

# Heriot-Watt University's Mapping to the UK Quality Code

## Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access

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### Regulatory contexts for the Quality Code

The Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) are mandatory for higher education providers in all parts of the UK. Common practices are mandatory in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and while providers in England may choose to work towards them, they are not required to do so as these are not regulatory requirements and will not be assessed as part of the OfS's regulatory framework. National regulators and QAA are not bound by the information in this advice and guidance and will not view it as containing indicators of compliance. This guidance does not interpret statutory requirements.

### Terminology

**Admissions:** Refers to the practices and processes developed and delivered by providers that relate to admitting a prospective student up to the point of enrolment on a course through an application and selection process.

**Recruitment:** Generally refers to a broad range of activities and initiatives undertaken by providers or their representatives prior to the point of admission. This includes outreach, events and various marketing activities, which ultimately encourage prospective students to either apply to, or start a course with, that provider. Within the scope of this Code, recruitment specifically refers to the process by which providers share information and advice with prospective students.

**Widening access:** A term which has multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is used. It can refer to issues relating to social justice and social mobility, or to activities and initiatives designed to enable different groups of people to gain entry to different aspects of society, such as job opportunities and professions, or involvement in higher education. Within the scope of this Code, widening access refers to the process by which providers may (or may not) vary their admission or selection processes according to local or national policy guidelines and expectations.

**Prospective student:** Refers to all those who are applying or considering applying for any course, at any level and employing any mode of study, with a higher education provider.

**Current student:** Students who are registered/enrolled on any course at undergraduate or postgraduate level, with a higher education provider. An individual becomes a 'current student' at the point of registration/enrolment.

**Contextual data and information:** Data and information that enable higher education providers to put attainment in the context of the circumstances in which it was obtained, for example, educational, geo-demographic and socio-economic background data.

**Autonomous higher education provider:** Higher education providers that are independent, self-governing bodies, active in teaching, research and scholarship.

**Inclusive admissions:** An admissions system which seeks to minimise any unnecessary barriers in the process which may prevent some groups of applicants from making a successful application.

## Expectations and Practices

The advice underneath the Expectations and Practices is not mandatory for providers but illustrative of a range of possible approaches.

This Theme relates to three separate but interconnected areas, admissions, recruitment and widening Access, which are of interest to prospective students, enrolled students and their supporters (such as relatives or educators); and for the UK and devolved governments; and the public. This Theme aims to provide advice and guidance to build a framework for providers to assure quality in these areas. While the three interconnected activities are referred to separately and in further detail throughout the Theme, it is recognised that different learner journeys result in multiple and varied pathways to enrolment with a provider. The manner or order with which the prospective student and the provider connects with these activities will not necessarily be uniform. Further to this, all UK providers have legal or statutory obligations they must meet, particularly around information available to prospective students. This Theme does not seek to duplicate or interpret these.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STANDARDS	EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY
<p>The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector- recognised standards.</p> <p><i>Effective admissions, recruitment and widening access policies and procedures enable providers to recruit students who are capable of meeting the required standards for their course.</i></p>	<p>From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.</p> <p><i>Admissions, recruitment and widening access sets the tone of engagement for a student with their provider and the wider sector. Therefore the support a student receives from pre-entry to enrolment will be instrumental in laying the foundations for a successful educational experience.</i></p>
<p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above expectations for Standards. Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles.</i></p>	<p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Expectations for Quality. Reference should be made to the detailed mapping against each of the Guiding Principles below.</i></p>
Core Practice (Standards)	Core Practice (Quality)
<p>1. Heriot-Watt University ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.</p> <p><i>In practice, this means managing expectations of students, from researching prospective courses through to admissions and enrolment. Providers need to ensure that only students for whom there is a reasonable expectation that they are capable of completion are admitted.</i></p>	<p>1. Heriot-Watt University has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.</p> <p><i>In practice, this means that fairness and reliability are embedded principles within admissions and recruitment, and inclusivity pervades throughout the process from outreach activity to processes and practices to enrolment.</i></p> <p>2. The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.</p> <p><i>In practice, this means that there needs to be active engagement with students who have recently gone through the admissions process and those who declined, with a view to continuously improve the process for future diverse cohorts.</i></p> <p>3. The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.</p> <p><i>In practice, this means that providers adhere to the practice of having clearly articulated and transparent processes for handling complaints of prospective students that are accessible to all stakeholders. These should be monitored and reviewed to mitigate against the same issues arising in the future.</i></p>
<p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Core Practices (Standards). Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below as well as the mapping document to the 'Enabling Student Achievement' theme.</i></p>	<p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Core Practices (Quality). Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below, as well as the mapping document to the 'Concerns, Complaints and Appeals' theme.</i></p>

# Guiding Principles with Mapping from HWU Practices

A 'Reference' document is available to use in conjunction with this mapping document.

The guiding principles given here are not mandatory for any provider. They are a concise expression of the fundamental practices of the higher education sector, based on the experience of a wide range of providers. They are intended as a framework for providers to consider when establishing new or looking at existing higher education provision. They are not exhaustive and there will be other ways for providers to comply with their requirements. These principles underpin the successful delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access processes and activities throughout the higher education sector. These encompass and build on the foundations laid by the 'Schwartz Report', 'Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice' (2004), but are aligned primarily to the Expectations and Core practices of the Quality Code. Higher education providers are encouraged to implement them in relation to the full breadth of their provision.

Guiding Principles	Heriot-Watt University Practice
<p><b>1. Policies and procedures for application, selection and admission to higher education courses are transparent and accessible.</b></p> <p>Policies and procedures for selection and admission to higher education should be readily accessible by prospective students and their supporters, and clearly articulate how the application and selection process operates. This will include expected timescales and key milestones, what communications they will receive and through which channels, what actions they will need to undertake and when, and how to request feedback or submit a complaint or appeal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University has in place a four-part Code of Practice (COP) for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes for managing the University's provision delivered across various locations and by various modes. Part 1: The Student Experience references the following key principles:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Principle 1.3: Information given to Applicants</li> <li>○ Principle 1.4: Admission to Non-UK Campus Programmes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The University's recruitment, selection and admission criteria are clearly articulated in its regulations, policies and procedures; for example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ordinance 1: Admission</li> <li>○ Regulation 2: Admission, outlines the minimum requirements/expectations for application and admission to the University</li> <li>○ Each programme has specific entry requirements clearly articulated in the prospectus and on the website which are reviewed and updated annually.</li> <li>○ Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer</li> <li>○ Policy on Admission of Ex-Offenders as Students</li> <li>○ Fair Access Admissions Policy which details University commitment to widening participation</li> <li>○ Policy on English Language Requirements for Entry</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Strategic priorities are ascertained through planning meetings which are held with each academic School that bring together staff from the Planning Office, Directorate of Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment and Communications and each of the Schools to agree strategic priorities for each admissions cycle and the number of places available for applicants. Two series of meetings are held annually.</li> <li>• Admissions criteria is reviewed by academic and school staff on an annual basis in advance of the publication of prospectuses and other literature. Advice on criteria is also provided by Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions colleagues, informed by sector behaviour.</li> <li>• Various recruitment groups and management boards within Schools and Campuses exist to agree, discuss and monitor internal achievement targets.</li> <li>• Institution-wide groups exist to consider Undergraduate and Postgraduate cohorts. These include the PGT and UG Task Groups which meet fortnightly and have representation from each School and Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions.</li> <li>• Monthly reporting on recruitment, admissions and progress to targets is given to the University Executive group.</li> <li>• Annual collation of entry requirements (UG and PGT) is carried out in the latter part of each calendar year. A master database of all entry requirements, with international equivalencies, is being created for the 20/21 academic year.</li> <li>• Weekly circulation of Student Recruitment and Admissions high-level data across the institution, complemented by detailed monthly reporting.</li> <li>• Access to real-time Admissions data available through CRM dashboards for all campuses and all levels of study.</li> <li>• The Admissions Office maintains a SharePoint site with advice and guidance on UCAS/ Undergraduate admissions and Postgraduate admissions (incorporating PGT/PGR). This reference tool is used across all campuses by staff involved in admissions throughout the University in order to guide and develop staff.</li> <li>• Guidance is provided for staff new to selecting applicants by the Admissions Office and from School staff who have been involved in selection themselves.</li> <li>• Information on applying for all campuses is published on our website. This includes information on how to apply, when to apply, types of offer and any fees applicable, as well as a link to the online application form.</li> <li>• Admissions Office liaise closely with staff in Schools to discuss priorities for the cycle and ensure best practice across the University.</li> <li>• Applicant communications are sent via our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and are reviewed and updated on an annual basis.</li> <li>• Direct applicants (non-UCAS) have access to an application account where they can view and update their personal information, submit further applications, upload supporting documentation i.e. transcripts to meet conditions, view offer letters and reply to offers.</li> <li>• Turnaround times on application processing are set by the University Executive and are monitored via CRM dashboards and reporting.</li> </ul>

- New centralised Admissions function is in development to ensure streamlined and consistent policy and practice is applied for an enhanced applicant experience. This replaces the current devolved structure where over 50 staff across students were acting as application reviewers as part of their remit. The centralised function will be a dedicated team of c20 staff whose sole responsibility is to be knowledgeable about admissions and how these are dealt with.
- Dedicated web pages are available on widening participation and access policies and provision.
- The University has in place a Complaints policy.
- The Undergraduate Admissions Guide also references appeals and complaints and the steps that are taken to address any appeals that are received.
- Complaints are monitored by the Professional Services Leadership Board (who report to the University Executive) on a regular basis.
- A small working group has been established to review the Policy on Admission of Ex-Offenders and to ensure the University is dealing with this cohort fairly. This is expected to be available in 2020.
- A dedicated enquiries team has been established to act as 'one point of contact' for all prospect and applicant enquiries, supported by a FAQ database. The aim is to redirect all enquiry mailboxes and phone lines to one dedicated mailbox and phone line by the end of 2019.
- Pre-enrolment reporting on any student under 16 is carried out to ensure that appropriate risk assessments have taken place.
- Applicants using our online form sign up to our Privacy agreement and the link to this is included with our offer letters.
- Applicants who are unsuccessful in gaining a place will be considered for other programmes and where appropriate, an alternative offer will be made. Reasons for rejection are provided to applicants via their reject notification. Contact details are provided for the Admissions team if they wish to get back in touch to question this.

**2. Higher education providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully.**

An effective admissions process should select students based on their potential to succeed on their chosen course of study, and assessment should be aligned to this goal. Assessment methods should be fair and reliable: consistently applied and delivering consistent outcomes. Tools used to differentiate the suitability of applicants should be appropriate to the course of study and within reasonable expectations of prospective students.

- The University's Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes references the following key principles:
  - Principle 1.3: Information given to Applicants
  - Principle 1.4: Admission to Non-UK Campus Programmes
- The following documents are produced internally by Admissions Office staff and circulated to Admissions Tutors and Administrators in the academic Schools to ensure that staff are knowledgeable and competent in their roles:
- Code of Good Practice in the UCAS Admissions Guide.
- The Admissions Office maintains a SharePoint site with advice and guidance on UCAS/ Undergraduate admissions and Postgraduate admissions (incorporating PGT/PGR). This reference tool is used across all campuses by staff involved in admissions throughout the University in order to guide and develop staff. This includes qualification factsheets for new and existing qualifications.
- Confirmation and Clearing Guide (annually updated).
- Student Administration System and CRM Process guides and sub-process guides.
- International Recruitment Staff across campuses receive training to ensure the University is represented accurately by all staff in all markets. All staff recruit to all campuses and annual planning and training is done.
- Any external agents go through due diligence checks before a contract is signed (process document available). This is overseen by the University's Director of Governance and Legal Services.
- Agents sign a legal contract with the University before being allowed to represent HWU (agent contract template is available). This was updated for GDPR purposes in 2018. This process is also overseen by the Director of Governance and Legal Services.
- An agent guidance booklet is produced by the Student Recruitment Service, which includes the Anti Bribery Act, the British Council Code of Conduct, the University's expectations, terms and conditions, as well as information about the University and all our procedures in order to advise prospective students on our behalf.
- Agents receive weekly updates and bulletins.
- Safeguard of data is managed through the application of policies, such as:
  - Data Protection Policy (incorporating GDPR)
  - Policy and Procedure for approving, monitoring and reviewing personal data processing agreements
  - Privacy statement is provided to applicants through online application forms and offer letters

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Records Management</li> <li>• Selection criteria and entry requirements are published in the University's prospectus (both print and online versions). These are reviewed and updated annually.</li> <li>• Where interviews or portfolios are required as part of the decision-making process, applicants are made aware of these at the earliest opportunity. Appropriate academic colleagues will make the decision based on their knowledge and experience of the applicant's likelihood to succeed.</li> <li>• Programmes with pre-requisite subjects must declare these in the printed and online prospectus. These also include the minimum grade required in each of these subjects.</li> <li>• English language requirements for non-native speakers are published beside entry requirements. As per the Regulations, all applicants must have a minimum of National 5/GCSE English or equivalent for study. Guidance on the acceptable English language tests and required scores is published on our website and reviewed regularly through the Student Learning Experience Committee.</li> <li>• A master database for all entry requirements and international equivalencies is being created which will be updated annually. This update will incorporate intelligence from colleagues in key markets and take into account market behaviour.</li> <li>• Qualification factsheets are created for new or reformed qualifications and uploaded to SharePoint.</li> <li>• For Contextual Admissions, from 2020 onwards the University prospectus will have both standard and minimum entry standards.</li> <li>• The University offers a High Achievers Scheme which includes unconditional offers to high-performing candidates from England, Wales and Northern Ireland; this scheme is regularly reviewed in line with sector norms.</li> <li>• The creation of a centralised admissions function affords the opportunity to improve consistency in offer-making and develop a highly specialised team with advanced knowledge of qualifications, contextual factors and applicant behaviour.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Higher education providers reduce or remove unnecessary barriers for prospective students.</b></p> <p>The application process should be inclusive and allow all prospective students to make an application and receive a fair outcome, regardless of background.</p> <p>Higher education providers should aim to reduce or remove any barriers not necessary to the appropriate selection and assessment of applicants. Action should be taken to ensure that internal policies and procedures do not have a negative impact on specific individuals or demographic groups and obstruct their access to the course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University's Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes references the following key principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Principle 1.3: Information given to Applicants</li> <li>○ Principle 1.4: Admission to Non-UK Campus Programmes</li> <li>○ Principle 1.5: Entry Requirements</li> </ul> </li> <li>• As noted in section two, entry criteria and admissions policy are set out to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to selection and selection criteria are based on the ability to succeed.</li> <li>• We recognise that not everyone has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their full academic potential from their school or college qualifications alone. For this reason, we aim to identify Scottish applicants who could benefit from additional consideration in the admissions process. This process is called the Fair Access Admissions Policy (see attached link), and it enables us to consider an applicant's achievements in context.</li> <li>• The aim of this document is to provide clear and transparent summary of the University's processes and procedures for ensuring that Scottish undergraduates from diverse backgrounds have fair access through our admissions procedures to the opportunities offered by an education at Heriot-Watt. This policy is aligned to our Widening Access Strategy 2019-2025 which outlines our vision as the following:</li> <li>• We have a proven track record as being an educationally and socially inclusive University. We will continue to reach out, support and reward talented individuals across society.</li> <li>• In line with the recommendations from the Commissioner for Fair Access, the University has implemented an access threshold for widening participation students. This forms part of the wider Fair Access Admissions Policy.</li> <li>• The University also annually reviews fair access with the Scottish Funding Council and publishes a mutually agreed Outcome Agreement. This includes review of the impact of equality measures and provides analysis, metrics and KPIs on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ General strategy</li> <li>○ SIMD20/40 (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)</li> <li>○ Scottish Higher Education Programme with Schools</li> <li>○ Articulation with Scottish Colleges</li> <li>○ Care experience and other protected characteristics groups</li> <li>○ Gender balance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The University is reviewing its Widening Participation Strategy in 2019 and has created a new post of Widening Participation Manager. The Strategy will look at the whole student journey rather than simply focus on pre-entry and enrolment. The role of the WP Manager is to support the development of this in conjunction with academic colleagues and to formalise support around other WP groups not currently measured by the SFC, including: mature students; armed forces families; veterans.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University Student Record System flags applicants from key groups, notably from SIMD 20 and Care Backgrounds. This allows for the appropriate selection criteria to be applied, and for University staff to address access issues at the earliest possible opportunity. The system links to Student Wellbeing and Disability Services.</li> <li>• The University also has named contacts for Care students, young and adult carers and estranged students.</li> <li>• Monitoring of success on course is undertaken through constant review of student attainment. This is led by the University Committee for Learning and Teaching with lead responsibility resting with the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and Directors of Learning and Teaching in each Academic School.</li> <li>• In terms of global reach and opportunity to study, the University has 27,670 students in total, 10,710 of whom are UK-based and 16,960 non-UK based. In terms of on-campus students, the University has 9,690 on the Scottish campuses, 3,610 in Dubai and 2,220 in Malaysia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions.</b></p> <p>Prospective students should have confidence that information supplied to them during recruitment and widening access activities is accurate and reliable, and enables them to make informed decisions about higher education. They should be directed to sources of further information to enable them to make informed decisions at the point of application for higher education courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University's Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes references the following key principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Principle 1.3: Information given to Applicants</li> <li>○ Principle 1.4: Admission to Non-UK Campus Programmes</li> <li>○ Principle 1.5: Entry Requirements</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The University makes every effort to ensure that all information provided to prospective students and their advisers are accurate, up-to-date, timely and gives a clear reflection of the student experience.</li> <li>• The Directorate of Marketing, Recruitment, Admissions and Communications coordinates the University's range of marketing materials (both online and print). Publications are updated and published on at least an annual basis. Presentations are given at both on-campus and off-campus events to reflect the most up-to-date information on academic portfolio as well as University facilities and services.</li> <li>• Recruitment, selection and admission processes, and entry requirements, are communicated through various methods, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Printed Prospectuses</li> <li>○ University website</li> <li>○ Input of information to the UCAS website on courses available and entry requirements</li> <li>○ Fair Access Policy</li> <li>○ Articulation Agreements with colleges</li> <li>○ Agent Guidance booklet and training – procedures are all outlined</li> <li>○ Undergraduate Admissions Policy</li> <li>○ Postgraduate entry criteria are clearly outlined in the online prospectus</li> <li>○ Publications for Graduate Apprenticeship Scheme</li> <li>○ Publications for the Edinburgh Business School – focusing upon online delivery of PGT business and management programmes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Prospectuses are typically published between 12 to 18 months prior to entry. The University website is regularly updated to reflect any material changes and these are also directly communicated by e-mail to prospective students.</li> <li>• Accreditation information for Professional Statutory and Regulation Bodies for relevant careers is clearly listed in the University's key promotional materials, notably prospectuses and website.</li> <li>• English language requirements are detailed prominently in promotional materials for international students and for all campuses. Information on English Language programmes is also published.</li> <li>• The University offers a range of delivery models from on-campus learning to independent online learning. The University also delivers Graduate Apprenticeship programmes that include substantial work-based learning programmes. All of these are clearly described in promotional materials which are regularly updated.</li> <li>• Student Recruitment staff at all campuses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attend recruitment events at schools and colleges giving advice, presentations and information.</li> <li>○ Attend higher education fairs in all key markets giving advice, presentations and information.</li> <li>○ Organise annual University Open Days for visitors which includes tours, talks and discussions with both academic and support staff. Programme of activities for Open Days are available before the events.</li> <li>○ Organise on and off campus offer-holder events for applicants to give detailed information on the University.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Staff in the Directorate of Marketing, Recruitment, Admissions and Communications also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintain a commitments and events calendar, giving details of internal and external activities</li> <li>○ Ensure up to date publicity materials are available to prospective students – prospectuses, programme information sheets, website and social media channels.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• International Recruitment Agents engaged on contracts by the University receive a weekly e-Newsletter with updates on the University, its portfolio, procedures and reputation. Agent</li> </ul>

	<p>Guidance provides key information that agents can use to advise/inform prospective students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agents are given regular face to face training, including an annual conference for key agents.</li> <li>• Various communication methods allow students to explore programme opportunities directly with staff (within Schools and the Student Recruitment Service) through forums such as email and online web chats.</li> <li>• A comprehensive communications plan for each student type is sent to applicants through the CRM system.</li> <li>• Online chats for prospective students are regularly held by both Academic Schools and Professional Services.</li> <li>• Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) legislation is carefully considered for University publications with reference to the University's policies overseen by the Director of Governance and Legal Services.</li> <li>• Fees for all categories of programme are published and regularly updated and overseen by the University's Fees and Scholarships Group, chaired by the Vice-Principal. Bespoke information on fees and living costs are published by the Student Recruitment team. The Admissions team publish fees in every offer letter.</li> <li>• Full details of financial support are available and are regularly updated. This includes information about scholarships, bursaries and access awards for all campuses. Prominent links throughout the website and sections within printed materials, advertise a wide range of scholarships.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. All staff, representatives and partners engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced.</b></p> <p>Admissions, recruitment and widening access activities should be conducted in a professional manner, and higher education providers ensure that anyone delivering these activities has received appropriate training and support. Training and resources should be reviewed, evaluated and refreshed regularly to ensure that practice and policy are fully aligned and reflect the current landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University's Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes references the following key principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Principle 1.3: Information given to Applicants</li> <li>○ Principle 1.4: Admission to Non-UK Campus Programmes</li> <li>○ Principle 1.5: Entry Requirements</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Student Recruitment and Admissions deliver relevant 'on the job' training to all staff engaged in admissions, recruitment and widening access. Staff are trained to ensure a comprehensive working knowledge of the University's portfolio and entry requirements. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New staff induction programme</li> <li>○ Regular training sessions with Academic Schools</li> <li>○ Collated information on key selling points for academic programmes</li> <li>○ Documented processes for all Admissions functions</li> <li>○ Attendance at external training events (e.g. NARIC, IELTS seminars)</li> <li>○ Engagement with professional bodies (e.g. UCAS Practitioners, Higher Education Liaison Officers Association, Scottish Universities International Group) to consider best practice</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regular review through Planning processes is undertaken to benchmark against resource and staffing levels in other institutions. This is led by the University's Planning Office. Additional staffing has been approved in 2019, notably for Widening Participation and International Recruitment.</li> <li>• Training needs are identified through the University's Performance Development Review processes.</li> <li>• Agent training is undertaken through a variety of activities, including online training, in-market visits, bespoke publications, regular digital communications and agent conferences. This includes particular focus on support through the University's in-country offices in China and India. Expectations of agency knowledge of portfolio and University services and facilities are outlined in the agency contract, which is reviewed and revised on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Staffing levels are reviewed through the University's Planning process.</li> <li>• Benchmarking work in staffing levels is undertaken on an ad-hoc basis but regularly informs discussions on staffing levels.</li> </ul>

**6. Providers continually develop widening access strategies and policies in line with local and national guidance.**

Procedures and policies governing the purpose and scope of widening access activities and initiatives are determined by a range of local and national bodies. There are different and evolving practices reflected across UK nations and providers should respond in line with stated expectations and develop their strategies in context with relevant frameworks.

- The University's Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes references the following key principles:
  - Principle 1.3: Information given to Applicants
  - Principle 1.4: Admission to Non-UK Campus Programmes
  - Principle 1.5: Entry Requirements

As noted above in section 3 and as set out in the University's Outcome Agreement, the University develops Widening Access Strategy in line with a range of stakeholders, notably:

- The Scottish Funding Council
  - Scottish Government, notably through the Commission for Wider Access
  - Local consortia (e.g. Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools, Scottish Wider Access Programme)
  - Universities Scotland and sub-committees
  - Sector groups – e.g. SHEP for schools
- The University is developing a new Widening Participation strategy to be presented to the University's Committee for Learning and Teaching in late 2019. This strategy will be developed in close partnership between Academic Schools and Professional Services and will be cascaded across the institution. The Strategy will take into account a number of factors, including SFC and government priorities as listed above, the University's own strategy and the recommendations of relevant stakeholders, including: -
    - Who Cares? Scotland
    - Carers Trust Scotland
    - StandAlone
    - Armed Forces Covenant
    - SCiP (Service Children's Progression)
    - The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 which sets out our statutory duty as a Corporate Parent.
  - We meet our Corporate Parenting duties through a variety of measures, including fair access policies, a guaranteed offer of a place to all those who can meet the widening access entry requirement and tailored support throughout the application process and their time at university. This is maintained through the Corporate Parenting plan, managed by Academic Registry.
  - In addition the University is either working towards, or already holds / has signed up to, many of the related covenants and strategies of the groups mentioned above.
  - The University's new strategy (Strategy 2025) is committed to developing flourishing communities and continuing the University's record of pioneering in education.
  - The University does considerable work around outreach, to target schools, colleges and communities, to increase aspiration and motivation to access Higher Education, and help applicants make informed choices and support them through the transition to university. This work is often collaborative and focuses on the needs of the local community in particular, although not exclusively.
  - Work has been completed through the Fair Access Admissions Policy to reflect the outreach work undertaken, and to recognise nuances in the achievement of formal qualifications in different circumstances, and where appropriate other indicators of potential to excel on an individual case by case basis, in line with developing best practice in admissions.
  - The University continues to work on alternative models of admissions, study and delivery to enable students to find a route and mode of study that best suits their individual circumstances. This includes continued development of both Associate Student Schemes and Articulation Agreements with local colleges in targeted subjects to provide advanced entry for HNC / HND students to our Graduate Apprenticeship programmes, aimed at those who want to develop their employment and academic potential at the same time. Through the delivery of online programmes to over 10,000 students around the world, the University also continues to be a leader in online delivery of courses and is working on ways to expand these models to a broader range of potential students. New online MSc programmes are being delivered in the School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society. Expansion of online provision is central to the University's Strategy for growth up to 2025.
  - As a central partner in the Edinburgh City Deal we continue to work with other local partners to identify gaps in industry and delivery and provide solutions, e.g. the development of articulation agreements with local colleges to look at the Data Sciences industry.
  - Support throughout the application process is targeted to individual groups and circumstances through the provision of expert advice and counselling services, preparatory and bridging activities where required, enhanced induction and mentoring, and practical financial help through targeted bursaries and scholarships. Examples of this work includes: -
    - S5 Brightest Watts summer school – in conjunction with Bailey Gifford
    - Targeted scholarships in conjunction with the Robertson Trust
    - Creative Extras – in partnership with LEAPS – targeting students who require portfolio support
    - SWAP Study Skills Days – in partnership with SWAP East to provide study and transitional support to mature students
    - Various visits both to campus and in college to support articulating and associate students through transition and study support

## 7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Describing who collates data about admissions, recruitment and widening access within the University, region and nationally.

- Strategy and operational development is constantly informed by data. This data is collected through a wide variety of channels, including:
  - Admissions – application rates, offer-making rates, conversion data
  - The Planning Office – sector benchmarking (e.g. via HESA; Key Performance Indicators)
  - Student Recruitment – application rates, geographical spread of applicants, domestic and international market reports, (e.g. from UCAS, British Council/SIEM). All activities have event evaluations (e.g. Open Days, Offer-Holder events).
  - Marketing – Digital marketing data reports, analysis of web and social media traffic, market intelligence reports to inform advertising campaigns.
  - Regular reference to regional data (e.g. LEAPS Widening Participation data)
  - Feedback from in-country staff and agents
- The University recently created a new post of Head of Market Research and Intelligence to help coordinate the gathering of data and liaise closely with colleagues in Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment and Planning.
- All information, including contextual data for Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access is regularly disseminated through e-mail channels and University senior boards and operational groups, including:
  - University Executive
  - University Committee for Learning and Teaching
  - Professional Services Leadership Board
  - Student Learning Experience Committee
  - Operational groups for UG and PG recruitment
  - Dubai Marketing Committee
- Institutional Key Performance Indicators measure progress towards the strategic objectives, as well as towards national priority areas as specified in the SFC Outcome Agreement: entry scores; retention/progression; attainment; widening participation; graduate first destinations (employability); student satisfaction (National Student Survey). The indicators are benchmarked nationally and incorporate previous years' performance for comparison purposes. They are monitored by the University Committee for Learning and Teaching (which includes representatives from Schools, Professional Services and the student body) and considered by the Court, the University Executive (and its Boards).
- Schools also analyse, review and report upon statistical data through the Annual Monitoring and Review process. Where programmes are delivered through, or in collaboration with, partner institutions, monitoring and review responsibilities are outlined within the partnership contract. The Annual Monitoring and Review process incorporates Partner Annual Monitoring and Review, which requires the collaborative production of annual reports and action plans by the School and the partner institution.

