



# Higher Education Information Directors in Scotland (HEIDS)

20<sup>th</sup> February 2026 | University of St Andrews & Microsoft Teams

## Action Items

Chair: Clare Taylor

Welcome	
	Claire Taylor opened the meeting, welcomed attendees to the University of St Andrews and thanked Catalyst for last night's hospitality. Steve Watt provided housekeeping details regarding fire safety, facilities, and the spectacular views from the venue.
Catalyst IT: Open Source and Software Procurement Joey Murison (Europe Managing Director) Jasmin Hodge (Business Development Manager)	
1	<p>Catalyst is a 30-year-old global organisation specialising in open-source managed services, particularly for the Moodle platform.</p> <p>Joey challenged common myths that open source is "insecure" or "clunky," noting that systems like Android and Apache underpin global infrastructure. He emphasized "libre" (freedom) to innovate and control data rather than "gratis" (no cost).</p> <p>He warned of "disempowerment" and "vendor lock-in" found in proprietary systems, specifically noting that some VLE providers prioritise commercialising student data.</p> <p>Joey observed that tender responses are increasingly being "gamed" by AI-generated content. He advocated for more detailed, probing questions in tenders to distinguish between true 24/7 technical support and mere answering machines.</p>
Wynpro - Software Renewal Negotiations at Heriot-Watt Fraser Muir – Heriot Watt	
2	<p>Heriot-Watt manages over 250 software contracts totalling approximately £5 million annually.</p> <p>The university engaged Wynpro, a firm of former software salespeople, on a "no win, no fee" basis to assist with contract renewals, in part using Winpro to coach internal staff, providing robust commercial strategies.</p> <p>Fraser and the team have secured five figure savings over three years in one contract renewal, and secured a muliti year fixed-price contract with no annual increases for another.</p> <p>Fraser emphasised the importance of starting negotiations three to six months early.</p>



<p><b>Project SUCSEED</b> Angus Warren (Chief Executive, APUC)</p>		
<p>3</p>		<p>Angus announced the receipt of a grant letter to launch a new shared service catalyst, titled Scottish Universities &amp; Colleges Shared Efficiency &amp; Effectiveness Delivery (SUCSEED) Catalyst Project</p> <p>The catalyst will explore shared services across a number of potential services , with the only of the early activities being to review the most appropriate and effective sequencing, to determine which of the ideas considered deliverable should be progressed first. This will include meeting with all relevant stakeholder groups across Universities and Colleges, offering face to face meetings with Principals / COOs.</p> <p>An item suggested as worthy of exploration by the funding council includes exploring a shared student record system for the college sector, which had also been mentioned at USECEC dialogue in the context of universities, all options are likely to be explored with the potential for use by either sector.</p> <p>A small team (recruiting from Monday) will assist early adopters with business cases and implementation logistics under the branding UCSS (Universities and Colleges Shared Services).</p> <p>Members noted that shared services must remain cost-effective to prevent institutions from reverting to independent models and Angus confirmed that for any Shared service relating to technology, HEFESTIS would be the first to be approached to offer the service.</p>
<p><b>Delivery digital equity in Transnational Education</b> Elizabeth Newall (Senior sector specialist - Digital transformation, Jisc)</p>		
		<p>Research Overview: Jisc studied Transnational Education (TNE) across 51 instances in over 30 countries, involving 5,000 students and 500 staff.</p> <p>Infrastructure: Students in Africa and Asia face significant challenges with electricity and costly cellular data.</p> <p>Licensing: Software and library access vary wildly by geography due to export laws and local regulations.</p> <p>Cultural Norms: Many TNE students are unfamiliar with UK educational norms such as independent study and academic integrity.</p> <p>Key Recommendations: Jisc advises providers to conduct "site-level assessments" of connectivity and calculate the full cost of providing digital resources in specific geographies before deemed financially viable.</p>
<p>Meeting</p>		



4		<p>The minutes from the previous meeting were approved and all pending actions from the previous meeting are being addressed or are complete.</p>
<p>Group updates and Feedback</p>		
5		<p><b>Jisc – Jason Miles Campbell</b></p> <p>Jisc shared a written report in advance of the meeting and highlighted the key items for those attending the meeting.</p> <p>Leadership Survey: Members were urged to complete the Jisc leadership survey to provide feedback on services.</p> <p>DigiFest 2026: Scheduled for early March with a specific Scotland Community meet-up.</p> <p>Cyber Security: Jisc highlighted their "Security Operations Centre" (SOC) podcast and new guidance on cyber-secure international travel for senior leaders.</p> <p>Cyber Incident: Personal thanks were offered to Jisc for their forensics support during a recent cyber.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Jason would welcome on <a href="#">Cyber-secure international travel: why senior leaders need to take a role in mitigating this risk</a></p>
6		<p><b>HEFESTIS – James Knock</b></p> <p>James (representing Brian) provided the following updates:</p> <p>Service Pricing: The board approved a 1% rise for services in 2026-27, which is notably below inflation.</p> <p>Growth: The DPO team has grown to 15 staff members. A new service steering group is being established for SOC offerings.</p> <p>Contractual Status: Discussions with TopDesk for UniDesk are complete, with the process expected to be finalised by the end of March.</p>
7		<p><b>APUC – Michael McLaughlin</b></p> <p>APUC shared a written report in advance of the meeting and highlighted the key items for those attending the meeting including that Student Information Management Systems are due for retender next year; a working party is currently forming for prior engagement.</p> <p>A global memory shortage is affecting hardware pricing. Members were warned that HP has submitted a formal proposal to the Scottish Government for price increases.</p>



8	<p><b>Universities Scotland</b> No report.</p>
9	<p><b>Schoms – Mark Dunlop</b> Mark was unable to attend the meeting and offered to circulate a written report in his absence.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> It was agreed to form a subgroup to develop a high-level artifact or "holistic framework" for learning space design. Mark will draft the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Court rooms – Claire to engage and share. <b>Action:</b> Court room design was mentioned – Claire to share previous work done in this space.</p>
10	<p><b>UCISA – Deborah Green</b></p> <p>Deborah Green started by thanking HEIDS for the introduction to Cyber Scotland and noting a strong partnership has been established, which has enabled offering a cyber security course for all students in the UK and Ireland.</p> <p>Data Model Project: The steering group agreed on the data model to adopt ( the SURK OEAPI Model) for the UK. Kent and Greenwich Universities are early adopters, along with London South Bank University. A Jisc funded Programme Manager has been approved to manage the Project and recruitment to this post will commence shortly.</p> <p>Supplier Negotiations: UCISA is acting as the "member voice" to inform and support Jisc in a number of difficult negotiations.</p> <p>Strategic Plan: The 2027 strategic plan is under development, with open member meetings scheduled for March. Claire thanked Victoria for representing HEIDS in this area.</p> <p>If you haven't booked for the Leadership Summit, please do so.</p>
<p><b>AI Roundtable</b> James Nock (HEFEISTIS) Mark Johnston (Glasgow)</p>	
11	<p>Mark and James led a discussion on the challenges of Generative AI (GenAI):</p> <p>Policy vs. Reality: A room survey revealed that while 62% have some documented policies, many feel they are not keeping pace with "Shadow AI". Despite prohibitions, thousands of users continue to use tools like ChatGPT on enterprise assets.</p> <p>Risk and Governance: Major concerns were raised regarding "Agentic AI" and tools like OpenClaw, which can relinquish control of assets to AI.</p> <p>Data Protection: James emphasised that purpose is central to data protection. Issues include the proliferation of meeting transcripts (estimated at 700 pages per year for just two weekly meetings) and the resulting burden on Subject Access Requests (SARs) and FOI requests.</p>



		Institutional Progress: Glasgow has adopted Microsoft Copilot Chat but is maintaining a limited pilot for M365 Copilot within IT to manage data governance risks.
AOCB		
12		The HEIDS AGM is scheduled for 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2026 via Teams, the Secretary position will be up for re-election.
<p><b>Future meetings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 May 2026 – <b>AGM</b> – Microsoft Teams</li> <li>• 19 June 2026 – Glasgow Caledonian University</li> </ul>		

### Attendees In person

Angus	Warrant	(APUC)	James	Blair	(Stirling)
Belinda	Haig	(SRUC)	James	Gillanders	(Jisc)
Ben	Holme	(St Andrews)	James	Nock	(HEFESTIS)
Catherine	McMillan	(Strathclyde)	Jason	Miles Campbell	(Jisc)
Claire	Taylor	(Napier)   Chair	Kris	Getchel	(St Andrews)
David	Telford	(Stirling)	Mark	Johnston	(Glasgow)
David	Smyth	(Queens)	Michael	McLaughlin	(APUC)
Fraser	Muir	(Heriot-Watt)	Mike	Whyment	(Aberdeen)   Secretary
Guilherme	De Sousa	(Heriot-Watt)	Steve	Watt	(St Andrews)
Iain	Macpherson	(Fife)	Stuart	Graham	(GCU)
Ian	Robotham	(Aberdeen)			

### Attendees Online

Chris	Ellis	(GCU)
Deborah	Green	(UCISA)
Elizabeth	Newall	(Jisc)
Frazer	Greig	(Abertay)
Jem	Taylor	(UHI)
John	Maher	(UHI)
Kenji	Lamb	(College Development Network)
Mark	Lloyd	(Dundee)
Richard	Lynch	(RGU)
Scott	Renton	(City of Glasgow College)