

# Students of Determination

## Academic Support statement

Heriot-Watt University is committed to inspiring and engendering a positive attitude toward the promotion of equality and diversity and delivering a work, education and social atmosphere which is inclusive of everyone. Heriot Watt is a global university of 5 campuses. Diversity is valued and embraced while equity of opportunity is embedded in everything we do.

Heriot-Watt University's academic support policy for students of determination is informed by the United Kingdom Equality Act 2010 and the commitment to removing barriers to learning. Heriot-Watt University also acknowledges and supports the aspirational vision and practical focus of the *Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework*<sup>1</sup> and parallels, as closely as possible, the 10 Dubai Inclusive Education Standards:

1. Identification and early intervention
2. Admissions, Participation and Equity
3. Leadership and Accountability
4. Systems of Support for Inclusive Education
5. Special Centres as a resource for Inclusive Education
6. Co-operation, Co-ordination and Partnerships
7. Fostering a Culture of Inclusive Education
8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
9. Resourcing for Inclusive Education
10. Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Higher Education and Post-School Employment

Heriot-Watt University recognises the necessity and value of inclusive education. Our alignment with the Dubai Inclusive Education Standards is apparent in the information provided on our website [HWU](#) and policies, from [pre-application and admissions](#) to employment and [careers](#).

This document will focus on the specifics of standard 10 of the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy framework; Higher Education:

- 10.1 *Establish an Accessibility Office to provide support for students who experience SEND, The office will consist of an Accessibility Officer and an Inclusion Support Team as required by the different education providers to facilitate the enrolment of students who experience SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) and provide all necessary support to the staff in terms of needed curricular adaptations, teaching and learning modifications, existing assistive technologies and devices to support participation of all students.*

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1. Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework, Dubai Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2017

The Heriot-Watt Dubai Campus contact for students of determination is the *Student Wellbeing Advisor*. Our Student Wellbeing Advisors are part of the [Student Wellbeing Team](#).

Prospective students are encouraged to disclose a disability either at application or at any point in their university studies and are given many opportunities to do so. Students are also invited to discuss conditions that may not have been formally assessed or diagnosed in the past. Students are supported through any assessment or diagnosis. Students are contacted via a method of their choice and offered information, advice and support. Drop-in sessions allow students to informally ask for advice.

Inclusive practice is encouraged and implemented in the physical, technical, academic and attitudinal sphere. Individual needs are considered and agreed and reasonable adjustments are made to remove barriers to academic success. The Student Wellbeing Advisor liaises with staff and other University departments on a variety of adjustments. Awareness training is provided to all staff.

The Student Wellbeing Advisor offers advice on assistive technology, including equipment and assistive software. Heriot-Watt University offers assistive software programs which are available to all students on campus. Advice, as well as training information and videos are available to all.

#### *10.2 Work in partnership with schools to develop accredited vocational and alternative educational pathways*

Heriot-Watt University does not offer vocational courses but the University's Educational Liaison Team works with Schools and Colleges to encourage application to our courses by students from a range of backgrounds. Foundation courses are available to those who do not meet our undergraduate degree entry academic requirements. Support and advice is provided to any student who has a disability.

#### *10.3 Implement under-graduate level courses associated with inclusive education and related specialist services. Ensure that vocational trainers, academic lecturers and other teaching staff possess the basic knowledge and experience of inclusive education principles and techniques*

Heriot-Watt University requires all staff to undertake Equality and Diversity Training. Teaching staff are offered the Postgraduate Certificate of Academic Practice (PG CAP) which develops teaching skills including awareness of students of determination, reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice.

Postgraduate research students undertake the Learning Enhancement and Academic Development training (LEAD) programme which has a similar focus.

The Student Wellbeing Service offers training, some of which is mandatory, on disability awareness, making reasonable adjustments for individuals and encourages inclusive practice by and for all.

Heriot-Watt's Information Service offers sessions on assistive software and issues that support academic progress.

*10.4 Develop and implement school to work transition programme/s and strategies to actively promote the employment of people with disabilities in the wider economy including the revision of accreditation processes for all education certificates. This can include diplomas from special education centres or schools.*

Heriot-Watt University offers and delivers degree level education. Accredited degree courses follow a rigorous process while observing reasonable adjustments. A system of credits is also in place to reward for commitment given and skills gained in volunteering roles within the University.

A transition programme exists for students with an Autistic Spectrum diagnosis. Our Summer School offers support to students from non-traditional backgrounds and workshops operate to offer strategies for university study.

*10.5 Ensure that students who experience SEND will have full access to training courses and work placement programmes such as apprenticeships, training contracts, and supervised work programmes in the private, public and voluntary services.*

Heriot-Watt University's Student Wellbeing Advisors, Careers Advisors and Teaching staff work together in supporting students with disabilities in careers decisions, work placements, CV writing, job hunting, interview practice and discussing and accessing reasonable adjustments in interviews, volunteering, and the workplace

*10.6 Ensure that students with SEND will receive certification, accreditation, or qualification upon completing of training courses specifying the skills and competencies they have acquired and their relevance to employment*

Heriot-Watt University provides advice and support, makes reasonable adjustments to coursework and exam requirements and implements inclusive practice to ensure that barriers to academic success are minimised.

Where a student fails to achieve an educational outcome, despite the implementation of reasonable adjustments, acknowledgement of their achievement is provided wherever possible. This may be in the form of a Certificate of Higher Education or other acknowledgement.

*10.7 Collaborate to develop a database to register public offices, private companies, institutes, voluntary associations and other organisations whose activities are suitable for promoting meaningful work placements of students who experience SEND.*

Our Academic Schools and Careers Service has strong links with companies, public offices and private companies, voluntary and other organisations and advertises a range of employment opportunities, including from employers who actively seek to recruit students with disabilities.

- 10.8 *Work with relevant bodies from higher education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and post-school employment sectors to provide **reasonable accommodation**, appropriate support and assistive devices based on the individual education plans. This includes monitoring that students who experience SEND are employed based on their acquired skills and are paid competitive salaries.*

The Student Wellbeing Advisor will work with placement destinations and with post-education employers, with the student's agreement, to detail the reasonable adjustments made and support provided at Heriot-Watt University. Advice will also be given to both student and employer on what reasonable adjustments have been beneficial at University and may be beneficial in the workplace. Examples include:

- Assistive technology
- Speech to text software,
- Advanced spelling and grammar programs,
- Mind-mapping programs
- Ergonomic furniture or equipment

Heriot-Watt University is constantly reviewing our processes, procedures and practices with regard to the improvement of inclusive education