



Meeting Minutes

Meeting	Trustee Board	
	Management Board	
	Executive Committee	X
	Finance & Commercial Development	
	Appointments & Remuneration	
	Compliance, Governance & Risk	
	Other:	

Meeting Date	9 th May 2025
Meeting Time	13.00-14.00
Attendance	
Present	William Campbell, Students' Association President (Chair) Elizabeth Keegan, Inverness President Holly Pearce, Inverness Depute President Nicolas Kowalczyk, North, West & Hebrides Depute President (West) Mila Tabone, Orkney Depute President Xander McDade, Perth President Andi Garrity, Perth Depute President Harley Green, Shetland Depute President
Apologies	
Absent	Shannon MacCullum, Vice President Education Sarah Marshall, Moray Depute President Kian McDonald, Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) Depute President
Attended	Rachel Burn, Chief Executive Simon Varwell, Director of Student Engagement & Representation Paul Stalker, Insight & Democracy Co-ordinator (Clerk)

Section	Minutes
1	Meeting Management
1.1 Apologies	The Chair noted that no apologies had been received in advance of the meeting.
1.2 Draft March Executive Committee Meeting Minutes	The Chair made reference to the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 4 th April 2025 and asked for all those who attended that meeting to approve whether this was an accurate reflection or not. The minutes were approved.
1.3 Executive Committee Action Log Update	The Students' Association President noted that they had secured undertakings from the Director of Community & Communications that the use of X (Twitter) would be investigated within the upcoming Communications Review.

	<p>The Students' Association President asked if any member objected to marking the action to identify the email account linked to the HISA X (Twitter) account as being complete.</p> <p>The Students' Association President noted that they would mark the action to identify the email account linked to the HISA X (Twitter) account as being complete as no member had objected to doing so.</p>
2	Governance
2.1 Student Officer Resignation Protocol	<p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation noted that recent circumstances had highlighted that there was a lack of clarity around the process for Student Office resignations.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation explained the Students' Association Articles and Schedules lacked a clear and defined process for Student Officers to resign, especially for Local Officers. The Director of Student Engagement & Representation also explained that due to this gap in the governing documents it wasn't clear what needed to happen when a Student Officer resigns, especially in terms of who needed to be informed and in what order.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation noted that they had developed a Student Officer Resignation Protocol to act as a short-term stop gap resolution while the Students' Association's Articles and Schedules were being reviewed and revised as part of the Democracy Review. The Director of Student Engagement & Representation also noted that the Student Officer Resignation Protocol had been developed with input from the Development Managers and Insight & Democracy Coordinator.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation highlighted that the guiding principle behind the Student Officer Resignation Protocol was that a Student Officer resignation was a democratic process with HR implications, rather than an HR process with democratic implications.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation explained that under the proposed protocol any Student Officer wishing to resign would need to submit a letter of resignation to Student's Association President. The Director of Student Engagement & Representation also explained that under the proposed protocol the Students' Association President would on receiving a letter of resignation from a Local Officer inform the Chief Executive or the relevant Development Manager so they could trigger the relevant HR process.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement noted that any Students' Association President wishing to resign would need to submit a letter of resignation to the Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees, Chief Executive, and the Vice President Education.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation highlighted that they wanted to know if members had any comments or feedback about the Student Officer Resignation Protocol before it went to the HISA Board of Trustees meeting in July for approval.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation asked members if they had any comments or feedback about the draft Student Officer Resignation Protocol.</p> <p>The North, West & Hebrides Depute President (West) and the Perth President noted that they liked that the proposed protocol made it clear to both Student</p>

	<p>Officers and HISA staff members what a Student Officer needed to do if they wished to submit their resignation.</p> <p>The Students' Association President noted that they liked that the guiding principle behind the proposed protocol was that a Student Officer resignation was a democratic process with HR implications, rather than an HR process with democratic implications.</p> <p>The Perth President noted that they felt that there needed to be a conversation about allowing incoming Student Officers to start their role earlier in situations where the incumbent Student Officer had resigned a couple of months before the end of their term of office. The Perth President explained that they felt that allowing an incoming Student Officer to start their role earlier in such situations would reduce the period of time HISA would be without a voting member on important UHI and/ or UHI Academic Partner meetings.</p> <p>The Students' Association President noted that they felt that there needed to be a wider conversation about how Student Officer vacancies were managed within the organisation, both when a vacancy occurs less than half-way through a term of office and when a vacancy occurs more that half-way through a term of office.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation explained that the purpose of the Protocol was to establish the order of the communications cascade required to deal with a Student Officer resignation rather than how to manage a vacancy caused by a Student Officer resignation.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation suggested amending the rationale section within stage two of the protocol to include a reference about managing the impact of arising from a resignation.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation noted that they agreed that it would be useful to have wider conversation about how Student Officer vacancies were managed within the organisation, both when a vacancy occurs less than half-way through a term of office and when a vacancy occurs more than half-way through a term of office.</p> <p>The Students' Association President noted that they felt that it might be useful to develop a protocol around how Student Officer vacancies were managed within the organisation in order to provide clarity and certainty on what actions needed to be undertaken to mitigate the impact of a Student Officer resignation.</p> <p>The Director of Student Engagement & Representation noted that they would amend the rationale section within stage two of the protocol before it went to the HISA Board of Trustees meeting in July for approval.</p>
<p>2.2 HISA Freedom of Speech Policy</p>	<p>The Students' Association President noted that a draft HISA Freedom of Speech Policy had been developed as part of the ongoing work to remove operational policies from the organisation's schedules.</p> <p>The Students' Association President explained that the aim of the draft HISA Freedom of Speech Policy was set out the reasonable and practical steps HISA will take to secure freedom of speech within the law for UHI students and staff members, as well as external speakers.</p> <p>The Students' Association President highlighted that the Board of Trustees were happy in principle with the draft HISA Freedom Of Speech Policy but wanted to know if Executive Members had any comments or feedback about it before they formally discussed approving it.</p>

	<p>The Students' Association President asked members if they had any comments or feedback about the proposed HISA Freedom of Speech Policy.</p> <p>The Perth President questioned whether the proposed HISA Freedom of Speech Policy had been assessed against Article Ten of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The Perth President also questioned whether enhanced protections for public officials in Article Ten of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) covered Student Officers.</p> <p>The Student's Association President noted that they would have to check and get back to the Perth President on whether the proposed HISA Freedom of Speech Policy had been assessed against Article Ten of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The Student's Association President also noted that they would have to check and get back to the Perth President on whether enhanced protections for public officials in article ten of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) covered Student Officers.</p> <p>The Students' Association President highlighted that members until Friday 16th May to let them know if they had any additional comments or feedback about the proposed HISA Freedom of Speech Policy.</p>
3	Student Engagement & Representation
3.1 Code of Conduct on Staff/ Student Relations	<p>The Chief Executive noted that UHI was currently working on developing a partnership-wide Code of Conduct on Staff/ Student Relations.</p> <p>The Chief Executive explained that familial and intimate personal relationships between students and staff members had the potential to create conflicts of interest and/ or imbalances of power and authority. The Chief Executive also explained that conflicts of interest and imbalances of power and authority caused issues for both academic integrity and student welfare.</p> <p>The Chief Executive noted that student-staff relations policies were important to maintaining academic integrity as they helped protect students and staff members against allegations and accusations of bias and favouritism. The Chief Executive also noted that student-staff relations policies were important to maintaining a safe learning and working environment as they helped protect students against abuses of authority.</p> <p>The Chief Executive highlighted that the majority of colleges and universities in the UK had introduced policies to deal with familial and intimate personal relationships between staff members and students. The Chief Executive also highlighted UHI was one of the few institutions in the sector that didn't have a policy in place to deal with familial and intimate personal relationships between staff members and students.</p> <p>The Chief Executive explained that colleges and universities had broadly adopted one of two approaches to student-staff relations policies: the prohibition approach and the disclosure management approach.</p> <p>The Chief Executive highlighted that the prohibition approach involved completely banning staff members from having any responsibility for students where a familial or intimate personal relationship existed. The Chief Executive further highlighted that the prohibition approach also involved completely banning staff members from forming new intimate personal relationships with students.</p> <p>The Chief Executive highlighted that the disclosure management approach involved requiring all staff members to declare any familial or intimate personal</p>

	<p>relationship with students so any potential conflicts of interest could be appropriately managed (e.g. alternative marking arrangements). The Chief Executive further highlighted that the disclosure management approach also involved actively discouraging staff members from forming new intimate personal relationships with students.</p> <p>The Chief Executive explained that UHI had adopted the disclosure management approach when developing its draft Code of Conduct on Staff/Student Relations. The Chief Executive also explained that UHI's Senior Executive Team had approved the draft Code of Conduct on Staff/Student Relations for consultation.</p> <p>The Chief Executive noted that UHI was currently in the process of consulting HR practitioners across the partnership on the draft Code of Conduct on Staff/Student Relations. The Chief Executive also noted that the consultation with HR practitioners across the partnership was the first step in working towards getting each academic partner to support and endorse a partnership-wide Code of Conduct on Staff/ Student Relations.</p> <p>The Chief Executive highlighted that UHI wanted to know if members of the HISA Executive Committee supported the disclosure management approach of the draft Code of Conduct on Staff/Student Relations. The Chief Executive highlighted that UHI wanted to know if HISA Executive Committee members had any comments and/ or feedback on the draft Code of Conduct on Staff/Student Relations.</p> <p>The Chief Executive asked members if they supported the disclosure management approach of the draft Code of Conduct on Staff/Student Relations. The Chief Executive also asked members if they had any comments and/ or feedback on the draft Code of Conduct on Staff/ Student Relations.</p> <p>The Students' Association President and the North, West & Hebrides Depute President (West) noted that they felt that it was important for UHI to have a cross-campus policy to deal with familial and intimate personal relationships between staff members and students.</p> <p>The Students' Association President, the Inverness President, the North, West & Hebrides Depute President (West), and the Perth President) highlighted that they supported the disclosure management approach to dealing with familial and intimate personal relationships between staff members and students over that of the prohibition approach.</p> <p>The Inverness President and Perth President noted that they supported discouraging staff members from forming new intimate personal relationships with students.</p> <p>The North, West & Hebrides Depute President (West) highlighted that they didn't think that the prohibition approach was needed at UHI; that the disclosure management approach would be enough to safeguard academic integrity and student welfare at UHI.</p> <p>The Perth President noted that they didn't think that the prohibition approach would be practical to implement at UHI due to its unique geographical context; that placed based learning within a sparsely populated region such as the Highlands & Islands was likely to result in more staff members and students having a familial or intimate personal relationships than at other colleges or universities.</p>
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	<p>The Inverness President highlighted that they felt that the current wording within the draft Code of Conduct on Staff/ Student Relations implied a prohibition approach rather than a disclosure management approach; that the text of the draft Code of Conduct on Staff/ Student Relations emphasised prohibition more than declaration.</p> <p>The Chief Executive noted that they would pass on members comments and feedback on the draft Code of Conduct on Staff/Student Relations to UHI.</p>
3.2 UHI/HISA Approach to Drugs & Our Students	<p>The Chief Executive highlighted that UHI was proposing to run a project on developing a partnership-wide approach to student substance misuse.</p> <p>The Chief Executive noted that unlike other colleges and universities, UHI didn't currently have a policy in place to deal with the issue of student substance misuse.</p> <p>The Chief Executive explained that UHI was looking to develop a supportive rather than punitive approach to student substance misuse.</p> <p>The Chief Executive highlighted that UHI wanted secure the Executive Committee's support for this project. The Chief Executive also highlighted that UHI wanted Student Officer input and involvement in this project.</p> <p>The Chief Executive asked members whether they supported proposal to run a project on developing a partnership-wide approach to student substance misuse. The Chief Executive also asked members if they would be interested in being involved in this project.</p> <p>The North, West & Hebrides Depute President (North) noted that they supported the proposal to run a project on developing a partnership-wide supportive approach to student substance misuse. The North, West & Hebrides Depute President (North) noted that they felt that a pastoral approach was the best way to deal with alcohol and/ or drug addiction.</p> <p>The Perth President noted that they would be happy to support the development of a partnership-wide approach to student substance misuse so long as it was nuanced and took into account the different communities in which UHI operated within. The Perth President also noted that they felt that there needed to be wider student input into this project, that student engagement in the project shouldn't just be limited to Student Officers.</p> <p>The Students' Association President noted that they supported developing a partnership-wide supportive approach to student substance misuse but questioned whether such an approach on a complex and contentious issue could be agreed among all of the academic partners. The Students' Association President also noted that felt that student engagement in this project shouldn't just be limited to Student Officers.</p> <p>The Chief Executive noted that they would let UHI's Student Support Manager know that members supported the proposal to run a project on developing a partnership-wide approach to student substance misuse. The Chief Executive also noted that they let UHI's Student Support Manager know that members felt that student engagement in this project shouldn't just be limited to Student Officers.</p>
3.3 Orkney International Student Guidebook	<p>The Orkney Depute President highlighted that they had been working on developing guidebook to help support international students moving to Orkney to study.</p>

	<p>The Orkney Depute President explained that the purpose of the Orkney International Student Guidebook was provide a student friendly compilation of information that maybe useful to international students moving to Orkney to study. The Orkney Depute President also explained that although the Orkney International Student Guidebook was primarily aimed towards international students moving to Orkney to study, the guidebook contained information that would also be useful for UK UHI students moving to Orkney to study.</p> <p>The Orkney Depute President noted that the draft Orkney International Student Guidebook contain information about accommodation, banking, grocery shopping, health care, and public transport. The Orkney Depute President also noted the draft Orkney International Student Guidebook contain information about both UHI Orkney and HISA.</p> <p>The Orkney Depute President noted that they wanted to know if members had any feedback or suggestion on the draft Orkney International Student Guidebook. The Orkney Depute President also noted that they wanted to know if members felt there would be any value in adapting the Orkney International Student Guidebook to create similar guidebooks at other Academic Partners across the UHI Partnership.</p> <p>The Orkney Depute President asked members if they had any feedback or suggestions about the draft Orkney International Student Guidebook.</p> <p>The Students' Association President, the Inverness President, and the North, West & Hebrides Depute President (West) indicated that they really liked the Orkney International Student Guidebook.</p> <p>The North, West & Hebrides Depute President (West) noted that they liked that the Orkney International Student Guidebook contained information about banking and grocery shopping.</p> <p>The North, West & Hebrides Depute President (West) suggested that it might be useful to include within the Orkney International Student Guidebook information about eating out and local takeaways.</p> <p>The Shetland Depute President asked whether the Orkney International Student Guidebook had been designed to be an online resource and/ or a printed resource.</p> <p>The Orkney Depute President noted that the Orkney International Student Guidebook had been designed to be an online resource rather than a printed resource. The Orkney Depute President also noted that the Orkney International Student Guidebook had been developed to act as a sign-post for existing information and as such contained a number of hyperlinks that students could use to find out more information.</p> <p>The Orkney Depute President also asked members whether they felt there would be any value in adapting the Orkney International Student Guidebook to create similar guidebooks at other Academic Partners across the UHI Partnership.</p> <p>The Students' Association President, the Inverness President, the North, West & Hebrides Depute President, and the Shetland Depute President highlighted that the liked the idea of rolling out International Student Guidebooks across the UHI Partnership.</p> <p>The Shetland Depute President asked who would be responsible for rolling out International Student Guidebooks across the UHI Partnership.</p>
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	<p>The Students' Association President suggested that the Development Managers and/ or the Local Coordinators would be the best placed individuals to lead on the roll out of International Student Guidebooks across the UHI Partnership.</p> <p>The Shetland Depute President asked whether members felt there would be value in providing these types of guidebooks in different languages for students whom English wasn't their first language.</p> <p>Students' Association President, the Orkney Depute President, and the Perth President noted that they didn't think there would be any need to provide guidebooks in different languages as international students had to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in English in order to gain their student visa. The Students' Association President further noted that HISA didn't have the staff resource or money to provide guidebooks in different languages.</p> <p>The Orkney Deputy President thanked members for their feedback and suggestions.</p>
3.4 NUS Scotland Rep Numbers	<p>The Students' Association noted that NUS Scotland had released details of its proposal for the number of NUS Scotland Representatives for its events during the 2025-26 academic year.</p> <p>The Students' Association President explained that NUS Scotland was currently proposing that each Students' Association/ Union be allocated between a minimum of two places and a maximum of eight places based on the number of members they had. The Students' Association President also explained that NUS Scotland was currently proposing to allocate HISA eight NUS Scotland Representative places for its events during the 2025-26 academic year.</p> <p>The Students' Association President highlighted that they felt that NUS Scotland's proposal didn't take into account the fact that unlike other Students' Associations/ Unions, HISA represented students at more than one academic institution. The Students' Association President also highlighted that they felt HISA should be allocated at least ten NUS Scotland Representative places to allow for a student from each of UHI's Academic Partners to attend NUS Scotland events during the 2025-26 academic year.</p> <p>The Students' Association President explained that they felt that although it was highly unlikely that HISA would be in a position to a student from each of UHI's Academic Partners to attend NUS Scotland events during the 2025-26 academic year, as a matter of principle HISA should reserve the right to do so.</p> <p>The Students' Association President noted that NUS Scotland was looking for feedback on its proposal on the number of NUS Scotland Representative for the 2025-26 academic year. The Student's Association President also noted that they wanted to feedback to NUS Scotland that HISA should be allocated at least ten NUS Scotland Representative places to allow for a student from each of UHI's Academic Partners to attend NUS Scotland events during the 2025-26 academic year.</p> <p>The Students' Association President highlighted that they wanted to know members views about the proposed number of NUS Scotland Representatives. The Students' Association President also highlighted that they wanted to know if member objected to them feedback to NUS that felt that HISA should be allocated at least ten NUS Scotland Representative places to allow for a student from each of UHI's Academic Partners to attend NUS Scotland events during the 2025-26 academic year.</p>

	<p>The Students' Association President asked members for their views on NUS Scotland's proposal to allocate HISA eight NUS Scotland Representative places for its events during the 2025-26 academic year.</p> <p>The Inverness President noted that they agreed that HISA should have at least ten NUS Scotland Representative places, even if it wasn't possible to send a student from each of UHI's Academic Partners to NUS Scotland events during the 2025-26 academic year.</p> <p>The Perth President noted that they agreed with the Students' Association President that NUS Scotland's proposal didn't take into account the fact that HISA represented students at more than one academic institution. The Perth President also noted that given NUS Scotland's proposal allocated a minimum of two NUS Scotland Representatives for every other college and university, HISA should have really should have been allocated a minimum of 20 NUS Scotland Representatives given that the UHI Partnership includes ten different Academic Partners.</p> <p>The Perth President highlighted that they didn't think there should be a cap on the of NUS Scotland Representatives. The Perth President also highlighted that they felt that NUS Scotland's proposal on the number of NUS Scotland Representatives protected Students' Associations/ Unions at smaller universities at the expense of Students' Association's at much larger colleges.</p> <p>The Perth President noted that they felt that the feedback to NUS Scotland's should be that HISA wanted its 'fair share' of NUS Scotland Representatives so that the differing student experiences across the ten different Academic Partners within the UHI partnership could be captured at NUS Scotland's events.</p> <p>The North, West, & Hebrides Depute President (North) highlighted that they thought HISA needed more than eight NUS Scotland Representatives. The North, West, & Hebrides Depute President (North) also highlighted that they felt that NUS needed to hear from students at each the academic partners within the UHI partnership at its events.</p> <p>The Students' Association President noted that they felt it was important to remind NUS Scotland that HISA was unique and didn't just cover one academic institution. The Students' Association President also noted that they felt it was important to send a message to NUS Scotland that they couldn't just treat HISA like any other Students' Association/ Union.</p> <p>The Perth Depute President highlighted that they agreed that having an NUS Scotland Representatives from each UHI academic partner at NUS Scotland's events would be great but questioned whether securing an increased number of NUS Scotland Representatives would have any negative financial impact on HISA.</p> <p>The Students' Association President explained that they didn't think securing an increased number of NUS Scotland Representatives would have any negative financial impact as because as was the case now, HISA wouldn't necessarily send it full allocation to an in-person NUS Scotland event.</p> <p>The Students' Association President noted that they felt there was a consensus among members that the proposed number of NUS Scotland Representatives did not take into account or reflect the fact HISA represented students across ten different academic institutions. The Students' Association President also noted that they would feedback to NUS Scotland that HISA were unhappy with the current proposed number of HISA NUS Scotland</p>
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	<p>Representatives as it did not take into account or reflect the fact HISA represented students across ten different academic institutions.</p> <p>ACTION: Students' Association President to provide feedback to NUS Scotland on their proposed number of NUS Scotland Representatives for NUS Scotland events during the 2025-26 academic year.</p>
4	AOCB
4.1 Future Executive Committee Meeting Dates & Deadlines	<p>The Students' Association President highlighted that this meeting was the scheduled Executive Committee meeting for the 2025-26 academic year.</p> <p>The Students' Association President noted that the first Executive Committee meeting for the 2025-26 academic year would take place during the Student Officer Residential taking place on the week commencing Monday 28th July.</p> <p>The Students' Association President concluded the meeting by thanking all members of Executive Committee for their contributions throughout the academic year.</p>