


# NOMINATIONS

HANDBOOK FOR STUDENT  
ELECTIONS



HOW TO RUN IN THE  
STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
ELECTIONS TO BECOME  
PART OF THE NEXT  
EXECUTIVE TEAM AT THE  
HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS  
STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

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YOUR  
STUDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION

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# KEY DATES

Date	Event
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> February (10:00)	<b>Nominations Open</b> Students will be able to nominate themselves on our website at <a href="http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk">www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk</a> .
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March (14:00)	<b>Nominations Close</b> Nominations on the website will close at this point.
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> March (09:00)	<b>Supported Publicity Period Begins</b> HISA displays and distributes all candidate material and voting promotional material on our website.  Candidates can start campaigning from this point.
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> March (10:00)	<b>Voting Opens</b> Students are able to vote for their chosen candidate(s) from this date on our website and at the nearest physical ballot station.
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> March (13:00)	<b>Voting Closes and Supported Publicity Period Ends</b> No students can vote the ballots closes.
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> March (18:00)	<b>Results are announced</b> Successful candidates will be announced at this time.  <i>(Announcement of the Election results is dependent on candidate expense details being submitted on time, complaints being handled in full and all other urgent election matters being handled.)</i>

# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! By opening this nominations guidebook, you have taken the first step to becoming an elected officer of the Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA).

HISA is an organisation led by students, for students. Every year, students elect from amongst themselves the new leadership team of HISA. This is a great opportunity for you to represent your fellow students and change the student experience for the better.

HISA is the students' association that exists to represent all students in the Highlands, Islands, Perthshire and Argyll – whatever you study, wherever you study. There are a range of different roles available where you can leave a legacy for students in your region and where you learn.

For more information about HISA, visit [www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk).

HISA elected officers represent the voice of students. They sit on the highest decision-making bodies of UHI and its academic partners, meet with local and national politicians, and campaign for change. They do all this to help change people's lives.

To become a HISA officer, you don't need to submit a CV, attend an interview or have any prior experience. To become an elected HISA officer, all you need is a vision of how being a student could be better, and to secure the support of your fellow students in an election.

This nominations guidebook will help to guide you through the key things you need to know for the elections.

# WHAT IS HISA?

The Highlands and Islands Students' Association is the legally recognised representative body for students studying at the University of the Highlands and Islands and each of its academic partners. We are independent of UHI and aim to act as a critical friend/support system for their students.

HISA's role is to ensure that students' voices are heard. This can be in terms of their teaching and learning experience, the support they receive and the services they need. It also represents students on issues that UHI or its academic partners, don't control – such as travel, housing, and health. HISA officers meet regularly with MPs and MSPs and work with the National Union of Students (NUS) to influence decisions that affect students.

All enrolled students are members of the Students' Association and able to vote, unless they advise HISA they wish to 'opt out' and not be a member.

# HOW IS HISA RUN?

The Students' Association is a member-led organisation – run by students, for students. Only students may nominate themselves in its elections, and vote for its officers. This ensures that when it comes to speaking for students, it is the students themselves who do so.

Democracy is a key value of any Students' Association. Every year elections are run to choose the leadership of HISA. This means that those who lead HISA are representative of the student body and are recognised by UHI and its academic partners as having a legitimate mandate to speak on students' behalf.

It is important that students continually inform the work of HISA and its officers. Local Officers regularly engage with Student Voice Reps (SVR) at their academic partner, in order to gain a better understanding of the broader student experience. Local Officers also have a role on the HISA Executive Committee, so that their experiences shape the work of HISA and assist the Regional Officers.

Every year, HISA runs an event called Regional Student Council. This is HISA's annual conference where student representatives from across the region meet to discuss the experience of being a student and shape HISA's work. HISA also provides opportunities for students to engage with NUS Scotland and other national agencies so that important decision-makers are influenced by our fellow students' experiences.

HISA has a team of around 22 members of full-time and part-time staff. Their role is to ensure the smooth running of the organisation and to provide direct support to every Regional and Local Officer in HISA. The staff help every Officer with their work to ensure they are successful in their role and deliver their manifesto to HISA student members across UHI.

# WHY BECOME A HISA OFFICER?

The role of a HISA officer is a job like no other. You do not need prior experience as you will have a team of dedicated staff who will support you. Furthermore, being a HISA officer is the best way to make a positive impact for all those that study at UHI and its academic partners.

HISA has a track record of success in changing students' lives, inside and outside of the classroom – from learning quality and housing to student finance. In every case, this change has been led by students like you. If you have a vision for how being a student could be better, and a passion for improving the student experience, there is a HISA officer role for you.

If you are already a Student Voice Rep, becoming an officer can be a great next step. It offers you an even bigger opportunity to help your fellow students and can even lead to exciting new career opportunities, both inside and outside of HISA.

If you are interested in knowing more about what officers do, email [returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk) and ask about local HISA officers at your academic partner.

## Florence Jansen

Local Officer

(2018-2020)

HISA Regional President

(2020-2022)

“Being a HISA officer, both locally and regionally, has set me up for my future in addition to what my course had to offer. I have learned many skills and what it truly means to be in a leadership role.”



# THE ROLES

There are two categories of roles available in a HISA election – regional and local. Regional Officer roles are all full-time positions that represent all students in the Highlands and Islands. Local Officers are lead student representatives at each of the academic partners of UHI. These local roles vary depending on the nature of the academic partner.

Regional Officers can work from any UHI academic partner.

Local Officers must work from their academic partner.

Full role descriptions for all roles are found on the HISA elections website [www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections](http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections)

## REGIONAL ROLES

### PRESIDENT

The President is the leader and figurehead of the students' association. As President, you will:

- Lead the HISA Executive Team
- Lead on the Student Associations' Development
- Lead on the Partnership with UHI and external affiliations
- Be a Trustee of the Association

### VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION

As the Vice President Education – or VPE – you will:

- Lead on the student learning experience
- Champion and help co-ordinate the Student Voice Rep system
- Co-ordinate and implement relevant campaigns on academic issues
- Be a Trustee of the Association

### VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNITIES

As the Vice President Communities – or VPC – you will:

- Lead on student welfare
- Lead on equality and diversity within the Association and the University
- Lead on Welfare and Community campaigns within the Association and the University
- Be a Trustee of the Association



# LOCAL ROLES

At each academic partner, there will be a student officer with a responsibility to represent students on a local basis. Local Officers are lead student representatives at each academic partner. The nature of these positions varies at each academic partner, and is explained further in this guidebook – if you feel you can make a change, there is a position for you!

Local Officers are responsible for ensuring the voices of students are heard by their academic partner. They engage closely with Student Voice Reps, represent the student voice to senior management, and organise events. Local Officers have a seat on HISA's Executive Committee, ensuring student voices are shaping HISA's work.

You will be the recognised student leader for where you are taught. As HISA Regional Officers are responsible for representing students across the region, Local Officers are responsible for representing students at their academic partner.

All local HISA branches have at least one Local Officer. HISA Moray has two Local Officers. HISA Perth and HISA Inverness have three Local Officers each.

As a Local Officer, you are the lead student representative for your academic partner. You will play a key leadership role in representing the student voice at your academic partner and will work closely with other students and staff to do so. Your role will be to champion the development of students at your academic partner, to enhance their learning experience and to ensure the student voice is heard both locally and regionally.

## Representing your fellow students at a LOCAL level:

You also play a role in representing students at your academic partner, to external bodies and organisations within your community. Such as the local council, to promote ideas and policies important to the needs of your fellow students. Throughout the year you should attend all Student Voice Rep meetings. This is in an incredibly important way to engage with students at your academic partner!

There will be key members of staff at your academic partner that you will work with. Depending on which academic partner you study at, you will be one of two student members on the Board of Management – the governing body of your academic partner. The Local Officer role is expected to provide student representation on the Board of Management and linked committees, and support is provided by both HISA staff and board staff to ensure officers can fully engage in meetings.

Engaging with members of staff, such as the academic partner Principal or those with responsibility for the student experience, is important to carrying out your role.

Students can only run for Local Officer Roles at the academic partner to which they are a student. Furthermore, candidates for a Local Officer position **MUST** live locally to the area of their academic partner (eg: close enough to the campus that you are able to travel in time for your work hours.)

## Representing your fellow students at a REGIONAL level:



Within the Highlands and Islands Students' Association, you are a full voting member of its Executive Committee and the Regional Student Council.

Decisions are made at a regional level that impact upon the learning experience of all students, including those at your academic partner. The Principal Officers of HISA are the student representatives that sit on those regional bodies and whose decisions affect all students in the university partnership. The Depute Presidents play a vital role to support the Principal Officers and ensure that they understand the feelings and views of the students at the academic partner they represent.

#### Term of Office:

Candidates that are elected, do not take up post immediately after the election. However, candidates that are elected are called "Officers-elect" and receive an honorary title until they officially take up the post. For example, if you were elected to the role of Regional President the title would be "Regional President-elect." Officers-elect take up the post for the next academic term. There will be a full schedule of training and induction for officers to support them in their role. Officers-elect must submit proof of identification, the required right to work forms and undergo a successful Disclosure Scotland PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) check to be able to take up the officer position.



Gabbi Starr, HISA Inverness President 2017-18 at BBC Studios.

# HOURS AND PAY

The Regional Officers are full-time sabbatical positions and offer a starting salary of **£21,840** per annum.

Students who are elected as Regional Officers take a year's break from their studies to perform the role. Due to meetings and other HISA commitments, the position can involve working evenings, including occasional weekend travel and events.

Local Officers are paid, part-time positions (with the exception of the UHI Perth Depute President position which is full-time). Officers are currently paid an hourly rate of **£12.00**.

The number of hours that Local Officers work is dependent on their academic partner.

They are as follows:

Academic Partner	Role	Hours
UHI Argyll	Depute President	12 Hours
Highland Theological College	Depute President	10 Hours
UHI Inverness	President	15-17 Hours
	Depute President Education	15-17 Hours
UHI Moray	Depute President	15 Hours
	Depute President	15 Hours
UHI North, West & Hebrides	Depute President – North	12 Hours
	Depute President – West	12 Hours
	Depute President – Islands	12 Hours
UHI Orkney	Depute President	12 Hours
UHI Perth	President	35 Hours <i>(Full-Time – Sabbatical)</i>
	Depute President	10 Hours
Scottish Association for Marine Science	Depute President	10 Hours
UHI Shetland	Depute President	12 Hours

# ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

This section explains what positions you are eligible to run for.

Students can run for election in one position only. Students can only run for Local Officer roles at the academic partner to which they are a student. Furthermore, a candidate may only run for a Regional Officer role or a Local Officer role, not both.

To be eligible for a position as a HISA officer, elected Officers must successfully undergo a Disclosure Scotland PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) check before they take on the position.

## REGIONAL OFFICERS

All roles are full-time, paid sabbatical positions. If you are successful, you shall take a year's break from your studies to fulfil the duties of the position. Students who are in their final year and are due to graduate will be eligible to stand as well, as long as they are registered as a student at the time of the election. The term of a full-time Regional Officer is from 1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024. In order to take up an elected regional role you must also complete a Charity Trustee Declaration Form, which is available at: [www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections](http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections)

To be eligible to stand for a Regional Officer role, you must be registered on any course at the University of the Highlands and Islands or any of its academic partners.

## LOCAL OFFICERS

In order to stand for election as a Local Officer, you must be registered as a student at the academic partner you wish to hold the position for. If you are successful, you must also be an enrolled student at the same time as the term of the Local Officer role. The term of a part-time Local Officer is from 1 August 2023 - 31 May 2024. If you do not continue as a student in 2023-24, you will not be able to carry out the role of a Local Officer.

If you study at UHI Perth, the position of HISA Perth President is full-time. Therefore, as it is a sabbatical position, you do not need to be a student in 2023-24 to take on this role. If you are due to continue as a student, you will be required to take a break from your studies to carry out this role.

Students that have been in a paid officer position for two years at their local college partner will not be eligible to stand in the HISA Student Elections for the same post again. However, students can then if they wish, stand for a regional post.



Nurina Sharmin, HISA

Perth Vice President for Education and Engagement 2017-18 at NUS Scotland conference.

# NOMINATE YOURSELF!

Nominating yourself for a position is easy.

To become nominated for the HISA officer role you want to run in, you need to complete an online form on the HISA website.

Go to <https://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/> and login with your student details.

Click on the elections button on the front page or find the 'Nominate Today!' button under the 'Nominate Yourself Today' heading.

This will take you to the nominations MS form where you will be asked for your:

- Name\*
- Student Number\*
- Photo (Only head and shoulders visible is recommended)\*\*
- Poster\*\*
- Manifesto\*\*\*

\*This is a requirement to submit on the form

\*\*This is not a requirement, but it is advantageous as it enhances your visibility to voters.

\*\*\*You do not need to submit this until the candidate essentials deadline.

Once you submit your nominations form, it will be sent to HISA staff who shall ensure that you are eligible to run in the position you have selected. After this check is complete, the Depute Returning Officer will send an email to your student account, confirming your nomination and detailing the next steps.

A nominee is not officially accepted as a candidate until all candidates have been announced on the HISA website. You must refrain from campaigning, promoting or announcing your nomination, until the announcement of all candidates has been released by HISA.

Nominations must be received before the deadline, which can be found in the Key Dates section of this Guidebook.

# CAMPAIGN ESSENTIALS

For every position, each candidate should submit the aspects listed below. The deadline dates for these candidate materials are outlined in the key dates section at the start of this guidebook. From experience, each of these aspects are designed to support you in your campaign to be elected and have a positive effect on helping candidates publicise themselves effectively. The table below summarises how each aspect can have a truly positive impact on your campaign

Aspect	Potential Impact
Manifesto*	A manifesto sets out three major selling points: who you are, what you'd like to change for students and why you think it would help improve students' lives. A manifesto gives students an insight as to the issues you would focus on as their representative, which in turn gives students an insight into your character.
Video*	A video is a great way to display passion and help students connect with you as a person. Students get to better see who you are and how you'll engage with them as their officer. After face-to-face meeting and a live video chat, a recorded video is the best method to engage students. Remember to keep it under 1 minute, be as engaging as possible and stay on point!
Poster	A good poster summarises your manifesto, highlights that you are standing for election and displays a photo of yourself. Again, like the manifesto it gives students an opportunity to see your creativity as well as your balance of casual vs. professional approach to students.

\*Please note you can submit your manifesto as a video. Simply upload the video on to YouTube or any other public video sharing website and enter the link into manifesto box.

Here's what each aspect is and how it is used by HISA:

## **Manifesto**

A manifesto is the basis of your campaign. It expresses why students should support and vote for you, and what you will do if you are elected to that position. It is one of the most important ways for students to understand what you have to offer them, particularly those students you may not get the opportunity to meet while campaigning.

Your manifesto will be uploaded on to the HISA website, either by yourself when you submit your nomination, or by HISA after the campaign essentials deadline. Examples of what you may wish to include are: a short introduction of who you are, what you pledge to do if you are elected and your views on any important issues.

If you're not sure of the issues students face/what you'd do if you won your election, speak to your Student Voice Rep who will know of key issues going on. Don't ask your local HISA team though – they can't give specific manifesto advice but can give a friendly ear if you want to chat through any concerns. Read the role description of the role(s) you are interested in – not only will this tell you the specifics of the job but it can also give you some ideas on what to include in your manifesto.

**DON'T GO OVER THE WORD COUNT!** The word limit is set to make our elections fair and if you go over then what is shared on our website and elections page will be cut off on the 500<sup>th</sup> word.

Don't see your manifesto as a cover letter for a job! Avoid long paragraphs or writing out all of your points. Focus on 3-6 of the ones you believe to be most important, use bullet points and try to make sure it's easy to understand, so students know what you are saying and what it is you want to do. Remember you can expand more when you go out and talk to students or if you plan to use digital campaigning in any way.

Submit everything before the deadline – This makes things a lot easier and also means that you can concentrate on your campaign plan! As well as this, late materials may not be accepted by HISA.

## **Video**

Videos are a great way to promote your campaign and to display who you are as a candidate to potential voters you may be unable to meet physically. Your video will be displayed on the HISA website.

You can make your video by using your phone or any other recording device. Keep it to less than 1 minute long. HISA will trim all videos at the 1-minute mark.

## **Poster**

A poster is a great visual for promoting your campaign and catching the eye of potential voters. Your poster will be displayed in a booklet of candidates, which will be available to students on the HISA website.

You must design your own poster. Posters must be submitted in pdf or jpeg formats only. If you have any queries regarding the poster, please contact the depute returning officer at [returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk).

If you are not confident designing your own poster, you can request a HISA template poster. You will only need to submit key information and choose a colour scheme. Please note, this will be of a standard design format.

The information to submit is:

- Your name
- Your Photo
- Position applying for
- A 50-word summary of your manifesto

## **Hustings**

As well as these materials, HISA will also be delivering two live virtual hustings, giving candidates the opportunity to introduce themselves to voters and share their ideas. Each of these events will run for 2 hours. The dates for these events are outlined in the key dates section at the beginning of this guidebook.

These events will function similarly to a town hall debate and consist of each candidate being asked the same set of pre-prepared questions. These questions will be circulated to all candidates before the date of the event. Your answers to each question must be no longer than one minute each – The chair of the hustings will stop you at 1 minute for each question. These hustings are not mandatory, however confirmation that you wish to take part, must be received via email at least 1 hour in advance of the event taking place. Please ensure that you arrive to the correct hustings event for the position you are a candidate for.

If you are unable to attend at these times but still wish to take part, you will be able to pre-record your answers and have them posted on the HISA website alongside the others. Pre-recorded videos must be no longer than 1 minute per question. Videos over one minute will be trimmed down to the one-minute mark before posting.



# CANDIDATES TRAINING

There are 3 aspects to candidates' training, which candidates will be invited to. The dates for each of these are in the Key Dates section. Candidates' Training is compulsory to attend. All Candidates must undergo the Rules, Ethics & Campaigning training, while only regional candidates need to attend the Regional Officer Demographics Training, and only Local Officers need to attend the Local Officer Awareness Training. Candidates' Training is broken down into various elements, covering the essential information that will help you in your campaign.

Type of Training	Expected Content	Delivery Method(s)
Rules, Ethics & Campaigning Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Election Rules</li> <li>➤ Expected behaviours</li> <li>➤ Mindset/tone</li> <li>➤ How to campaign</li> <li>➤ HISAs publicity support</li> <li>➤ Your budget</li> <li>➤ How students can vote for you</li> </ul>	Teams, Run regionally
Regional Officer Demographics Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How HISA functions on a regional basis</li> <li>➤ Information on how the various Aps vote</li> <li>➤ The demographics of HISA and how the Aps differ</li> </ul>	Teams, Run Regionally
Local Officer Awareness Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Expectations for Officers at your local AP</li> <li>➤ An introduction to members of the local HISA team.</li> <li>➤ Local student demographics and the best ways to campaign.</li> </ul>	Teams, Run Locally

# ELECTION RULES

All HISA elections are governed by Schedule Six of the HISA Memorandum and Articles of Association which is available online at <https://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections/election-rules>

All candidates must abide by the University's policies and procedures and those of their academic partner. All candidates must obey the law.

## Returning Officer and Depute Returning Officer:

The elections are overseen by the Returning Officer, who is responsible for the good conduct and administration of the elections and shall have the final interpretation of the election rules. The Returning Officer is assisted by a Depute Returning Officer.

The Depute Returning Officer's main role is to handle complaints regarding other candidates and how the election has been administered within the parameters of Schedule Six of the HISA Memorandum and Articles of Association. They are contactable throughout the election period via [returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk).

## Elections Project Co-ordinator:

HISA has separated out the roles of Depute Returning Officer and the Project Co-ordinator, as the two roles are distinct. One person holding both roles limits impartiality, should complaints about administering the election arise.

The Project Co-ordinator leads and organises the elections. They are assigned the role of working with staff in order to structure the elections in ways that complies with Schedule Six and aims to maximise student engagement in the election. They do this by working with staff across the region. They are contactable throughout the election period at [returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk).

## HISA Staff:

For the Nominations Period, HISA staff engage students through a variety of means, with a view to answering any questions they have about the elections, particularly standing for election. HISA staff are neutral throughout the election process and aim to recruit as many candidates as possible, to maximise the opportunity for the wider student body to choose who the students think will best represent them in the coming year.