Programme Transfer Policy

Policy

Purpose	This document provides the policy framework for student transfers between Heriot-Watt University degree programmes.
Scope	The policy applies to students studying on all Heriot-Watt University programmes of study.
	This policy covers programme transfers within the same School as well as to another School at Heriot-Watt University[1].
	This policy **does not** cover temporary transfers to another Heriot-Watt campus (inter-campus transfers).[2]
Policy Statement	The University Retention Strategy states that "there will be no unnecessary impediments to students seeking to change programmes, since retaining students within the University is a higher priority than retaining students within any School/discipline[3]."

The University is committed to improving student progression and to supporting every student in realising their academic potential. In order to realise this aim, a clear process is required to enable students to transfer degree programmes, if they are academically qualified to do so.

The new programme ought to take account of academic history at Heriot-Watt University, the pre-entry qualifications of the student and recognition of prior learning. The underlying aim of this policy is that a programme transfer will be allowed unless the student's prior study or subject knowledge does not fulfil the entry requirements of the new programme (as detailed in the prospectus). It is recognised that transfer to an alternative programme could be difficult after year 1 without the student repeating stages of study.

Students are able to request a programme transfer at any time during the academic year, but can only transfer at the start of semester 1 or 2.

It is recognised that transfer to an alternative programme may be dependent on availability of teaching resources, such as undergraduate lab space or equipment.

Programme transfer applications should be processed within the first 3 weeks of teaching. This is to ensure that the student is not too late to join their new programme.

Each School will have a named representative who is responsible for progressing any programme transfer applications and notifying Registry Services Directorate and Planning as required. They will be known as 'Change of Programme Coordinators'.

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[1] This may involve a permanent change of location, which should be noted on the application form. In addition to academic approval, a student requesting such a transfer must meet the visa requirements for the proposed location.
[2] Students may apply for an inter-campus transfer, which allows temporary transfer to another Heriot-Watt campus for a period of one semester or one academic year. Further information is available at: https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/goglobal/inter-campus-transfer.htm
[3] Heriot-Watt University Retention Strategy (staff only): https://intranet.hw.ac.uk/ps/registry/ar/lt/Pages/Retention-Strategy.aspx

Implementation

Programme Transfer within the same School

It is the responsibility of the School to:

- Receive and process programme transfer applications from their existing students;
- Liaise with the relevant Director of Studies/ Programme Director taking any relevant accreditation and academic issues into consideration (including pre-requisite courses);
- Take care not to exclude the opportunity for transfer on the basis of entry qualifications which may be the subject of contextual admissions or where a student's offer was untypical due to Clearing;
- Ensure that for transfers after year 1, the entry point on to the new programme takes into account prior learning and avoids unnecessary duplication of stages of study;
- Ensure that the reasons for transfer are fully considered and understood and that where poor performance is a factor, ensure that this is considered alongside other relevant factors;
- Consider implications on teaching resources, such as availability of undergraduate lab space/equipment;
- Ensure that the student is assigned a new personal tutor if required;
- Ensure the referral of any student to appropriate further sources of advice and guidance on any non-academic aspect of the transfer e.g. for funding advice, visa requirements etc.;
- Notify the Student Records Officer (Academic Registry) of approved transfers for Tier 4 visa holders (for reporting purposes).

Programme Transfer to a different School

It is the responsibility of the present School to:

- Receive and process programme transfer applications from their existing students, advising students and offering the opportunity to discuss reasons for transfer if appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the new School to:

- Consider programme transfer applications from students in a different School, taking any relevant accreditation and academic issues into consideration (including pre-requisite courses);
- Take care not to exclude the opportunity for transfer on the basis of entry qualifications which may be the subject of contextual admissions or where a student's offer was untypical due to Clearing;
- Ensure that for transfers after year 1, the entry point on to the new programme takes into account prior learning and avoids unnecessary duplication of stages of study;
- Ensure that the reasons for transfer are fully considered and understood and that where poor performance is a factor, ensure that this is considered alongside other relevant factors;
- Consider implications on teaching resources, such as availability of undergraduate lab space/equipment;
- Ensure that the student is assigned a new personal tutor if required;
- Ensure the referral of any student to appropriate further sources of advice and guidance on any non-academic aspect of the transfer e.g. for funding advice, visa requirements etc.;
- Notify the Student Records Officer (Academic Registry) of approved transfers for Tier 4 visa holders (for reporting purposes);
- Notify the Planning Office of programme transfers so that capped quotas of the two Schools can be adjusted, to ensure the limit on student numbers does not prohibit Schools from accepting transfer students, if academically qualified.

Support and related documents

Supporting Students

Registry Services Directorate will work with the Student Union and Student Support and Accommodation to promote the policy to the student body at all campuses and will provide non-academic support to students who are considering submitting a programme transfer application, liaising with the receiving School to aid transition and progression.

Further information and advice is also available from:
Schools (e.g. Student offices, Personal Tutors, Course Co-ordinators/Programme Directors)
Registry Services Directorate (e.g. Academic Registry, Student Induction and Transition Office)

Related Documents

The following documents are available from the Learning and Teaching Policy Bank (http://www.hw.ac.uk/committees/ltb/ltb-policies.htm):
* Programme Transfer application form [hyperlink];
* Programme Guidance notes [hyperlink];
* Student-facing referral chart for support [hyperlink]

The following policies and procedures are related to Programme Transfers and may also be considered:
* Temporary Suspension of Studies Guidance notes http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/leaving/temporary-suspension-studies.htm;
* Mitigating Circumstances policy and application http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm.
* University Retention Strategy (https://intranet.hw.ac.uk/ps/registry/ar/lt/Pages/Retention-Strategy.aspx)

Consultation and Review information

Date	Consultation	Brief Description of Amendment
Nov 15	Quality Enhancement Officer Registry Officer (Studies Committees) Student Induction and Transition Office Students Records Officer	
Dec 15	School Support Staff	
Jan 16	Student Learning Experience Committee	
Feb/Mar 16	Undergraduate & Postgraduate Studies Committees (USC & PSC)	
Apr 16	Academic Registrar Planning Manager Quality Enhancement Officer Student Induction and Transition Manager Students Records Officer	Revisions made in response to USC & PSC comments
Aug 16	Senate	Revisions made in response to Senate comments
Aug 17		Date of first review (thereafter every 5 years)

Heriot-Watt University Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Stage 1: Initial EIA

Heriot-Watt University: STAGE 1 Initial Equality Impact Assessment								
School		Area	Academic Registry	Person responsible for the assessment	Pamela Calabrese	Date of Stage 1 EIA		4 May 2016
Name of the Policy/Process to be assessed			Programme Transfer Policy	Is this a new or existing policy? (please circle)	**NEW**		**Does the policy impact on people?**	**Y**
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy			This document provides the policy framework for the University which should be used for all students who want to transfer between Heriot-Watt University degree programmes, within the same School as well as to another School.					
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy, please explain			The University is committed to improving student progression and to supporting every student in realising their academic potential. In order to realise this aim, a clear process is required to enable students to transfer degree programmes if they are academically qualified to do so.					

3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy and in what way?	**Students**: They will have a clear process, guidelines and support should they wish to transfer degree programme. **Schools:** The policy and process for handling programme transfer applications are clear and recommend a named member of support staff in each School in order to ensure that programme transfers are handled effectively. Also, this policy requires Planning to adjust capped quotas of the two Schools, following notification from the School, so that the limit on student numbers is not prohibiting Schools from accepting students from another School, if academically qualified.
4. Is any data available about the policy, e.g. feedback from users?	No.
5. What outcomes are wanted from this policy?	The University is committed to improving student progression and to supporting every student in realising their academic potential. This policy will help to realise this aim by ensuring there is a clear process in place to allow programme transfer for those students who are academically qualified. Specific outcomes are as follows: 1. Clarity regarding academic considerations: When considering a programme transfer application, academic history at Heriot-Watt University, the pre-entry qualifications of the student and recognition of prior learning should be considered. The transfer will be allowed unless a student's prior study or subject knowledge does not fulfil the entry requirements of the new programme (as detailed in the prospectus). It is recognised that transfer to an alternative programme could be difficult after year 1 without the student repeating stages of study. 2. Clarity regarding timing: Students will be able to request a programme transfer at any time during the academic year, but applications should be processed within the first 3 weeks of teaching and a transfer can only take place at the start of semester 1 or 2. 3. Clarity regarding responsibility: The policy clearly sets out the responsibilities of the Schools concerned, and of support services. Each School will have a named representative who is responsible for progressing programme transfer applications and notifying Registry Services Directorate and Planning as required. They will be known as 'Change of Programme Coordinators'.

6. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	It is important that a named person in each School is assigned in order to liaise effectively with other Schools, Registry Services Directorate and Planning. This will also provide an effective service to the student and ensure that the programme transfer is handled well in order to aid student progression and retention. Students need to have effective guidance, promoted effectively through various platforms (website, handbooks, academic mentors etc.).
7. In which equality areas are there concerns that the policy **could** have a differential impact? (If no go to question 8. If yes please circle then continue to question 9)	**NO** **Go to question 8**
8. If you answered 'No' to question 7, give details of how you reached your decision. Answer N/A to remaining questions and circle 'No' to question 15.	This is a global policy, and is about every student's entitlement to transfer degree programme and the processes which will be implemented by each School. The policy is designed to ensure consistency in practice and to remove any differential impact based on mode of study, campus and School etc..
9. If you circled responses to question 7, what concerns are there that the policy **could** have a differential impact on relevant groups? What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this Please explain (continue on the separate Question 9* table if necessary)	N/A

10. Demonstrate how you have involved stakeholders in the Stage 1 EIA	N/A					
11. What are the risks associated with the policy in relation to differential impact?	N/A					
12. Could the differential impact identified in 6-11 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy? If no, outline why and go to question 14	**YES**	**NO**	Please Explain	N/A		
13. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason	**YES**	**NO**	Please Explain	N/A		
14. As a result of this assessment is Stage 2 EIA necessary?	**YES (go to Q16)**	**NO (go to Q15)**	**15.** Date for future review of policy/function	Initially, annual review and then on a five-yearly period after that.	**16.** Start Date for Stage 2 EIA	

*EIA not required

Question 9* Additional Information suggested form	
Equality Group	**Concerns re differential impact**
Race	

Disability	
Gender	
Age	
Sexual Orientation	
Religion and Belief	
Caring Responsibilities	
Transgendered/ Transsexual	