**HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

**SHETLAND ISLANDS ELECTIONS 2019**

**CANDIDATE GUIDEBOOK**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Congratulations!** By opening this candidate pack, 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 and Islands – whatever you study, wherever you study. There are a range of different roles available where you can leave a legacy for students in our region and where you learn.

For more information about HISA, visit 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 change people’s lives.

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

This candidates’ guidebook will help to guide you through the key things you need to know for the elections, including:

- What is HISA,

- What positions are open for election,

- How to become a candidate and how to campaign,

- How the election works,

- Key dates.

Deciding to run in the elections is a fantastic first step, and we’d like to wish you the best of luck in your campaign.

**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. Its role is to ensure that students’ voices are heard. This can be in terms of the teaching and learning experience at the College, how the College is run, and the services the College provides.

It also represents students on issues that UHI or its academic partners doesn’t control – such as travel, housing, and health. HISA officers meet regularly with MPs and MSPs and work with the National Union of Students to influence decisions that affect students.

These are all issues you may wish to campaign on if you want to become a HISA officer!

All students aged 16 and over become members of the Students’ Association as soon as they are enrolled.

**How is the Students’ Association run?**

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

Democracy is a key value of the Students’ Association. Every year elections are run to choose the leadership of HISA. This means that those that 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 class reps where they study to gain an understanding of the broad experience of being a student. 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 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.

**THE ROLES**

There are three local officer roles available in the election:

* Depute President for Shetland Islands
* Lerwick Local Officer
* NAFC Local Officer

The Depute President for the Shetland Islands is the lead student representative for all students at Shetland College UHI and NAFC Marine Centre UHI.

The Lerwick Local Officer and the NAFC Local Officer lead on representation specific to Shetland College UHI (including students studying in Mareel and Islesburgh) and NAFC Marine Centre UHI respectively.

Full role descriptions for each individual role can be found on the HISA elections website [www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections](http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections).

**HISA Local Officers**

If you are elected, you will join a team of local officers and regional officers known as the HISA Executive Committee. At each academic partner, there is a student officer with responsibility for representing students on a local basis. These are HISA local officers. Local officers are the lead student representatives at their academic partner.

Local Officers are responsible for ensuring the voices of students are heard by their academic partner. They engage closely with class 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.

**Winning candidates**

If you win the election, you will take up the post you ran for in the academic term 2019-20. You will begin your term on the week commencing **21st of October** with induction training taking place that week at an appropriate time for you (start can be negotiated up to a week later if prior commitments – eg: holidays – are a concern). Your term will end at the end of June 2019.

Election winners must undergo a successful Disclosure Scotland PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) check to be able to carry-out the role.

**Officer’s hours and pay**

**Local Officers** are paid, part-time positions. All local officers are paid an hourly rate of £9.36 which is the same hourly rate as the Regional Officers. The number of hours that the Local Officers work is dependent on the academic partner. The hours for the available roles in the Shetland Islands

Elections are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Hours p/w** |
| Shetland Islands Depute | 7 hours |
| Lerwick Local Officer | 3 hours |
| NAFC Local Officer | 3 hours |

**ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?**

To run for Depute President for Shetland Islands you must be a registered student at either Shetland College UHI or NAFC Marine Centre UHI. To run for the Lerwick Local Officer or the NAFC Local Officer position you must be a registered student at Shetland College UHI or NAFC Marine Centre UHI respectively.

Note that you can only run for election in one position only. You cannot run for the Shetland Islands Depute position and the Lerwick or NAFC Local Officer position.

To be eligible for a position as a HISA officer, winning candidates must successfully undergo a Disclosure Scotland PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) check.

If you are successful, you must also be a student at same time as the term of the Local Officer role. The term for these roles is 21st October 2019 – 30th June 2020. If you choose to discontinue your studies at any point throughout your term you must also step down from your role.

Students that have already been in a paid officer position for two years will not be eligible to stand in the elections.

**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 at [www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections](http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections).

The form will ask for your name, student number, the position you want to run for, and contact details. Once you submit the nomination form, it will be sent to the Returning Officer who shall ensure that you are eligible to run in the position you have selected. After the check is complete, the Returning Officer shall send a confirmation email to your student account.

Nominations will be open from Monday 16th September, 10am until Friday 27th September, 5pm.

**CAMPAIGN ESSENTIALS**

For every position, each candidate must submit **a candidate statement, mini-statement and a campaign poster** by **Thursday 3rd October, 1pm**.

**What is a candidate statement?**

The candidate statement is the basis of your campaign and expresses why students should support and vote for you, and what you will do if 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 during campaigning.

Examples of what you may wish to include is a short introduction of who you are, what you pledge to do if you are elected and your views on any important issues.

There is a 500-word limit to the candidate statement and this must be submitted by email.

**What is a mini-statement?**

Essentially, the mini-statement is a smaller version of your candidate statement. When we email students information on the election, and post information on the website, we will display the mini-statements as “tasters” for each candidate. This is an opportunity for you to quickly catch the eye of possible voters.

There is a 50-word limit to the mini-statements and this must be submitted by email

**The campaign poster**

A poster is a great visual way to promote your campaign. Using your own design, you can summarise your campaign in something visual to catch the eye of potential voters. Posters must be submitted in pdf or jpeg formats only, by **Thursday 3rd October at 1pm**. If you have any queries regarding the poster, please contact the returning officer at [returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk).

**CANDIDATES’ BRIEFING**

Once your candidacy is confirmed by the Returning Officer, you will be required to attend a candidates’ briefing. This is a compulsory session which all candidates must attend.

The session will be delivered by the Returning Officer and will cover the rules of the election, and the election process.

**The date for the candidate briefing is Tuesday 1st October at 12:45pm. The candidates’ briefing will be conducted by videoconference (VC) and details of how to attend the briefing shall be sent to all confirmed candidates by email to their student account.**

If a candidate is unable to attend the briefing the Returning Officer must be informed in advance at [returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk) and an alternative arrangement will be made.

**CAMPAIGNING BUDGET**

To help you run your campaign and reach as many students as possible, each candidate will receive a campaign budget. You are entitled to spend the campaign budget on campaign materials and travel. The campaign budget is a £20.

The campaign budget exists to ensure that there is parity between each candidate in their ability to reach out to students. You may not spend more money on your campaign than the allocated £20.

You may spend the campaign budget on travel and campaign materials.

All travel costs must be receipted and submitted. All material spending must be receipted and submitted. These must be emailed to the Returning Officer ([returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk)) no later than Friday 1st November. Your expenses claim will then be reimbursed. If your campaign receipts are not submitted by the deadline, your candidacy may be declared void. An expenses form shall be sent to all candidates.

In principle, candidates must only do what all other candidates have had an equal opportunity to do. For example, if a candidate is able to get a personal discount for materials because they know the person they are buying this from, the full price of the materials must be declared in the campaign expenses.

**VOTING**

All voting takes place at the HISA elections website: [www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections](http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections).

At the HISA elections website, students will access their ballot paper by logging in with their student ID and password. They will be presented with information about the candidates they can vote for and the ballot papers.

**Voting method**

This election will be run by the **alternative vote (AV) method**. You will vote by ranking the candidates in order of preference for who you want to win. You will place a number “1” in the box next to the name of the candidate who is your first choice to win, a number “2” for your second preference, a number “3” for your third preference.

What you are doing is saying “this candidate is my first choice to win (write number ‘1’). If they don’t win, this is the candidate I would like to win next (write number ‘2’). If they don’t win either, this is the next candidate I want to win (write number ‘3’)”.

**You do not have to rank every candidate.** If you only wish to vote for one candidate, then do so by writing a “1” next to that candidate’s name.

**Declaring a winner**

When the votes are counted, the winner must have **50% of the total amount of votes plus one**. That means if 400 people voted, the winner must receive 201 votes.

When the votes are counted, all candidates who received a number “1” preference is added up. This is called the first round of votes. If no candidate achieves 50% of the votes plus one in the first round of votes, the count goes to a second round.

The votes of the candidate that finished last are removed and redistributed. The votes are redistributed to the other candidates that the voters of the bottom-placed candidate had given their second preference to.

This is repeated until one candidate gets 50% of the available votes plus one.

This election will be run online and students will submit votes electronically. The election system used by HISA calculates the votes and a report is produced which details each round of voting.

**KEY DATES**

This section outlines the key dates and deadlines for the election:

Nominations open Monday 16thSeptember 10am

Nominations close Friday 27th September 5pm

Candidate briefing Tuesday 1st October 12:45pm

Candidate statement, mini-statement and poster due Thursday 3rd October 1pm

Voting opens Monday 7th October 9:30am

Voting closes Thursday 10th October 1pm

Candidates informed & results announced Thursday 10th October (afternoon)

Deadline for campaign expenditure and receipts Friday 1st November 5pm

**ELECTION RULES**

Campaigning for an election is a great way to interact with students and start conversations about their student experience. It can contribute to a good atmosphere throughout the College. We will support all candidates to participate fairly and openly in elections.

This also means that we require candidates to respect that spirit so that the election is conducted fairly, that students can vote freely and candidates can canvass openly. To ensure that the election is fair, candidates must follow the election rules. Any breach of these rules may result in disqualification from the elections.

All HISA elections are governed by Schedule Six of the HISA Memorandum and Articles of Association (schedule six) – this is the rules for the elections and is available online at [www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections](http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections). All candidates must abide by the University’s policies and procedures and those of their academic partner. All candidates must obey the law.

Candidates must take reasonable steps to ensure that their supporters’ actions comply with the election rules at all times and must be able to demonstrate this in the event of a complaint against them.

It is compulsory for all candidates to attend the Candidates’ Briefing. In the event that a candidate is unable to attend due to mitigating circumstances, the Depute Returning Officer must be informed in advance, and a named representative must attend on their behalf.

**Campaign budget**

No candidate may use resources not freely available to all students for the purposes of their campaign. Items that are already owned by a candidate or other person may be used during a campaign, but they must be declared as if they had been bought during the election.

Campaigns may not exceed the budget limit set in the election rules.

All candidates must submit a written list of all campaign costs and corresponding receipts to the Returning Officer ([returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk)) within five working days of the close of polls. Items freely and readily available to all candidates can be used without the need for submission. An expenses form shall be sent to all candidates.

**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 will be contactable throughout the election period through [returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk).

**Campaigning**

All candidates must refrain from malicious and negative campaigning or comments about other candidates, students or staff in the College.

All candidates must respect that every student has the right to vote confidentially and freely. Any complaints raised by students about being unfairly pressured to vote for any particular candidate will be taken extremely seriously and will result in immediate expulsion from the election if a complaint is upheld.

**Slates and joint campaigning**

Candidates are permitted to organise in teams and jointly campaign, sometimes known as “slates”, and may produce shared publicity and encourage voters to support candidates in other positions.

However, slates may not pool their resources to give them an unfair advantage or do things that independent candidates could not do. For example:

1. Slates may not pool their resources to obtain a bulk discount on purchases.
2. Slates may not pool their resources to purchase items that a single candidate could not buy.

**COMPLAINTS**

Any complaints regarding the conduct of any candidate or campaigner during the campaign should be made to the Returning Officer. Any evidence should be submitted alongside the complaint. Complaints should be made no more than two working days after the close of polls.

All complaints must be submitted using the HISA elections complaint form found on the HISA elections website at [www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections](http://www.hisa.uhi.ac.uk/elections).

The Returning Officer has the right to postpone elections pending complaints, and disqualify candidates from the elections.

Candidates must refrain from frivolous, provocative and malicious complaints about other candidates.

The ruling of the Returning Officer is final. Any complaints must be submitted to [returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:returningofficer@uhi.ac.uk).