

EVALUATION OF TOURISM STUDIES  
HOLAR UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

A report commissioned by the  
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

December 2010

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## **Part I – General Outline**

## I. Introduction

### I.1. The Expert Panel

- Professor Stephen Williams, Director of the Institute for Environment, Sustainability and Regeneration, Staffordshire University, UK, Chair
- Professor Godfrey Baldacchino, Canada Research Chair in Island Studies and Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI), Canada, and Visiting Professor at the University of Malta, Malta
- Dr. Edward H. Huijbens, Director of the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, Akureyri
- Dr. Eiríkur Stephensen, the Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS), Liaison Officer

### I.2. Terms of Reference

The Expert Panel is appointed according to Article 8 of Rules No. 321/2009 on Quality Control of Teaching and Research in Higher Education Institutions. The Committee is to base its reference on the components of Article 4 of the same act. They are:

- a. role and objectives,
- b. administration and organisation,
- c. structure of teaching and research,
- d. competence requirements of personnel,
- e. rules regarding admission requirements and rights and duties of students,
- f. facilities and services provided to teachers and students,
- g. internal quality management system,
- h. description of learning outcomes,
- i. finances.

### 1.3. Working Method

The Expert Panel received *Internal evaluation. Department of Rural Tourism* and further documentation on 24 April 2010 by email (see Appendix II). A site visit to the University

of Iceland was originally scheduled for spring 2010 but due to the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull it was postponed to October.

The Expert Panel met on 4 October 2010 for a first discussion about the exercise and then made a site visit to Holar University College on 6 October during which it had the opportunity to discuss with management, faculty, students and external representatives and look at facilities (see agenda in Appendix I).

A report was then drafted after the Iceland visit and circulated amongst Expert Panel members by email correspondence. The descriptive parts of the final version (Part II – Report) were sent to the Holar University College for a check of factual errors and misinterpretations on 10 November 2010. The Expert Panel received some factual corrections on 17 November 2010 and revised the report accordingly.

#### **1.4. Short Evaluation of the Work Process**

*Hólar University College* (subsequently HUC) is a small, specialist institution based around three academic departments: equine science, aquaculture and fish biology, and rural tourism. The evaluating team has had the opportunity to receive and read a self-evaluation report (SER1) and a later addition to that report (SER2) submitted by a new tourism department head, who was appointed a few weeks prior to the on-site visit, held on October 6, 2010. Six focussed meetings were held during the site visit, each lasting 45 minutes. Four were held on the main HUC campus in Hólar and two from Sauðárkrókur Continuing Education Centre, the latter to enable the evaluating team to avail itself of video conference facilities there.

At the start of each meeting, the Chair of the expert panel explained the purpose of the external evaluation in the light of the relevant legislation and invited those present to consider the encounter as an opportunity for critical, but positive and constructive, dialogue.

The panel also had the opportunity to chat informally with staff and students during various refreshment breaks and tours of the facilities at both the main campus and at Sauðárkrókur. The key concerns that guided and shaped the questions which drove these meetings had been developed by the panel Chair in advance of the visit, on the

basis of issues raised from a close reading of SER1 and SER2. This tightly scripted arrangement allowed for the maximum use of limited time. The panel was also satisfied with the documentation provided. Its only additional requests were for a clarification of (1) the number of academic staff engaged with the rural tourism programme; and (2) the number of students registered with the HUC rural tourism programme, how this number has been changing over time and its composition in terms of resident vs. non-resident and BA programme registrations vs. diploma (compiled in Figure 2).

The evaluation team discussed the findings of the site visit in the light of the documentation received after the site visit had been concluded, and took notes to guide its eventual report writing. The panel also benefitted from detailed minutes of all meetings kept by the Liaison Officer, Eiríkur Stephensen.

## **Part II – Report**

## **II.1. Holar University College**

### **II.1.a. Role and Objectives**

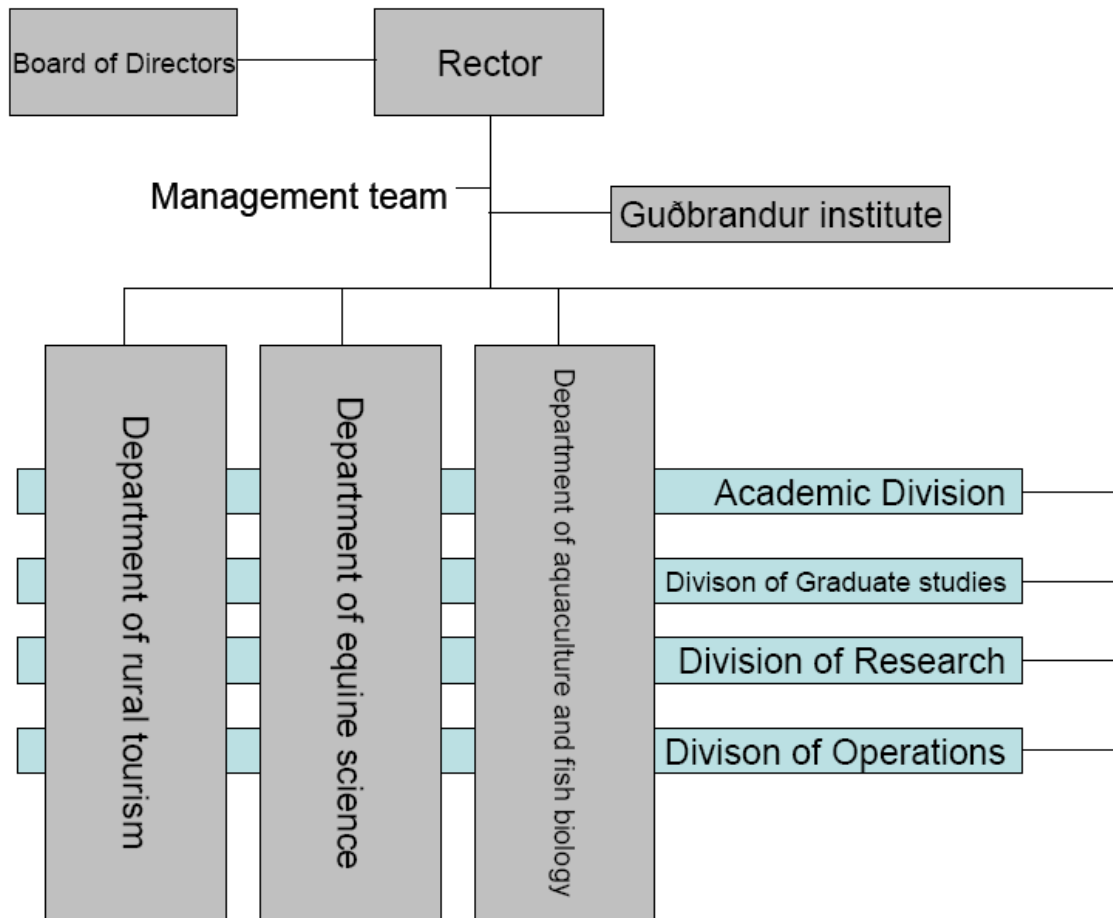
HUC clearly occupies a very significant role in various respects. It is associated with one of the key historic centres of Iceland, which has been a national centre of learning for centuries, albeit in varied guises. The campus is also the site of one of Iceland's earliest Christian dioceses (in 1106); and the site of Iceland's first printing press (in 1530). The College is located in a rural region of Iceland dependent on agriculture, raising livestock (especially sheep), horse breeding, fishing, commerce and, increasingly, tourism. HUC, with some 60 employees, is also a significant employer in the region and plays a crucial role in dynamizing the rural knowledge economy in this part of Iceland. (Fifty six persons are listed on the HUC website, of whom 39 hold teaching positions - as at Oct 12, 2010 - <http://www2.holar.is/>). HUC is an 80-minute drive away from Akureyri, which is, by far, Iceland's largest municipality outside the capital region, and therefore can realistically consider some synergies with institutions located there (including the University of Akureyri).

In the wake of the serious fiscal crisis that has gripped Iceland since 2008, HUC has taken up an increased number of students (predominantly via distance learning) and aims to bolster and inspire confidence in struggling rural communities. The senior managers at HUC were able to articulate to the panel a clear and convincing vision of the potential of tourism in the development of rural Iceland and the role of the Rural Tourism programme in contributing to that process. The programme currently has 154 students (115 women and 39 men; 25 resident and 129 in distance education mode).

### **II.1.b. Administration and Organisation**

Originally established as an agricultural college in 1882, HUC became accredited in the field of resource management and as one of Iceland's four public universities in 2008 (University Act 63/2006). There are three academic departments (equine science, aquaculture and fish biology, and rural tourism), each of which operates under a departmental head, who in turn reports directly to the Rector of the College and his senior management team. HUC also has four administrative divisions (academic, graduate, research and operations), which also report to top management (Figure 1).





**Figure 1: Structure and organisation of HUC (extracted from SER 1, p. 35).**

The Board of Directors of the College is appointed by three ministries, the University of Iceland, HUC staff and students, and the Association of Horse Breeders in Iceland. The Guðbrandur Institute is a collaborative project run by the Icelandic Lutheran Church, the University of Iceland and HUC. There is some overlap between academic and administrative streams, creating some role ambiguity that the College may wish to address. HUC also claims considerable flexibility in how it allocates the funding it receives from the Icelandic state.

### II.1.c. Structure of Teaching and Research

HUC offers three undergraduate programmes in rural tourism: (1) a diploma in rural tourism (90ECTS), of which 60 ECTS serve as the foundation for the BA degree (see

below), can be completed over one academic year plus a project and practicum in summer, and which is offered both in residence and via distance education; (2) a diploma in event management (60ECTS) also run over one academic year plus a project and practicum in summer, offered only as part-time, distance education; and (3) a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in rural tourism (180 ECTS), which adds two years of full-time study to the diploma in rural tourism. There is also (4) a Master of Arts (MA) programme with both residency and distance education options, focusing on rural tourism. Except for the MA which is mainly taught in English, the remaining three streams are mostly taught in Icelandic; however, most of the pedagogic material used is only available in English. The course composition offers both general and more specialised courses.

The panel is agreed that, in the context of a small institution with limited resources, this breadth of activity is ambitious. The panel has particular concerns about the present viability of a Masters level programme, given the uneven level of engagement with research by Faculty members; the fact that many of the teaching staff do not currently hold a PhD; and the very modest level of resourcing of the College library and issues of access to specialist tourism journals. Some consolidation around established areas of specialism in the undergraduate programmes might therefore be a more prudent approach to adopt in the short- to medium-term.

Faculty have been engaged in various research and development projects, mainly about horse-based tourism and local rural tourism development generally, often in close collaboration with local industry stakeholders. There are some active collaborations with foreign universities, notably with Guelph (Canada) and Hamke Polytechnic (Finland). Since 2009, however, travel budgets for the academic staff have been cut completely, prejudicing professional development. On-going policy is to support faculty in writing papers with publication potential in international, peer-reviewed journals and presenting papers with publication potential at conferences, especially in Iceland. However, due to the economic condition, conference attendance is likely to be primarily within Iceland, unless travel expenses can be funded through external grants.

#### **II.1.d. Competence Requirements of Personnel**

Students and graduates have expressed general satisfaction with the HUC academic staff. They are approachable, dedicated to their work, and concerned with student welfare. Staff-student ratios are now in the order of 1:14, and were even lower in previous years. The faculty are, however, not always teaching in areas of their personal expertise. The panel noted that the Faculty has adopted a pro-active approach to the management of the workloads of teaching staff which it commends as good practice in the context of the delivery of several related award programmes that are taught by a comparatively small cohort of staff. Courses are offered in Icelandic where both tutors and students are Icelandic speakers, but are offered in English where it is necessary to facilitate exchanges through programmes such as ERASMUS. All courses in the Masters programme are taught in English.

While the panel was told that there are no less than 19 academics – but a full-time equivalent of just 6.94 in 2009 - engaged in the HUC rural tourism programme (full-time, part-time, or temporary), the publication record of these scholars is limited and somewhat uneven. The panel noted that two members of the Rural Tourism Faculty have a particularly good record of publication, but over 95% of all publications listed by the staff are in Icelandic and are not peer-reviewed. There are only four peer-reviewed journal articles (3) or book chapters (1), in English, authored by some of the HUC rural tourism staff, singly or jointly, in the period 2000-2010. In the same period, 30 completed or ongoing research and development projects are listed (SER1). This suggests that the faculty is much more interested in disseminating research via local fora, indicating also a preference for writing in their national language, and in national publications. While this is certainly useful to support local knowledge, it fails to expose most of the Faculty to the rigour of critical and international scholarship or build a wider reputation.

The panel does have some concerns in relation to the viability of Masters teaching at HUC, unless the resources underpinning the programme can be strengthened. This might be achieved either by collaboration and/or by raising the level of expertise at HUC through new appointments and/or staff development. HUC currently have one MA tourism programme running, but with a small cohort of just 4 students, one of whom is also listed as teaching staff. The panel would also have expected to see a stronger and

broader publications and research profile from the HUC academic staff to support its postgraduate work. The panel notes that four members of the faculty are newly enrolled as PhD students with the University of Iceland, which will strengthen the qualifications base of the faculty in time, but overall the panel is not convinced of the wisdom of offering graduate level courses in the current situation and echoes concerns expressed in the SER in relation to a lack of “requisite expertise” that has already been recognized by HUC faculty in relation to a potential, new MA programme (SER1: 31).

#### **II.1.e. Rules Regarding Admission Requirements and Rights and Duties of Students**

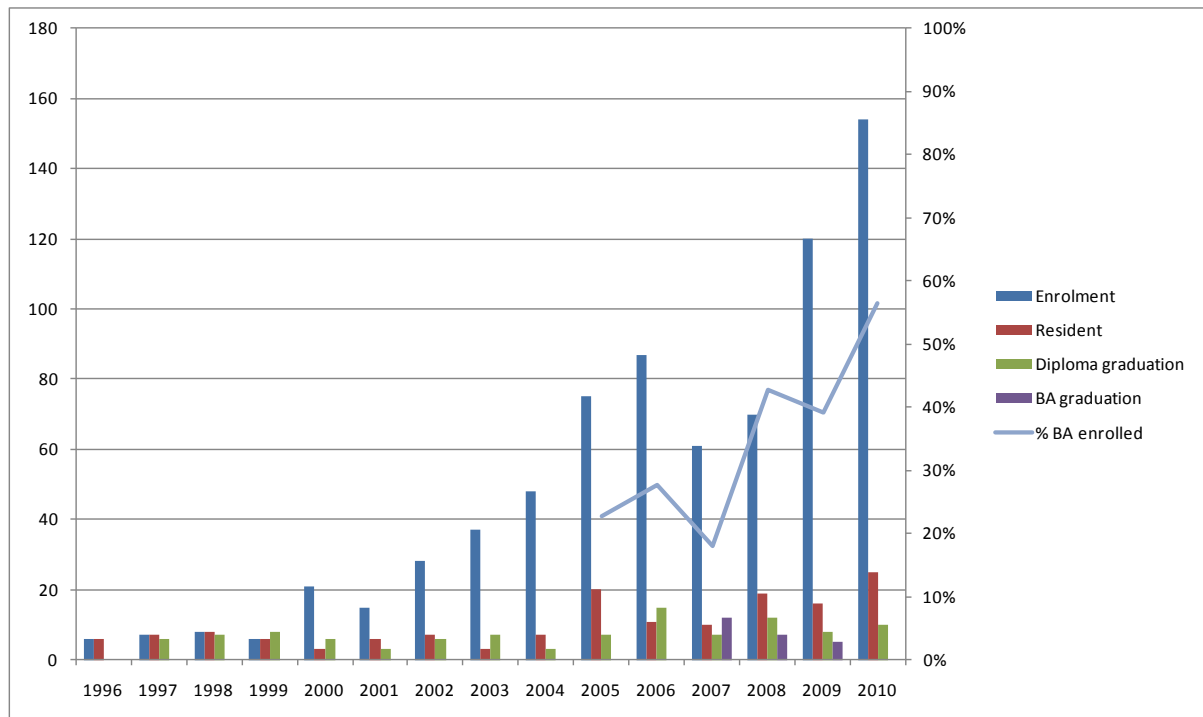
HUC is developing two broad clusters of students: one, considerably smaller, deals with younger, full-time residential students who are mainly pursuing the BA programme; the second consists in more mature, part-time students engaged via distance learning, who manage their studies alongside their work and family responsibilities. The panel noted that the monitoring of distance learning student progress appears to be somewhat lacking and, given the nature of such students, enrolment figures are often contradictory. The panel was informed that the College is actively developing more robust systems for monitoring student progress which the panel endorses as an essential development to underpin the growth of the distance learning programme and to inform resource planning.

As is often typical with distance learning students, applicants may lack the formal academic qualifications required for entrance to HUC; however, since 2007, their prior learning and work experience is being assessed to determine their suitability for acceptance to HUC by an internal committee of the College. The panel agrees that such processes for admitting students without formal qualification are acceptable and satisfactory.

Students have a student union to represent formally their views and interests; however, all students spoke highly in favour of an ‘open door’ policy whereby faculty and management make themselves accessible and approachable to discuss any concerns that students might have, almost at any time. There is student representation at every decision-making level. The students also have high praise for a pedagogic style that emphasizes student involvement and training in communication skills, critical

evaluation and analytic thinking. Anonymous student feedback on courses is generally welcomed by teachers who then make any necessary adjustments to their teaching.

Figure 2 below tabulates the enrolment and graduation figures provided by HUC via SER1 and SER2 in the period 1996-2010. The percentage of those enrolled from the start as BA is shown also, but many students would first enrol to the diploma programme and then move on to the BA after diploma completion.



**Figure 2:** Enrolment and graduation from HUC, based on figures in SER1 and SER2.

The panel has noted, with some concern, that whilst enrolment to the programmes is rising significantly, graduation rates appear to be falling. From the data that the panel was able to access, it remains unclear whether this is a consequence of student drop-out, or a comparatively slow rate of progression across the levels by students who have to balance other commitments, or – most likely – a combination of both. However, the panel recommends that the College reviews the issue of student progression as a matter of priority and puts in place an action plan aimed at raising what appears to be a very low completion rate. The action plan should identify first, how student monitoring systems can be enhanced; and second, what interventions teaching staff might make to support and encourage students whose progress is identified as below expectations.

### **II.1.f. Facilities and Services Provided to Teachers and Students**

The panel established that Faculty members seem to be generally satisfied with their working conditions: only two have left HUC since the department of rural tourism was set up in 1996. They are not paid at overtime rates should they teach outside normal hours. Full-time faculty members each have a private office; and share a comfortable common space.

Distance education at HUC is operationalised by means of the Moodle virtual learning environment. Both resident and distance learning students use Moodle for discussion, chat, and assignment management. The College has one technical specialist on site, as well as one website and Moodle content manager.

Access to student counselling is critical; but the single counsellor (who was also in charge of student records) has left HUC and at the time of the panel visit had not been replaced, although the panel has since been advised that a qualified counsellor has now been appointed on the basis of one day per week attendance at HUC.

The HUC Library has the same access to electronic material as the rest of the universities in Iceland. The single librarian has left HUC and may not be replaced (an arrangement with the University of Akureyri for a visiting librarian is being pursued, presumably to cut costs.) One of the student representatives who met the panel claimed that she still did not know how to use the Library, in spite of its very limited size and complete indexing according to the Dewey decimal system. All students are offered a course in the use of the library on their arrival at HUC; some thought should be given to making attendance on this course a requirement for new students.

The panel was able to inspect briefly the library during its visit. The tourism book stock is adequate for the needs of residential students studying on the BA programmes, but is below the level that is required for Masters programmes. There is a particular problem with access to the specialist journals that are needed to support both undergraduate and, particularly, postgraduate work. The panel noted that key tourism journals are not too well supported by the on-line access system that is shared with other Icelandic universities; and whilst solutions to this problem are not immediately evident, it remains an issue that the College – possibly in collaboration with other universities in Iceland – still needs to address.

HUC has three regular classrooms (seating a maximum of 20); two meeting rooms (seating 12 and 6 respectively) and a gym (seating a maximum of 60). Two of these rooms are assigned to Rural Tourism on a permanent basis. Whilst generally fit-for-purpose in the present context, the panel feels that classroom space would quickly become a constraint if the number of residential students were to increase significantly.

Quality of life at Hólar is enhanced with the operations of Hólar Tourism Services which runs a canteen on campus, offers accommodation to visiting students, and organizes various campus events, often in collaboration with the student union.

Students have access to their on-site teachers, should they require additional explanations or guidance from them.

#### **II.1.g. Internal Quality Management System**

HUC is governed by a College board which has wide internal and external representation (Figure 1). As one of four public universities in Iceland, some informal national benchmarking and relative performance indicators are deployed to monitor quality, HUC however stands to gain from proposals, still not in place, to centralise and coordinate some university functions (such as the offering of graduate programmes and academic research evaluation) nationally.

HUC is also a signatory to the Bologna process of streamlining higher education in the European Union.

The key concern that the panel has identified with internal quality assurance systems relates to the multiple roles that the employees of HUC have to juggle, and which is a typical dilemma in small institutions.

#### **II.1.h. Description of Learning Outcomes**

Although it was not able to do so as part of its visit to Hólar, the panel has subsequently reviewed the award structures and the related statements of the learning outcomes and is satisfied that the structures are generally appropriate for degree programmes in rural tourism and that the outcomes are broadly aligned with the different levels of learning.

HUC students and graduates, as well as employers who engage HUC graduates, or who are themselves graduates, have expressed general satisfaction with the HUC 'product'.

For those to whom the panel talked, their 'HUC experience' has fulfilled their expectations, and particularly its interdisciplinarity and its close links to (especially rural based) industry and community. Stakeholders are anxious about a relative lack of research funding, and suggest that HUC should seek more research cooperation and collaboration, both with industry as well as with other universities in Iceland.

Students have however expressed some concerns about a modular style of teaching, whereby a course is taught intensively over a 3-week period. Management defends this version because (1) it allows all students to concentrate on just one course; (2) it permits part-time students to plan for, and complete, such modules; (3) makes it easier for visiting faculty to spend time at HUC; and (4) liberates academic staff for undivided research time. However, students complained that the teaching is crammed and there is not enough time available for feedback on student work from the respective instructor. The panel recommends that, at the very least, the modular style of teaching should be kept under review and that further thought should be given to the issue of how students can receive feedback that actually serves its intended purpose in developing their understanding of the learning material.

Another issue regards research methodology. The faculty bias at HUC is clearly in favour of teaching qualitative techniques. As a result, graduates are not as well versed in quantitative techniques (including the processing of statistical data) as some of their employers would like and may expect them to be.

A third concern refers to limited proficiency of HUC graduates in written English. This can prove problematic when working with clients/tourists, but also hampers the students' ability to explore academic materials.

A final request, posed by the students, relates to a need to strengthen the teaching of management, business planning and entrepreneurship in the HUC rural tourism programme. An early reaction to this comment was that this bias could reflect the background and preferences of the HUC rural tourism faculty and the panel recognises that the constant "balancing act" between vocational training and academic pursuits is hard to resolve.



### **II.1.i. Finances**

Just like any other state-funded university in Iceland, HUC has seen its financing plummet in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis: the actual operating budget for 2008 was 20% lower than initially forecast. The crisis may not yet have bottomed out and further austerity measures are expected in the coming fiscal year.

HUC has been negotiating an agreement on funding for teaching and research with the Iceland Ministry of Education, similar to the one in place for the University of Iceland and the University in Akureyri; but this agreement has not yet been completed. Prior to being moved under the auspices of the Ministry of Education in 2008, HUC belonged to the Ministry of Agriculture and had a wholly different funding structure. HUC is adapting to the new regime of funding along with the aforementioned austerity measures. The management of HUC is also keen to reinforce the fact that the cultural, historical and religious significance of Hólar, in which HUC is immersed, cannot and should not be separated from the financing of the educational institution *per se*. HUC bears a responsibility for the management and preservation of Hólar as an historical site and community, and this places a significant strain on the College resources.

## **Part III – General Findings and Recommendations**

### **III.1. Summary of Findings**

The expert panel is satisfied that the provision of the degree programmes in rural tourism at Hólar University College meets the requirements of such programmes of study, as set down in the relevant legislation of the Ministry, and in the wider expectations of the international academic community.

Hólar University College is providing a very important service to rural Iceland, especially in the region where it is placed: as an employer and a knowledge broker. It serves rural tourism in Iceland as a trainer and provider of skilled human capital to the predominantly small- and micro-sized enterprises which make up about a half of Iceland's tourism industry. It fulfills its role as a mirror to rural Icelandic society which seeks to reinvent itself through rural tourism in the modern service economy. It commands a significant role in the Hólar community, continuing a centuries-old tradition of the place as a seat of learning. An intimate community of committed scholars and students provides the requisite skills, knowledge and critical awareness to energize the rural economy, with a special focus on tourism. The panel congratulates the Rector and staff of HUC for having such a clear, strategic and well-articulated vision of their mandate and would stress that resources and focus should be directed in line with this vision.

However, HUC is clearly facing a number of challenges, some resulting from the post-2008 financial situation in Iceland, some from HUC's own enthusiasm to expand its suite of programmes.

HUC has developed a two-pronged approach to its programme delivery: residence and distance learning. The former has a ceiling in terms of physical resources (number and size of classrooms, availability of on-site accommodation) and may need to be capped; but the latter is largely open-ended. In the context of a recession, this may have led to a sharp increase in the number of students which have, in turn, increased demands on the limited administrative and academic staff, possibly threatening the intimate low staff-student ratio feel that has so far made HUC so attractive, and successful. It is also difficult to judge how well distance learning students are following their course of studies; it becomes difficult to establish if and when they suspend their studies, and

whether any lulls in their progress effectively disguise failures to continue or complete their course. The best estimate is presented in Figure 2 and it confirms the concerns that are raised above, where the number of those actually graduating is dropping alarmingly, even though there is an exponential rise in student numbers.

## **III.2. Recommendations**

1. The panel recommends that HUC should aim to consolidate its programme delivery before considering any further expansion and prioritise in favour of its identified strengths and competences in rural tourism vocational training. If finances permit, developing some additional course offerings within the existing diploma and degree programmes is advisable, at the same time introducing some element of choice to students. This could be broadened with some collaboration on course offers at undergraduate level with other universities in Iceland, tapping expertise in fields that are presently lacking at HUC, e.g. in business planning, management studies, environmental studies and quantitative techniques.

2. The panel recommends that the College reviews the issue of student progression as a matter of priority and puts in place an action plan aimed at raising what appears to be a very low completion rate. The action plan should identify first, how student monitoring systems can be enhanced and second, what interventions teaching staff might make to support and encourage students whose progress is identified as below expectations. The panel believes that effective monitoring of student progress is a key to ensuring successful and rewarding student experiences. This fits in nicely with the small and intimate ‘feel’ of the College, which is one of its competitive advantages. A counselling and occupational career guidance service which tracks student progress, and including that of distance learners, can improve the rate of successful course completion, to the satisfaction of all concerned.

3. The panel recommends that postgraduate programmes should not be entertained at HUC, and should not be considered except in close collaboration with other universities, where HUC could provide supervision where applicable. The panel believes that the graduate studies ambition deflects core human and material resources from other, more pressing, needs. Such initiatives could perhaps be revisited if and when core members

of staff at HUC have completed their PhD studies and issues relating to resource areas such as the library are addressed.

4. The panel recommends that the experiment with the use of three-week modular courses be kept under review. The three-week modular course pattern of delivery, while having its benefits, also has its weaknesses, as students have been quick to point out. No such programmes should be entertained unless the instructor commits to provide quick feedback on any submitted work to students. Moreover, the modular option for running courses should be deployed on a 'per need' basis, given the urgency to attract quality visiting staff, or to liberate HUC staff for research. The panel affirms the need to develop a mechanism to 'fly in' visiting faculty since there is hardly any rotation of HUC's core staff. Staff commitment is an asset, but there are associated dangers of parochialism and of a recycling of 'set' knowledge.

5. The panel believes that it is vital for the HUC Rural Tourism Faculty to strengthen their research output and to bolster their regional and international profile, especially if the College has ambitions to attain status as a graduate-level, degree-granting institution. The provision of tuition in an international language [English] is quite essential to attract some exchange students from abroad.

On the other hand, as a university college, HUC is reminded of its 'core competence' of providing personnel who are trained in accordance to the current and projected needs of the rural Icelandic economy. This is one other compelling reason for HUC to concentrate on what it does best: presumably its targetted diploma programmes and its single 'flagship' undergraduate degree programme which builds on these.

6. The panel recommends that HUC should develop an investment plan to address areas of its support services that the panel believes are currently at a level that is below the desired norm. In particular, the College library needs to strengthen its collection of advanced level tourism texts and, especially, its access to key international tourism journals. The panel considers this to be essential: to support honours level students and students working at post-graduate level; and also to support the development of staff research. In addition, the College is recommended to review its provision of librarian support and also student counselling services, both of which are currently provided on a very limited basis.

7. The panel recommends that HUC should seek to strengthen existing collaborative links with the University of Akureyri and the University of Iceland, especially to enable the development of research but also to strengthen curricula and curriculum delivery through wider use of visiting lecturers and possibly the development of on-line modules that can be integrated into teaching programmes at other institutions on a reciprocal basis. In this respect, the panel recommends that current negotiations between HUC and the Geography and Tourism Studies programme at the University of Iceland for the mutual recognition of credits and grades, are pursued as a priority.

8. The panel commends HUC for the close level of support that it provides to its students – particularly those who study in residence – and recommends that the College aims to build on this relationship by developing an alumni network that seeks to build and maintain contact between HUC and both its former and current students, and especially those who are engaged with HUC via distance learning. A close rapport should be maintained with alumni, many of whom may now themselves be employers or entrepreneurs who are engaged in tourism. Such relationships may enable the wider development of work placements, student research projects, programmes of guest lectures and possibly programmes of funded research, all of which will enrich the provision of rural tourism at HUC and will support the overall development of rural Iceland.

### **III.3. Signatures of the Expert Committee**

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Professor Stephen Williams, Chair (UK)

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Professor Godfrey Baldacchino (Canada)

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Dr. Edward H. Huijbens (Iceland)

# **Appendices**



## **Appendix I. Agenda of Site Visit to Holar University College 6 October 2010**

### **10:00-10:50 Meeting with internal evaluation committee and new department head**

Guðrún Helgadóttir professor and chair of the internal evaluation committee, Skúli Skúlason rector, Guðrún Þóra Gunnarsdóttir lecturer and former department head, Eydís Sigurðardóttir student representative and Kristina Tryselius department head

### **10:55-11:55 Meeting with faculty members**

Bergþóra Aradóttir, Birna Kristjánsdóttir, Guðrún Þóra Gunnarsdóttir, Guðrún Helgadóttir, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir, Kristina Tryselius, Per Åke Nilsson

### **12:00-12:30 Meeting with support staff**

Hjördís Gísladóttir student records, webmaster and technical support for students, Bjarni Kristófer Kristjánsson chair of academic committee

### **12:30-13:00 Lunch in Hólar canteen**

### **13:00-14:00 Meeting with student representatives**

Eydís Sigurðardóttir, Einar Óskar Sigurðsson, Eiríkur Vilhelm Sigurðarson, Hrafnhildur Ýr Víglundsdóttir, Unnur Gottsveinsdóttir

### **14:05-14:35 Coffee meeting with students on campus**

### **14:40 Tour of Hólar campus facilities, with visits to out-of-classroom education sites; Hólar forest for trailmaking and nature interpretation, Hólar Cathedral for heritage tourism.**

### **15:10 Departure for Sauðárkrókur Continuing Education Centre**

### **15:35-16:05 Video conference with external stakeholders from industry and public sector**

Áskell Heiðar Ásgeirsson, director of marketing and development for Skagafjörður, Svanhildur Pálsdóttir manager Hótel Varmahlíð, board member of Icelandic tourism association, Þorvarður Árnason director of University of Iceland Center, Höfn, Ólöf Ýrr Atladóttir, director Iceland tourism board, Helga Haraldsdóttir, ministry of Industries

### **16:10-16:40 Video conference with graduates**

Sandra Björg Stefánsdóttir, Höfn, Guðmundur Ögmundsson, Höfn

Guðrún Brynleifsdóttir, Sauðárkrókur, Alda Davíðsdóttir, Patreksfjörður  
Skúli Jóhann Björnsson, Reykjavík, Rósa Vésteinsdóttir, Skagafjörður, Ingibjörg  
Ævar Steinsdóttir, Höfn

**16:50-17:20**      **Final meeting and refreshments with the internal evaluation  
committee in Verið, Sauðárkrókur**

**17:30**              **Departure for Akureyri**

## **Appendix II. Documents Received**

*From Rannis:*

Act no. 85/2008 on Public Higher Education Institutions (Draft Translation 2008).

Rules on Quality Control of Teaching and Research in Higher Education Institutions No. 3212009.

*From HUI:*

Internal evaluation. Department of Rural Tourism. Guðrún Helgadóttir editor. January 2010.

Supplement to Internal evaluation report (2010-01-20). Kristina Tryselius. September 2010.