaches.

Teaching staff gather learners’ views about their learning experiences during regular discussions in lessons. As a result, improvements are made to teaching approaches and assessment schedules.
6. How well are learners engaged in enhancing their own learning and the work and life of the college?

How well do learners engage in enhancing their own learning?

All learners have positive and supportive relationships with staff and enjoy their college experience. In most curriculum areas, staff encourage learners to enhance their own learning by making active choices regarding topics to be studied and the pace of learning, or using evaluative tools such as stop, start, continue. In this initiative, learners discuss which approaches work well in class and which ones they would like to see introduced or discontinued. In hairdressing and hospitality programmes, learners are supported well to develop enterprise skills for running a small business. However, in some curriculum areas, teaching staff do not provide learners with sufficient opportunities to enhance their own learning.

Almost all learners value the support provided by personal academic tutors. Learners reflect effectively on their progress towards achievement of learning goals and use timetabled guidance slots well to discuss their on-going personal development. Learner representation has improved recently, and all FE programmes now have an elected class representative. Helpful and well-attended student participation in quality Scotland (sparqs) training, supported by the college, is delivered to learners, with follow-up sessions offered to those who are unable to attend. Class representatives work well with staff through regular informal discussions and attendance at programme team meetings. In a few curriculum areas, learners support their peers effectively to resolve issues and promote positive behaviours.

Feedback from learners to college staff leads to improvements of facilities. These include the introduction of recycling bins in catering areas, improvements to the cafeteria and repairs to the college smoking shelter.

Learners contribute well to self-evaluation processes. Staff use learner feedback through completion of both college-wide and end-of-unit questionnaires and discuss learners’ comments informally and during programme team meetings. Class representatives attend regular programme team meetings where they represent the views of their classmates effectively and contribute to action planning for improvement. However, the collection and use of learner feedback is not consistent across all areas of the college, and feedback to learners on actions taken as a result of their input is not promoted effectively.

How well do learners engage in enhancing the work and life of the college?

The college has supported an innovative step by the Student Association to establish an FE Student Association to better hear the voice of the FE learner. The Board of Management and SMT welcome the views of learners and use them to inform initiatives and programmes. Members of the SMT meet regularly with class representatives to discuss learner issues.

Learners take pride in their college and are well represented on college committees including the Board of Management and the newly-formed Student Journey Committee. The college supports the Students Association well. To encourage learners to engage in the life and work of the college, the newly-elected Student President has recently
expanded the number of executive roles available to learners. The new *Events Co-ordinator* is implementing well-considered plans to broaden the range of social events and charitable activities for learners.

The Student President and Executive are supporting well a renewed focus on employability and the development of meaningful work experience for all learners. The Student Association President, supported by the college, is highly committed to improving the FE learner experience. The Student Association works well with a range of external partners to extend the range of work placement opportunities. They are also instrumental in establishing the *Hebridean Engineering Society*.

The college reputation is enhanced through effective use by learners of social media to promote learner activities and successes. Learners make good use of a range of opportunities across the curriculum to achieve more widely through project work, competition entry, and success in college awards ceremonies. For example, engineering learners participate in the *Diamond Anniversary Challenge* working alongside fellow higher education learners to develop their skills; learners in business programmes use the *Bright Sparks* initiative to develop skills for entrepreneurship; and hospitality learners make and supply cakes for a local food bank.
7. How well is the college led and how well is it enhancing the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders?

The college has established clear and broad aims to achieve the vision to be a beacon of excellent learning, teaching, research and enterprise in the islands of the Outer Hebrides. The recently introduced strategic plan for 2013-17 aligns well with SFC targets, the UHI regional outcome agreement and Scottish Government priorities. It establishes objectives for the college to provide high quality education and training which meets the needs of the local population and employers.

The Board of Management works closely with the principal and the SMT to set an appropriate strategic direction for the college. The principal provides highly visible and supportive leadership and has communicated clearly the college’s aims and direction to staff and learners. Most staff understand and support these aims. The principal also has an influential role in the local Community Planning Partnership. The college works closely with the local education authority and local schools to deliver a good range of high-attaining Skills for Work (SfW) programmes.

The aims and objectives in the strategic and operational plans complement each other well and almost all of the actions in the current plan have been achieved or are on the way to being achieved. However, the actions identified in the operational plan are sometimes insufficiently specific which makes it difficult to measure the progress that has been made.

The principal and senior managers have begun to establish a positive quality culture within the college which encourages staff from different departments to share expertise and work collectively to identify and resolve issues. The college has developed plans to improve performance on student outcomes and improve learning and teaching. Staff enthusiastically promote and engage in these initiatives. However, there are currently insufficiently clear expectations for learning and teaching approaches and practices for all managers, staff or learners. The college is preparing a learning and teaching strategy to address these issues.

The college’s Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities for 2013-14 have been closely aligned with the aims in the college’s strategic plan. However, approximately a third of staff had not commenced appropriate safeguarding training at the time of the review.

A team-based approach in support services is working well and leadership for support services is strong. Most learners are able to access helpful and prompt support services at all points in their experiences and are very satisfied with the support they receive. The college has appropriate links to external agencies to support learners who experience hardship or ill-health.

The quality culture is led well by the principal and SMT. Arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement focus closely on issues affecting performance and action planning for improvement, and staff are taking appropriate action to address issues which affect learners. The Faculty Management Group, which includes Assistant Principals and Heads of Department, is very enthusiastic about driving forward the quality enhancement agenda, with particular emphasis on enhancing learning and teaching.
Across the college, staff are committed to the college’s quality culture and improving the quality of the learning experience. Staff engage in college committees and in regular self-evaluation exercises. As a small college, they also engage in informal discussions with other tutors and learners and many of these discussions lead to improvements for learners. Support services evaluate their performance and generate action plans to improve their performance.

Through a range of recently introduced initiatives, learners have a strong voice in the work of the college. They are welcomed by the college to promote their views and actions are implemented as a result.

Programme team self-evaluation reports include an effective analysis of PIs. This helps programme teams to track learners who leave and provide reasons for low PIs where they occur. However, self-evaluation reporting is not sufficiently comprehensive in the coverage of learning and teaching and action planning deriving from these reports is inconsistent.
8. How extensive and effective are college partnerships with communities, other learning providers, employers and agencies?

The college’s strategic plan focuses on building and maintaining relationships with the local community to achieve the college aims. The principal contributes well to two important sub-committees (Outcome Groups) of the Community Planning Partnership. These groups have a major influence in creating pathways to employment and training by responding to local economic priorities.

The principal has played an active role in reinforcing well-established school-college partnerships. The college works effectively with local secondary schools and the local education authority to deliver a wide range of Skills for Work courses which have resulted in very high levels of attainment for pupils.

Volunteering agencies have positive relationships with the college. One organisation works effectively with staff to support learners to achieve their Saltire Award through community-based volunteering activities. Learners who engaged in the activity have continued their involvement in the community after their award. However, the pace of implementation of initiatives with third sector agencies is sometimes slow.

The college has developed effective working relationships with local employers. For example learners undertaking care, engineering, hairdressing, hospitality and construction programmes benefit from work experience placements.
9. **Signposting excellent practice**

During the Education Scotland external review, the college submitted examples of what it considered to be excellent practice and the review team also identified examples worthy of dissemination.

9.1 **The college’s promotion and development of employability skills**

The college’s strategy to embed essential skills, including employability and entrepreneurship in the curriculum, is effective and results in positive outcomes for learners. The college liaises effectively with the island’s employers to develop the curriculum and to provide opportunities for work experience and work-related learning. In session 2012-13, 50% of full-time learners participated in work experience opportunities. Local employers benefit by having access to local, work-ready learners who have the skills and qualifications required by their businesses.

The college works effectively to embed employability skills, such as time-management, customer service and co-operative working, in all the programmes. Staff work in partnership with local employers to provide work experience opportunities to learners on many programmes. These include learners from care, construction, engineering, hairdressing and professional cookery programmes.

This partnership arrangement is popular with learners. They gain real life experience in the discipline they are studying and establish a relationship with a local employer which often results in a positive reference or employment.

The arrangement has impacted positively on retention and successful completion outcomes. Programmes in advanced engineering, professional cookery and health, social and child care have high completed successful rates. Programmes with lower successful outcomes report that many learners who leave their programme early enter related employment or continue in employment with their work experience provider, with many re-enrolling in the college apprenticeship programmes.

In November 2013, 27% of FE learners from session 2012-13 had entered full-time employment, apprenticeships or cadetships. This has a positive and sustainable impact on the local economy and allows young people to remain in the islands, rather than pursuing the traditional route of outward migration. A substantial number of learners have set up their own businesses, including cake decorating and nail bars.
10. **What is an overarching judgement?**

Education Scotland uses an overarching judgement of *Effectiveness* to express the findings of the review team. The judgement of effectiveness takes into account all the evidence gathered through the eternal review. Such judgements express outcomes as:

- effective;
- limited effectiveness; or
- not effective.

This judgement is further detailed by supporting statements which substantiate the judgement of effectiveness. Education Scotland evaluates and reports according to the three key principles. In this report, the principles and supporting statements relate to:

Key principle 1 – High quality learning (supporting statements numbers 1 and 2)

Key principle 2 – Learner engagement (supporting statement number 3)

Key principle 3 – Quality culture (supporting statement number 4)

Judgements of effectiveness and supporting statements provide stakeholders with assurances, or otherwise, about the quality of a college’s provision. These judgements are based on trends and track record of a college, the findings at the time of the external review, and the college’s capacity to continue improving.

**A judgement of effective** indicates that the college has in place effective arrangements to maintain and enhance the quality of its provision and outcomes for learners and other stakeholders. This judgement means that, in relation to quality assurance and enhancement, the college is led well, has sufficiently robust arrangements to address any minor weakness, and is likely to continue to improve the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders.

**A judgement of limited effectiveness** indicates that the effectiveness of the college’s arrangements to maintain and enhance the quality of its provision and outcomes for learners and other stakeholders is limited. This judgement means that there are some strengths in the college’s arrangements for quality enhancement. However, there are weaknesses in arrangements for *high quality learning* and/or *learner engagement* and/or *quality culture*. If not addressed, the importance of these weaknesses will continue to limit the effectiveness of the college’s arrangements.

**A judgement of not effective** indicates that the college’s arrangements to maintain and enhance the quality of its provision and outcomes for learners and other stakeholders are not effective. This judgement means that there are significant weaknesses in the arrangements for *high quality learning* and/or *learner engagement* and/or *quality culture*. There is a high probability that, without significant and comprehensive action, with external monitoring and support, the college will fail to improve current low-quality provision and outcomes to an acceptable level. Education Scotland does not have evidence that the college has the capacity and commitment to identify and implement effective and comprehensive action.
Scottish Funding Council response to judgements

If the overarching judgement is **effective**, the Council will expect the college to engage with Education Scotland in follow-up activity, as appropriate, and, one year after the publication of the review reports, to provide a report, endorsed by its governing body (see *Council guidance to colleges on quality from August 2012*, paragraphs 62-66 *SFC/13/2012* setting out its response to the review.)

If the overarching judgement is of **limited effectiveness** or is **not effective**, the Council will require the institution to prepare and fulfil an action plan to address the shortcomings identified (see paragraph 67 of guidance). Education Scotland will provide advice to SFC on the adequacy of the action plan and on how it is being implemented. SFC, taking into account any advice from Education Scotland, will normally require a formal follow-up review at an appropriate time, usually within no more than two years.
11. What happens next?

Education Scotland will continue to monitor progress during annual engagement visits to the college.

There will be feedback to the learners at the college.

One year on from this report, the college will produce a report setting out what it has done to address the main points for action and/or areas for development in the report and other quality assurance and enhancement activities. There will be a link to this report from Education Scotland’s website.

Peter B Connelly
HM Inspector

12. Further information

The review and judgements relate to the college as a whole and do not provide information about individual programmes of study or subjects. For further information on these or any other queries, contact the college or look on its website - http://www.lews.uhi.ac.uk/

For further information about Education Scotland, the external review methodologies, or other information about reviews, see www.educationscotland.gov.uk

For further information about the Scottish Funding Council, see – www.sfc.ac.uk
13. How can you contact us?

This report has been produced as a web-only publication and is available on our website at http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/othersectors/collegeviews/LewsCastleCollege.asp. If you would like to receive this report in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on 01506 600381.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to The Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston, EH54 6GA.

Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

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Education Scotland
# Appendix 1

## Glossary of terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Further Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
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<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<td>PI</td>
<td>Performance Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCQF</td>
<td>Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework</td>
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<td>SFC</td>
<td>Scottish Funding Council</td>
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<td>SIW</td>
<td>Skills for Work</td>
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<td>SMT</td>
<td>Senior Management Team</td>
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<td>Sparqs</td>
<td>student participation in quality Scotland</td>
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<td>SQA</td>
<td>Scottish Qualification Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>UHI</td>
<td>University of the Highlands and Islands</td>
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<tr>
<td>VLE</td>
<td>Virtual Learning Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSUM</td>
<td>Weighted student unit of measurement</td>
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Appendix 2

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework brings together all Scottish mainstream qualifications into a single unified framework. The framework includes: degree provision, HNC and HND, SQA National Qualifications, and SVQs. There are 12 levels ranging from Access 1 at SCQF level 1 to Doctoral degree at SCQF level 12. Each qualification whether a unit, group of units or larger group award has also been allocated a number of SCQF credits. Each credit represents 10 notional hours of required learning. Doctoral degrees based on a thesis are an exception to this.

Other learning may be credit rated and included in the framework provided it leads to a clear set of learning outcomes and has quality-assured learner assessment. All of Scotland’s colleges were awarded SCQF Credit Rating powers in January 2007.