UHI | MORAY MOIREIBH

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
Minutes of Meeting held on
Thursday 4 September 2025
At 1:30pm in the Boardroom and via MS Teams

Present:

Grenville Johnston (Chair)
David Patterson
Elizabeth Hudson (MS Teams) – Left @ 2pm
Caroline Webster
Roddy Burns
Colin Watson (Unison Member)
Clare Matysova
Katy O'Connor (Teaching Staff Rep) – Left @ 3.20pm
Jolene Young (Support Staff Rep)
Emmaleigh Hay (HISA)

In Attendance:

Murray Easton
Carolyn Thomson (MS Teams)
Eleanor Melton (Clerk)
Derek Duncan
Alex Hastings (Minutes)

Item		Action	Date
BM.25.03.01	**(i) Resignations**		
1.1	Resignations have been received from Eilidh Kennedy McLean with immediate effect and Stuart Cruickshank whose 4-year term as Support Staff member has come to an end.		
	(ii) Appointments		
1.2	Grenville has been asked to act as Interim Chair of the Board. Jolene Young has been appointed as the Support Staff member and Emmaleigh Hay was introduced as the incoming Student member.		
BM.25.03.02	**Apologies for Absence**		
2.1	Apologies were received from Ralph Luck.		
BM.25.03.03	**Any Additional Declarations of Interest including specific items on this Agenda**		
3.1	There were no additional declarations of interest received.		
BM.25.03.04	**Draft Minutes of Board Meeting held on 12 June 2025**		
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record: Proposed: Roddy Burns Seconded: Katy O'Connor		
BM.25.03.05	**Matters Arising from Board Meeting held on 12 June 2025**		
5.1	**5.1** Ongoing – Action superseded by the Chair's resignation. Grenville will ensure this action is completed.		
5.2	**6.7** Complete – Clerk to redistribute to new members.		

5.3	**10.4** Ongoing – Action superseded by the Chair's resignation. Grenville will ensure this action is completed.		
5.4	**13.2** Complete		
BM.25.03.06	**Principal's Report**		
	(i) KPI Dashboard		
6.1	David supported the paper, highlighting the key points throughout. Roddy queried the process for informing external partners about the College's successes in terms of student satisfaction and outcomes. David explained that this is communicated regularly to staff and stakeholders and is promoted in various meetings. Roddy asked if there is still a gap between demand and what can be provided. David stated that the gap remains on the FE and apprenticeship side, adding that the College could have taken on more HE students last year, however the available funding has not increased with demand. Jolene asked how the incoming Deputy Principal is going to be introduced. David explained that Euan will attend the CMT meeting on Monday 8 September, followed by a meeting with all Academic Heads. Speaking on the Director of Finance recruitment, David explained that following Aspen People being awarded the contract, a meeting has taken place to determine the College's requirements, and a response is expected with their proposed timeline. The Board noted this update.		
BM.25.03.07	**Finance Update**		
7.1	Murray supported the paper, welcoming questions from members. Colin queried the provision for Job Evaluation costs being £1.7m, asking how this figure has been projected. Murray explained that the Government recognise that funding the project is their responsibility. Despite this, there is no designated pot of funding for the project. Murray added that whether the cost bares any relevance to what will be posted in the accounts is another question. Roddy asked for a further explanation on the elimination of the forecast deficit for 2025/26 by		

	commercial income representing an increase of 25%, which was described as unrealistic. Murray explained that the target for 2025/26 is realistic, however, closing the gap would require an additional 25% of commercial income, which is unrealistic. Roddy asked if a 5-year forecast has been considered following the suggestion at Dundee. Murray stated that it hasn't been mentioned within the FD network. David highlighted that since starting their post, the college sector has been lobbying for 2–3-year forecasting, although it remains unlikely that this would be backed by the SFC. The Board noted this update.		
BM.25.03.08	**Moray Growth Deal Update**		
	(i) BEHub - RESERVED		
8.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	(ii) MEEIC - Verbal		
8.2	David provided an update on discussions regarding the MEEIC project proposal. Whilst the College believes that most of the £21m funding would be used for the project, questions are continued to be asked regarding the ability to partner with DHI. David explained that there are no direct links between the projects, adding that governance would be extremely challenging in the event of a partnership. David highlighted that there is continued scepticism from the Council, particularly around UHI's resource to carry out a project like MEEIC. Alastair MacColl has written to the Council reiterating how this project aligns with the UHI Strategic Plan. David advised that the Council is asking for certain commitments such as student numbers, which are unobtainable at this stage. David added that it is uncertain whether the Council would be able to get the level of commitment it requires without further advancing the project. Katy queried if there is an expiry date on the funding. David explained that MGD funding will expire in 2031. Roddy asked whether there are any partners the College can use as leverage at meetings with the Council. David advised that strongly worded support had been received from SSE, adding that there are other companies who would likely help.		

	The Board noted this update.		
BM.25.03.09	**UHI Transformation - RESERVED**		
9.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
BM.25.03.10	**Learning and Teaching**		
	(i) Student Outcomes 2024-25		
10.1	David presented the paper, welcoming questions from members. An update was provided on FE full-time student achievement for 2024/25, where an estimated figure of 75.6% has been recorded for the College, the highest figure achieved since the methodology started. Staff who have supported and facilitated this effort were commended. The Board noted this update.		
	(ii) Applications and Enrolments Update 2024-25		
10.2	David's update was noted by the Board. It was highlighted that the Heads of STEM and Academic Partnerships will be leaving, with a plan required as to how they are replaced.		
BM.25.03.11	**HR & Organisational Development Directors Report**		
	(i) Job Evaluation and Regrading		
11.1	Carolyn reminded members of the ongoing work regarding the Job Evaluation project. It is hoped that the project's business case will be presented to the Government in the coming months. Carolyn asked the Board to consider a continued pause on regrading applications from staff. Colin highlighted that it has been 7 years since Job Evaluation started, and staff are being asked to wait a further two years. Colin added regrading is a different issue and it would be concerning to leave this until completion of the Job Evaluation project. Colin suggested leaving the Job Evaluation to progress and reopen regrading applications. If not, managers should be asked to review all job descriptions. Colin asked how the College plans to improve staff morale, knowing staff will have to wait 9 years in total for a resolution. Carolyn summarised the excellent relationships with Unison and College Employers Scotland, highlighting that the focus is not on the 7 years it has taken, but what is imminent. Colin added that if staff were able to submit a		

	regrading request, the College would be ahead of schedule and also be able to decide what action to take until the Job Evaluation project is live. Carolyn advised that the process for regrading is not available yet, highlighting the need to be careful not to ask staff to do things that will not be part of the process. Jolene stated that when the Job Evaluation project started in 2018, there was a year long contract for it to be facilitated. Staff have been here before and it may fall apart again with a potential new Government, for example. Grenville asked Carolyn to update the Board on developments with the project at the next meeting. Carolyn stated that the sector is hopeful of a response from the Government by the end of the year.		
BM.25.03.12	**Risk Register**		
12.1	Murray supported the paper, highlighting that governance is an increasing risk in which the status on recruitment is unchanged. Roddy pointed out that the risk management paper does not include timescales or mitigations to address issues. Roddy also pointed out that the Strategic Plan outlines financial sustainability by 2027. Considering national bargaining cost figures are known, there is no indication on what the Job Evaluation project may cost, so stating financial sustainability is an issue. Murray highlighted that there is no indication on a national of Government level that costs could be covered. Murray identified looking into the political position in the new year as a priority to determine whether there will be an increase in funding or for it to remain flat cash. Murray added that if it was flat cash funding, the College would have no option but to consider a course of action such as a VS scheme, or changes in the FE curriculum, for example. The Board noted this update.		
BM.25.03.13	**Estates Update**		
	(i) Summer Works		
13.1	Derek summarised the work completed across the estate over the summer period. Some delays have been caused by a demand for contractor availability. To mitigate this, Colin is looking at works that could be completed mid-year to avoid competing for contactors, with the Council, for example.		

	The Board noted this update.		
	(ii) RAAC		
13.2	Derek informed members that Turner & Townsend have now submitted the proposal to take the project to RIBA Stage 2, where the College, in consultation with the RSB and SFC, will have a fully costed proposal for Speyside Wing. This update was noted by the Board.		
BM.25.03.14	**Policies Due for Review - Update**		
14.1	Derek informed members that the policies that were carried over from the previous year are near ready for F&GP Committee approval. The Board noted this update.		
BM.25.03.15	**HISA Update**		
15.1	Emmaleigh supported the paper, highlighting that training days have been planned for new SVRs. Clare pointed out that SVR attendance issues were raised in previous meetings. Emmaleigh stated that the main problem was getting SVRs to attend in person due to other commitments. Online training sessions have now been arranged to mitigate this. Roddy asked if there are any issues Board could help with, drawing attention to the report stating that one of Emmaleigh's goals for the year is to support students moving up from secondary school. Emmaleigh summarised the anxieties students can have in contributing to classes in front of new peers, adding that this can be overwhelming. Colin highlighted that Robert Gordon University has a platform in place for students to communicate prior to starting studies. David stated that it would be worth having the conversation with HISA on what would work best, adding that if people can meet before studies, it would make them more comfortable. The Board noted this update and suggested moving the HISA Update further up in the agenda in future meetings.		
BM.25.03.16	**Governance - Verbal**		
	(i) Board Recruitment		
16.1	Grenville detailed change plans at the start of the meeting when introduced as Interim Chair of the Board. More work will be done to ensure Board visibility to staff and further recruitment.		

	(ii) Committee Membership		
16.2	The Board was reminded that the External Audit is commencing soon, with no Audit Committee currently in place. Grenville will consider membership of the Audit and F&GP Committees as Interim Chair.		
	(iii) Board Development Day		
16.3	Murray reminded members of the discussion around UHI Court governance, highlighting that the Board should discuss points raised during the presentation delivered by Vicki Nairn and Roger Sendall. It was noted that there is currently no scheduled date for the next Board Development Day, however this is an ongoing action for Grenville and the Clerk to address.		
ACTION	Chair and Clerk to discuss and agree Board Development Day date	**GJ/EM**	
BM.25.03.17	**Emerging Issues**		
	(i) Graduation – 10 October 2025		
17.1	El reminded members that the College's Graduation ceremony will take place at Moray Sports Centre this year, highlighting the need for more Board members to attend.		
BM.25.03.18	**Date of Next Meeting – 30 October 2025**		
RESERVED ITEMS			
BM.25.03.19	**Draft Reserved Minutes of Board Meeting held on 12 June 2025**		
19.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	Meeting closed at 4.00pm		