Abbreviations

This list of abbreviations refers to terms used in the Reference Manual and also incorporates acronyms commonly used throughout Heriot-Watt University, which the Partners may come across in supporting documentations. A second list provides sector-wide abbreviations which are also used in the Reference Manual.

ALP  Approved Learning Partner
APMR  Annual Partner Monitoring and Review (until August 2010, the acronym APMR was used generically to mean all forms of annual monitoring)
CAPS  Common Assessment and Progression System
CFS  Course Feedback Survey
EBS  Edinburgh Business School
EPS  School of Engineering and Physical Sciences
IDL  Independent Distance Learners
ICE  International Centre for Examinations
IPE  Institute of Petroleum Engineering
ISB  International Strategy Board
MACS  School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences
PSC  Postgraduate Studies Committee
QSC  Quality and Standards Committee (in use from August 2010; formerly Quality Enhancement and Standards Committee)
SBE  School of the Built Environment
SLS  School of Life Sciences
SML  School of Management and Languages
TEX  School of Textiles and Design
UE  University Executive
USC  Undergraduate Studies Committee
VLE  Virtual Learning Environment

Glossary

This glossary provides definitions of the key terms used throughout this document, particularly those unique to Heriot-Watt University (HWU) or those which HWU may use differently from other higher education institutions.

Curricular Terminology

From September 2010, the University changed its curricular terminology to reflect that used in its new student system (Banner). While every effort has been made to modify current documents to reflect these changes, historical documents will inevitably use the former terminology.

Course  Individual unit of learning worth 15 credits (previously known as a “module”).
Programme  Taught provision leading to a named award (previously known as a “course”). An undergraduate programme comprises 8 taught courses in each stage of study. A postgraduate taught programme comprises 8 taught courses, plus a dissertation.
Discipline  A related group of programmes managed as a single unit, e.g. the Physics Discipline or the Mathematics Discipline (previously known as a “programme”).

Non-HW Staff in Academic Roles

Approved Teacher  An individual who provides academic support to a student and who is responsible for academic decisions such as curriculum development or assessment. Such teachers are primarily based at the UK campuses.
Approved Tutor  An individual who provides academic support to a student, but is not responsible for academic decisions such as curriculum development or assessment. Academic staff in Approved Learning Partners require to be recognised as Approved Tutors.
Students

School Officers Elected, non-sabbatical students who represent the collective student body at the School level or the individual discipline level. School Officers provide a link between Student Union Sabbatical Officers and Class Representatives.

Student Feedback The view of an individual learner on his/her personal experience.

Student Representation The collective view of the student body.

Course Feedback Survey University survey run once per semester and administered through VISION through which students communicate their personal views on each of their individual courses.

Monitoring and Review

Periodic/Academic Review The collective process of evaluating the activities of all Schools, comprising five-yearly Internal Review (enhancement-focused) and three-yearly Internal Audit (assurance-focused; high risk activities).

Annual Monitoring Self-assessment by Schools reporting to the University Executive and the Senate.

Miscellaneous

Institute The two postgraduate-only academic departments (Institute of Petroleum Engineering and Edinburgh Business School).

School The unit of organisation of academic departments, ranging from 1 to 5 disciplines; offering both UG and PGT/PGR provision. “School” is used collectively, incorporating Institutes.

Semester The University operates on a two semester structure (2 x 12 teaching weeks, plus 2-week assessment period in Semester 1 and 4-week assessment period in Semester 2). Some Schools offer a Semester 3 at the Dubai Campus or through Approved Learning Partners.

VISION The University's Virtual Learning Environment.

Heriot-Watt University
External Partners:
Guide to Quality Assurance Procedures

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Handbook is to provide information to external partners on the quality assurance procedures that underpin the University’s Quality Assurance Framework. Quality assurance has the aim of providing stakeholders with evidence that quality is maintained, standards are attained in all areas and that agreed processes in the University are operated correctly and professionally. The University has in place a Quality Assurance Framework which brings together all the relevant policies, procedures, guidelines and codes of practice associated with standards and assurance under the overarching processes of approval, monitoring and review.

The Handbook brings together information on the University's Quality Assurance Framework, explains the range of delivery models and arrangements and identifies the quality assurance which underpins the international operation. It also provides signposting to sources of information and help and the key contacts are listed at the back of this handbook.

The University's priority is to enhance its reputation globally and achieve sustainable international growth and success consistent with our status as a research-led university. We are doing this by building on our strengths and our established global presence. The University's ambitious International Strategy incorporates plans for increased international recruitment in Scotland and Dubai and growth with our partners in teaching and research collaborations.

The University is characterised by the opportunities it offers for multi-location, multi-mode study and by the extent to which academic disciplines are closely linked to professional career opportunities. Most disciplines have professional accreditation, and all undergraduate programmes include preparation for graduate-level professional careers. These programmes are offered to a wide range of students through a number of different modes of learning, including studying with academic partners, most of whom are located outside the UK. The portfolio of programmes offered by the University, with specialisms in science, engineering, built environment, IT, business, management, languages, and textiles and design, reflects the emphasis on professional programmes which prepare students for graduate level employment.
1 Background and Academic Structure

For almost two centuries Heriot-Watt University has pioneered innovative learning, delivering education in areas of key world importance to tackle the issues facing society. Heriot-Watt has established a profile as an international university and internationalisation is a core component of the University’s overall strategy. We are successful in attracting international students and staff, with around a third of our students studying in Scotland from outside the UK, including our Dubai Campus and extensive partnerships and international research profile, making Heriot-Watt a culturally rich place of learning and one of the most internationally diversified universities in the UK.

The University has four campuses: the Edinburgh Campus, the Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels, the Orkney Campus and the Dubai Campus. An additional branch Campus is currently being established in Malaysia.

The University is organised into Schools, with each School having between one and five academic disciplines. Within each discipline there are a number of different programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (except for Edinburgh Business School and the Institute of Petroleum Engineering which are exclusively postgraduate). The Schools are:

- School of the Built Environment;
- School of Engineering and Physical Sciences;
- School of Life Sciences;
- School of Management and Languages;
- School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences;
- School of Textiles and Design;
- Institute of Petroleum Engineering (PG only);
- Edinburgh Business School (PG only).

2 Governance

The Court is the governing body of the University and the Senate is the supreme academic body. The University is managed by the University Executive (UE) which includes the Principal, the Vice-Principal, the Secretary of the University, the Senior Deputy Principal, the Deputy Principals and the Heads of Schools/Institutes. This structure ensures that there is an integrated, co-ordinated approach to the management and strategy of the University.

A simplified diagram of the University committee and reporting structure is shown in Appendix 1.

The Senate and its Committees have responsibility for all academic matters of the University, including standards, quality and awards. The key committees in this respect are Quality and Standards Committee (QSC), Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) and Postgraduate Studies Committee (PSC). The core function of QSC relates to monitoring and review (including the Learning and Teaching Strategy), policy development and oversight of the quality assurance framework; while that of USC and PSC concerns programme approval. In addition to ex-officio members, each of these Committees comprises members appointed by the Senate and those nominated by Schools. Students are represented on QSC and the Senate. The University has two Deans, who are elected for periods of three years and provide cross-institutional input into key activities, particularly through membership of core committees and boards. At the institutional level, one Dean chairs the PSC and the other the USC. Additionally, each Dean has responsibility for four of the eight Schools. The Deans are an integral part of the University’s quality assurance process and in this respect, their remit includes: reviewing external examiners’ reports and Approved Learning Partner reports; approving the designation of Approved Teacher status; monitoring the operation of exam boards; scrutinizing proposals for programme approvals.

This executive and the deliberative committee structure is designed to provide effective integration between the University, Schools, Professional Services and the Student Union.

3 International Strategy

The University’s international strategy is an integral part of its overall strategy and vision. The University will continue to expand its presence and influence internationally through in-country provision and recruitment to its UK campuses.

The University’s main goals in the international strategy are:
- to build on HWU’s international reputation and standing
- to promote HWU as a world centre for research and innovation in all of its disciplines
- to be a global leader in high quality learning and teaching
- to provide sustainable growth in academic activities
- to grow financially viable international business.

International Strategy Board

The International Strategy Board (ISB), in conjunction with the Director of International Development, is responsible for the University’s international strategy and oversees its implementation across the institution, reporting to the UE. It is also responsible for the continuous development and dissemination of good practice with regard to development of the University’s international activities.
The key policy documents are:

- Heriot-Watt University’s International Strategy  
- Ordinance 44: External Academic Partners  
  http://www.hw.ac.uk/ordinances/ordinances.pdf
- Policy on the Management and Oversight of Academic Partners  
  http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/policies.htm

4 Modes of Learning

While the learning experiences of students may vary according to location and mode of study, the University prescribes that when students have successfully completed their programme, they will have achieved the same learning outcomes and acquired the same knowledge and skills as students enrolled at the Scottish campuses. In addition, irrespective of mode or location of study, the University requires that all students should be provided with support appropriate to their needs and at a level sufficient for them to achieve the designated award.

The University takes seriously its responsibility to provide clear and comprehensive information to help students to make informed choices.

The University offers in effect six options for learning. Each option has different characteristics, as listed below, reflecting the spectrum of choice available to students, and provides different benefits to students depending on how and where they choose to study. These different approaches result in different student experiences, which the institution considers to be an advantage of offering a diversity of study options. Students are, however, able to transfer between modes or locations – a further benefit of providing a range of learning opportunities. The University is proud of being able to open up options to a larger group of international students to experience new styles of learning, which in turn broadens their experience and provides them with the skills needed for the 21st century global market.

Edinburgh Campus  
- Research-intensive environment and research active staff  
- Widest range of services  
- Widest choice of subjects  
- Access to co-curricular activities

Borders, Dubai, Orkney Campus  
- Applied research environment  
- More intimate community of scholars  
- Access to co-curricular activities  
- More focussed on learning experience

Approved Learning Partner
- Local access to global education  
- Professional focus of staff profile and approach to learning  
- Contextualisation for local environment

Exchange/Collaboration/Industry
- Access to a wider range of resources and facilities  
- Different cultural learning experience or work experience

Articulation
- Local learning in early years  
- Access to specialist expertise and facilities  
- Experience of different cultures

Independent Learners
- Flexible in time and location  
- Opportunities for part-time study  
- Opportunities to determine own pace of study and manage learning alongside work and other demands

Student Information

Each School offers various programmes, delivered on a campus or through partners. Information on such programmes can be found in relevant School websites. The programmes are updated regularly. General information can be accessed from: http://www.hw.ac.uk/student-life/international/study-in-your-own-country/approved-learning-partners.htm

There is also a range of information available to support student learning, irrespective of mode or location.

Prospectuses and School Information

Students can access both undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses, either online or printed copy, that detail the most up-to-date information about the programmes and disciplines of study that are of interest. Students can order a prospectus from the following weblink: http://www.hw.ac.uk/about/publications/order-a-prospectus.htm

Student Handbooks and Welcome Packs

Schools ensure that all students receive a student handbook for their studies every year. The handbooks provide information and assistance on University policies and support services, for example, Student Services Directorate, enrolment information, assessment
information, Student Support Services and so on. It also provides information on the relevant School’s programme of study, for example, on the structure and related information and on School staff contacts, etc.

Partners should consult the relevant School websites to locate the handbooks for the various programmes.

PARTNERSHIPS

The University has currently more than 70 partnerships with other institutions in the UK and overseas. In response to student demand for local tutoring, the University has been establishing partnerships with in-country institutions, known as Approved Learning Partners (ALPs), to provide face-to-face support.

ALPs comprise the majority of the University’s partnership activity. There is, in addition, a range of other partnerships: Joint Collaborative, Articulation, Exchange and Industrial Partners, and these are described below.

5 External Partner Models

This section provides an overview of University-level activities (supported by underlying School-level activities) for external partnerships, describing each of the University’s models, including the reference to the relevant policies and operational arrangements. In all cases:

- There is a formal contract between the University and the external partner which includes matters of a strategic, business and academic nature. The business aspects are approved by UE and academic aspects are approved by the Senate.
- UE are directly involved in decisions which are either strategic or high risk and the Court of
- the University is consulted if determined necessary by UE.
- The contract is normally signed by the Secretary of the University but exceptionally, where required by the partner, may be signed by the Principal.

Models and Further Information

There are detailed guidelines and quality assurance procedures regarding the approval and set up of External Partnerships. The support process is managed by the Academic Registry within the University. The following information is provided as an overview in Appendix 2 and full details can be accessed from: http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/external-partnership.htm

5a Memorandum of Understanding

A document produced between the University and a partner, confirming their intention to establish a formal agreement to develop future courses and programmes for mutual benefits. At this stage there is no obligation on either part for any action undertaken by the other,
and therefore a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is sufficient.

For Further Information
Information on MoUs can be accessed from:
http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/mou.htm

5b Articulation Agreements
A partnership with another institution to accept students who have successfully completed an identified programme, which has been determined by the University to provide suitable preparation for entry on to one of HWU’s programmes.

Approval Requirements
For the approval of articulation agreements, there is a formal contract between the University and the external partner which lays out the terms of the agreement.

Monitoring
Schools are required to keep records of the student numbers and student progress, and these are reported to the Partner on an annual basis. The performance of students and the success of the partnership are reviewed at the Internal Audit undertaken every three years. It is expected that there will be periodic visits of staff to the partner to build the relationship.

For Further Standard formats for agreements
Information
Standard versions of Articulation Agreements can be accessed from:
http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/articulation.htm

5c Joint Collaborative Agreements
A partnership with one or more other higher education institutions (each with its own degree-awarding powers) to offer a joint programme leading to a joint or dual award.

Approval Requirements and Contractual Arrangements
If Heriot-Watt University is the lead institution, then the following policies, procedures and templates should be used from the following weblink:
http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/collaborative-agreements.htm
Where one of the other partners is the lead institution, then the partner’s templates will be followed, but the same criteria for approval will apply. All programmes leading to a joint or dual award shall be approved by the Senate before contracts are signed. In practice, this is first delegated to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies Committees which report to the Senate.

Monitoring
For collaborative partnerships, there is:
- an Internal Audit, normally on a 3 yearly basis
- an annual report from the Board of Studies or equivalent to the University.
[Responsibility for all Academic matters, including the delivery, monitoring, evaluation, development and overall arrangements for quality assurance of a programme, should reside with a Board of Studies (or similarly named body) established jointly between participating institutions. The Board of Studies will comply with the normal procedures of the Lead Institution in respect of Programme/Discipline monitoring and review. The Lead Institution will make appropriate arrangements for the joint programme to be included in its normal annual monitoring and internal review cycles. All documentation arising from such review processes will be made available to the Partner Institution(s).]

5d Approved Learning Partners
An institution which has been approved to deliver a programme, whereby the curriculum, the approach to teaching, style of learning, and form of assessment are determined by the University, but the teaching, student support, marketing and recruitment is undertaken by the partner institution

Outline of Roles and Responsibilities
- Heriot-Watt University (HWU) is solely responsible for the academic programmes including the content, learning materials, setting and marking of examinations and assessments, certification and the quality and standards of its awards. The University is responsible for admissions decisions on candidates wishing to undertake a Heriot-Watt award. The University is responsible for approval of Partners and the approval of Teachers and Tutors for its programmes. In addition, the University is responsible for providing appropriate briefing to Approved Learning Partner (ALP) staff on the programmes and related arrangements in supporting the establishment of a new ALP.

- The Approved Learning Partner (ALP) is responsible for providing the appropriate facilities, learning resources
as defined for each programme, teaching/tutoring and administrative arrangements for the programmes. The ALP is responsible for securing any local approvals for the programmes to operate and for marketing and recruiting to the programme - processing student applications for the University to approve. The ALP receives tuition fees for the programme and provides the agreed share to the University on invoicing. The ALP must comply with the University's quality assurance guidelines and procedures.

**Monitoring**

For Approved Learning Partnerships, there is:
- an Internal Audit, normally on a 3 yearly basis
- an annual report from the Board of Studies or a pro forma completed by the Partner.

[HWU will set up arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the ALP on a continual basis. HWU will be responsible for all start-up arrangements, annual monitoring with feedback mechanisms for teaching and performance of students, internal reviews and make regular visits to the ALP. The ALP must complete and return an Annual Partner Monitoring and Review Form. This will include data relating to admissions, progress and completion, details of quality assurance procedures, learning support, student feedback, and communication.]

**Exchanges**

An arrangement between the University and a non-UK HEI, to accept students onto each other’s programmes for a period of time (between 3 and 12 months), with the credit gained usually contributing to the overall award.

**Staff**

The Lifelong Learning Erasmus programme provides mobility to both academic and non-academic University staff to participate in periods abroad.

Teaching Mobility is a scheme which provides an allocation of financial support to academic staff to visit partnering EU/EEA HEIs so that they may contribute to the curriculum of those institutions. These visits are usually for one – two weeks.

Training Mobility is a scheme which provides an allocation of financial support to non-academic University staff to visit any EU HEIs (it is not necessary to hold an inter-institutional agreement to participate) with a view to sharing best practices. These visits are usually for one week.

**Student**

The Erasmus Programme also allows students to take part in study placements and they are awarded credit which counts towards their degree marks. For Erasmus Agreements, the University issues the Diploma Supplement, which gives a summary of all credit attained by the student at HWU, together with the equivalent results within the European Credit Transfer System.

**Approval Requirements and Contractual Arrangements**

For the approval of student exchange agreements, there shall be a formal contract between the University and the external partner which lays out the terms of the agreement.

**Monitoring**

For Student Exchanges, there is:
- an Internal Audit, normally on a 3 yearly basis
- an annual report from the Institutional Exchange Co-ordinator to QSC.

[The British Council is required by the European Commission to undertake audit and monitoring visits to a representative sample of institutions/organisations each year to ensure that the financial management is satisfactory and within the general terms of the Erasmus University Charter/Extended Erasmus University Charter. Audit and Monitoring visits are intended to check that the programme is being managed effectively and within Commission guidelines, collect information on qualitative aspects of programme management and on the effectiveness and impact of the programme and address the issue of compliance with recognition requirements, including learning/training agreements, transcripts and mobility agreements.]

**For Further Information**

Information on Student Exchanges can be accessed from:
http://www.hw.ac.uk/support/isao/outgoing-staff.htm
http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/exchange.htm
5f Industrial Placements
An arrangement with industry or a business organisation to enable students to undertake a period of work-related learning.

For Further Information
Information on Industrial Placements can be accessed from the Careers Advisory Service at: http://www.hw.ac.uk/careers

5g Validation
A partnership with an institution or organisation, whereby the programme is developed, delivered and assessed by the partner, but has been assured by the University of an appropriate quality and standards to lead to a University award or credit.

Approval Requirements and Contractual Arrangements
For the approval of validation agreements, there shall be a formal contract between the University and the external partner which lays out the terms of the agreement.

Monitoring
For Validation Agreements, there is:
- an Internal Audit, normally on a 3 yearly basis
- an annual report from the Board of Studies or equivalent to the University, which is considered and approved at an annual meeting of the Validation Committee. All programmes are reviewed on a 5-year cycle.

5h Research Partnerships
Collaborating across research builds strong networks of academic expertise that feed into the University's teaching and learning, and work to provide practical solutions for business and industry. Heriot-Watt has a well-established reputation for working closely and successfully with industry and policy makers to apply and exploit knowledge created here. Research and Enterprise Services is the research and knowledge transfer support unit for Heriot-Watt University, and it applies an integrated team approach to knowledge creation, transfer and exploitation reinforces that reputation and makes it easier for colleagues and for clients to work together.

For Further Information
Information on Research Partnerships can be accessed from: http://www.hw.ac.uk/research.htm

QUALITY PROCESSES

6 Quality Processes
The University has a wide range of partners and different types of arrangements and the University Court, having overall responsibility for business and academic matters respectively, has authorised the UE and the Senate to exercise judgement in the development and use of processes for partnership arrangements. Such processes are regularly renewed and adapted to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose and have been designed in such a way as to achieve the overall objectives of growing the University's business through the delivery of sustainable high quality programmes of study with minimal risk.

Processes for quality assurance
In common with the rest of the higher education sector, the University's quality assurance system is based around three processes:
- Approval
- Annual Monitoring (largely self-assessment)
- Periodic Review (peer review).

Information can be accessed from: http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/monitoring.htm

The responsibility for monitoring and reviewing academic quality and standards resides mainly with the Senate, though there are also management responsibilities to ensure that adequate resources are allocated. The Senate has delegated the operational aspects of approval, monitoring and review to three key committees: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies Committees (USC and PSC), and the Quality and Standards Committee (QSC).

Partners play an important role in the Annual Monitoring process by providing annual reports to Schools, and a key part of the process is to respond to the partners on the content of the report, eg. if any issues are raised, the School will explain how they will address them.

The Quality Assurance Framework, which comprise a related series of policies and guidelines, is managed by QSC, and is underpinned by the University's Ordinances and Regulations.

The University has a Risk Strategy Management Group, which reports to UE and the Court, and considers all of the
University’s risks. Schools and Professional Services are required to maintain risk registers and these are formally reviewed as part of the cycle of Planning Round meetings held throughout the year.

There is a risk register prepared for each new academic partner, which includes standard risks that must be formally considered as well as partner-specific risks. School oversight of the risks associated with individual partners is considered through the Internal Audit process. The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) reports on significant risks to the Risk Management Group.

One of the other mechanisms for monitoring quality and standards involves formal visits from University staff to the Partner. The University requires a formal visit at least every three years, although many partners are visited annually. These visits are likely to occur at different times and may be for a variety of purposes including visits by academics to discuss the programme with tutors, and visits for quality assurance purposes. Visits will often be undertaken when staff are in the vicinity and there are considerable advantages in having as many visits as possible, even if the visit is not related to quality assurance.

Information on risk registers/visits is available within individual partnerships at: http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/external-partnership.htm

The University has a strong international student profile and many of our students are studying with academic partners. As part of our key quality assurance processes, the University retains electronic and paper student records for applicants and enrolled students in line with data protection retention periods. Electronic records are held in the University’s Student Administration Service (SAS) system. All students must enrol online each academic year to ensure we maintain accurate and up to date student records and comply with the Data Protection Act and the University’s Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations. Enrolment requires students to check and confirm personal details including their address, programme of study, courses and visa details.

7 Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards

The key aspects of the University’s procedures for setting and maintaining academic standards include:

- the design and approval of disciplines, programmes and courses
- assessment framework and associated processes
- external examiners.

7a Design and Approval

The initial process for the setting of academic standards is undertaken by Schools/Institutes as part of academic development prior to approval. The approval of a new programme, which is undertaken by the Studies Committees (USC and PSC), includes consideration of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels and UK Subject Benchmark Statements and, where appropriate, this scrutiny may be extended to individual courses. Details of SCQF levels can be accessed from: http://www.scqf.org.uk/The%20Framework/

Where content has been developed by another institution (as in a validated programme) or where judgement on academic standards is more complex (as in work-based learning), more detailed programme level information must be provided to the Studies Committee for approval Policy on the Management and Oversight of Academic Partners).

7b Assessment

The University has a Common Assessment and Progression System (CAPS) in place to ensure consistency of assessment across all of the University’s taught awards, irrespective of mode or location of delivery. Examination boards and external examiners consider the complete range of assessment results across all forms of a programme. Additional procedures are in place to ensure the security of the management and marking of off-campus examinations. Details of CAPS can be accessed from: http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/resources/examdoc5.pdf

The method of assessment at the individual course unit level is agreed by the programme team on the advice of the course co-ordinator, thereby ensuring that assessment methods across the programme as a whole are efficient and effective in both supporting student learning and providing a measure of student achievement.
Off-Campus Activity
The University sets and maintains academic standards of its off-campus provision initially through both the design and approval stages. Assessment provides the University with the assurance that all students, irrespective of mode or location of study, have met the same learning outcomes and acquired the same knowledge, skills and expertise as students undertaking the same programme on campus. For off-campus activities, therefore, the security of the assessment method and management of assessment are paramount. In consequence, the majority of summative assessment of ALP and IDL provision is by written examination. Furthermore, in most cases, the same exam is taken by on- and off-campus students.

The University has a Policy on Management of Examination Scripts (on and off-campus) in the unusual event that a paper goes missing or becomes illegible. There is also a Policy on examinations and other assessments held around the world in different time-zones to manage exams which cannot, because of timezone differences, be held at exactly the same time across the world. Exceptionally, curriculum or contextualisation differences may justify different assessment methods or separate exams.

Academic Registry has overall responsibility for the management of examinations for ALP and IDL students. Off-campus examination centres, invigilation and courier services are managed by the International Centre for Examinations (ICE), which is a part of the University's Edinburgh Business School, and this operates under a Service Level Agreement with the Academic Registry. The collaboration between the two Sections is designed to ensure that there is a consistent approach for all students.

Summative assessment undertaken by ALP students is marked by Heriot-Watt academic staff based at the Scottish campuses. In some cases, where student numbers are large, Schools may appoint Approved Teachers to undertake this marking, which is in turn moderated by HWU academic staff.

Examination Boards
Examination Boards are responsible for the award of credit, making decisions about progression and for recommending awards. Boards are chaired by Heads of School, Directors of Learning and Teaching or others approved by the QSC. Chairs are expected to attend annual briefing sessions led by the Deans of the University to help consistency of decision-making.

Examination Boards are required to consider all assessment results regardless of the location or mode of study of learners to ensure equity of treatment of students and consistency of standards in making academic judgements. The assessment results of all students on the programme in its various formats are usually considered at the same Examination Boards; however, a separate board may be convened for ALP students if the activity is sufficiently large in scale, or if timing makes the “same board” approach impractical. In the case of separate boards, processes are in place to monitor comparability of performance and standards across different cohorts.

As part of the management of academic standards (as specified in the exam procedures for taught programmes), Examination Boards are required to consider, in detail, any unusual results such as high failure rates.

A Dean of the University, or Dean’s representative (senior academic staff member), is required to attend all progression and award boards as an observer to assure consistent and equitable decision-making [Guidelines for Deans]. A Dean’s Summary Report on the effectiveness of the operation of each board is submitted to Academic Registry where common issues are identified and progressed. The Deans also report annually to QSC on any recurring issues.

External Examiners
The external examiner system is one of the processes by which the University assures itself that the standards of its degrees are comparable to the awards of other higher education institutions. External examiners are appointed by the USC and PSC. Examiners appointed for taught and research programmes receive a Handbook [Handbook on Examining for Taught Courses; Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees].
Regardless of location or mode of study, all students enrolled on the same programme are considered by the same external examiner, thereby further assuring quality and standards. Exceptionally, where separate external examiners have been appointed (when a Partner provision is sufficiently large or the programme is sufficiently different), Schools have a moderation policy in place to ensure consistency of academic standards.

External examiners submit an annual report to the Principal which is considered, and acted upon by the relevant Dean, the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) as well as the School Management Team. [Procedure for the Scrutiny of External Examiner Reports for Taught Programmes]. The Academic Registry is currently conducting a review of the process of scrutinising external examiner reports. Comments from external examiners will now be communicated back to Partners.

Professional Institutions also have a role in ensuring the consistency of standards across the University, primarily through periodic accreditations. Several programmes have an external examiner team in which one member has a professional, rather than an academic, background.

8 Approval, Accreditation, Monitoring and Reviewing Partnership Activity: Key Features

Core to the effective management of partnership activity is the recognition that such activities have the potential to be relatively high in risk. Therefore, there are additional levels of scrutiny in approval, monitoring and review. The incorporation of high risk activities within the standard approval, monitoring and review processes ensures that there is consistency of quality and standards across all of the University’s awards.

The University was involved in a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) in January/February 2011. This is one of the components of the quality enhancement framework which was introduced in Scotland in 2003. The main focus of the ELIR method is to review an institution’s approach to improving the student learning experience. It also examines an institution’s ability to secure the academic standards of its awards and to manage the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for its students. Following the ELIR visit, the University received its report (July 2011) confirming that the University has processes in place which enable it to secure academic standards and to assure the quality of the student experience. The findings of the Review indicated that there is confidence in the institution’s current, and likely future, management of the academic standards of the awards it offers, and the quality of the student learning experience it provides. The Report is available at:
http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/resources/QAA-ELIR-report.pdf

A recent Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Overseas Audit of one of the University’s Partners highlighted the following positive aspect of the partnership: “well-designed and clearly expressed programme approval, monitoring and review mechanisms that provide the University with effective oversight”.

Approval
Programmes delivered with a partner receive increased scrutiny by the UG and PG Studies Committees of the Senate. In addition, all partnerships must be approved by Senior Officers of the University for the business and operational aspects of the arrangement, including student support. Similar processes are used for other high risk activities such as the Dubai Campus, independent learning and disciplines which include a placement.

Accreditation
The University faces an ever-increasing demand to meet local requirements for accreditation of programmes that are delivered by a partner. Recognised national quality assurance bodies in relevant countries wish to increase the availability of University-level training through accreditation of institutions, programmes and qualifications for recognition and acceptability. It ensures quality through the adoption and improvement of educational standards to ensure that all transnational programmes and qualifications that are offered by registered institutions are granted recognition and accreditation status. The granting of accreditation status to an institution is an expression of confidence in the institution’s mission and goals; the quality of faculty and students; the quality of academic programmes and the level and appropriateness of resources. Accreditation facilitates student recruitment and local employment.

Annual Partner Monitoring and Review
Annual monitoring includes a separate stringent process for monitoring of partners, with summary reports being prepared by Schools and by the Deans of the University. The outcomes of these partner reviews are considered alongside all campus-based activity and are summarised within Schools’ annual reports to provide a collective evaluation.

Through Annual Monitoring and Review, the main group of high risk activities which is monitored annually is the delivery of programmes through partners. The majority of partners are ALPs, for whom separate annual monitoring processes are well embedded and effective.
Core to the Annual Partner Monitoring and Review is student feedback. The opportunities to students at ALPs to present a collective view are detailed in the partnership agreement (eg the use of Student Ambassadors). ALPs hold staff-student meetings to gather the student view and forward this to the University through the annual monitoring process. However, direct feedback is also very important for ALP students. University staff also meet with groups of students during regular visits to partners, reporting back at the institutional or School level, as appropriate. The University requires a formal visit at least every three years, although many partners are visited annually. In addition, ALPs have their own representative structures with which students can engage on a range of matters related to their learning experience.

In order to supplement the APMR process and face-to-face visits, a University-wide process for collecting feedback at the course (former “module”) level was introduced in December 2008. The Course Feedback Survey (CFS) aims to provide all students, irrespective of mode of study, with the opportunity to complete at the end of each semester a standard, online questionnaire (via the VLE) on each of their four courses.

For further information on annual partner monitoring, please refer to: http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/studentfeedback.htm
For further guidance on feedback, please refer to: http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/monitoring.htm
For further guidance on annual partner visits, please refer to: http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/resources/alp-visitprocedures.pdf

Periodic Review
The University conducts periodic reviews of its strategic, academic and business activities related to learning and teaching, as well as the overarching quality assurance framework which governs such activities.

The University has two processes in place for periodic review of academic activities. The systems for periodic review have been designed to ensure that the needs of all students are considered.

Internal Review
The first is an enhancement-led Internal Review process which considers all academic activities, including the wider student experience and academic enhancement, as well as quality and standards, on a five-year cycle. This process also provides a formal route for capturing and facilitating the dissemination of good practice through the University’s committee structure. Full details are provided in the Internal Review Handbook [Internal Review Handbook]. The process is designed to ensure that not only is each activity being delivered properly, but that there are management structures in place that are likely to be effective in addressing any future issues. Review teams have typically two external and two internal academic reviewers and two student reviewers (supported by a staff member from the Students Union).

Internal Audit of High Risk Activities
The second is an assurance-led Internal Audit which complements the enhancement-led Internal Review, and is undertaken on a three-year cycle by academic peers from within the University to ensure that the management and operation of higher risk activities are properly managed by Schools and to assure the quality and standards of such activities. Programmes delivered in partnership with an external institution and by independent learning are subject to this additional scrutiny process. This process has proven to be invaluable and is considered by the University to be an example of good practice as the in-depth process allows for more scrutiny of the management of the higher-risk activities. It provides an additional mechanism for explicit, regular review of programmes offered to non-campus based students. It also provides a more co-ordinated, longer term overview of activities and ensures that Schools are collecting, analysing and acting on relevant management information, particularly on the performance and satisfaction of off-campus students.

9 Reference Points
The University’s partnership programmes are underpinned by a range of external reference points, particularly the QAA’s Academic Infrastructure at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx for assuring standards and quality. This provides all institutions with a shared starting point for setting, describing and assuring the quality and standards of their higher education programmes.

9a Qualifications Framework
All of the University’s programmes and awards are located within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and currently all awards (and individual courses) comply both with the spirit and letter of these requirements. http://www.scqf.org.uk/The%20Framework/

The awards and qualifications of partners (such as articulation arrangements) are also located within the SCQF or can readily be interpreted using SCQF. With European partners, the Bologna process provides not only a formal framework for aligning credits and awards, but also facilitates discussion of aspects such as learning outcomes and credit transfer. The Bologna Framework has simplified the establishment of Joint Collaborative Partnerships leading to joint awards.

Professional institutions also inform qualifications, and although these do not formally align with academic frameworks, they form a useful reference point.
9b Curriculum Content
Programme documentation (which is approved by the Studies Committees) must include references to the QAA benchmark statements and other external reference points. The Internal Review provides a formal process for discussions about the currency of the curriculum.

9c Professional Institutions
Professional institution guidelines provide an important reference point in the development of the content of curricula.

9d Government Expectations
Expectations of the governments of the countries in which the University operate also influence curriculum development.

9e QAA Code of Practice
The University also applies the principles of the QAA Code of Practice to all forms of provision and to all students, irrespective of mode or location of delivery. The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in UK higher education.

Revisions to the Code are reviewed and implemented by appropriate Professional Services or Schools, and compliance or otherwise is communicated via review reports to QSC. In addition to the principles outlined in the Code, overseas governments will have supplementary requirements, often on reporting/data sharing and student enrolment. These additional requirements are managed by the partners, with HWU’s input from the relevant School or Professional Service.

FURTHER INFORMATION

10 For Further Information and Contacts
The following internal contacts are listed below.

Institutional Contacts:

Prof John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)
Chair of the Learning and Teaching Board
Overall responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement, including learning and teaching strategy.
Email: j.w.sawkins@hw.ac.uk
Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 4624

Dr Maggie King, Head of Academic Quality
Responsible for management of quality enhancement and learning and teaching strategy.
Email: m.king@hw.ac.uk
Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 3728

Ms Helen Crosby, Academic Registry Quality Officer
Responsible for management of University-level quality assurance processes.
Email: h.a.crosby@hw.ac.uk
Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 3445

Ms Kathy Patterson, Academic Registrar and Deputy Secretary
Responsible for management of Enrolment, Exams/Assessment/Appeals/Complaints, Graduations and the Student Experience (including student services and support) and the management of quality assurance, including external academic partnerships.
Email: k.patterson@hw.ac.uk
Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 3368

Professor Andy Walker, Senior Deputy Principal
Chair of the International Strategy Board
Responsible for international development and international strategy.
Email: a.c.walker@hw.ac.uk
Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 3036

Mrs Ruth Moir, Director of International Development
Responsible for international development.
Email: r.j.moir@hw.ac.uk
Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 3128 Mobile: 0044 (0)782 5522665
Mrs Michele Stenhouse, International Executive Officer  
Responsible for the management of external academic partnerships, international development processes, support for overseas graduations  
Email: m.r.stenhouse@hw.ac.uk  
Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 4016

For specific guidance on the day-to-day queries on external partnerships, please contact the Academic Registry staff below or the representative for the respective School:

Academic Registry

Miss Jenny Tough, Registry Officer (Quality and External Partnerships)  
Responsible for documentation on approval processes for Approved Learning Partners, Joint Collaborative and Articulation Agreements and Memorandum of Understanding / Agreements.  
Email: j.tough@hw.ac.uk  
Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 3292

Ms Sue Moore / Ms Eileen Wallace, Institutional Exchange Co-ordinators  
Responsible for administering the University's exchange programmes (Socrates Erasmus and non-EU) for both outgoing and incoming students.  
Email: s.moore@hw.ac.uk / e.wallace@hw.ac.uk  
Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 3028

School Contacts

School of Management and Languages (SML): Mr Marc Quinn  
Responsible for overall management, operation and administration of SML's external programmes.  
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Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 3736

School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences: Dr Torsten Kleinow / Dr Nick Gilbert  
Dr. Torsten Kleinow: development of transnational programme partnerships  
Dr. Nick Gilbert: Responsible for management of programmes delivered through Approved Learning Partners.  
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Phone: 0044 131 451 3252 / 0044 131 451 3718

School of Engineering and Physical Sciences: Prof Martin McCoustra / Dr Wolf Fruh  
Responsible for management of Programmes delivered through Approved Learning Partners and development of transnational programme partnerships.  
Undergraduate: Professor McCoustra  
Postgraduate Taught: Dr Fruh  
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Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 4292 / 0044 (0)131 451 4374

School of the Built Environment: Dr Graeme Bowles / Dr Neil Dunse  
Responsible for management of programmes delivered through Approved Learning Partners and development of transnational programme partnerships.  
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Phone: 0044 (0)131 451 4626 / 0044(0)131 451 3146

Institute of Petroleum Engineering: Prof John Ford  
Interim Head of Institute of Petroleum Engineering and Director of Distributed Learning.  
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Edinburgh Business School: Mr Alick Kitchin / Dr Moira Storey  
Responsible for all business activities and operations of the School (contracts, finances, marketing, IT, publishing) / Responsible for quality and standards.  
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School of Life Sciences (SLS): Dr Kevin Muldoon  
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