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Part 1:
Operational Aspects of the PSC
1 Introduction to the Postgraduate Studies Committee and its Handbook

As a committee of the Senate, the Postgraduate Studies Committee (PSC) has delegated responsibility for all academic aspects of postgraduate study, including: the approval of, and major modifications to, disciplines and programmes; maintenance of academic standards; approval of External Examiners; approval of requests for additional assessment opportunities, amendments to registration and compulsory withdrawals from the University; consideration of student appeals relating to progress; approvals of research supervisors and postgraduate research awards.

The Committee reports directly to the Senate and the Chair, one of the Deans of the University, is a member of the Senate.

The Committee members comprise: the Principal and the Deans of the University as ex officio members; five members appointed by the Senate, of whom at least two are members of the Senate; eight members nominated by the eight School/Institutes (one per School/Institute or Institute). The Committee is clerked by a member of the Academic Registry.

The requirement for this Handbook arose out of a recommendation from the Deans of the University that a manual was needed for new members of both the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) and the PSC, particularly to enable them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the operation of the Committees and thereby be both efficient and effective in fulfilling their remit. As the University’s approvals processes became more complex, with a greater emphasis on scrutiny of higher risk proposals, there was an additional need to ensure that U/PSC members were properly equipped to consider such proposals in ways which benefitted both the institution and the proposing School/Institute.

The Handbook is separated into two parts: Part 1 deals with the operational aspects of the PSC; Part 2 is dedicated to the role of the Committee and its members in the University’s Programme Approval Process. This focus on programme approval reflects the fact that scrutiny and approval are a fundamental responsibility of the PSC, as it is by this means that the University assures itself of the quality and standards of new or modified programmes. Part 2 does not differentiate between the USC and PSC in the approval of programmes, as it was deemed useful for members of both Committees to have an understanding of the entire process.

The Handbook is updated as required, but particularly where major changes have taken place in the remit or the operation of the Committee or in the University’s programme approval process.

The Handbook aims to provide a comprehensive overview of all aspects of the PSC, and is intended to support members in executing their roles on the Committee. It is hoped that, in addition, the wider group of staff involved in PSC-related activity, in both School/Institutes and Professional Services, will find the Handbook useful.

Academic Registry
August 2011
2 The PSC

2.1 Remit of the PSC

The Committee’s principal function is to be responsible, on behalf of the Senate, for all academic aspects of postgraduate study and to report to the Senate. The other key aspects of the Committee’s remit (as extracted from Regulation 17) are:

(a) To be responsible, on behalf of the Senate, for all academic aspects of postgraduate study and to report to the Senate.
(b) To maintain the University’s academic standards, support a co-ordinated approach to quality assurance and enhancement, and advise the Senate on related academic matters.
(c) To approve, on behalf of the Senate, the academic content, delivery and administrative arrangements for new and modified programmes and courses (as guided by the University’s Guidelines on Approval of Programmes, Courses and Modules).
(d) To approve, on behalf of the Senate, the appointment of External Examiners for postgraduate taught programmes and courses of study, Examiners for research degrees, approved supervisors for postgraduate research degrees and thesis supervisors.
(e) To approve, on behalf of the Senate, requests from School/Institutes and students for additional assessment opportunities, amendments to registration and compulsory withdrawals from the University.
(f) To approve, on behalf of the Senate, recommendations for the award of research degrees
(g) To recommend to the Senate modifications to the University’s Ordinances and Regulations relating to postgraduate programmes and courses of study.
(h) To consider, on behalf of the Senate, and in terms of Regulation 36, student appeals relating to progress.
(i) To consider any other matter as directed by the Senate.

The Committee is also responsible for progressing or engaging with institutional policy development. Such developments are usually undertaken in conjunction with relevant committees, primarily USC, Quality and Standards Committee (QSC), and Learning and Teaching Board (LTB)\(^1\).

The Committee aims to communicate and consult effectively and efficiently across the University on policy development and on any other matters related to Postgraduate study which require engagement of the wider community.

2.2 Composition and Membership of the PSC

The composition of PSC is as follows:

- Principal of the University, \textit{ex officio}
- Deans of the University, \textit{ex officiis} (one of whom acts as Chair of PSC)
- Five members appointed by the Senate, of whom at least two are members of the Senate
- Eight members nominated by the six School/Institutes and two Institutes which offer postgraduate provision (one per School/Institute or Institute).
- Clerk, Academic Registry (in attendance)

\(^1\) An organisational chart of the University’s committee structure, with hyperlinks to the websites of individual committees, can be accessed at: \url{http://www.hw.ac.uk/committees/committee_structure.pdf}
The Committee may co-opt persons to provide specialist input.

The membership (and terms of reference) are provided for information at the first meeting of each session.

### 2.2.1 Term of Office

Members of the Committee, other than a member *ex officio*, are appointed for three years, ending on the last day of July. Members are eligible for re-appointment, but are not permitted to serve more than two consecutive terms of three years. Any extension of the number of consecutive terms of three years requires approval from the Senate.

### 2.2.2 Casual Vacancy

A casual vacancy on the Committee will be filled as soon as possible by the Nominating Working Group (Senate) which will make a recommendation to the Senate. An individual appointed to fill a casual vacancy will hold office for the unexpired period of office of his or her predecessor plus one further full academic year. Such individuals will be eligible for re-appointment.

### 2.2.2 Chair

The Chair of the Committee is appointed by the Senate.

### 2.3 Website of the PSC

The Committee has a website at: [http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/committees/psc.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/committees/psc.htm), which the remit, composition and membership, dates of meetings, agendas and minutes. The website is updated after each meeting of the Committee.

### 2.4 Matters delegated by the PSC

In order to maximise time available at meetings for consideration of more complex items, several routine matters of business have been delegated by the PSC.

The Chair considers and approves External Examiners for postgraduate taught programmes; nomination of supervisors for research students; nomination of examiners for research students; limited access to theses requests; approved supervisors for research students; extensions to prescribed length of theses requests; amendments to registration requests; requests for additional assessment opportunities on behalf of the Committee, although all such approvals are reported to PSC for information. In the case of more complicated applications or nominations, the Chair will invite the entire Committee to consider the proposal at a scheduled meeting.

The Student Progress Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of PSC, with a remit to: consider applications and appeals from postgraduate students for appeals against progression decisions.

The majority of student amendment to registration applications are for a temporary suspension of studies and extension to period of study and these are considered solely by the Chair and reported for information. For extensions of study beyond the time allowed under the Regulations, the Chair will invite the entire Committee to
consider the request at a scheduled meeting. Appeals against progression decisions are considered by the Student Progress Sub-Committee. A copy of the applicant's paperwork is sent to each member of the Student Progress Sub-Committee so that views can be shared. A decision is then made by the Chair.

3 Operation of the PSC

3.1 Standing Agenda Items and Typical Meeting Structure

Items considered by the PSC may originate from recommendations made by the Senate or may be forwarded by other committees, particularly the QSC. However, the majority of the business of the Committee comprises standing agenda items which feature at each meeting. The order of business at each of the Committee’s meetings typically proceeds as follows:

- Welcome and Apologies
- Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- Matters Arising
- Chair’s Business
- Approval of thesis title and appointment of examiners for research students
- Amendments to registration
- Reports from Examiners
- Appointment of External Examiners
- Appointment of approved supervisors for postgraduate research students
- Approval of supervisor nominations for postgraduate research students
- Applications for exclusion from continued study or assessment
- Student appeals on progress
- New Programmes and Modifications to Programmes for approval
- Any Other Business
- Date of Next Meeting

3.2 Management of Standing Agenda Items

The Committee manages its consideration of standing agenda items typically by devolving the detailed aspects of scrutiny to designated individuals, who may be members of the Committee or staff with specialist knowledge/expertise. For example, the Student Progress Sub-Committee (see 2.4 above). The Academic Registry is responsible for managing the External Examiner system for postgraduate taught programmes at the institutional level and will submit recommendations for the appointment of External Examiners for endorsement, and approval, by the Committee.

Programme proposals require consideration and approval by the entire Committee, but each proposal is specifically allocated to two named members for more detailed scrutiny and reporting back to the entire Committee.

Where appropriate, aspects of regular business may be considered by the Chair outwith Committee meetings and reported for information or for approval.
Through devolution of standing items, the Committee is able to ensure that discussion at meetings is focused on more complex items, institution-wide issues or matters requiring input from all members.

3.3 Schedule of Meetings

The Committee meets eight times per session: August, October, November, December, January, March, and April;

A schedule of meetings for each academic year is issued prior to the start of each session; each schedule lists the meetings for two academic years. Meetings are scheduled so as to ensure timely reporting to meetings of the Senate and usually take place on Tuesdays. The start time is typically 2.15 pm, with an expected duration of two hours, which may be extended if more detailed discussion of particular items is required. Additional meetings may be required for more detailed consideration of particular items or in response to requests from the Senate or the University Executive.

Cancellation, rescheduling or inclusion of additional meetings will be notified to members by the Clerk as soon as possible, and within not less than five working days.

3.4 Agenda and Papers

Agenda items considered by the Committee are primarily School/Institute-specific proposals, but also include University-level issues. In addition, the Committee may generate its own strategic agenda items, identifying areas of policy or procedure related to postgraduate study which need to be developed.

3.4.1 Notifying agenda items

Deadline dates for submission of papers and agenda items are circulated to members of the Committee, Directors of Learning and Teaching and postgraduate administrators in School/Institutes at the start of each session.

Papers and possible agenda items should be notified to the Clerk by the deadlines issued. Items notified after the specified deadline will be included on the agenda only with the agreement of the Chair; otherwise they will be held over until the next meeting. Tabled items will not be considered, as there is insufficient time for scrutiny by the Committee.

The agenda is typically set two weeks in advance of each meeting. The Chair and the Clerk will determine whether notified items are matters for the Committee or for another of the University’s Committees (usually the QSC).

Members are requested to identify all matters to the Clerk in advance of the meeting, including any urgent issues, in preference to raising matters not previously notified to the Clerk under the ‘Any Other Business’ item.

3.4.2 Preparation of papers

Papers are prepared by the Clerk, usually in conjunction with other individuals, such as: the Chair, members of the Committee, staff in Academic Registry
or academic/administrative staff in School/Institutes who are submitting proposals.

3.4.3 Circulation of agenda and papers
The agenda and papers are circulated a week in advance of each meeting. These are issued in hard copy to Committee members and, for information, to Directors of Learning and Teaching, the Academic Registrar & Deputy Secretary, the Head of Senate Services and the Head of Quality Enhancement. A summary of proposals to be scrutinised at the meeting is emailed to Committee members, identifying reviewers of both taught programmes (see 3.6 below) and postgraduate award examination reports. The meeting date, time and location is confirmed in this email, and a note included, stating that hard copy papers have been sent.

Minutes of the previous meeting are included in the main papers; an e-version will have been already issued approximately two weeks after the relevant meeting.

Additional papers, typically including ‘to follow’ papers, are kept to a minimum, but on some occasions are unavoidable (eg if papers are being provided by other Committees). Every effort will be made to ensure that all such papers are issued electronically before the meeting, so that members have sufficient opportunity to consider them in advance.

3.5 Scrutiny of Programme Proposals
All Committee members are expected to read and comment on proposals for new programmes and modifications to programmes. However, to ensure thorough scrutiny and to make best use of the meeting time, each proposal is assigned to specific members of the Committee to review prior to the meeting. Reviewers are chosen by the Chair and in such way to ensure that the task is shared equally among Committee members over the course of the session. Typically two reviewers are assigned to each proposal, based on expertise where feasible and not be expected to review a proposal from the member’s own School/Institute. Where a proposal is being re-submitted to the Committee, the original reviewers are generally re-assigned.

The summary of proposals sent out with the meeting papers and agenda indicates which members have been assigned to review specific proposals. Reviewers are expected to report back to the meeting with detailed comments. If unable to attend, a reviewer is asked to pass comments to their fellow reviewer and the Clerk, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, so that these can be shared with the Committee.

Once a proposal has been scrutinised at the meeting, a decision on approval is taken. If not approved, the Committee is likely to request further information from the School/Institute, or particular actions, either to provide clarity or to strengthen the proposal. The Committee may agree that Chair’s action be taken to approve the programme once all of the points raised have been satisfactorily addressed, in which case the School/Institute submits amendments to the Chair via the Clerk.

In some cases the requested amendments are more extensive and require re-submission of the proposal to a subsequent meeting of the Committee.
It should be noted that the PSC will only give ‘approval in principle’ in exceptional circumstances (see section 8.14).

3.6 Scrutiny of Postgraduate Awards

All Committee members are expected to read and comment on the Examiners' reports and recommendation for the following postgraduate research awards: Master of Science by Research (MSc), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Engineering (EngD), Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) and Doctor of Science (DSc). However, to ensure thorough scrutiny and to make best use of the meeting time, each report is assigned to specific members of the Committee to review prior to the meeting. Reviewers are chosen by the Chair and in such a way to ensure that the task is shared equally among Committee members over the course of the session. Typically two reviewers are assigned to each report and are not permitted to review a report for research students they are currently supervising or have examined.

The summary of reports is sent out with the meeting papers and the agenda indicates which members have been assigned to review the reports. Reviewers are expected to report back to the meeting with detailed comments. If unable to attend, a reviewer is asked to pass comments to their fellow reviewer and the Clerk, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, so that these can be shared with the Committee.

Once a report has been scrutinised at the meeting, a decision to make the award or not is taken. If the recommendation of the Examiners is not approved, the Committee will seek further information from the Examiners’ and/or from the School/Institute.

In some cases the requested amendments to the theses are more extensive and may require re-submission and/or a further oral examination. The reports will be reviewed at a subsequent meeting of the Committee.

3.7 Decision-Making and Voting

The Committee’s remit allows it to make decisions on, and thereby approve, proposals related to: new/modified programmes; appointment of external examiners for postgraduate taught programmes; nomination of supervisors for research students; nomination of examiners for research students; approved supervisors for research students; awards of research degrees. All such decisions are reported to the Senate for information. On policy or procedural matters which require approval from the Senate or input from other Committees, the PSC will convey its decisions in the form of recommendations.

Voting rights are specified in Regulation 17. All full members are entitled to vote, as required, at meetings of the Committee, although only those who are Senate members are eligible to vote on issues involving functions delegated by the Senate. Co-opted persons who are not full members and individuals invited to attend meetings are not eligible to vote. The Chair has a deliberative and a casting vote.
3.8 Non-Attendance

Members are encouraged to attend all meeting of the Committee. Anyone unable to attend a meeting should notify the Clerk in advance, particularly members who have been assigned programme proposals or Examiner reports for scrutiny (see 3.5 and 3.6 above). Members who fail to attend three consecutive meetings will be required to report to the Chair on their absences.

If a member is unable to attend a meeting where decisions on policy or procedure are expected to be taken, then he or she is invited to submit views (either as an individual or on behalf of the School/Institute, depending on the nature of the consultation) in writing prior to the meeting.

In the absence of the Chair, the Committee can appoint a Deputy Chair from amongst its full members who are present at the meeting. Alternatively, the role of Deputy Chair may be allocated in advance by the Chair to the other Dean of the University. In the absence of the Clerk, the Academic Registrar & Deputy Secretary will provide a substitute Clerk.

3.9 Quorum

As a Committee of the Senate with powers delegated by the Senate, the quorum necessary to transact business is three members of the Committee who are members of the Senate.

In accordance with Regulation 17: Standing Committees of the Senate, in the absence of a quorum, no business will be transacted other than the adjournment of the meeting. Notice of the adjourned meeting will be sent to all members of the standing committee at least seven days before the date of the adjourned meeting. At the adjourned meeting, the business for which the original meeting was called may be completed in the absence of a quorum.

3.10 Minutes and Action Points

The Minutes of each meeting are produced by the Clerk and signed off, after required amendment, by the Chair. Minutes are circulated electronically to Committee members usually within two weeks of the meeting. Members are invited to notify any factual errors in the Minutes to the Clerk before the next meeting; these will be announced by the Chair at the next meeting prior to the Committee being invited to accept the Minutes as an accurate record.

The Clerk is responsible for circulating action points to designated individuals within one week of the meeting so that such individuals have ample time to progress and complete any actions against them. The Clerk will follow up on actions no later than 10 days prior to the next meeting in order to receive a progress report.

Routine ‘Matters Arising’ from the Minutes are reported to the Committee though a separate information sheet, which is issued with the agenda and papers for the each meeting. The ‘Matters Arising Information Sheet’ aims to minimise reporting on routine matters from the previous meeting and increase time for considering scheduled items of business.
3.11 Reporting to the Senate

As a standing committee of the Senate, the PSC is required to report at least once per session to the Senate. In practice, a report from PSC is presented at every meeting of the Senate. The report to the Senate is produced by the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair, and adheres to the format set out in the Senate Report Guidelines.

The report represents a summary of key points from the meeting (without the detail of the Minutes), categorised according to matters for approval or for information. The Clerk of the Senate will inform the Clerk of PSC of the outcome of the Senate's consideration of items highlighted for approval, identifying actions to be undertaken.

The Committee brings relevant matters, either for consideration or information, to the attention of the other Committees of the Senate, particularly QSC and USC, as well as to the LTB.

3.12 Reporting to School/Institutes and Professional Services

As part of its ethos of engagement across the institution, discussions and decisions related to the Committee must be reported to School/Institutes and Professional Services. Such reporting is the responsibility of the representative on the Committee. All PSC decisions and discussions should be communicated widely unless paperwork and decisions are identified as confidential.

In the case of School/Institutes, each member should ensure that his or her Director of Research (DoR), and where appropriate Head of School/Institute, is informed of pertinent issues and decisions. DoRs should also ensure that staff, and students where appropriate, are properly informed and that individuals who may be directly affected are fully briefed.

The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that relevant individuals in the Professional Services (most usually, colleagues in Academic Registry) are properly informed of the Committee’s discussions and decisions.

The Clerk will liaise directly with Committee members regarding information to be communicated more widely across the University, and will provide summaries to assist representatives in this process, and will post relevant papers on the web. Such communication is particularly fundamental in the case of policy initiatives and is necessary to ensure the effective engagement of all relevant staff in such activities.

3.13 Reporting to the PSC

3.13.1 Reports from Consultations

As the Committee is responsible, at the institutional level, for academic aspects related to postgraduate study, it will frequently require the views of staff across the University on proposed policy developments. The Clerk will provide members with discussions papers, questions for consideration and details of format and timescales for responses for all internal and external consultations.
The Clerk is responsible for circulating consultation papers to the School/Institutes and relevant Professional Services; most often, for Academic Registry, and for determining the most appropriate means of gaining the collective view. Responses returned to the Clerk must be representative of the shared view of the School/Institute, not the personal opinion of any one individual.

3.13.2 Papers for the Committee
Individuals, who would like to present a paper to the Committee for consideration should contact the Clerk in the first instance. Such papers are primarily programme proposals or examiners’ reports; the former requiring signatures from the Head of School/Institute and Director of Learning and Teaching. The Clerk will advise the sponsor of details such as the meeting at which the paper will be considered and of the format of the paper. In the case of programme proposals, advice will be provided, if required, on the particular templates to be used.

3.14 Participating in Devolved Activities
As outlined in section 2.4, much of the Committee’s activity is devolved to, for example, the Chair, the Student Progress Sub-Committee or pairs of nominated reviewers. The Committee may also establish working groups to take forward the development of policies or procedures. All members are expected to volunteer as participants in such groups to ensure that the work of the group is continually influenced by the Committee’s objectives and to facilitate reporting to and from the Committee. Members are encouraged to invite their colleagues to participate in the Committee’s various activities, thereby providing a wider spectrum of views and experiences. The Clerk will provide details such as the remit (as endorsed by the Committee), number of meetings, duration of activity and expected commitment to assist members in seeking volunteers. The Clerk will also advise groups on methods of reporting, administrative support and any other relevant matters.

4 Members of the PSC

4.1 Formulation of Membership
As a standing committee of the Senate, the membership of the PSC is prescribed in Regulation 17: Standing Committees of the Senate.

4.2 Roles of Members of the Committee
As a standing committee of the Senate, the role of the members of the PSC is prescribed in Regulation 17: Standing Committees of the Senate.

All members of the Committee have a multi-layered representative function. School/Institute nominees represent not only the views of the PSC and their own School/Institute, but also the University as a whole. Members appointed by the Senate are
responsible for ensuring that the recommendations of the Senate are taken account of.

The roles and responsibilities of the various categories of membership are:

1. Chair

   The responsibilities of the Chair with regard to the Committee are to:
   
   • provide leadership to move forward the institutional priorities related to postgraduate study and ensure that the Committee achieves its overall objectives.
   
   • chair meetings and ensure that meetings run efficiently and effectively.
   
   • schedule items across meetings so as to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to bring forward items for consideration and that items are not repeatedly dropped from the agenda.
   
   • ensure that appropriate papers and information are provided to enable members to make an informed contribution to discussions.
   
   • present the Committee’s views to the Senate and other committees as appropriate and to provide feedback from such Committees.
   
   • provide specialist knowledge regarding approvals procedures and quality assurance and enhancement.

2. School/Institute Nominees

   The responsibilities of the School/Institute nominees are to:
   
   • consider, and report to the Committee, programme proposals and examiner reports allocated by the Chair via the Clerk.
   
   • provide advice on proposals specific to their School/Institute.
   
   • discuss issues in School/Institutes as appropriate and to bring to the Committee their considered views.
   
   • review and revise School/Institute policies in light of recommendations from the Committee.
   
   • bring items to the attention of the senior management of School/Institutes.
   
   • advise on the implementation of agreed policies and procedures.
   
   • identify policy and procedure items for consideration by the Committee.

3. Senate Appointees

   Although the Senate appointees are members of academic staff in particular School/Institutes, their additional role is to:
   
   • ensure that the recommendations of the Senate are taken into consideration, as appropriate, by the Committee.
   
   • provide verbal reports, if required, at meetings of the Senate in order to
supplement the report given by the Chair.

4. Clerk

The role of the Clerk is to:

- provide administrative support and advice for the Committee and relevant sub-committees or working groups.
- draft proposed policies and procedures for consideration.
- provide specialist input to discussions.
- support School/Institutes in submitting programme proposals for approval.

4.3 Contribution of Members

The success of the Committee in fulfilling its terms of reference and its responsibilities to the Senate and the University is dependent on the active engagement of its members both during and outwith meetings.

4.3.1 Preparation for Meetings

For the Committee’s meetings to be efficient and effective, members must be well-prepared and informed regarding the issues to be discussed. Such preparation includes reporting on the collective views of colleagues in response to consultations as well as reading the papers circulated in advance of the meeting, and being familiar with the key issues and proposals.

Coversheets for each agenda item will highlight key points for consideration and action required of the Committee, thereby enabling members to focus their preparation.

The allocation of programme proposals and examiners’ reports to pairs of reviewers requires members to undertake detailed scrutiny and to provide a comprehensive report to the Committee in order to assure academic quality and standards.

4.3.2 At Meetings

Irrespective of their position, the contribution and views of all members are regarded as equally valid. To that end, the Chair will ensure that representatives from the School/Institutes and Senate have an opportunity, particularly during meetings, to contribute to issues under consideration. As the situation demands, the Chair will actively invite all members to contribute in order to ensure that the views of each person in attendance is heard during meetings.

4.3.3 Outwith Meetings

In addition to preparation for, and contribution to, meetings of the Committees, members will also be involved in additional Committee-related activities such as briefing or training events (e.g. on the approvals process in general or for particular activities, such as Restructuring the Academic Year or the Postgraduate Research Student Code of Practice/Rest of UK fees).
Other activities involving Committee members outwith meetings are outlined in previous sections of this Handbook and include: reporting to colleagues; disseminating information and Committee decisions; participating in working groups, etc (see sections 3.12-3.14).

5 Useful Documentation Related to Postgraduate Provision

5.1 PSC

Terms of reference, membership and minutes of the PSC can be found on the Committee’s website at: http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/committees/psc.htm. Deadline dates for the submission of papers are also published.

5.2 Approvals Procedures

Detailed information on the approvals procedures is provided in Part 2 of this Handbook. The various forms, templates and guidance notes, including a useful summary/diagram of the approvals processes and making updates to the Student Administration System (SAS), can be accessed at: http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/approval-procedures.htm

5.3 Policy and Procedural Information

An extensive series of policies, procedures, guidelines and codes of practice is available on the Academic Registry website: http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/policies.htm. Relevant information includes: accreditation of prior learning; compulsory withdrawals; student complaints, appeals and discipline.

Additional policies and guidelines can be found on the quality section of the Academic Registry website: http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/. Relevant information includes: partnership approvals; annual monitoring and review; internal review; external examiners; programme handbook templates.

5.4 Postgraduate Research Awards

The procedures and schedule of dates for the submission of postgraduate thesis is provided at http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/examinations/thesis.htm. Guidance for staff and postgraduate research students is provided by the Postgraduate Research Student Code of Practice available at http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/resources/cop-pgr.pdf

6 Useful Contacts in the University (for Postgraduate Matters)

PSC

Contact details of the current members of the PSC are available via the “people finder” link on the University’s homepage. Current membership can be found on the
PSC website at: [http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/committees/psc.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/committees/psc.htm)

It is recommended that all communications with the Committee as a whole should be channelled via the Clerk rather than individual members.

Key Board Contacts:

- **Clerk:** Sam Bitar, Registry Officer (Studies Committees)
  
  tel: ext 4575   email: s.bitar@hw.ac.uk

**Professional Services**

Academic Registry

- ext 3727; email [registry@hw.ac.uk](mailto:registry@hw.ac.uk); website: [http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/](http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/)

Recruitment & Admissions:

- For contact details, see [http://www.hw.ac.uk/about/contact.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/about/contact.htm);
  
  website: [http://www.hw.ac.uk/recruitment/](http://www.hw.ac.uk/recruitment/)

**Careers Advisory Service**

- Edinburgh: ext 3391/3396; [careers@hw.ac.uk](mailto:careers@hw.ac.uk)
- Scottish Borders Campus: ext 2131; [careerssbc@hw.ac.uk](mailto:careerssbc@hw.ac.uk); website: [http://www.hw.ac.uk/careers](http://www.hw.ac.uk/careers)

**Library (incl. Effective Learning Advisor)**

- For contact details, see [http://www.hw.ac.uk/library/ask.html](http://www.hw.ac.uk/library/ask.html)
  
  website: [http://www.hw.ac.uk/library/](http://www.hw.ac.uk/library/)
7 Further Information: Scottish Funding Council, Quality Assurance Agency, Universities Scotland

A range of useful information on sector-wide developments related to postgraduate provision, particularly learning and teaching, can be found on the following websites:

- Scottish Funding Council (SFC): [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/); for sections related to learning and teaching, see tabs on the SFC home page
  
  **Areas of interest:**
  - Annual Teaching Grant and Funding Mechanisms
  - Condition of Learning & Teaching Grant
  - Employability and Skills
  - Access, Inclusion and Progression
  - Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement
  - Performance Indicators

- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA): [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/); for the Scottish section of the website, see [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/default.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/default.asp)
  
  **Areas of interest:**
  - Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR)
  - Academic Infrastructure, incl: Code of Practice, Programme Specifications & Subject Benchmarks
  - Events for the Scottish HE sector

- Enhancement Themes (Scottish sector): [http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/)
  
  **Areas of interest - Current themes:**
  - Developing and Supporting the Curriculum (integrating theme)
  
  **Completed themes**
  - Assessment
  - Integrative Assessment
  - Responding to Student Needs
  - Flexible Delivery
  - Employability
  - The First Year
  - Research-Teaching Linkages
  - Graduates for the 21st Century

- Universities Scotland: [http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/](http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/)
  
  **Areas of interest:**
  - Social inclusion and wider access
  - Learning and teaching
  - Academic Quality and Standards
  - Internationalisation

- Scottish Government: Higher Education
  [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640)
  
  **Areas of interest:**
  - International activity
  - Academic Quality
  - Joint Future Thinking Taskforce on Universities
  - Graduate Destinations
• Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF):  http://www.scqf.org.uk/
  
  Areas of interest:
  – Europe and International
  – Accreditation/Recognition of Prior Learning
  – FE-HE Transition

• Higher Education Academy:  http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/
  
  Areas of interest:
  – Academy Update and Exchange
  – Events and Resources
  – Networking and funding opportunities, incl. national Subject Centres
  – Student Experience Surveys  http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/student-experience-surveys
  – Academy in Scotland:  http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/scotland/home

• Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA):  http://www.hesa.ac.uk/
  
  Areas of interest:
  – National Performance Indicators (incl. Student Numbers, Progression, Degree Classification, Employability)
  – Longitudinal Survey of Graduate Destinations

• Unistats - the UK FE and HE comparison site:  http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/
  
  Areas of interest:
  – UCAS entry scores
  – National Performance Indicators (incl. Teaching Quality & Graduate Destinations)
  – Results of National Student Survey (see also  http://www.thestudentsurvey.com)

• Bologna Framework for European Higher Education:  http://www.ehea.info/
  
  Areas of interest:
  – Overview of the Bologna Process
  – European Credit and Transfer (ECTS) framework
  – European Diploma Supplement

• Research Councils UK (RCUK):  http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/
  
  Areas of interest:
  – Research Policy
  – Research Careers
  – Knowledge Exchange and Impact

International Student Barometer  
http://www.i-graduate.org/

Contact Recruitment and Admissions for further information  
website: http://www.hw.ac.uk/recruitment/
Part 2:
Approvals Process and Role of the PSC
8 The Role of the Senate and its Committees

8.1 University Charter and Statutes

The University is an independent institution established by Royal Charter. The Charter defines the objects, powers, officers and statutory bodies of the University. It defines the University as a teaching, research and examining body and includes such fundamental powers as those of awarding degrees.

The Statutes prescribe details concerning the members of the University, officers of the University, the membership and functions of statutory bodies (including Court and Senate), conditions of service which apply to academic staff of the University and other miscellaneous provisions (such as the service of notices and contracts).

The University is required to have in place processes to ensure that the degrees and other qualifications that are awarded are consistent with the rest of the UK higher education sector.

8.2 Role of the Court, the Senate and the University Executive

The Court is the governing body with responsibility for ensuring that the University is properly managed and has particular responsibility for effecting the long-term sustainability of the institution and for maintaining its reputation.

The Court has delegated much of the day-to-day running of the University to the University Executive (UE). UE is required to report to the Court regularly and to seek approval from the Court for matters such as finance, staffing and estates.

The Senate has ultimate responsibility for academic matters and, in this respect, it is the supreme academic body of the institution. The Senate reports to the Court.

The Court approves the Ordinances of the University, which set out how the institution is governed within the general framework of the Charter and Statutes. Ordinances related to academic matters are recommended for approval by the Senate.

The Senate approves the Regulations of the University, which set out the framework for the academic activity of the University, the education of its students, and such other matters as lie within the functions of the Senate (such as committees and awards).

8.3 Quality Assurance Processes

Although the University is an independent institution, it receives public funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and must, therefore, abide by the conditions of grant as set out by the SFC.

The SFC requires the University to have formal processes to ensure that academic standards are secure and the quality of the student learning is maintained. In common with the rest of the UK HE sector, the University has three major activities (collectively referred to as the "Quality Assurance Framework") designed to assure quality:
- Design and approval of courses and programmes
- Annual Monitoring of delivery of programmes
- Periodic review by external peers

Courses and programmes are designed by subject specialists in School/Institutes. The approval of programmes is the responsibility of the Senate, acting on recommendations of the USC and PSC (in practice, the Senate has delegated programme approval to its Studies Committees and approval of most types of courses to School/Institutes; see sections 8.12 & 8.13). Annual Monitoring is the responsibility of School/Institutes, reporting to the QSC. Periodic review is undertaken by specialist teams of peers, under the direction of QSC, and reporting the Senate, UE, the Court and the SFC.

The Academic Registry has administrative responsibility for all aspects of institutional approval, monitoring and review.

8.4 External Reference Points

When academic judgements are being made, a wide range of external reference points is used to ensure that the quality and standards of the University are in line with the rest of the UK. This is important to ensure that the UK retains its global position as an attractive place for students to study.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), working with the Higher Education Sector, has developed a set of key reference documents:

- Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework
- Subject Benchmark Statements
- Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality & Standards in UK HE

There are similar reference guides from the governments of the non-UK countries in which the University delivers programmes, requirements of professional institutions (both UK and non-UK) as well as other good practice guides published by student bodies, the QAA, Funding Councils etc.

8.5 Management of Academic Standards

**Academic standards** refer to the academic level and the amount of the knowledge that a student must have learned before he or she can receive a degree (or credit). These standards should be broadly comparable across subjects and institutions. A good university is one in which many students achieve the standard necessary for a good degree.

Academic standards are assured and managed by a number of processes. The Common Assessment and Progression System (CAPS) sets out a consistent series of criteria for making judgements about the grade that a student receives for each course. Each School/Institute has a Moderation Policy which sets out the local process of assuring that academic staff are making consistent judgements. Exam Boards ensure that the moderation processes are implemented effectively and allow staff involved in a programme to make a collective judgement about student performance and grades.
The External Examiner(s) for taught programmes of study have oversight of the School/Institute processes and report formally to the University. The External Examiner is not responsible for assuring standards, but for ensuring that the School/Institute is managing standards.

The Studies Committees are responsible for ensuring that the assessment scheme for a programme is of appropriate standard, but are not responsible for the academic judgements. The exception is for research degrees, where the PSC acts as a “super award board” and has oversight across the School/Institutes to ensure consistency of standards as well as equity for students.

### Academic quality

**Academic quality** refers to the quality of the teaching and the quality of the student learning experience. High teaching quality not only means that a lecturer is good at standing in front of a class and imparting knowledge but also requires that the course should be well organised, students should receive prompt and useful feedback, the exams and coursework should help learning, students should acquire a range of general skills and develop as individuals and there should be high quality resources such as labs, lecture theatres, learning spaces, library and IT facilities.

#### 8.6 Management of Academic Quality

The quality of the taught programmes delivered to students is assured by a number of different processes. The first process is approval which is the responsibility of USC or PSC and which ensures that there is a clear intention to offer a programme that meets the University expectations.

There is then a series of regular monitoring processes to ensure that what is being delivered is what was approved. These include monitoring of performance metrics such as student performance, student satisfaction, School/Institute self-assessment reported through annual monitoring as well as reviews of professional services such as the Library and IT.

The third process comprises periodic review, which are undertaken by peers from outside the School/Institute and the institution. Periodic review includes both the academic and non-academic functions. Such reviews provide an external validation of the quality.

The quality assurance processes are designed for the specific types of programme and methods of delivery adopted by the University. Therefore, the Senate (and the its Studies Committees) should not approve a new type of activity just because a School/Institute has put forward a comprehensive proposal, without first ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation processes are in place to ensure the quality of the programme. This restriction is most apparent with the types of partnership that the University is permitted to enter into.

#### 8.7 Academic Approval of Disciplines, Programmes and Courses

Academic approval is the responsibility of the Senate. The Senate retains authority for approval of new disciplines, but has delegated approval of new/modified programmes to its Studies Committees and approval of most types of new/modified courses to Schools/Institutes. The purpose of approval by the Senate and U/PSC is to ensure that:
• Disciplines/Programmes meet the expectations of the external reference points (typically credit level, degree title, broad curriculum)
• Disciplines/Programmes meet the requirements of the University – specific curriculum content, methods of assessment, development of HWU Graduate Attributes (including employability skills)

Consideration of a programme for approval requires U/PSC to scrutinise the following aspects in particular:

• Coherence, currency and completeness of the academic content
• Consistency of programmes with the University’s requirements, as articulated through the key principles of Restructuring the Academic Year (RAY) (section 9.2)
• Assurance of academic standards
• Sufficiency of resources such as staff, space, library etc.
• Expertise to support the specified mode of study
• Academic, administrative and managerial expertise to support the mode of study at the proposed location
• Study in a language other than English (except for languages programmes)
• Administrative requirements, in the case of non-standard provision
• Programme fees, including differential fees

Although responsibility for approving the majority of new and modified courses rests with Schools/Institutes, the Academic Registry must be notified (through the Clerk to U/PSC) of new and withdrawn courses, and certain types of course modifications (as detailed in the Summary of Approvals Processes: Disciplines, Programmes and Courses). See sections 8.12, 11.6, 11.7 and 12.3 for types of courses which do require to be considered and approved by U/PSC.

8.8 Academic and Business Approval

In addition to academic approval through the Studies Committees, new programmes (and sometimes modifications to programmes) require business approval. Business approval is the responsibility of PME. The purpose of this approval is to ensure that the University has sufficient resources to deliver the programme and that any partner meets the University requirements to share in the delivery of the programme. The approval also ensures that the risks have been properly assessed and there is sufficient demand from students for the programme to be sustainable. Resources includes space, staff, learning materials, IT facilities, laboratories.

Some aspects of business approval are delegated to Heads of Schools/Institutes, while others are delegated to specific Senior Officers. Exceptionally, business approval may require the approval of the Court, e.g. a new campus.

8.9 Value Added through Scrutiny by the Studies Committees

Approval of programmes and courses is divided between the Studies Committees of the Senate and School/Institutes. School/Institutes are best placed to provide subject-specific knowledge on matters such as detailed curriculum content and specialist resources. The Studies Committees are better placed to make independent judgements about (see section 10 for an overview of each area listed below):
• The fit of the programme with the portfolio of University programmes
• The implementation of the University expectations for programme content
• The balance between technical content and transferable skills
• The range of assessment activities used
• Level of risk
• Judgements about credit level and credit rating of industry placements
• Identifying duplication in courses and opportunities for efficiency savings
• Design of programmes intended for delivery by more than one mode

U/PSC scrutiny should add value to the University in such ways as:

• Reducing risk to the University by providing external (to the School/Institute) scrutiny
• Alignment with the University Strategy
• Advising Schools/Institutes on University norms and disseminating good practice
• Assuring quality and standards

8.10 Scrutiny by the Academic Registry

Approval documents are complex and often lengthy. There is a formal role for Academic Registry staff (normally the Clerk to U/PSC) to ensure that forms are properly completed and that matters such as levels and credits have been properly accounted for.

8.11 External Advice

Although U/PSC is expected to make recommendations on individual proposals, there will be times when the Committee does not have the expertise to make an informed decision. In those cases the Committee should seek external advice.

External advice should always be sought when a new discipline is added to the portfolio. External advice was sought for the introduction of Psychology and the Degree Entry Programme (Dubai). The QAA has noted that the University does not make sufficient use of external advice (HWU ELIR Report, February 2011).

The Committee should also seek advice from relevant specialists within the University, e.g. other members of staff in the Academic Registry or staff in Schools/Institutes offering a comparable programme to the one being considered.

8.12 Risk

U/PSC should be aware of the varying levels of academic risk associated with different activities, and should spend time and effort in proportion to the risk rather than the scale of the paperwork. Activities of above average level of risk include:

• Programmes to be delivered for the first time
• Programmes to be delivered by a partner
• Programmes to be delivered on a new campus
• Programmes for independent learners
• Courses to be studied through an industrial placement
• Programmes with non-standard assessment methods

There is a tendency for U/PSC members to associate risk with activities that they are unfamiliar with. Members should take time to understand activities they are unused to, but should recognise that this does not equate with risk to the University.

Although course approval has been delegated to Schools/Institutes, there are types of courses which pose a higher risk and, therefore, require additional scrutiny outwith the School/Institute, namely by the Studies Committees. For example, U/PSC should always review and approve courses that are to be delivered through a validated programme and courses that involve awarding credit for industrial placement. Courses to be offered without any formal contact time or through block teaching also require U/PSC approval, as do credit-rated and non credit-rated English Language courses (see 11.6, 11.7 and 12.3)

U/PSC should consult the following guidance documents: Process of Identifying Risk at the point of Approval (for Postgraduate and PSCs); Guide to the Assessment of Risk associated with Partnerships. Both are available at: http://www.hw.ac.uk/quality/policies.htm

8.13 Delegating Authority to Schools/Institutes

With the authority of the Senate, the U/PSC can delegate some aspects of the approval process, such as new and modified courses, to School/Institute committees where it considers it safe to do so and provided that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the required level of scrutiny by the School/Institute. In addition, there are processes to ensure consultation with other Schools/Institutes and timetablers as appropriate. School/Institutes also have devolved authority to approve minor modifications to programmes (as detailed in Guidelines on the Approval of Disciplines, Programmes and Courses). The U/PSC is, however, responsible for approving high risk courses (see section 8.12 above).

8.14 “Approval in Principle”

Schools/Institutes may seek “Approval in Principle” for new activities before the entire approval process has been completed. Such requests are usually to allow the programme to be marketed and for student recruitment to begin (typically 12 months before the programme runs for the first time).

“Approval in Principle” should only be given if it is clear beyond reasonable doubt that: a full set of papers will be provided for approval in due course; there are no undue concerns or risks evident; and that the programme will clearly be approved. The Clerk of the Committee will liaise with the School/Institute in question to ensure that the appropriate paperwork is provided by the specified deadline. Thereafter, Committee scrutiny will proceed in the usual way.
8.15 “Fast-Track Approval”

School/Institutes may request “Fast-track approval” for programmes which are required to have been approved by HWU in advance of accreditation by an overseas government. A complete set of documentation is required for “Fast-track approval” proposals and the standard approvals procedures must be adhered to; the only difference is that proposals are progressed in a shorter timescale than usual and may be considered outwith the published Committee calendar. Proposals must be scrutinised by the entire Committee, either by correspondence or at a specially convened meeting.

9 General Requirements of Programmes

9.1 UK Higher Education Sector

The Scottish Funding Council and the Quality Assurance Agency require that:

- All awards and their titles will be located in the SCQF framework
- The academic level of study will be recorded using the SCQF level criteria
- Credits will be based on a notional 10 hours of learning for 1 credit
- Student workload will be based on a notional 40 hours per week
- Postgraduate courses will be based on 30 weeks of study at 40 hours per week giving 1200 student effort hours (SEH) or 120 SCQF credits
- Postgraduate Masters courses are based on a 45 week year corresponding to 1800 SEH or 180 SCQF credits
- The content of all named awards will be consistent with the expectations of the national Subject Benchmark Statements
- The University will undertake its business in a way that is consistent with the QAA Code of Practice.

The University complies with all these requirements, except in one case: the location and mode of study are not specified on the transcript and/or degree certificate issued by HWU. The University’s rationale for this divergence from the QAA Code of Practice is based on the fundamental principle that HWU degrees are equivalent irrespective of mode or location of study.

9.2 Heriot-Watt University

The University has a number of requirements for programmes, as established through its mission and objectives. In almost every case, these requirements are common to Postgraduate, graduate and postgraduate taught programmes.

In 2008/09, the University implemented a restructured academic year (RAY), as part of which a semester system was introduced and all taught programmes were re-designed to incorporate a common, core set of criteria. Since 2008/09, all programmes, irrespective of mode or location of delivery, must meet the following curricular and structural requirements:

- Balance between examination and other forms of assessment (100% exam for ALP or IDL programmes requires U/PSC approval; see section 10.5)
- Provision of learning support in assessment periods
• Diversity of learning and teaching methods
• Research-informed learning (scholarship, enquiry and research skills), including introduction to scholarship skills in year one
• Development of skills (specified as the HWU Graduate Attributes), including employability and PDP
• Transition and induction programme, including academic socialisation activities, for all students, irrespective of point of entry
• Incorporation of the international dimension in student learning, the curriculum and wider experience
• Inclusion of a research project/dissertation (excl undergraduate non-Honours, postgraduate certificate and diploma programmes)
• Balance between year-long courses and semester-long courses: where year-long courses are used, end-of-year assessment/exam should not be the only means of assessing student
• Exit awards at each stage for UG programmes and at certificate/diploma level for PGT and graduate programmes

U/PSC should ensure that all programme proposals address the above requirements.

Design and approval of courses is managed at the School/Institute level. However, there is still a role for U/PSC is ensuring that the programme as a whole incorporates the following course requirements: formative assessment (for learning/improvement; may be for credit); informative feedback to promote learning; minimum VLE presence.

Although not a requirement, it is recommended that all programmes should provide a “flexible semester/stage” to enable students to undertake work placement or period of study abroad.

In addition to the above, the following criteria apply to Undergraduate programmes:

• Programmes shall be designed to be four or five years in duration, but should be accessible to suitably qualified students with advanced entry
• Programmes shall be designed to enable substantial numbers of suitably qualified A’Level candidates to enter in year two (part of the University’s proactive recruitment of “Rest of UK” students)

9.3 Non-UK Governments

As the University extends its trans-national business, there is an increasing trend for the governments of the countries in which the University delivers programmes to require oversight of the programmes. Such external oversight is entirely reasonable and is reciprocal, as the QAA has similar responsibilities for overseeing programmes delivered by non-UK institutions.

There are varying levels of oversight by overseas governments, ranging from simple registration through to formal accreditation. In some cases, this oversight may impose requirements on the curriculum, assessment or method of teaching.

In any proposal, this set of requirements should be made explicit in the paperwork being considered by U/PSC.
Academic Registry maintains a formal record of registration and accreditation by non-UK governments, and retains all documentation and final reports.

9.4 Professional Institutions

Significant numbers of professional institutions (mainly in the UK, but some international) accredit most of the University’s programmes. Such organisations are referred to collectively as Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

In some cases, this accreditation may impose requirements on the curriculum, assessment or method of teaching. In such proposals, this set of requirements should be made explicit in the paperwork being considered by U/PSC.

Programmes to be offered overseas, either at a campus or through a partner, should also be accredited. In many cases, there will be accreditation both by a UK and overseas institution. In addition, overseas authorities may require particular programmes to be accredited by the relevant in-country PSRB.

Academic Registry maintains a formal record of accreditation by PSRBs, and PSRB reports are considered annually by a sub-group of QSC.

10 Guidance for the Approval of Programmes

10.1 Introduction

This section provides advice to U/PSC members on the criteria to be used when making judgements about the approval of programmes. Section 11 contains additional advice on specific types of programme.

10.2 Consistency of the Programme with the University’s Portfolio

All proposals should make clear that the programme (whether new or modified) is consistent with the overall portfolio of the University.

U/PSC should also have a view on whether the award title is appropriate, particularly if similar, but slightly different, titles have been introduced for various versions of a programme, although the content, assessment etc are almost identical. The Committees should operate on the agreed principle that the same title should be used; different locations or different option choice are not sufficient justification. Professional institutions may, however, require different titles as part of their accreditation criteria.

10.3 Implementation of University Expectations for Programme Content

While the University does not make any recommendations as regards the subject-specific aspects of programmes, there are certain criteria which all non-research programmes are required to incorporate and specific skills which all students
must be given the opportunity to acquire and develop. Both sets of requirements, which are outlined in section 9.2, were introduced as part of Restructuring the Academic Year (RAY).

In addition, the University expects the content of all programmes to have been informed by national Subject Benchmark Statements and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional institutions (PSRBs) and overseas government authorities.

10.4 Balance between Subject Content and Transferable Skills

The University has not stipulated a particular percentage as regards the balance between subject content and transferable skills; rather, the institutional approach is to allow Schools/Institutes the flexibility to construct the balance as best fits the nature of their programmes. However, as part of Restructuring the Academic Year (RAY; see section 9.2), certain aspects of skills development were made mandatory:

- Incorporation of research-informed learning skills into all stages, particularly stage one
- Development of employment-related skills/HWU Graduate Attributes throughout the curriculum
- Inclusion of a dissertation/project (at 30 credits for UG; 60 credits for PGT)
- Introduction to key skills to be included as part of an academic socialisation programme for new students

10.5 Range of Assessment Methods

As part of the restructuring of the academic year (RAY), it was a requirement for programmes to use a variety of assessment methods, for both formative and summative assessment. However, many programmes delivered to ALP and IDL students use only exams for assessment due to the need for security, author authentication and scalability. It is, therefore, a University requirement that any programme assessed exclusively by examination (excluding non-project courses) has to be explicitly approved by U/PSC.

10.6 Oversight of Multi-Mode, Multi-Location Programmes

Multi-mode, multi-location delivery is a defining characteristic of Heriot-Watt University, and forms a significant (and increasing) proportion of the University’s provision. It is an area to which U/PSC should pay particular attention in scrutinising programme proposals, given both the scale of this activity and the level of risk associated with it. Aspects for U/PSC to consider when approving such programmes are outlined in sections 11 and 13.

10.7 Level of Risk

Different activities are associated with varying levels of academic risk, which U/PSC should take into consideration as part of the approval process. Section 8.12 outlines
both the type of activities which could pose a potentially higher level of risk and the role of U/PSC in considering such proposals, and provides a link to relevant documents for U/PSC to consult.

10.8 Judgements about Level and Credit of Learning in Industrial Placements

Most of student learning in industrial placement is undertaken without the day-to-day supervision of HWU staff. U/PSC need, therefore, to be reassured, in cases of credit-rated industrial placements, that the work-based learning is of an appropriate standard and quality. The Committees can do this only through scrutiny of written evidence. Therefore, more comprehensive information is required than the standard course descriptor.

A detailed description of the placement is required, including: learning activities; record of learning; supervision on placement; support from HWU staff; number of effort hours; nature and form of assessment. In addition, an evaluation of, and justification for, the SCQF level and credits should be provided, with particular reference to learning outcomes and effort hours respectively.

The level and credit of learning are areas on which U/PSC should specifically focus. Members should ensure that the proposed credit-rating is matched by the appropriate number of effort hours of student learning on placement (e.g., 60 credit placement will require 600 effort hours). In addition, the learning outcomes should be evaluated against the relevant SCQF level descriptor to ensure that the proposed SCQF level rating is correct. The learning outcomes also need to be related to the proposed method of assessment, since assessment is the means by which it is determined whether or not the learning outcomes have been met.

As with all proposals, U/PSC may seek advice from non-members on any matter related to credit-bearing industrial placement in order to inform its consideration and subsequent decision-making.

Further information on the role of U/PSC in considering programme proposals with a formal, credit-rated industrial placement is provided in sections 13.6 & 13.7.

10.9 Identification of Duplication in Courses and Opportunities for Efficiency

It is not unknown for Schools/Institutes to plan to offer courses identical, or very similar to, courses which are already being delivered by other Schools/Institutes. Therefore, there may be opportunities for efficiencies in a number of areas.

Where U/PSC members identify efficiency opportunities in their scrutiny of programme proposals, these should be noted and reported back to the Schools/Institutes involved; however, this should not be used as a reason to delay formal approval. School/Institutes can then choose whether or not to follow up the opportunity.

This approach adheres to the University’s policy on service teaching (approved by UE, October 2006).
11 Multi-Mode, Multi-Location Programmes: Additional Aspects for Consideration

Multi-mode, multi-location programmes are a defining feature of HWU provision and are a regular occurrence on the agendas of U/PSC. This section provides an overview of the particular aspects for U/SC to take account of in scrutinising such programmes.

There are two key principles underpinning all decisions related to multi-mode, multi-location delivery against which the University judges itself and which should likewise inform U/PSC consideration of programme proposals, namely:

- The academic standards and quality of learning of all awards must be equivalent to UK expectations and must be properly located in the Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF), be consistent with national Subject Benchmark Statements and adhere to the QAA Code of Practice.

- Any programme offered in more than one location or by more than one mode of study must have identical academic standards, meet the same learning outcomes and develop the same knowledge and skills.

It should be noted that if a programme is approved for one location or mode of delivery, it is not automatically approved for all locations or modes. Schools/Institutes need to submit separate proposals for different versions of a programme. There is only one exception: programmes to be delivered through an Approved Learning Partner (ALP) require U/PSC approval only for that mode of delivery; offering the programme through new partners does not require additional approval by U/SC (business approval is, however, needed for each partner; see sections 8.8 & 13.3).

11.1 Home/UK Campus

There are not normally location-specific matters which need to be considered when programmes are to be delivered on the home/UK campus. However, it should not be presumed that just because a programme is being offered on the home/UK Campus, it is risk-free or that the level of scrutiny should be less rigorous. See Sections 13.5-13.7 for examples of UK campus activity requiring further scrutiny.

11.2 Dubai Campus

Programmes delivered in Dubai are subject to approval by the Dubai government accrediting authority, known as KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority). Typically, KHDA requires a formal set of paperwork 12 months before a programme is to be delivered at the Dubai Campus.

KHDA requires that all programmes offered in Dubai should also be delivered at the UK “home” campus. KHDA staff confirm this by checking the list of programmes submitted for approval against the University website, and that the programme and course titles are the same. Any differences are queried.

In the early years of establishing the campus, space and staff numbers were limited, and therefore, the approval of programmes required U/SC to be reassured that the School/Institute had the necessary resources to deliver a programme,
including:

- General teaching space
- Specialist teaching space
- Office accommodation
- Library and IT provision
- Staff in Dubai
- Management capacity in the UK

As KHDA approval is normally required significantly in advance of the appointment of staff to deliver the programmes, U/PSC has required a statement from the Secretary of the University that the required resources had been approved and were documented in the School/Institute plan.

As at 2011, the campus is well-established and this level of assurance is no longer required for Schools/Institutes who are themselves well-established at the campus. However, if new School/Institutes begin offering programmes or if significantly different programmes are being proposed by established School/Institutes, then U/PSC should ensure that the resources have been approved and are in place. Such reassurance can be provided in the form of a formal note from the Vice-Principal (Dubai) to the Committee that staffing requirements have been included in the School/Institute plan. Alternatively, or in addition, the Committee may request that the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) should monitor the implementation of the School/Institute plan and report any problems to QSC.

11.3 Delivery on Campuses other than the Home Campus or Dubai Campus

Where a programme is to be delivered on a campus other than the Home or Dubai Campuses, then the same guidelines as for Dubai should be followed, e.g. if a School/Institute wishes to offer a programme at one of the other UK campuses. Separate guidelines on programme approval will be required as the University establishes a new, international campus (see section 11.4 below).

11.4 Additional International Campus

As of September 2011, the University is in the early stages of applying for approval to open an international campus in Malaysia. All programmes to be offered at the new campus will require approval by U/PSC. In addition, there are very detailed, complex requirements for programme approval from the Malaysian government and from the Malaysian Qualifications Authority. Therefore, specific guidance will be required for Schools/Institutes in developing programmes, for U/PSC in approving them and for Academic Registry in collecting the requisite information and submitting it in the appropriate format. These guidelines will supplement, rather than replace, the normal approval requirement for delivery outside the Home Campus including content, resources and management oversight.

11.5 Independent Distance Learners

Independent distance learners (IDL) are students who study at their own pace without direct, regular supervision of, or face-to-face contact with, staff. IDL students are
not part of a cohort and therefore are not able to learn key skills such as group work, leadership, negotiation, communication etc. These skills are a core part of all Postgraduate programmes and therefore Postgraduate IDL programmes cannot be approved for delivery. Postgraduate programmes should only be approved if there is no equivalent skill development required in order to complete the programme.

IDL students must be provided with the resources needed to allow them to complete the programme without the regular support of a tutor, namely:

- High quality, comprehensive learning materials covering the entire programme
- Study guides to explain how to use the materials
- Supplementary materials provided through structured access to Library and VLE resources
- Opportunities to obtain feedback on their progress
- A University-based tutor who can provide timely answers to questions

It is common for programmes to be approved for delivery before learning materials are prepared. There have been occasions when the quality of the learning materials was not satisfactory. Therefore, in addition to PSC approval of programmes for delivery in IDL format, there is an additional check by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) to ensure that the learning materials have been produced and are of an appropriate standard before students are recruited.

11.6 Courses without Formal Contact Time

Occasionally, Schools/Institutes wish to offer single courses to students on an “independent learning” basis in order to extend the range of options on offer or to develop further the skill set of students. These courses can be in the style of a “reading course” or may mirror an IDL course.

When a programme includes courses of this type, then this must be made clear, and justified, in the paperwork submitted for consideration by U/PSC. The Committee should review these courses and ensure that there will be an appropriate level of support for students and procedures are in place for effectively communicating to students the type and amount of support to be provided, the expectation of learning and method of assessment. It should be noted that in the past students enrolled on such courses have complained because their expectation of support is greater than the support actually given by the School/Institute or the “stand alone” nature of the course is not readily apparent from the materials provided.

11.7 Block Teaching

Block teaching is a form of timetabling where all (or a large part) of the teaching is condensed into a short timeframe. Block teaching is not used in the UK campuses, but has been introduced in Dubai to allow staff from the UK to visit the campus, for perhaps a week, to deliver all the lectures in a course. At the present time, some School/Institutes are discussing the introduction of block teaching in instances other than those required by visiting staff.

While there are clear benefits to staff in compressing the teaching of standard 12-week
courses into fewer weeks, block teaching only works well where a course has been specifically designed in this format. Feedback from students indicates that they do not like standard 12-week modules to be taught in a compressed timeframe, as it does not allow sufficient time to reflect on learning; in addition, they find it very difficult to concentrate on a single subject for up to 8 hours per day for a week.

One of the causes of this negative feedback is due to the fact that the courses in Dubai have to be the same as in the UK and therefore, quite understandably, the lecturer provides the same style of teaching as is used in the UK campuses. This style of back-to-back lectures is not conducive to student learning.

Courses to be block taught should, therefore, incorporate a style of teaching which has been specifically designed for that format; on which will benefit the student learning experience (as agreed by QSC, June 2011). All courses to be block taught should be explicitly approved by U/PSC. Schools/Institutes should make clear in the submitted paperwork:

- how the delivery has been adapted to make it suitable for block teaching
- how block teaching will support student learning
- how students will be able to get help and support at times when the lecturer is not present
- how the course work will be assessed, given that assessment will not take place at the same time as in the UK.

11.8 Blended Learning

In earlier versions of the University’s approval forms, there was an option for School/Institutes to deliver programmes/courses by blended learning. The expectation at that time was this delivery would be by a mixture of formal teaching and supported self-study using pre-prepared learning materials.

This mode of delivery has not become common and has been used at least once to hide the absence of support and teaching. It is recommended, therefore, that blended learning delivery not be permitted. The Clerk should, therefore, return to the School/Institute any such proposals, with a recommendation that, prior to scrutiny by the Committee, a revised submission should be produced.

11.9 E-Learning

In the early years of the virtual learning environment (VLE), it had been assumed that e-learning would emerge as a different type of learning from conventional teaching and would, where appropriate, replace face-to-face teaching.

However, the use of the VLE has developed across the University as a complement to conventional teaching. Therefore, any course or programme to be delivered using only electronic resources should meet the requirements for “independent” study.
12 Non-Standard Programmes

This section provides background information on some of the more unusual programmes offered by the University. The notes provide some context for these types of programmes and outline particular features which U/PSC members should be aware of in their consideration of proposals. Specific briefing sessions on these programmes will be arranged, as required, for U/PSC members.

12.1 Edinburgh Business School Programmes

Although the Edinburgh Business School (EBS) is an integral part of the University in terms of its academic business, PSC should be aware of the different business model used by EBS when approving new programmes or revisions to programmes. PSC members should also be aware that there are separate Regulations for the EBS Master of Business Administration and Doctor of Business Administration programmes.

EBS delivers 20-credit courses rather than the more normal 15-credit courses, has programmes with no dissertation and targets most of its provision at IDL students and Approved Learning Partners (ALPs).

12.2 Programmes Delivered in a Language other than English

This section does not apply to programmes incorporating the study of a foreign language (eg translating and interpreting).

EBS offers a number of programmes in languages other than English, including Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Chinese. The arrangements for the translation and maintenance of learning materials, support for students and assessment of students are in place in EBS and the University has a number of policies to support this work, including Guidelines on the Delivery and Assessment of Courses in Languages Other Than English.

Nevertheless, the activities and issues around each new language are slightly different; therefore, when a new language is introduced, PSC should ensure that the resources, plans and controls are in place even if the academic content remains unchanged. Any proposal to offer a programme in an additional foreign language must be explicitly approved by PSC.

12.3 English Language Programmes and Courses

The University offers a number of programmes in English Language for students whose level of English does not meet the institutional admission requirement. These programmes may be:

- Pre-sessional programmes, lasting from 6 weeks to a full year; normally not credit bearing
- In-sessional support for students who have only just reached the minimum requirements. These programmes do not require approval, are not credit
bearing and do not carry an award.

- Credit-bearing programmes which form an integral part of the main degree.

As per standard processes, all credit-bearing programmes or courses require U/PSC approval. Although non-credit-bearing programmes or courses do not lead to an award, they need to be appropriately structured, managed and resourced. They are delivered in the name of the University and would have an impact on the reputation of the institution if, for example, student feedback on their experience was poor.

Therefore, all English Language programmes and courses should be approved in accordance with the University’s standard procedures, namely through U/PSC.

12.5 Study Group

Study Group is a private education provider with a base on the Edinburgh Campus. It is authorised, through a formal contract with the University, to deliver a number of programmes with the expectation that successful students will transfer to conventional University programmes. Study Group is currently authorised to deliver the following programmes:

- 1 year Undergraduate certificate programme leading to advanced entry to year 2
- 1 year Undergraduate diploma programme leading to advanced entry to year 3
- 1 year pre-Masters postgraduate programme allowing application for admission to named Masters programmes
- Academic English courses of varying duration

The programmes are validated by the University, which means that Study Group develops the curriculum and assesses the students; Heriot-Watt is responsible for accrediting the learning. Some key points for U/PSC to take into account are:

- It is Study Group’s responsibility to prepare all the paperwork required.
- As a general rule, U/PSC should not require that HWU forms be completed, but should specify the type of information to be provided.
- As a validated programme, U/PSC should receive and consider individual courses; these are not approved by School/Institutes.

As in all cases, U/PSC is only approving (or not approving) the academic content of the submitted proposal.

Schools/Institutes which accept students from the Study Group programmes should be consulted on matters requiring approval. Normally, Schools/Institutes consider proposals from Study Group and pass the proposal to U/PSC with a recommendation. Exceptionally, Study Group may submit a proposal to U/PSC, on which the Clerk seeks the views of the School/Institute.
While it might be desirable to invite School/Institutes to consider proposals before U/PSC, this is not always practical, given the number of School/Institutes involved. In addition, School/Institutes may not have the necessary experience to provide the expected level of scrutiny. Finally, there could be unacceptable delays if every School/Institute had an independent veto. Although School/Institutes must be consulted on Study Group proposals, they do not have the authority to reject a proposal. However, each Study Group proposal must be reviewed by at least one School/Institute, with that School/Institute taking on the role of sponsor.

12.6 CPD Courses and CPD Programmes

CPD courses and programmes are not common across the University and there are few, if any, formal approval processes.

Organisations interested in CPD being provided by the University are rarely content with opting for courses already offered as part of an existing MSc programme. It is the University’s position that all such courses should be an integral part of the MSc programme.

Under the standard approvals procedures, U/PSC approves all credit-rated CPD courses and programmes. At present, CPD provision without credit is approved only at the School/Institute level; there is no institutional oversight or single, central source of all CPD activity. The Studies Committees will be invited, in due course, to consider whether this approach remains appropriate.

13 Programmes offered through External Academic Partnerships

The University offers a large number of programmes in conjunction with external academic partners. These programmes pose a higher risk to the institution than programmes delivered entirely by the University; therefore, there is a need for greater scrutiny.

Ordinance 44: External Academic Partners and the associated Policy on the Management and Oversight of Academic Partners set out the types of partnership which the University may enter into. U/PSC may not approve a programme for delivery with a partner if it is not one of the types described in the aforementioned policy. Further information on the permitted types of partnership is provided in the sub-sections below.

In all cases, the programme cannot be made available to students until there is a signed contract between the University and the partner. Contracts are signed by the Secretary of the University after the Senate has approved the programme through its Studies Committees. As with all programmes, the Senate and the Studies Committees are responsible for the academic content, quality and standards of the awards.

13.1 Joint Collaborative Partnerships (JCP)

Joint Collaborative Partners (JCP) are other HEIs (primarily in the UK, but also international) with their own degree awarding powers. Programmes delivered with
a JCP lead to either a dual award (separate degree certificates from each participating institution) or joint award (single degree certificate with names and crests of all participating institutions).

The University’s requirements for documentation and approval are identical, irrespective of whether the award is dual (or triple) or joint. A joint award is preferred by Heriot-Watt, as this makes explicit the wholly collaborative, shared nature of the study. However, many institutions have government/legal restrictions on the award of joint awards and can only enter into arrangements for dual awards.

In a JCP programme, it is expected that each partner will contribute to the development of the programme and will lead on at least a third of the programme. If the partner does not lead on a significant part of the programme, then they should not be eligible to make an award and the award should be a sole award of Heriot-Watt University. A typical joint programme is an MSc where each partner delivers half of the taught part and the student chooses where to study for the dissertation.

The University’s underpinning premise for a JCP is that the two partners will deliver a programme which neither could offer individually. Therefore, there must be a clear academic case for offering a joint programme. The assumption that the two institutions could recruit more students to a joint programme than either could do individually should not be accepted as sufficient justification for approving a programme.

When a JCP programme is considered by U/PSC, the Committee must review the entire programme and not just the elements for which Heriot-Watt is responsible.

The proposal should include information on: how the programme will be managed between the institutions (normally with a joint Board of Studies); how the two institutions will have oversight of academic standards (normally a joint Board of Examiners with External Examiners); how the two institutions will have oversight of quality (normally the Board of Studies).

13.2 Joint Collaborative Partnerships (JCP) for PhD Students

Relevant to PSC only.

The University is increasingly becoming involved in joint PhD awards. As with taught programmes, these normally involve a joint certificate issued by the two Universities.

Although these partnerships can appear straightforward, there is a need to ensure that the two institutions have the same requirements and regulations. Difficulties can occur if one institution requires completion of a taught component and the other does not, or if one partner allows a resubmission and the other does not. Normally, this comparison of the regulatory framework should be undertaken by the School(s)/Institute(s) involved and evidence of this should be provided to PSC.

As with all joint awards, the Senate (through PSC) is required to approve the joint programme, even if there will be only one student.
13.3 Approved Learning Partner (ALP) Programmes

Approved Learning Partners are described in the QAA Code of Practice as franchise arrangements, in which the partner undertakes teaching and sometimes assessment of a programme developed by the awarding institution. In most franchise arrangements, the partner is responsible for assessment, but at Heriot-Watt University, the institution retains this responsibility (for summative assessment at least). At HWU, such partners are described as Approved Learning Partners (ALPs), rather than franchise partners.

In all ALP cases, the University develops the curriculum, prepares learning materials for students, prepares tutor guidelines and provides training for tutors. The ALP undertakes marketing and recruitment, and may also provide assessed coursework, with formative feedback. The University retains responsibility for enrolment of students, summative assessment and award.

For ALP programmes, U/PSC approves only the mode of delivery; the Committees do not have any role in approving the partners. Therefore, U/PSC only needs to approve a programme once for delivery through an ALP. The initial and additional partners are approved and contracts are signed without having the programme re-approved by U/PSC. Therefore, a shared understanding of the nature of the programme is important; hence the requirement that all ALP programmes follow a common pattern.

Programmes delivered at an ALP are normally expected to be the same as campus-based programmes, since they normally lead to the same award. As set out in the Multi-Mode, Multi-Location Code of Practice, the content and assessment do not need to be identical, but standards and learning outcomes must be identical.

When U/PSC approves a programme for delivery through an ALP, they should ensure:

- School/Institutes have identified any differences between the on-and-off-campus versions
- The assessment framework is appropriate, though not necessarily identical to the on-campus version
- The programme can deliver the same learning outcomes, including skills
- Schools/Institutes have clearly described the nature of learning and teaching materials.
- PSC would need assurance that the learning materials have been prepared to the required standard prior to the enrolment of students.

Contracts are not agreed if learning and teaching materials have not been produced.

13.4 Validated Programmes

Validated programmes are designed, delivered and assessed by an academic partner, but the award is made by the University. The University has very few such programmes and all are strategically important. Edinburgh College of Art delivered validated programmes, but these are now validated by the University of Edinburgh. The only partners in 2011 are Study Group (see section 12.5) and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), which offers a Postgraduate Certificate programme.
As the University makes the award, the programme has to be approved by the University through U/PSC in the normal manner. The provision of validated programmes allows the University to extend its portfolio without investing in staff expertise or other resources. Therefore, the University may not have subject expertise in some validation arrangements. In such cases, U/PSC should seek specialist advice, where required, before approving a programme.

In view of the risk associated with validated programmes, U/PSC should always approve the detailed course descriptors and undertake a detailed review of such documents to ensure that the academic level and the credit-rating are appropriate.

Validated programmes should always have the business case approved in principle before going through the detailed academic approval process to ensure that there is a proper fit with the University’s strategy and priorities.

13.5 Academic Exchange and Academic Placement

Some academic programmes include an opportunity for an academic exchange or academic placement (referred to as “placements” here). These placements must be to other academic institutions and will almost certainly be institutions with their own degree awarding powers. Students can only go on a placement if the programme has been approved by U/PSC to have a placement component; a School/Institute cannot simply allow students to go to another institution.

At the time of approval, it is unlikely that the School/Institute will know who the partners are going to be (except in the case of Languages programmes) or how many students will take up placements. Therefore, U/PSC ensure course descriptors properly describe the activities to be undertaken, the level of learning and the method of assessment.

It should be noted that academic placements can be undertaken by PhD students who chose to study in a different university for part of their time, but who only receive a Heriot-Watt award. Such placements do not require approval by PSC but Schools would be expected to undertake appropriate risk analysis.

13.6 Industrial Placement

Some academic programmes include an opportunity for an industrial placement where the student receives credit for the learning undertaken in the workplace. This may be learning associated with a specific project or may be a structured activity where all students have the same broad experience. These placements will be held in organisations without degree awarding powers; there is, therefore, a need for greater scrutiny and oversight.

Students can only go on a placement if the programme has been approved by U/PSC to have a placement component; a School/Institute cannot simply allow students to go to an external organisation for accredited work-based learning.

At the time of approval, it is unlikely that the School/Institute will know who the industrial partners are going to be or how many students will take up placements. Therefore, U/PSC should review the course descriptors to ensure that they
properly describe the activities to be undertaken, the level of learning and the method of assessment.

It should be noted that industrial placements can be undertaken by PhD students who chose to work in industry for part of their period of study. For EngD students placements are an integral part of the programme.

The University has arrangements in place for proactively managing all placements, as detailed in the Industrial Placements Policy (due for approval in autumn 2011).

13.7 Industrial Projects

Project work is an integral part of many programmes and students value the opportunity to undertaken projects outside the University, often in a work place environment. When the location of the project is optional and a student can choose between University and work-place, then the matter is one of choice and as long as all students are properly supervised irrespective of location, then there is no reason for U/PSC to be involved.

The U/PSC should only be involved in considering proposals where work-based learning is a required part of the programme. In such cases, section 12.6 on Industrial Placements will apply.

13.8 Articulation Agreements

Articulation Arrangements refer to a partnership where a student begins at one institution and then proceeds to another. The decision for the University is to ensure that the curricula of the two institutions are sufficiently close that there is a reasonable expectation that students will be successful in completing the programme to which they have transferred.

The decision to admit a student with advanced entry of this type is delegated to School/Institutes (as part of Regulation 46: Accreditation of Prior Learning); therefore, U/PSC does not need to be involved in the academic approval of these partnerships.

Academic Registry maintains a record of the University’s articulation agreements.

14 Guidance on Postgraduate Research Awards and Items for PSC Consideration/Approval

The University offers a wide variety of research opportunities and research awards and the PSC is responsible for various approvals affecting Postgraduate Research Students.

14.1 Postgraduate Research Awards

The PSC has the authority to approve the following awards to Research Students:

- Doctor of Philosophy
14.2 Nomination of supervisors

The Chair of PSC has the authority to approve the nominations of Supervisors as recommended by Schools/Institutes.

There are two types of Supervisor appointments:

- Nomination of Supervisors - consisting of two internal Heriot-Watt University academic staff members
- Appointment of Approved Supervisors - consisting of one internal Heriot-Watt University academic staff member (normally the Primary Supervisor) and an external Supervisor from an alternative University or an Industry professional (normally the second supervisor)

Supervisory arrangements consist of a primary Supervisor and second Supervisor. The primary Supervisor will usually be an experienced academic who has previously supervised a research student to a successful conclusion. In exceptional cases a primary Supervisor who has not previously supervised a research student may be appointed if the nominated second Supervisor is a senior member of academic staff.

Once nominations for Supervisors have been approved they are reported to PSC for ratification.

14.3 Appointment of External Examiners and Approval of Thesis Title

The Chair of PSC has the authority to approve the appointment of Internal Examiners, External Examiners and approval of thesis titles as recommended by Schools/Institutes.

Two Examiners (Internal and External) are appointed by the PGSC for each Student (unless where the student is also a member of staff, in which case two External Examiners must be appointed in addition to one Internal Examiner). A second External Examiner can be appointed if the thesis subject (cross-disciplinary) warrants it. Examiners will normally be recognised international experts, with a degree to the level being examined and an active research and publication profile.

An Examiner should not normally be proposed if that Examiner (or a colleague from the same institution and subject area as the proposed Examiner) has been appointed within the last two years in the same subject area in the University as the proposed candidate. Similarly, the Examiner should not normally be proposed if a member of Heriot-Watt University’s staff in the same subject area as the candidate has been appointed within the last two years in the same institution and subject area as that of the proposed Examiner.

Once the Examiners and thesis titles are approved they are reported to PSC for ratification.
14.4 Recommendation of Examiners

The PSC has the authority, as delegated by the Senate, to approve or not approve the Examiner’s recommendations as detailed in the Examiners’ reports.

The recommendations of Examiners is submitted to the PSC on the following forms:

- **Individual Examiner Reports**
  The Committee will receive independent reports from both the Internal and External Examiners which will be based upon the research student’s examination copy of the thesis (temporary bound).

- **Examiners’ Joint Recommendation**
  Following initial examination both the Internal and External Examiner will meet with the research student to conduct a formal oral examination (viva voce). The Examiners will complete an Examiners’ Joint Recommendation Form indicating one of the following recommendations:
  
a. That the candidate be awarded the degree;

b. That the candidate be awarded the degree, subject to the specified minor (typographical) corrections being completed to the satisfaction of the Internal Examiner. A further report demonstrating that the particular changes were satisfactory, must be submitted to the Academic Registry by the Internal Examiner;

c. That the candidate be awarded the degree, subject to corrections being completed to the satisfaction of the Internal Examiner (submission within 6 months). A further report demonstrating that the particular changes were satisfactory, must be submitted to the Academic Registry by the Internal Examiner;

d. That the candidate re-submit without the need for further oral examination, specifying the areas requiring attention and suggested time limit (submission within 24 months required for a PhD and 12 months for an MPhil);

e. That the candidate re-submit the thesis after further work for further oral examination;

f. That no award be made.

- **Internal Examiner Declaration**
  Once the Internal Examiner has confirmed all corrections and has had sight of the presentation bound thesis they shall submit a completed Internal Examiner Declaration Form indicating that the thesis has been finalised to the satisfaction of both Examiners.

The completed Individual Examiners’ reports and Joint Examiners’ Recommendation form must together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the University to satisfy itself that the criteria for the award of the degree have been met. In all cases, the Internal Examiner must also submit a declaration with the final presentation copies of the thesis, stating that any required corrections have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Examiners, and that the thesis is bound in accordance with the regulations of the University.

The Clerk of the PSC will allocate two (or more) reviewers who will consider the reports and recommendations from the Examiners and, on the basis that the requisite criteria are satisfied, will recommend to the PSC that the degree be awarded.
14.5 MacFarlane Prize

The MacFarlane Prize commemorates the contribution to the University made by Professor A G J MacFarlane during his tenure as Principal and Vice Chancellor. The Award is made annually to a PhD graduate who has clearly produced a performance of outstanding quality during the period of research. This may be demonstrated by some or all of the following: work of significance in the field of study; a distinguished contribution to knowledge; a thesis of high quality and/or a body of published work. If the Examiners consider the candidate to be appropriate for the award, this should be stated on the Examiners’ Joint Recommendation Form.

Useful Links for Postgraduate Research Matters