Learning and Teaching Policy Development

This document specifies the principles of the development of Learning and Teaching policies at Heriot-Watt University. It sets out the objectives of policy development and provides a step-by-step guide on how to develop a policy.

Principles

Policies are normally reviewed every 5 years	Policies are normally reviewed every 5 years. They can also be reviewed on a need basis (external/internal), or according to the priority list agreed at the Student Learning Experience Committee (SLEC) and in conjunction with the Learning and Teaching Administrators' Forum (LTAF).
Policies are accessible	Policies are published on the Learning and Teaching Policy Bank (hyperlink) so that requirements and expectations of learning and teaching are clear and transparent. The Policy Bank will be promoted to staff and students within staff induction materials, in VISION and in programme handbooks.
Changes will be communicated	Colleagues will be advised by email of changes to policies. Academic Registry will provide colleagues with a summary list of new and revised policies at the end of each academic year. Colleagues will also be notified of planned reviews at the start of each academic year. Briefing sessions may be arranged to provide additional information and guidance.
Policy development will enhance learning and teaching	Staff and students are encouraged to participate in policy development and to review and reflect on policies in practice. By doing this colleagues actively improve the quality of our learning and teaching[1].

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[1] Enabler to achieving the Learning and Teaching strategic objectives: Learning and Teaching Strategy 2013-2018: Full Version (https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/learning-teaching-strategy.htm)

Guide to Policy Development

What are the objectives?

Develop a new or revised policy	Write a new policy or revise an existing policy either within the 5-year review cycle or due to an identified external or internal need.
Carry out a consultation	Collaborate and consult with those who will be affected by the change and who have expertise, in particular, of the policy in practice.
Seek Committee approval	SLEC will recommend approval of the new or revised policy, so the drafting group should try to submit to the next scheduled meeting.
Communicate and implement	Publicise the change widely and provide support post-implementation.

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How to develop a policy

Before you start

Make the case	Make the case to SLEC. State the purpose of the policy, the need for change, the nature of the changes, the scope of consultation, any operational aspects and the resource implications (including dependencies such as IT development or training).
Agree the detail	SLEC will consider the case and recommend who should be involved in drafting, usually at least one SLEC member and colleagues with relevant expertise, including the policy 'owner' (person from the area with functional responsibility).

Before the 1st draft

Consult with students and colleagues at all University campuses:
- contact targeted individuals or groups with expertise
- add the policy to relevant Committee agenda
- ensure that operational aspects are scrutinised, e.g. by the Learning and Teaching Administrators' Forum (LTAF)
- ensure that all modes and locations of delivery are considered
- hold focus groups or workshops if there is a need for discussion
- provide feedback to contributors, e.g. next version of the document or summary of next stages of development

Seek approval

Submit the policy to SLEC for a recommendation:
- meet the deadline for papers to next meeting
- include the cover and policy document
- SLEC recommends approval to U/PSC or QSC
- U/PSC or QSC recommends approval to Senate

After approval

Prepare supporting documents	Procedures, a briefing paper and any related forms (Equality Impact Assessment/EIA), templates etc. should be prepared. These should be submitted to LTAF before implementation.
Communicate and Implement	The policy owner arranges for the policy to be added to the Learning and Teaching Policy Bank, emailed to SLEC and LTAF for wider distribution, emailed to those involved in the consultation and included in a list of new and reviewed policies produced by Academic Registry. Implementation also rests with the owner, who will address operational issues and amend supporting documents if required.

After implementation

In some cases a review 1-year post-implementation will be carried out so that the policy can be refined to address e.g. unforeseen operational issues.

Staff and students are encouraged to reflect on and raise concerns about policies at any time.

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Supporting Documents

Document templates: SLEC cover sheet
Policy Template
Briefing Paper – samples (Quality and Learning & Teaching)

Useful Links

Committee Structure for Learning and Teaching:	https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/docs/ltb-committee-structure.pdf
Learning and Teaching Policy Bank:	https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/policy-bank.htm
Learning and Teaching Board:	https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/learning-teaching-board.htm
Learning and Teaching Strategy 2013-2018:	https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/learning-teaching-strategy.htm
QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education:	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/
Student Learning Experience Committee:	https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/student-learning/student-learning-experience-committee.htm

Further Information

Pamela J Calabrese
Quality Enhancement Officer
Academic Registry
P.J.Calabrese@hw.ac.uk
+44(0)131 451 3805

Version History

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