



HISA Update for Learning, Teaching and Research Committee May 2026

1: Key organisational headlines from HISA

- Our 2026 Student Election results [are online](#). The new Student Officer team starts on 1st July, and onboarding and planning for summer training is underway. Formal reports on these elections will come to boards once we have completed by-elections in April/May for three vacant posts: the Depute Presidents for UHI NWH North, UHI NWH West and UHI Shetland. We have a further by-election due to a withdrawal of the Depute President for UHI Perth, and discussions are live about next steps for this.
- At the same time as Student Election voting, we ran a referendum to approve our revised Articles & Schedules. [This vote passed but was inquorate](#) so our Trustee Board has agreed that this is taken for consent at an all-student meeting, likely to be held in May. From there, it will revert to UHI governing bodies for final approval.
- Following a motion at an All-Student Meeting, we held a [referendum on our membership of NUS](#) during the week of 30th March. The result was a clear indication of preference to leave but was inquorate, so next steps will be decided by our Trustee Board.
- In the same week, we held a vote on students' priorities for our next [Student Partnership Agreement](#). Outcomes are being taken forward by UHI and HISA leadership.
- We had 640 nominations in this year's [HISA Awards](#) across 9 categories. Judging took place in April and we aim to publish the winners and highly commended in late May.
- We have been recruiting for new [Student Trustees](#) to join the HISA Trustee Board, with applications closed 5pm on May 1st.
- We are also [recruiting for student board members](#) for UHI Inverness, UHI Moray, UHI Perth and UHI Argyll, closing 31st May.
- Nominations for [Sporting Blues](#) will close on Tuesday 26th May.

2: The Student Voice Rep system and feedback on learning

As we approach the end of the academic year, we have 573 SVRs across UHI of whom 57% are trained (up from 515 and 42% in 2024-25).

We have a new [page of our website dedicated to SVR meetings](#), containing dates of and reports from our meetings including thematic reports on discussions formed around the [sparqs Student Learning Experience themes](#). This should make it easier for UHI staff, governors and others to learn about and, where possible, join meetings, as well as



understand the outcomes and themes in past meeting discussions. Our final meeting themes, in April, covered assessment and curriculum.

Major recent themes across SVR engagement over the past period have included:

- Lots of variation in the use and value of Brightspace.
- Considerable numbers of comments about facilities issues. We are exploring options for better ongoing logging and reporting outside of SVR meetings.
- Strong views from students about the need for better social spaces - both for academic and informal purposes. We are in conversations with a number of centres/APs at the moment about improving our ability to provide facilities and social spaces for students as part of integrated HISA presences on key campuses.
- Questions raised about the best way to support students to use technology.

Academic Partner specific issues raised through the SVR system about learning and the wider student experience are outlined later in this report.

We are developing revisions and improvements to our SVR system for 2026-27, including working with relevant management on identification of gaps in recruitment, and a revision to our SVR training that we intend will feature a shorter core training session supplemented by a suite of optional modules for various contexts and topics.

4: Wider quality activities

Internally, HISA has supported student engagement in various university-led quality activities and we are engaging constructively at all levels in latest developments in UHI Transformation.

Externally, HISA is contributing evidence and perspectives in partnership with the university in the preparation for UHI's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER), which will create a firm grounding for approaches to later TQERs of individual UHI academic partners. We are also a key part of many elements of [Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme](#) including having led on the production of one project, [the Language Accessibility Promise](#). We are contributing to a national working group about the role of students' associations in the wider Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF).

5: Student Communities and Inclusion

- We currently administer [35 societies, 16 sports clubs, and 7 networks](#) across UHI, with a membership of over 1000. 14 of these groups are online and open to UHI students in any location, roughly 40% are tied to academic subject areas.



- The UHI Dungeons and Dragons club just returned from Wales where they participated in the National Student Gaming and Roleplaying Championships. They took 7th place overall (of 22) but also took home several first places in individual categories.
- We are holding End-of-Year meetings with clubs and societies, checking on group health, finishing budget requests, and helping committee transition in circumstances where the group will continue next year.
- With the appointment of the new EDI Coordinator at UHI, we are looking forward to working together to help reshape UHI's EDI work for students and EDI collaboration with partners.
- We are [consulting students in the Humanities Degree Scheme on a pilot model of "Humanities Hubs"](#) at campuses, in a subject area where we have historically recruited very low numbers of Student Voice Reps but where there is clear desire for more in-person social opportunities. If successful this could be a blueprint for other subject areas and could align with Academic Partners' hunger for students to make the most of their nearby campuses.
- We have begun work on planning for Welcome activities for autumn 2026.

6: Local Updates

1. SVRs and Student Feedback

SVRs – 45

Trained – 40%

Meetings:

- February – 2%
- March – Cross-Campus with all APs included. Attendance numbers not recorded
- April – 4%

Students have praised the on-campus provisions in North, West and Hebrides, as well as the teaching received during their studies.

The main issue raised was an issue with a double booking of the exam room of the Applied Music course, which set them back by a half hour, meaning some students missed some of the organised activities the lecturing staff put together.

2. Events and Activities

In partnership with the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Officers, HISA has put together a number of successful events across the Fort William, Portree, Stornoway and Thurso campuses. These have included Treasure hunts, don't judge a book by its cover blind book swaps, therapy pets, and various other activities that have gone down well with our students. Below is a breakdown of the engagement numbers for these events.



Easter Treasure hunt

- Fort William – 15-20
- Thurso – 20-25
- Stornoway – 10
- Portree – Good engagement, but unsure of total numbers.

Don't Judge a book by its cover

- Fort William – 8
- Stornoway – 7
- Thurso – 10-15

Therapets

- Stornoway – Held weekly, numbers fluctuate between 5-15 students
- Thurso – First time held in this centre as had issues getting them to attend.
Numbers were between 10-15

Fort William also hosted an incredibly successful potluck picnic, with quiz hosted by Abby, and Sam. The attendance numbers were in the 20s

With the success of these events, plans are being formed to try and bring these style of events to as many of the centres across North, West and Hebrides as possible.

3. Local Officer Updates

Cole Garscadden – Working on grant applications to continue the free breakfast provisions across North, West and Hebrides, supported by Reatha Brunjes from HISA and Anne Maree Dykes. Some of these grants have been unsuccessful, but more have been submitted, so we are hopeful that the free breakfasts will continue.

The weekly gaming sessions on the Thurso campus, as well as the Don't Judge a Book by its Cover event were some successes of Coles, working towards his manifesto goal of community building across the university.

Alasdair MacLeod – Continues his work of bringing the student voice to as many places as he can, such as The Board of management, meetings with the principal, the ILM visit and committees across North, West and Hebrides. He worked on the funding issues that were experienced by our students this academic year, helping to find a solution that would benefit our students.

Abigail Teague – Has worked hard to build a sense of community at the Fort William campus, holding weekly quizzes, and creating resources such as the ADVENTure



Calendar which gave a new activity to try for each day of December, and a trip to a wellness farm and laughter yoga.

She has also been part of an action group to tackle the issues that have arisen with the Fort William student accommodation.