

HISA Shetland Report: Q1/Q2 2025

Inductions

This year's induction programme was a resounding success, marking an engaging and positive start to the academic year for new and returning students alike. HISA worked collaboratively with UHI Shetland to ensure that every student felt welcomed, informed, and included from day one.

A formal presentation was offered to FE and HE students at both campuses and online. All students attending inductions were informed of HISA's remit, the role of our independent Advice Service, the importance of Student Voice Representatives and the available clubs, societies and networks available to join.

Welcome Week

HISA is pleased to report the successful delivery of this year's Welcome Week programme (previously Freshers Week).



The activities were designed to encourage social interaction, introduce students to local opportunities, and foster a sense of belonging within both the UHI Shetland and the wider community.

The main event of the week was the Welcome Week Fair, held at the Lerwick campus, which brought together a diverse range of local businesses, community organisations, and student societies. This event offered students valuable

opportunities to connect with local services such as the NHS, explore volunteering options with Youth Voluntary Action Shetland and the Befriending scheme, and discover the available online and in-person clubs, societies and networks. Feedback from attendees and exhibitors alike was highly positive, with many commenting on the friendly atmosphere and strong level of engagement from students. It was felt by many that the return of Mr Stripey was the highlight of the day.



The week also featured a variety of social events aimed at building community and enhancing the student experience. The Evening Bingo Event at Mareel, while a small turnout, created a relaxed and enjoyable setting for students foster their newfound connections on their course.



In addition, the Fairground-Style Games Event hosted at the Scalloway Campus was particularly well received, offering light-hearted entertainment and encouraging



participation from students with the opportunity to win prizes. Unfortunately, this event was brought to a close earlier than scheduled due to the high number of tourists in Scalloway that day and the nature of the games in a very public area of campus. These factors made the event too high risk to continue. However, students did appear to appreciate and enjoy the opportunity to participate.

Overall, Welcome Week achieved its objectives of promoting inclusion, engagement, and student community. HISA would like to extend a sincere thank you to all UHI Shetland staff who contributed.

Student Voice Representatives

Recruitment

Recruitment for Student Voice Representatives has been much improved on previous years. This outcome reflects the growing engagement of the student body and their commitment to contributing to the continuous improvement of the learning experience.

The recruitment campaign effectively raised awareness of the importance of the Student Voice system. Promotional activities included classroom visits, digital communications through email and social media, Welcome Week freebies and staff-led encouragement during induction sessions.

HISA would like to extend its sincere thanks to all academic and support staff who assisted in the recruitment process. Their proactive promotion of the roles and support in identifying potential candidates were instrumental in ensuring that most courses had active and engaged representation from the outset of term. Many staff have successfully recruited SVRs at very early stages in the year, without the need for class visits.

There remains some work to be done on recruitment due to the limitations of the workload of part-time staff and officers, with a gap analysis due to be undertaken to identify further areas for recruitment in the remaining weeks of Semester 1 and going into Semester 2.

Current SVR numbers for Shetland are 8 and these cover representation Art, Engineering, Hairdressing, Carpentry and Joinery, Counselling and Computing. With a strong network of Student Voice Representatives now in place, HISA looks forward to working closely with them throughout the year to gather feedback, identify areas for enhancement, and ensure that the student perspective remains at the heart of decision-making.



Training

Following the Autumn recess, SVRs will be invited to in-person training and there is a strong programme of online training being offered to all SVRs across the partnership. All SVRs have been offered the opportunity to complete self-led training, one Shetland based SVR has completed this method of training.

SVR meetings

The first meeting of SVRs this academic year took place as an online, partnership wide event. This provided SVRs the opportunity to network with all other reps, meet both local and cross-campus officers and participate in a productive discussion on their expectations of the coming year.

Shetland based SVR meetings will be hybrid to allow for all student reps to participate no matter how or where they study. Dates are currently in the diary for Tuesday 11th November at 12:30pm and Tuesday 9th December at 12:30pm.

HISA would like to extend an invitation to the Board to send a delegate to one or both meetings to further the relationship between HISA, UHI Shetland Board and the student body and encourage channels of communication.

October Events

Following the success of Welcome Week, and to ensure Harley's commitment to UHI Shetland students in his election manifesto, HISA held a Trick or Treat event. Students were asked to come and Trick or Treat HISA at our Lerwick Campus office, on the days where we were not present then a bucket of sweet treats (and spiders!)

was left by our day. Unfortunately, due to staff leave and part-time staff and officer hours it was not possible to replicate this at Scalloway campus.



HISA Organisational update

HISA is proud of the progress it has made in 2024/25 across its range of activities - from having a full complement of elected officers for the 2025/26 academic year, improvements in the number and training of SVRs, and the growing numbers of student clubs and societies, and Advice Service cases. All of this increased student engagement has allowed HISA to maintain its excellent NSS score in the summer of 2025, with 77% satisfaction, up from 67% 2 years ago.

Alongside these improvements, 2025/26 will bring fresh challenges to HISA including ensuring student views are included in any changes proposed by Transformation, looking after student interests through any likely strike action, coping with ongoing flatline budgets and AP expectations across the partnership which will not always be able to be reconciled, and recruiting a new CEO.

HISA Student Communities and Inclusion – Partnership wide

All work on HISA Awards and Sporting Blues has been completed for the 2025 awards with all trophies and certificates handed out except for those which are forming part of degree ceremonies over the autumn of 2025.

HISA's EDI work this term is focussed on marking various cultural and religious festivals, Black History Month and working in partnership with UHI on marking 16 Days against Gender Based Violence. HISA is also working proactively with and



supporting student LGBTQ+ communities on significant concerns being raised about safety of trans individuals on our campuses in light of the Supreme Court ruling and how these might be implemented across UHI estates; HISA is strongly advocating for a trans-inclusive approach on the use of spaces and is happy to discuss with and provide student views on the matter.

HISA also wants to raise with APs issues around student clubs booking rooms on campuses for their activities - this continues to be a barrier to many student clubs at the start of term; if UHI is serious about create better student community on campus, this is one area which would have a huge impact should this be quickly resolved. Please note, this is less of an issue for Shetland students. Though there have been some issues around room bookings for students, these have not been club or society related.