

# Employer Engagement and Educational Development A collaborative Approach



**“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”**

*Henry Ford*

Creative Commons 2019

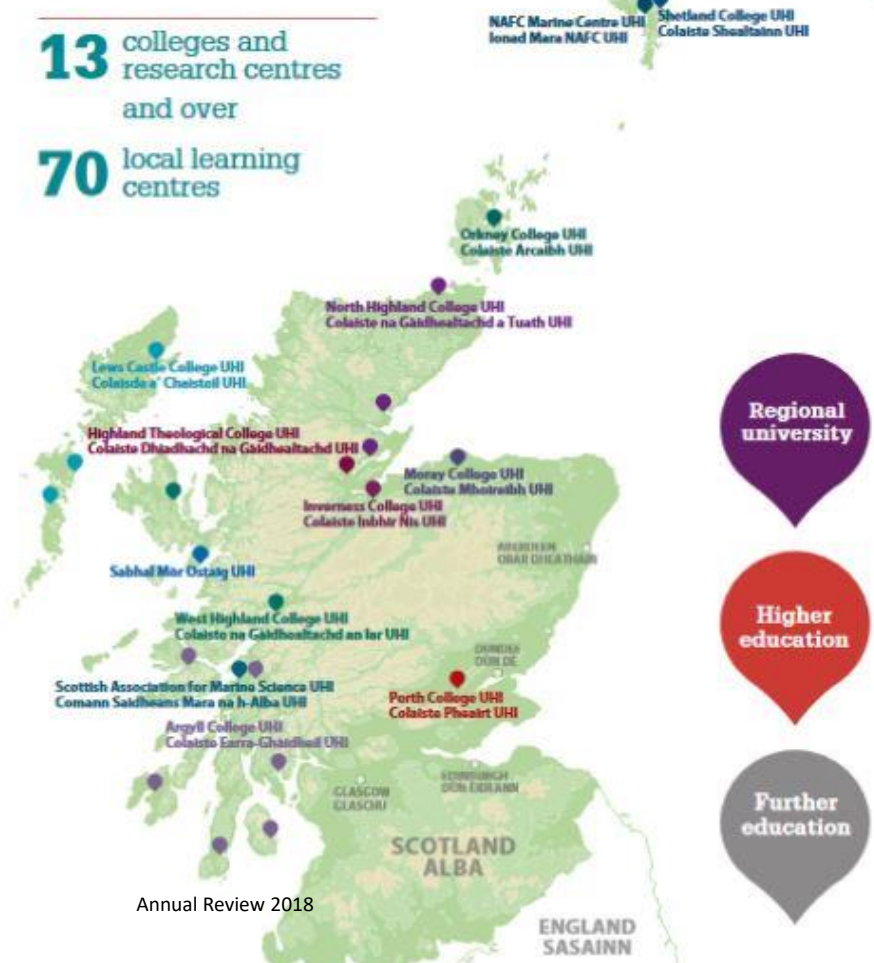
**Sara Smith Educational Design and Development Leader  
& Nicola Smith Head of Careers and Employability**

# University facts

## We're a little different...

**13** colleges and  
research centres  
and over

**70** local learning  
centres



Annual Review 2018

# The United Kingdoms Leading Integrated University

9,703 HE  
students

60% full  
time

40% part  
time

30,001 FE  
students

14% full  
time

86% part  
time

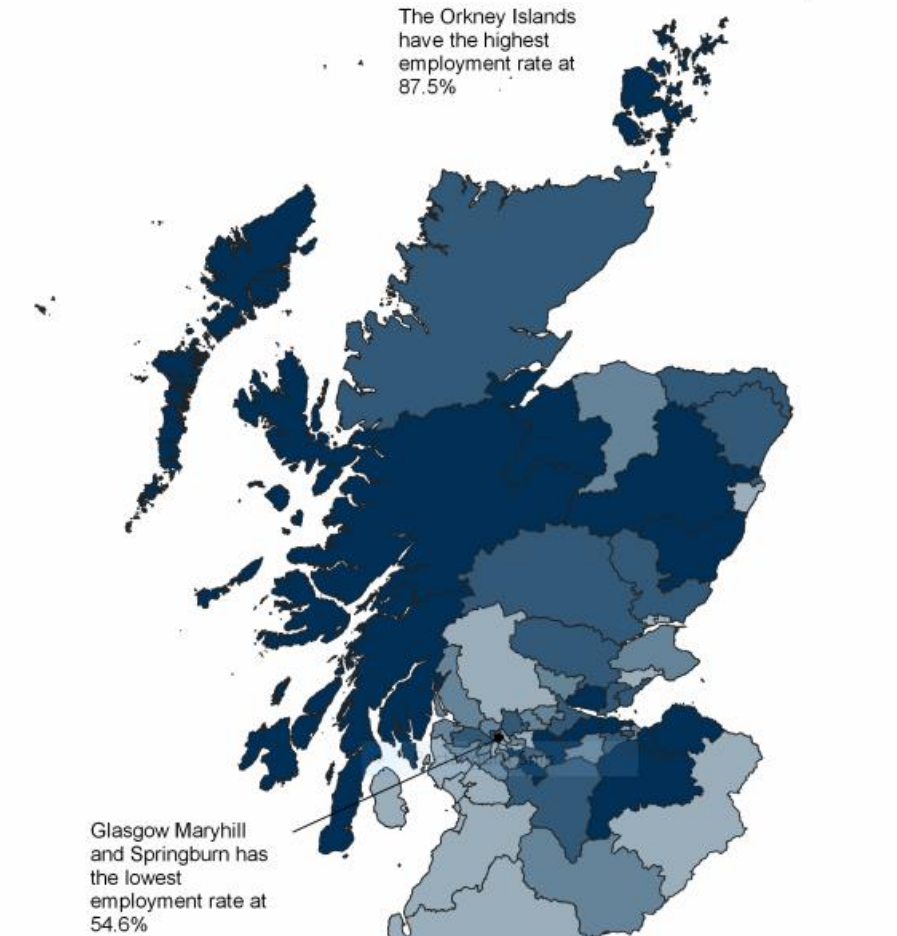
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# Regional Economic Challenges

- ❑ Peripheral and fragile communities
- ❑ A high percentage of 'non standard jobs'
- ❑ Underemployment not unemployment
- ❑ Decline in working age population
- ❑ Labour market/skills supply and demand
- ❑ Productivity below Scottish Average
- ❑ Brain drain of younger population

Employment rate (16-64) Oct 2017-Sep 2018

By Scottish Parliament constituencies



# The role of the University

## Careers and employability

A graduate for life!

### Our Vision

To have a transformational impact on the prospects of our region, its economy, its people and its communities

### Strategic vision

The University of the Highlands and Islands is the United Kingdom's leading integrated university, encompassing further and higher education.

We will be recognised for the quality of our students' experience and for their achievement.

Our worldwide reputation will be built upon our innovative approach to learning and our distinctive research and curriculum, enriched by the people, natural environment, economy, culture and heritage of our region and its communities.

We will be locally based, regional in structure and have national and international reach.

### Strategic themes

THE UNIVERSITY FOR ALL OF OUR REGION

OUR STUDENTS

FOCUSED RESEARCH

World-leading results put us firmly on the university research map

**REF2014**  
Research Excellence Framework

### Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

**87%** overall satisfaction

**5%** above UK and Scottish sector averages

*PRES is the only UK higher education sector-wide biennial survey to gain insight from postgraduate research students. In the 2017 survey our results were hailed as excellent, with an overall satisfaction rating of 87%, which is 5% above the UK and Scottish sector averages.*



**FutureMe**

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[www.uhi.ac.uk/careers](http://www.uhi.ac.uk/careers)





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agus nan Eilean

Careers and  
Employability Centre  
Ionad Dhreuchdan agus  
Freagarrachd airson Cosnaidh

# Curriculum Development Employer Engagement Team



Business, Management and Leisure (Alana MacPherson)



Creative Industries (Katie Masheter)



Engineering and the Built Environment (John McLuckie)



Health and Wellbeing (Lorna Ferguson)



Science, Technology and the Environment (Audrey Decou)

\*Development & Currency of Curriculum \*Integration of Employability Skills \*Growth of Placement and Work Experience



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Educational Development Unit  
Aonad Leasachadh Foghlaim UHI

# Educational Development Unit ESIF Team

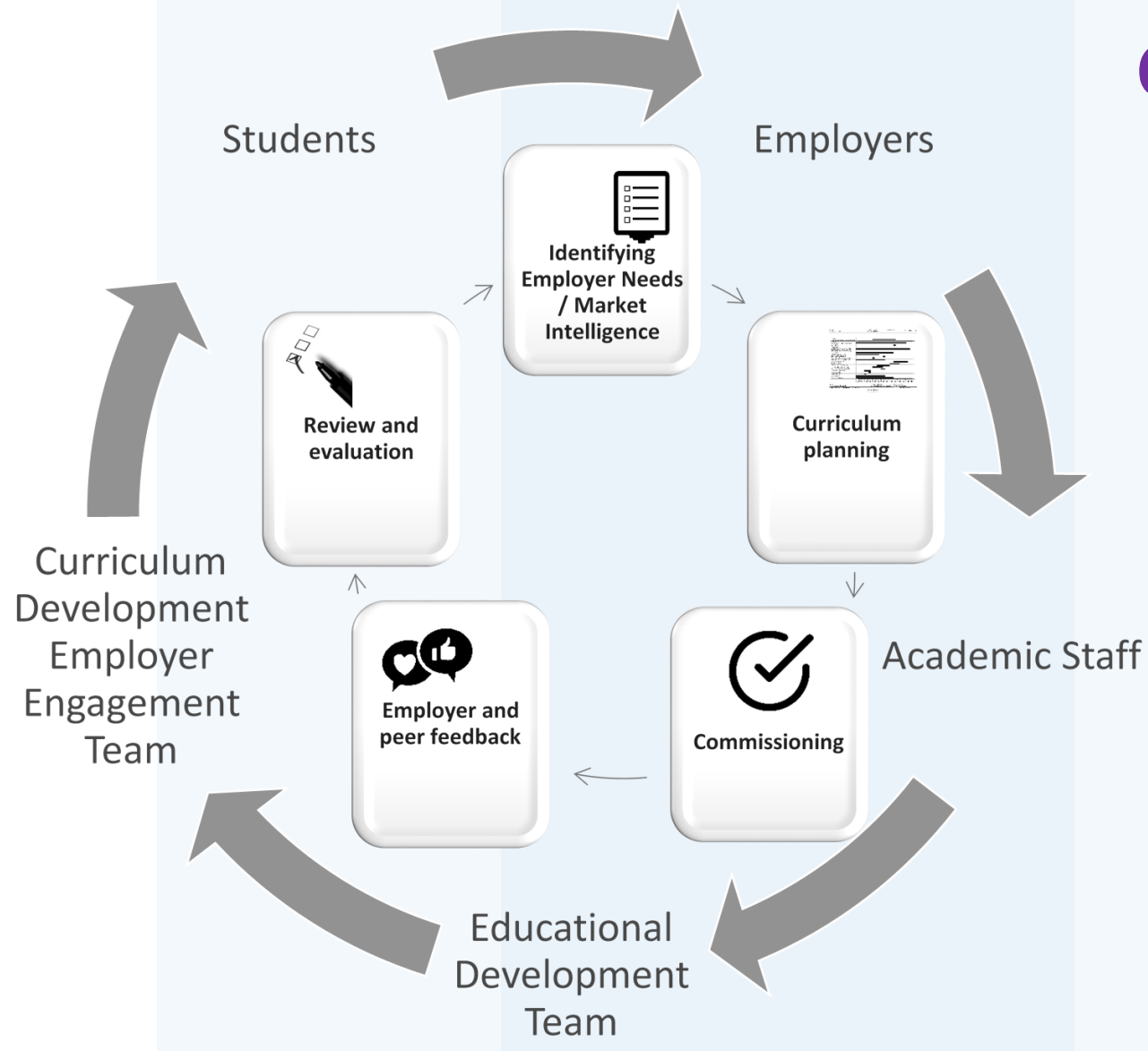


**Educational Design and Development Leaders - EDDL**  
*(Elaine Dalloway, Liz Hudson, Terri Smith & Sara Smith)*

**Educational Design and Development Associates – EDDA**  
*(John Buchan & Angus MacDonald)*

**Instructional Designers - ID**  
*(Llewelyn Bailey, Mark Wilkie & Daniel Falconer)*

\*Design and Development of New Courses \*Staff support and development \*Aligning L&T with UHI Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy

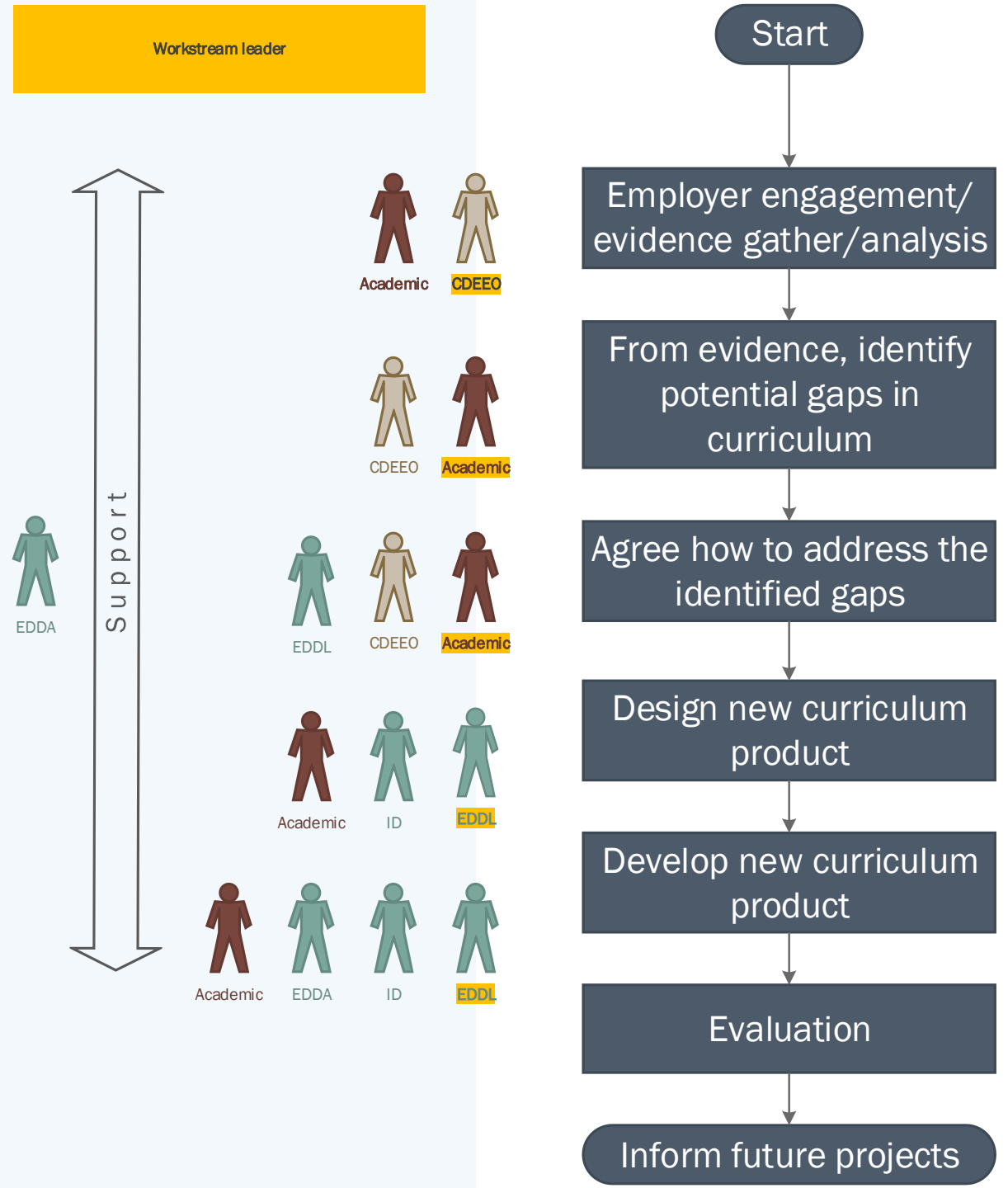


## Benefits of a Collaborative Approach

- ❑ Regional needs are met by embedding the voice of key stakeholders in the curriculum development, review and evaluation process
- ❑ Involved at an early stage with academic teams
- ❑ Support curriculum development and approaches adopted for Learning and Teaching
- ❑ Advise upon pedagogically appropriate styles to support students; knowledge and skill development as well as student experience
- ❑ Ensure digital technology is embedded within the curriculum to support delivery, creating an optimal learning environment for the student

# ESIF Collaborative Model

- Building upon the work of the CDDEOs the teams identify sector requirements and market 'gaps'
- The EDDA liaises with the Lead Academic, the CDEEO and the UHI European Programme Officer
- EDDL, ID and Academic team work together to design the new curriculum – ensuring a student focus and a delivery model that suits the student profile
- EDDL, ID, EDDA and academic team collaborate to develop the teaching materials and additional resources as required

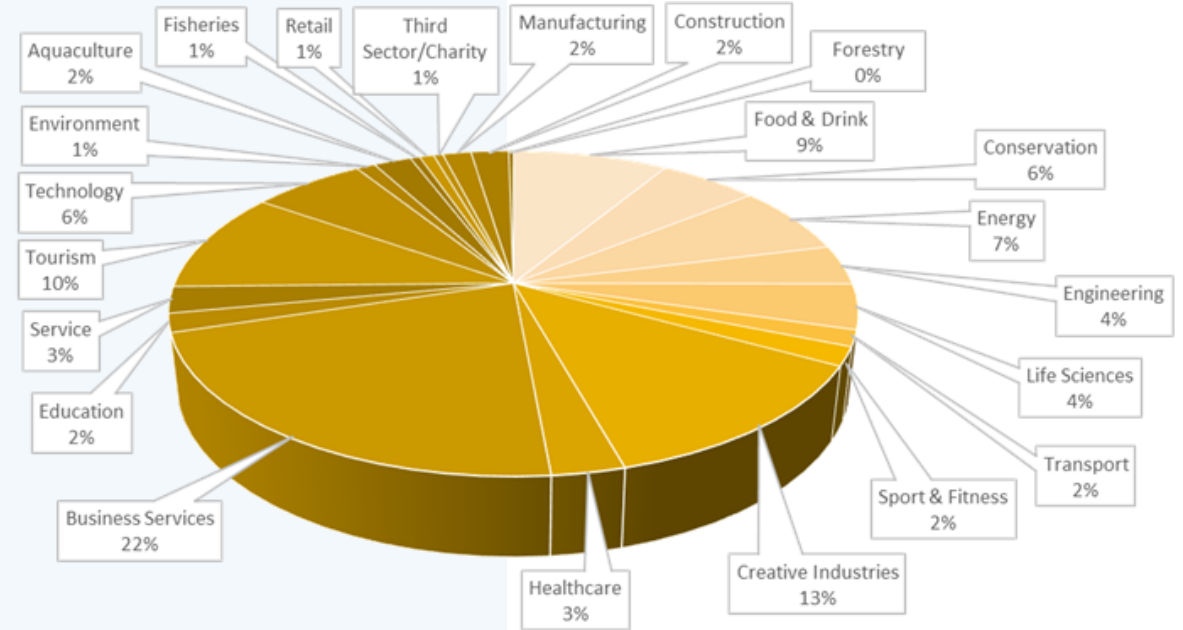
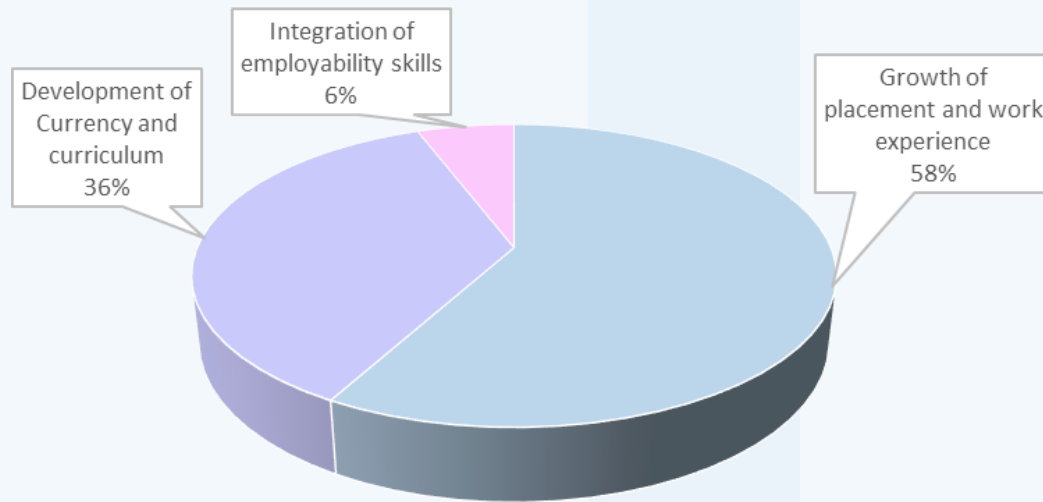




# Evidencing Impact

January 2018 – January 2019

- ❑ 273 companies contacted
- ❑ 69% new contacts
- ❑ 31% renewing and adding value to existing contacts
- ❑ Broad sector coverage



- ❑ 58% growth of placement and work experience
- ❑ 36% growth of employer engagement in the development and currency of the curriculum



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**NEW**

## **BSc (Hons) Applied Software Development**

The University of the Highlands and Islands is developing a new software development degree focused on employability, with an ambitious, collaborative format, for launch in August 2020. We want to build strong relationships with you, so that together we can rise to the challenges currently facing UK industries.

**Key challenges facing industry include:**

- Employment: 1.64 million UK Digital Tech jobs are being created at twice the rate of non-digital jobs\*
- The skills shortage: talent supply remains the number one challenge\*
- Gender gap: men outnumber women by at least 3:1 in 53% of UK digital technology companies\*

\*TechNation 2017

# Collaborative Development Outcomes

From day one, students studying on our new software development degree will learn through work-related scenarios and develop work-ready soft skills in business and project management.



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**NEW**

## MSc Engineering

The University of the Highlands and Islands is developing a new online engineering degree at Master's level for launch in September 2019 which allows employees the flexibility to undertake studies at graduate level.

The course will partially fulfil the requirements for chartered engineering status and we want to build strong relationships with you, so that together we can rise to the challenges currently facing the engineering sector.

### Key challenges facing the engineering sector include:

- Workforce shortfall - Up to 59,000 engineering graduates and technicians required annually to fill core roles\*
- Gender imbalance - 16% of first degree and 25% of postgraduate degree students in engineering are female\*
- Brexit - Potential impact on international collaboration, particularly for Higher Education\*

\* EngineeringUK 2018

# Collaborative Development Outcomes

Online flexible delivery allowing students to study around work and other commitments. Industry relevant projects are integral to the course content with specialisms available in civil, electrical and mechanical engineering in addition to a general engineering strand



# Labour Market Research informing curriculum delivery

## Creative & Cultural Industries: Alumni Research (November 2018)

### OBJECTIVE: DEVELOPMENT & CURRENCY OF THE CURRICULUM

To gather labour market intelligence around graduate experiences and perspectives to influence the development of new curriculum and the enhancement of current curriculum

9% RESPONSE  
RATE

Survey sent to 453 alumni from the creative industries subject network who graduated between 2015 & 2018

### Feedback Snapshot

Alumni felt that UHI benefited their development and practice through encouraging creative thinking, exploration & collaboration:

Alumni felt that curriculum could have prepared them better for work by providing more opportunities to learn and develop business and employability skills, through being exposed to more technical and practical techniques and through enhancing connections with and understanding of the sector:

The top five priorities for those undertaking postgraduate study were identified as: industry links, space/time to develop work, support

### 36 COMPLETED SURVEYS...

#### Breakdown by art form studied:

22% Visual Art; 22% Visual Communication;  
20% Music; 17% Drama; 14% Unidentified; 5% Textiles



**Employment:** Of the 36 survey participants, four remain in study, two are unemployed and six provided no further details. Of the 24 in work, 71% are placed in the creative industries. The 24 identified as self-employed/freelance. Those in employment, but not of a freelance nature, tended to be designers or employees in formal education settings.

## Creative & Cultural Industries: Your Shetland Research Phase 1 (Sept/Oct 2018)

### OBJECTIVE: DEVELOPMENT & CURRENCY OF THE CURRICULUM

To gather labour market intelligence in the context of creative industries provision in Shetland, to inform the future development of curriculum at the Centre for Rural Creativity, Shetland College UHI

15 invitations sent out to local individuals engaged with the local creative economy

### Findings Snapshot

Nine face-to-face interviews helped UHI gain an understanding of local needs and gauge demand for increasing the creative industries offering at Shetland College UHI

80% RESPONSE RATE  
Nine full interviews;  
Three notes of interest  
but no availability on  
this occasion;  
Three no response.



'Many have left the island because further education in the performing arts isn't available here'

**Accreditation** // Opportunity to think interdisciplinary & draw upon local skill sets – Gap in cultural leadership and decision-making, opportunity for UHI? – Manage expectations, as numbers would be small – Demand for CPD, not just entry route curriculum.

**Schools** // Art & Design only creative subject taught at National 5 - Little budget to support added value creative opportunities – Teaching staff don't always value the arts/creativity – Enthusiastic to accept funded activity/support.

**Geography** // Misconception that mainland = better – visiting activity usually about access not progression – Young people would benefit from space to reflect on their place in a national context.

For full research summary, please contact Stacey Toner, Curriculum Development Employer Engagement Officer (Creative Industries), [stacey.toner@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:stacey.toner@uhi.ac.uk)

## Accounting & Finance Research – July/Aug 2018

Project to identify systems and software used by Accounting & Finance employers and identify opportunities for collaboration/placements with HN Year 2 students.

40 meetings with organisations, predominantly in Inverness and surrounding area - 45 confirmed placements for local students in 2019

Most would prefer they were approached by students looking to secure a work placement at the **beginning of the year** (February/March)

Many said they want keen learners who show enthusiasm about their work and learning new things



Employers want to know how they can make placements of **real value** and as relevant to the student as they can be



22% explicitly state pivotal table skills are important



### Systems and Software

20% of organisations referenced SAGE as their main system, or their clients' main system

16% of organisations referenced Xero as their main system, or their clients' main system  
QuickBooks (11%) and Irs (6.5%) were the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> most referenced system

Clients still use a **wide mix** of manual, spreadsheet, and small business accounting systems (desktop, disc and online)

**Significant growth** in the use of online, cloud-based systems – reference to apps, efficiency of accessing accounts, etc.

### Sector Developments

Pressures to react to and support clients with **sectoral changes** such as 'Making Tax Digital' and 'Making VAT Digital'

Increasingly, an **understanding** of the systems, how to select one, **why** they work the way they do, etc. is very important

### Excel Skills

50% of employers who commented on Excel skills said a basic level of skills in Excel would be acceptable

22% of organisations said that Excel is very important, with 17% stating it was a **must**

For full research summary, please contact Alana MacPherson, Curriculum Development Employer Engagement Officer (Business, Management and Leisure), [alana.macpherson@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:alana.macpherson@uhi.ac.uk)

## Advantages of the collaborative model identified by EDU team:

# Evaluation of model

- Evaluation is embedded into each individual project ensuring that objectives are met
- Project team meetings – involving all teams allowing reflection on progress and identification of barriers and opportunities
- Formal evaluation:

Process

Evaluation of the new workflow model, advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and barriers, working relations etc.

Outcomes & Impact

Evaluation of the developed curriculum

- Student numbers
- Student experience
- Needs of local employers

Ensures we create exciting and essential new courses that are tailored to the distinctive needs of the region

..enabled evidence-based teaching and learning innovations to be nurtured within courses

The EDU, academic fellows and CDEEO are working collaboratively to ensure that the course we are developing specifically addresses skills gaps identified through continuing consultation with employers

I've found it a very integrated and innovative way to work. The collaborations between EDU, employability staff and academic staff are resulting in curriculum design which is digital in part or whole and which has some real strengths in building skills that supports recruitment to local industry



# Employer Engagement and Educational Development: A collaborative Approach

## Key points .....



- ☐ A holistic approach involving stakeholders at all stages ensures both currency of the developed curriculum as well as ownership
- ☐ Draws upon the skills and expertise of teams ensures 'best practice' is securely embedded throughout from initial scoping to final product