

Programme Transfer Policy

Policy

Purpose This document provides the policy framework for student transfers between Heriot-Watt University degree programmes.

Scope The policy applies to students studying on all Heriot-Watt University programmes of study.

This policy covers programme transfers within the same School as well as to another School at Heriot-Watt University¹.

This policy **does not** cover temporary transfers to another Heriot-Watt campus (inter-campus transfers).²

Policy Statement The University Retention Strategy states that “there will be no unnecessary impediments to students seeking to change programmes, since retaining students within the University is a higher priority than retaining students within any School/discipline³.”

The University is committed to improving student progression and to supporting every student in realising their academic potential. In order to realise this aim, a clear process is required to enable students to transfer degree programmes, if they are academically qualified to do so.

The new programme ought to take account of academic history at Heriot-Watt University, the pre-entry qualifications of the student and recognition of prior learning. The underlying aim of this policy is that a programme transfer will be allowed unless the student's prior study or subject knowledge does not fulfil the entry requirements of the new programme (as detailed in the prospectus). It is recognised that transfer to an alternative programme could be difficult after year 1 without the student repeating stages of study.

Students are able to request a programme transfer at any time during the academic year, but can only transfer at the start of semester 1 or 2.

It is recognised that transfer to an alternative programme may be dependent on availability of teaching resources, such as undergraduate lab space or equipment.

Programme transfer applications should be processed within the first 3 weeks of teaching. This is to ensure that the student is not too late to join their new programme. **For academic year 2020/21, programme transfers (and course changes) should be processed with the first 2 weeks of teaching. In 2020/21, learning, teaching and assessment will be delivered through a combination of online and face-to-face methods as part of the University's Responsive Blended Learning Approach. Online activities will be delivered through Vision, the University's VLE. Prompt programme transfers will ensure that are not disadvantaged if the transfer also involves course swaps (also to be processed within 2 weeks in 2020/21).**

Each School will have a named representative who is responsible for progressing any programme transfer applications and notifying Registry Services Directorate and Planning as required. They will be known as ‘Change of Programme Coordinators’.

Implementation

Programme Transfer within the same School

It is the responsibility of the School to:

- Receive and process programme transfer applications from their existing students;
 - Liaise with the relevant Director of Studies/ Programme Director taking any relevant accreditation and academic issues into consideration (including pre-requisite courses);
 - Take care not to exclude the opportunity for transfer on the basis of entry qualifications which may be the subject of contextual admissions or where a student's offer was untypical due to Clearing;
 - Ensure that for transfers after year 1, the entry point on to the new programme takes into account prior learning and avoids unnecessary duplication of stages of study;
 - Ensure that the reasons for transfer are fully considered and understood and that where poor performance is a factor, ensure that this is considered alongside other relevant factors;
 - Consider implications on teaching resources, such as availability of undergraduate lab space/equipment;
 - Ensure that the student is assigned a new personal tutor if required;
 - Ensure the referral of any student to appropriate further sources of advice and guidance on any non-academic aspect of the transfer e.g. for funding advice, visa requirements etc.;
 - Notify the Student Records Officer (Academic Operations) of approved transfers for Tier 4 visa holders (for reporting purposes).
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Programme Transfer to a different School

It is the responsibility of the present School to:

- Receive and process programme transfer applications from their existing students, advising students and offering the opportunity to discuss reasons for transfer if appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the new School to:

- Consider programme transfer applications from students in a different School, taking any relevant accreditation and academic issues into consideration (including pre-requisite courses);
- Take care not to exclude the opportunity for transfer on the basis of entry qualifications which may be the subject of contextual admissions or where a student's offer was untypical due to Clearing;
- Ensure that for transfers after year 1, the entry point on to the new programme takes into account prior learning and avoids unnecessary duplication of stages of study;
- Ensure that the reasons for transfer are fully considered and understood and that where poor performance is a factor, ensure that this is considered alongside other relevant factors;
- Consider implications on teaching resources, such as availability of undergraduate lab space/equipment;
- Ensure that the student is assigned a new personal tutor if required;
- Ensure the referral of any student to appropriate further sources of advice and guidance on any non-academic aspect of the transfer e.g. for funding advice, visa requirements etc.;

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¹ This may involve a permanent change of location, which should be noted on the application form. In addition to academic approval, a student requesting such a transfer must meet the visa requirements for the proposed location.

² Students may apply for an inter-campus transfer, which allows temporary transfer to another Heriot-Watt campus for a period of one semester or one academic year. Further information is available at: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/goglobal/inter-campus-transfer.htm>

³ Heriot-Watt University Retention Strategy (staff only): <https://intranet.hw.ac.uk/ps/registry/ar/lt/Pages/Retention-Strategy.aspx>

- Notify the Student Records Officer (Academic Operations) of approved transfers for Tier 4 visa holders (for reporting purposes);
- Notify the Planning Office of programme transfers so that capped quotas of the two Schools can be adjusted, to ensure the limit on student numbers does not prohibit Schools from accepting transfer students, if academically qualified.

Support and related documents

Supporting Students

Registry and Academic Support Directorate will work with the Student Representative Bodies to promote the policy to the student body at all campuses and will provide non-academic support to students who are considering submitting a programme transfer application, liaising with the receiving School to aid transition and progression.

Further information and advice is also available from:

Schools (e.g. Student offices, Personal Tutors, Course Leaders/Programme Directors of Studies)

Registry and Academic Support Directorate (e.g. Academic Operations, Student Life)

Related Documents

The Programme Transfer Application Forms (UG, PGT and PGR forms) are available on the Programme Transfer website:

(<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/record/change-course-programme.htm>):

The following policies and procedures are related to Programme Transfers and may also be considered:

- Temporary Suspension of Studies Guidance notes
- Mitigating Circumstances policy and application.

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/learning-and-teaching-policies.htm>

Consultation information

Date	Consultation	Brief Description of Amendment
Nov 15	Quality Enhancement Officer Registry Officer (Studies Committees) Student Induction and Transition Office Students Records Officer	
Dec 15	School Support Staff	
Jan 16	Student Learning Experience Committee	
Feb/Mar 16	Undergraduate & Postgraduate Studies Committees (USC & PSC)	
Apr 16	Academic Registrar Planning Manager Quality Enhancement Officer Student Induction and Transition Manager Students Records Officer	Revisions made in response to USC & PSC comments
Aug 16	Senate	Revisions made in response to Senate comments

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