

POLICY ON OVERSEAS GRADUATIONS



1. The aim of graduations is to:
 - Project a high quality image of Heriot-Watt University;
 - Celebrate achievement with staff, graduands and their families;
 - Mark the passage of a new relationship with students – as alumni, and gain publicity for the Watt Club, the alumni association of Heriot-Watt University.
2. Overseas graduations currently take place in Kuala Lumpur (biennially) and Russia. However, there is no formal arrangement to offer overseas graduations on a regular basis and this has led to disappointment in relation to the expectations of some overseas students. Benefits of staging overseas graduations include:
 - An opportunity for overseas students, particularly those unlikely to be able to travel to the UK, to participate in an event with their alma mater, engendering a sense of belonging for an increasingly dispersed body;
 - Personalising relationships with new graduates and enhancing links with existing alumni groups;
 - Raising the profile of HWU in overseas markets which we wish to penetrate further and against increasingly tough competition;
 - Strengthening links with partners (learning partners, companies, agents, distributors).
3. University policy is to allow graduations to take place overseas where:
 - A budget has been identified and expenditure approved in advance. A major contribution to funding should normally be provided externally (by such as industry, government, partners). However, the University may wish to consider providing start-up funds for Graduations in emerging markets where business interests could benefit;
 - Other objectives can be achieved (such as development of research or business links, cultural exchange, enhancement of alumni relations, positive publicity and marketing opportunities);
 - The number of graduands being presented is viable (normally 50+);
 - Adequate support is available from Heriot-Watt University, working in collaboration with relevant partners, for organisation of the event.
 - The support of the Academic Registrar and Director of Corporate Affairs is required before additional graduations take place.
4. The University must be represented at overseas ceremonies by either the Chancellor, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, Vice-Principal, Deputy Principal or Secretary of the University. A University Dean should normally be expected to attend and support staff may be required, depending on numbers. Where appropriate, an Alumni Office representative should be involved and associated Alumni events should be organised. The British Embassy and British Council should be made aware of the ceremony and invited to participate. Local Honorary Professors and Honorary Graduates should be invited to attend.
5. If an Approved Support Centre (ASC) requests a local graduation ceremony, the University must be satisfied that the ASC has the appropriate infrastructure in place to support the event and will work closely with the University to organise the ceremony. In relevant venues, ASCs are expected to contribute to local congregations.
6. An occasional alternative to a full graduation ceremony is a local celebratory event for graduates awarded degrees *in absentia* (for example, as happens currently in Trinidad). A standard procedure should be developed to maintain HWU quality standards and reputation.
7. Principal and Deans Committee must be informed about all plans for overseas graduation ceremonies and local celebratory events. Further consideration will be required for graduation ceremonies for students based on the Dubai Campus of the University.