External Examiners

14 March 2017, Briefing Session

Dr Maggie King, Head of Academic Quality

Mrs Margaret Henderson, Senior Administrative Assistant (Quality and External Partnerships)

Ms Jacqui Stewart, Senior Administrative Assistant (Learning and Teaching)
Welcome & Introductions
Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement at Heriot-Watt

Dr Maggie King
Head of Academic Quality
Heriot-Watt University

A University focused on science, engineering technology, design, business and commerce

Founded in 1821, as the Edinburgh School of Arts

The world’s first “Mechanics Institute”

A pioneer of access to education for working men and women

Awarded full University status by Royal Charter in 1966

Leonard Horner FRS
(1785-1864)
Geologist and educator

Robert Bryson
(1778-1852)
Watchmaker to Queen Victoria and founder of Mechanics Institutes
Heriot-Watt – the name

Commemorating two champions of commerce, education and technology

George Heriot
(1563 - 1623)
Financier to King James VI and benefactor of education in Edinburgh

James Watt
(1736 - 1819)
The great 18th century Scottish engineer and pioneer of steam power
Academic profile: Schools

1. School of Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS)
   • Chemistry, Physics, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Food & Drink & Human Health

2. School of Mathematical & Computer Sciences (MACS)
   • Pure & Applied Mathematics, Actuarial Mathematics & Statistics, Computer Science

3. School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure & Society (EGIS)
   • Created from a merger of Built Environment and Petroleum Engineering
   • Institute of Life & Earth Sciences
Academic profile: Schools

4. School of Textiles and Design (TEX)
   - Textiles Technology, Fashion design

5. School of Social Sciences (SoSS)
   - Accountancy, Finance, Economics, Management and Languages & Psychology

6. Edinburgh Business School (EBS)
   - MBA / DBA programmes
Academic Profile: Schools Sizes

Total: 9,300

On Campus in Scotland:
- Management & Languages: 30%
- Engineering & Physical Sciences: 26%
- Energy, GeoSci, Infrastructure & Society: 22%
- Mathematical & Computer Sciences: 14%
- Textiles & Design: 7%
- Edinburgh Business School: 0.2%

Total Worldwide:
- Management & Languages: 17%
- Engineering & Physical Sciences: 15%
- Energy, GeoSci, Infrastructure & Society: 19%
- Mathematical & Computer Sciences: 6%
- Textiles & Design: 3%
- Edinburgh Business School: 41%

Source: 2015/16 Enrolments as at Year End (Jul'16)
University’s five locations

Main Edinburgh Campus
8,600 students
1.5km² parkland site

Scottish Borders Campus, Galashiels
665 students

Orkney Campus
35 students

Dubai Campus
3,280 students

Malaysian Campus
1,320 students

Source: 2016/17 Enrolments as at 01Dec’16
Student statistics: Global

- 28,720 registered students in total, comprising:
  - 9,300 students on campuses in Scotland
  - 3,280 students on the Dubai campus
  - 1,320 students on the Malaysia campus
  - 14,820 on international (transnational) programmes
    - 7,510: studying with Approved Learning Partners
    - 7,310: independent distance learners

Source: 2016/17 Enrolments as at 01Dec'16
Student statistics: On-campus students in Scotland

31% of students on-campus in Scotland are from outside the UK

Scotland: 52%
Overseas: 22%
Other EU: 9%
Other UK: 17%

TOTAL: 9,300

Source: 2016/17 Enrolments as at 01Dec’16
Heriot-Watt University: Dubai Campus

- Established in 2005 within Dubai International Academic City
- Currently 3,870 students and growing rapidly
- 2011: First phase of the new campus was opened November 2011 by Scottish Government, First Minister Alex Salmond
- 2013: Second phase, including residences, was officially opened in September 2013
- Bachelors & Masters degrees in: Business, Engineering, Construction Management, IT, Fashion & Design
Heriot-Watt University: Malaysia Campus

- A major international university in Putrajaya, creating a new centre of excellence for teaching and research
- November 2012: Official opening of initial premises in Menara PjH, Putrajaya
- January 2013: first postgraduate students commenced studies
- September 2014: first undergraduate students commenced studies
Heriot-Watt University: Malaysia Campus

- Certificate of Invitation issued by the Ministry of Higher Education, Dec 2011
- Main Campus opened 1 September 2014
Professional Services

1. Registry Services
2. Campus Services
3. Human Resource Development
4. Information Services
5. Research & Enterprise Services
6. Marketing & Communications
7. Governance and Legal Services
8. Student Recruitment
Staff Numbers

- Academics: 708
- Research Associates: 248
- Professional Services & Support: 1,253
- TOTAL: 2,209
The Heriot-Watt Profile

• 5 campus locations (3 in Scotland; Dubai; Malaysia: 13,900 students)

• Approved Learning Partners (50 partners, in 30 different countries: 7,510 students)

• Independent Distance Learners (7,310 students)

• HWU programmes delivered in 150 countries world-wide

• HWU examinations held in 495 locations around the world

• Subject diversity: Engineering .... Fashion Design
The Heriot-Watt Context

Internal and External Context

- Diversity of activity
- International Strategy: One Heriot-Watt
- Scottish Funding Council/QAA Scotland
- Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies
- QAA Transnational Education Reviews
- Overseas government and accreditation organisations
Quality and Standards

Programmes delivered through UK campuses, overseas campuses, partnerships, independent distance learners)

• How do we assure academic standards?
• How do we enhance the quality of the student learning experience?

_identical academic standards;
diversity of learning experiences
The Heriot-Watt University Degree

There is one Heriot-Watt University Degree, wherever and however studied.....
Key Academic Principles

Identical Academic Standards; Diversity of Learning Experiences:

• Same learning outcomes irrespective of location or mode

• Same academic standards irrespective of location or mode

• Different experiences in different locations and modes to meet the needs of different students

• Always sufficient to allow students to achieve the learning outcomes
Academic Policy Framework

Overarching policy framework set out in *Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes*

1) The Student Experience
2) Management of Quality and Standards
3) Management of Programmes and Partnerships
4) Quality Enhancement

Key Purposes are to provide a framework for:

- the assurance of academic standards and enhancement of the student learning experience across multi mode/location programmes
- demonstrating HWU’s adherence to the QAA *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* and equivalent in all countries in which the University operates
Academic Policies within Framework

- Academic Management Structures
- Moderation of Assessment
- Chief External Examiners/External Examiners
- Examinations in Different Timezones
- Transfers between Campuses
Global Academic Management Structure at HWU

Consideration of External Examiner Reports (SSC features student reps)
Key Quality Processes across all Modes and Locations

3 key internal, institution-wide processes:

• Programme Approvals

• Annual Monitoring and Review (AMR)

• Periodic Review: Academic Review; Internal Audit
Programme Approvals

- Developed by **cross-campus Board of Studies**
- Endorsed by School Studies Committee
- Approved at the University level by Undergraduate or Postgraduate Studies Committees. **Senior management approval required of “high risk” programmes (Approved Learning Partners)**
- **External accreditation:**
  - Overseas government authorities: KHDA; MQA
  - UK professional bodies now accrediting programmes in Dubai and Malaysia
Annual Monitoring and Review (AMR)

- Schools prepare reports:
  - Separate partner annual monitoring process
  - Reports include details of collaborations with partners and summary of issues raised by/responses to External Examiners
  - Reviewed by Associate Deans, Academic Registry, Deputy Principal (L&T)
  - Meetings with School management teams to discuss (student involvement)

- Outcomes reported to:
  - Quality and Standards Committee (assurance)
    - (onwards to the Senate)
  - Learning and Teaching Board (enhancement)
    - (onwards to the University Executive)
Periodic Review: Academic Review

Enhancement-led approach:

• follows guidance of Scottish Funding Council
• discipline level (including
• Currently, separate reviews at the Dubai and Malaysia Campuses (informs review of all provision)
• students as Review Team members
• 5-year cycle
• Assurance: re-approval of programmes; judgement on management of academic standards and programme quality
• Enhancement Workshop (sector-leading)
Periodic Review: Internal Audit

An additional quality assurance process adopted by Heriot-Watt University

- **Assurance-led Audit**
  - Conducted at School level
  - Internal staff only
  - Risk-based assessment
  - 3-year cycle

- **Considers:**
  - School management processes
External Examiners play a vital role at Heriot-Watt University in

– Assuring quality and academic standards

– Supporting our enhancement agenda

The role is particularly important, given the scale of our multi-location, multi-mode provision
External Examiner: Role

Dr Maggie King, Head of Academic Quality
Mrs Margaret Henderson, Senior Administrative Assistant
Ms Jacqui Stewart, Senior Administrative Assistant
Key Topics

- Background
- Principal duties
- Provision of information
- The report
- Consideration of the report
- Resources
- The Chief External Examiner role
Review of the External Examining Role at HWU

• Growth in Heriot-Watt’s international activities and in diversity of the student population

• Introduction of the post of Chief External Examiner

• Development of the University’s Academic Policy Framework:
  – Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes
  – Policy on Moderation of Assessment
External Drivers

- Universities UK & GuildHE *report on external examining arrangements*
- HE Academy *Handbook on external examining*
- QAA Quality Code: external examining (Dec 2011)
- QAA Scotland Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) – specific focus on *management of collaborative provision*
- Malaysia Engineering Accreditation Council: separate External Examiners for Engineering programmes

- **HEFCE Review of Quality Assessment:**
  - strengthening of external examining – led by HEA
  - design and pilot generic professional development
  - exploring different forms of calibration exercises with subject associations and PSRBs
Principal Duties

- Review draft assessments contributing to final award
- Review sample of assessed work (across all modes and locations)
- Evaluate assessment processes (e.g., internal marking, borderline cases)
- Comment on level of student performance, including across different versions
Principal Duties (cont’d)

• Comment on consistency of programme (eg with UK Subject Benchmark Statements; with other HEI’s)
• Comment on academic standards
• Attend and participate in Board of Examiners
• Endorse final list of degree classifications
• Submit annual report to the University
Clarifying the role

- Meetings with students
- Equal vote at meetings of Boards of Examiners
- Recommendations on the adjustment of marks/grades
Information to External Examiners - Schools

Schools to provide:

• Invitation to the appropriate Exam Board and other meetings
• Programme curricula documents, handbooks, assessment regulations
• Draft exam/assessment papers and model answers
• School’s assessment procedures
• Sample of student work
• Previous External Examiner Reports
• Spreadsheets of results
Boards of Examiners

• In advance … opportunity to view scripts, projects and discussion with programme team

• The meeting:
  – All modes and locations
  – Held at UK campuses
  – Participation from other campuses (by Skype)

• At the meeting:
  – Comment on exam questions, student performance, assessment process
  – Recommendations on the adjustment of marks/grades
  – Ratification of University degree awards
Format of the Report

- Consistency (learning outcomes, QAA subject benchmarks)
- Quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Format of Assessment and Assessment Processes
- Student Performance
- Academic Standards
- PSRB Matters
- Induction and Administration
- Extent of satisfaction with role as External Examiner
- Dubai, Malaysia, Approved Learning Partners, Independent Distance Learner:
  - Quality of student work
  - Level of achievement
- Boards of Examiners
- Good Practice
Submission dates

Report Form Template available from Quality website: [https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/external-examiners.htm](https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/external-examiners.htm)

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<tr>
<td>30 June 2017 for UG Programmes</td>
<td>30 November 2017 for PGT Programmes</td>
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To Dr Maggie King, Head of Academic Quality ([M.King@hw.ac.uk](mailto:M.King@hw.ac.uk))
Consideration of the Report

• Schools, Deans and Chief External Examiner

• Students via School Studies Committee

• Summary Report to University’s Quality and Standards Committee, and Learning and Teaching Board

• Submitted as part of external review (PSRB’s, QAA, MQA)
Actions taken

- Actions taken by Schools (detailed in letter of reply to External Examiner)
  - format of assessment
  - more consistent marking processes

- Actions taken by the University
  - Moderation of Assessment Policy;
  - improvements to multi-campus Exam Boards
  - range of administrative improvements
Handbook on External Examining for Taught Programmes

Part A: Information for External Examiners
- Selection and Appointment
- Responsibilities
- Briefing and Induction
- Boards of Examiners
- Reports
- Confidentiality, Data Protection and FoI
- Fees and Expenses

Part B: Information for Staff
- Selection and Appointment; Induction and Information; Liaison; Reports
Web Resources for External Examiners

https://www.hw.ac.uk/services学术-registry/quality/qa/external-examiners.htm
Chief External Examiner

- Introduced from session 2012/13

- At least one Chief External Examiner per School, with responsibility for overseeing programmes in all locations and for all versions
Chief External Examiner

- Comment on versions of a programme
- Oversight of effectiveness of moderation procedures
- Review minutes of all Award Boards within the Programme/s
- Comment on the effectiveness of External Examining team
- Review sample of student work from all locations and modes
Chief External Examiner (cont.)

- Identify versions of programme where there are disparities, areas of concern or good practice
- Conduct an end-of-year paper-based review and report on such to the University
- Attend Exam Board, at least in first year
The Chief External Examiner Report

Report Form Template available from Quality website: https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/external-examiners.htm

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<tr>
<td>for UG Programmes</td>
<td>for PGT Programmes</td>
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To Dr Maggie King, Head of Academic Quality (M.King@hw.ac.uk)
The Chief External Examiner role does not include:

- Commenting on assignment tasks or exam papers/questions
- Reviewing or making judgements on course assessment results, progression or award decisions
- Scrutinising the activities or judgements of individual External Examiners
- Meeting with individual students
Further Information

https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/external-examiners.htm

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Question Time