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## Shetland College UHI/NAFC Marine Centre UHI Local Student Partnership Agreement 2018-19

### Introduction

The purpose of this agreement is to present the work being done to improve the student experience in partnership between Shetland College and NAFC ('the college'), and the Highlands and Islands Students' Association ('HISA'), to show students how they can get involved in that activity. It includes all students studying with the college, on further and higher education courses. It does not replace other strategic documents, and students are not limited by this document – you are actively encouraged to tell us how we can make your education better in any way.

### Our college community

The College and HISA are proud of the contribution we make to the Highlands and Islands regional community and beyond. The purpose of the college is to have a transformational impact on the development and prospects of the region, its people and its communities. Our vision is that we will be nationally recognised as a distinctive and innovative partnership which embraces both further and higher education. It will be:

Our student body is central to that purpose and vision. Both the College and HISA value the diversity of our student population and work to make sure everyone feels welcome and supported. All staff and students should interact in a way which helps create an inclusive, pleasant and welcoming environment for everyone.

Students at the College are represented locally and regionally level by HISA. HISA represents the views and interests of students to the College and other decision makers, and works in partnership with the college to secure the best possible student experience. Find out more at [www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk).

This agreement includes all our further and higher education students in their relationship as members of HISA.

### What is partnership?

The terms 'partner' and 'partnership' are used in a broad sense to indicate joint working between students and staff. Partnership working is based on the values of:

- openness;
- trust and honesty;
- agreed shared goals and values; and regular communication between the partners.

It is not based on the legal conception of equal responsibility and liability; rather, partnership working recognises that all members in the partnership have legitimate, but different, perceptions and experiences. By working together to a common agreed purpose, steps can be taken that lead to enhancements for all concerned. The terms reflect a mature relationship based on mutual respect between students and staff.

## **Part A – Student partnership and engagement at the college**

### **Formal student representation**

The college is committed to involving students in the decision making process and making sure that they have the best possible experience while studying with us. All further and higher education students are automatically members of the Students' Association (HISA). The college and HISA work closely together to ensure that students are represented on all relevant college committees and are supported and trained to fulfil their roles.

Opportunities to become involved in student representation include the following:

- Student representatives are present on all relevant college committees, including: College Boards and Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee. Students are informed about vacancies and how to take part when they arise.
- Each class should have a class representative who will attend Class Rep meetings and make student views known on issues related to the course experience. On-going communication will be encouraged out-with formal meetings.
- Subject Network Officers receive a small payment in return for representing students on the relevant Subject Network. Vacancies will be advertised this year for these competitively selected positions.
- Focus groups and consultation events are arranged when major changes, for example to curriculum, are planned, and students are invited to take part in these groups.

Student representatives are trained and supported in their respective roles. There is also the opportunity to meet with other student reps to support each other.

### **Student engagement in the life of the college**

Student involvement is not restricted to formal representative structures. All students are encouraged to become partners in shaping the life of the college. Opportunities include:

- Participating in volunteering opportunities within and out-with College.
- Giving honest, constructive feedback by taking part in surveys, focus groups and other feedback opportunities.
- Sharing opinions with class representatives, or other student reps.
- Speaking directly with lecturing staff or your Personal Academic Tutor.
- Supporting activities of your class, including interacting with other students online.
- Developing and taking part in events, societies, clubs and groups.

Staff will seek to engage with students in both formal and informal structures, and ensure that students are a central part of college decision making and informing of policy and practice. Means of ensuring clear and accessible communication between the wider student community and the college will be continually reviewed jointly to ensure that this is enhanced on an ongoing basis.

### **Highlands and Islands Students' Association**

HISA primarily exists to be an advocate for students across UHI and the College, by representing their rights, needs and opinions. You can become involved by:

- Standing for election as a sabbatical Principal Officer (paid, full-time roles within the Association)
- Standing for election as a HISA Depute. These are representatives for each academic partner within the university. Student officers form the Executive Committee which steers the operational direction of the Association.
- Taking part in Regional Council. Regional Council is an annual event, open to all elected officers (including class reps and student network officers), which offers an opportunity for students to meet either in person or by video conference to discuss and set the policy and practice of the Students' Association.

## **Part B Partnership working 2018-19**

### **Introduction**

The college and HISA have agreed to work together on the following issues over the coming year. These themes were chosen by student officers from Shetland College UHI and NAFC Marine Centre UHI following feedback gained during the recent Away Day for all class reps.

#### **1. Transport**

Insufficient transport systems can be prohibitive to education. College staff agree to assist HISA in lobbying for a better transport system, both within Shetland and on and off the island, including more bus services and student fares.

#### **2. Student Spaces**

The college agree to work with the students' association to create more suitable spaces for students to socialise and/or study in. This should include improving facilities/provisions in current spaces as well as potentially dedicating some new space specifically for students to use.

#### **3. Student Activities**

HISA intend to put on a wider variety of events for students at Shetland College and NAFC Marine Centre in the Academic Year 18/19 including social and sporting activities and events that promote better health and wellbeing of students. The colleges agree to assist HISA wherever possible in the organisation, running and promotion of these events.

**Other Issues**

We also agree to work together to investigate and address any issues arising from student feedback as required throughout the year. The college agrees to ensure that HISA has the support required to fulfil their role, and HISA agrees to ensure that it fulfils this role responsibly in making the student voice heard.

We are committed to keeping students informed of progress with the LPA, and will communicate regular updates on progress.

Chair of Shetland College Board

  
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Date

16<sup>th</sup> August 2018  
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Chair of NAFC Board of Trustees

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date

16/8/18  
\_\_\_\_\_

HISA Regional Vice President (HE)

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date

16/8/18  
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