

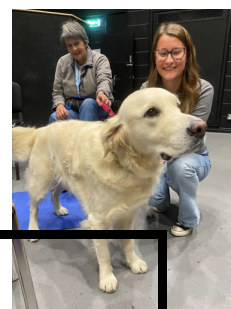
ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

December 2025

Vice President Academic: Holly McAdams

Reflections: What I've Achieved So Far & What I'm Working

Towards ACRONYMS BUSTER:



DO(s) - Department Officer(s)	GSRB—Global Student Representative Body
FTO(s) - Full-Time Officer(s)	SPA—Student Partnership Agreement
PG—Post graduate Students	SSLCs—Student-Staff Liaison Committees
AFP—Action Feedback Protocol	AED(E&SL)-Associate Exec Dean (Education & Student Life)
GenAI—Generative Artificial Intelligence	NUS—National Union of Students
STEP—Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme	SLE—Student Learning Experience

KEY OBJECTIVES

1 Improving Assignment Feedback

On average, assessment & feedback is one of the lowest ranking areas of internal student surveys. To help combat this, I've teamed up with an academic who has created **Action Feedback Protocol** (AFP). That simplifies feedback to help support students to get the most out of it.

Next Steps & Goal(s)

1. Previously focused on introducing this as 'good practice' - next will be to identify the existing blockers in getting staff to adopt this. I anticipate a key component will be stakeholder relationships management.
2. How we can proactively encourage students to read and use feedback.
3. Working with DOs who have feedback as their goals - using the Sparqs SLE model to develop a deeper understanding.

Impact?

- By having clearer, actionable feedback, it allows students to simply understand how to improve studies.
- Increases academic performance, by helping students apply learning more effectively for their next assignment.
- Allows for a consistent student experience which ensures fairness and clarity in feedback practices & expectations.
- Shifts to reflective learning - by encouraging students to engage with feedback, which can result in increased satisfaction levels.

As part of the GSRB, we also work in collaboration and partnership with the University on the SPA. This year, the format of this is based on the GSRB Global Priorities, which is developed during our officer induction in June. The specific academic actions I am leading on, are highlighted within the key objectives on the left.

2 Support for GenAI

GenAI is something that is has grown rapidly and we should be exploring how this can be used to benefit and enhance the student experience. By working together with the University, the aim is to demonstrate and highlight the implications and positive uses of GenAI - rather than producing guidance.

Next Steps & Goal(s)

1. Utilising various meetings to push for goal objectives e.g., Academic Integrity & Digital Strategy Group, as well as, utilising 1-1s with staff.
2. Working with staff to introduce workshops that **show & demonstrate** how AI can be used in an ethical and appropriate way.
3. Working with DOs to help achieve their AI-focused goals and GenAI Society to reach further students.

Impact?

- Promotes responsible AI use as students are learning the ethical & academic integrity guidelines for using AI tools within a practical setting.
- Increases skill development and practice for future employability readiness.
- Creates higher levels of confidence in the technology, meaning students feel supported within their learning environment - which should also (hopefully) reduce the risks of misuse occurring.

KEY LINKS

[Making the Most of Feedback Resources](#)

[STEP project Information](#)

[Sparqs SLE Model](#)

3 Providing Lecture Recordings

Year after year, lecture recordings & capture is something that the student body has advocated for. There are numerous benefits of having this, including wellbeing & accessibility. Therefore, based on the Universities position on moving into their new 10-year Strategy (Strategy 2035), I am working on pushing the dial on this, to ensure lecture recordings are truly considered.

Next Steps & Goal(s)

1. Identify what academic views & thoughts are with recording lectures - currently surveying staff.
2. Work with DOs to bring up in SSLCs by using the SLE model.
3. Developing a proposal paper with the aim of it being included within the Universities Digital Strategy.

Impact?

- Improved accessibility and inclusivity as students who miss classes due to illness, caring responsibilities, have impairments, or other commitments have the same student experience.
- Enhanced flexible learning as students can revisit topics at their own pace, and supports different learning style, which also provides better revision resources - this is a valuable tool for preparing for exams and assessments.



Additional Focuses

PG Student Experience:
Introduction of regular PGT & PGR class rep meetings to ensure they have an appropriate forum to raise comments or concerns.

Student Voice: Ensuring academic reps have access to relevant data (PowerBi Dashboard), and providing enhanced support by introducing goal-setting based on NSS data.

FTO Team

Team Objective: "Creating Better Humans".
Something we ground ourselves on to ensure our daily tasks and longer-term team goals work towards this.

Personal Goal: Confidence in Leadership
Something that is a surprising fact about me is that, I am really nervous in public-speaking and my leadership skills - as such, I've put a specific focus on developing this, by expanding my comfort area.

1

2

Student Executive

We've currently agreed 2 Priorities;
(1) Ending Gender-Based Violence
(2) Anti-Racism

These are being led by Cameron & Lilja (respectively due to the nature of my role, I will be supporting by raising through relevant committee meeting where necessary).

FURTHER PRIORITIES

3

4 External & Sector

STEP - "Belonging & Enabling Change: From Strategy to Practice". Otherwise known as the Belonging Project.
This work focuses on working with institutions throughout Scotland to understand what we are nationally doing to support students feelings of belonging. This is a huge collaborative work that other Scottish Officers, and staff members are working on.

STUDENT

ENGAGEMENT



**Check out the *full* posts here :
[@HWUNION](https://www.instagram.com/HWUNION)**

One of the more exciting parts of the role, is being able to get in front of students directly and see the direct positive impact of our actions – whether this is seeing in-person events come together, or sharing via our social media.

Hot Drinks – with colder weather incoming faster than ever, who doesn't love a nice hot chocolate to keep you warm? Bonus, we were also sharing information about Mitigating Circumstances – what they mean, and when to apply. Over the full two weeks, we managed to reach approx. 150 -200 students.



Guinea Pigs!

KEY EVENTS (SPOTLIGHTED):

Have Your Say – As a result of our new democratic structure, I organised an event on how to better engage students beyond academic concerns. This resulted in our newest 'townhall' event, where it was open space for students to *have their say* with key Union & University staff without it being in a pressured environment. The event support Student Executive with identifying priority campaigns & provided further context on students knowledge of AI use within study.

Galashiels Townhall – This event was created to directly engage, update and involve Galashiels students in the process of the High-Mill Building Re-Development.



Fresher's Week – From School Mixers (supporting student engagement to create belonging), subject-based SU talks, to being part of the FTO pub quiz – Fresher's is a fun, jam-packed 9-days, with lots of opportunity to engage with students.



Other engagement with students include direct contact with our Department Officers through fortnightly meetings, 1-1 support being offered, and attending some SSLCs. I also look forward to the semesterly rep celebration, where I get to dedicate a thanks to all of the hard work reps have put in. This year, I've also begun collaborating with one of our latest societies – GenAI – I'm really looking forward to seeing how we can continue working together on similar goals.

UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIPS

I make sure students' voices are heard on academic matters by representing them across key committees – from shaping AI principles and feedback processes to championing employability, supporting PGR engagement, and pushing priorities e.g., lecture recordings.

I work closely with senior leaders and staff through regular one-to-one meetings and project catch-ups, creating strong partnerships that turn ideas into action – from consulting on upcoming initiatives to solving issues quickly and driving projects forward for the best student experience.



SOSS Dissertation Deadline – Raised delays and concerns, leading to an extension for students.

Consolidation Week – Shifted the review to focus on student support and extra-curricular opportunities using data and feedback.

Actions From Meetings – Followed up on PGR software issues, resulting in a clear resolution process.

Academic Quality – Introduced student guides and departmental-level consultation, now recognised as sector-leading.

Combined Studies Support – Initiated plans for a dedicated townhall to better support this new DO role.

HOW I'VE USED 1-1s:

Survey Alignment – Worked to align surveys and SSLCs for stronger impact without over-surveying students.

Principal & Deputy Principal Meeting – Advocated for extended High Mill opening hours, resulting in a trial period.

COLLABORATION



Bus Campaign

Involved in connecting with local Edinburgh sabbatical officers to lead on a localised campaign. Contributed to key meeting discussions on how the bus routes could be improved for students.

Lecture Recordings

As much as this is primarily within HWU, I've used my external connections to seek consultation on what other institutions' policies are on this..

COLLABORATION

STEP & Sparqs

Attending sector-level STEP meetings to progress on the project highlighted previously.

Sparqs also support engagement, and have been a great partner to work with, especially for engaging with class reps.

Save our Education

This is a long-standing campaign that NUS has been running that I've gotten involved in - I'm looking forward to seeing how I can contribute to this in the future as it progresses.

DEVELOPMENT

Officer Training (Leadership, Values & Creating Change) - Strengthened leadership skills & ability to influence decision-making, resulting in ability to delivery projects and improve student outcomes.

360 Feedback—Seen significant improvement in communication and confidence compared to last year, leading to more effective representation and engagement.

Governor Training—Developed higher levels of diplomacy & expertise, which enhances my contributions to my trustee roles, allowing more information strategic discussions.

Difficult Conversations—Built confidence to support complex stakeholder needs, leading to more constructive & mutually beneficial outcomes.

That's Quality (sparqs) - Improved knowledge of the sector quality processes and support for class reps, ensuring student voice is embedded in decision-making.

Power Training—Gained theoretical insight into power dynamics, and how it can be used as a tool to navigate negotiations & the roles influence.

GenAI Training—Expanded knowledge of Copilot and ethics, allowing me to lead more informed conversations about my project on this resource.

Non-Violent Communication (NVC) - Valuable tool that supports enhanced relationship-building and conflict resolution skills.



Positive Feedback & Presentation

—Often recognised for clear, impactful communication in committees and events, which reinforces my confidence and visibility as a representative.

WINS & IMPACT

Lots of my key wins are spread throughout this report, however, I thought I'd highlight my top 3;

- 1: SFC Quality Report:** Introduced a new approach to engage with students at department level based on their experiences. Results in richer data and insights on student thoughts.
- 2: Introduction of Have Your Say (Edin & Galashiels):** New way of engaging students to amplify their voice, the new format has led to higher levels of attendance in a unique way.
- 3: SoSS Dissertation Review:** Based on previous years' data and insights, due to various delays, I began the year with a review on how this process is managed, which has now been implemented. We should begin to see the impact in April 2026.



CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

- 1: DO Goal-Setting:** Something new introduced this year, to support the development of our DOs—this was welcomed by senior staff, but due to miscommunication some academics were upset about the introduction of this. We've now begun to work on a communications plan to ensure this is embedded.
- 2: High-Mill Opening Times:** As highlighted, achieving this change, when the University was quite hesitant was difficult. But due to persistence and evidence of support, a trial period has now been introduced for the remainder of semester 1. The impact will result in Galashiels students having access to study rooms based on their own schedules & preferences.
- 3: Balancing Logic & Emotion:** Something that is an inner conflict within myself, by being more mindful on managing this, by introducing regular reflection has helped me approach things with a well-rounded approach.