

Heriot-Watt University
Role and Function of the Deans
Refreshed – March 2020

1. Introduction

This document sets out the identifiable tasks currently carried out by the Deans as specified in the Charter and Statutes and the Ordinances and Regulations of the University. The document is intended to inform the election of Deans in the course of 2020.

SUMMARY

1. The existence of Deans is determined in the University Charter and Ordinances. The relevant Ordinance (L1) states there shall be three Deans, who are members of the academic Staff.
2. One Dean is elected by academic Staff across the whole University, and two are elected from academic Staff in specified broad academic groupings.
3. The post of Dean is a secondary appointment, comprising 50% of academic duties, for a fixed-term period of three years. A Dean can serve for two periods of office.
4. The current Heriot-Watt model of elected Deans is unusual in UK Higher Education, and was established in 2001/02 following the dissolution of Faculties, and the disestablishment of the office of (executive) Deans of Faculty.
5. The Deans fulfil a broad range of academic functions defined in Ordinances and Regulations (primarily regarding Quality Assurance and Standards, Student discipline; and Staff recruitment and promotion).
6. The Deans – collectively and individually – contribute to the senior fora of the University, including the Senate (of which all Deans are *ex-officio* members); one Dean is elected by the Senate to be a member of Court.

2. Deans in Post

The Deans are elected for a period of three years, and there are three colleagues currently in post, who all are serving their first term of office and are eligible to stand for re-election:

- **Professor Scott Arthur** Dean (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) (elected until 31 March 2020);
- **Dr Fadi Ghaith** Dean (Science and Engineering) (elected until 31 December 2020);
- **Dr Amos Haniff** Dean (Pan-University) (elected until 31 December 2020).

3. Constitutional Documents

The University Charter establishes the position of Deans ¹ :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"Dean" means a member of the Academic Staff who represents the academic community and whose constituency, responsibilities and process of appointment as a Dean are prescribed in the Ordinances.</i>• <i>The Senate shall appoint Deans in accordance with the Statutes and the Ordinances which shall prescribe the manner of appointment and the responsibilities of the Deans.</i>• <i>At the discretion of the Senate, from time to time, any additional designation of the Deans may be agreed</i>
The Statutes refer to the Deans' appointment, responsibilities and removal ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Deans shall be appointed by the Senate from among the members of the Academic Staff in a manner prescribed in the Ordinances³. The conditions as to reappointment, removal or otherwise shall be prescribed in the Ordinances.</i>• <i>The responsibilities of the Deans shall be prescribed in the Ordinances</i>• <i>Any Dean may be removed from the office of Dean if not less than 75% of the members of the Senate present and voting vote that there is good cause for that Dean to be removed.</i>
The Ordinances contain several stipulations for Deans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The detailed requirements of Ordinances regarding the Deans are listed in Appendix 1.• Ordinance L1: <i>Deans of the University and Associate Deans</i> is online (and is under review).

¹ Charter Article 2. 'Further Definitions and Interpretation'; and Charter Article 16. 'The Deans'

² Statute 2.6. 'The Deans' and Statute 6.4 'Removal from Office or Membership'

³ Ordinance L1: Deans of the University and Associate Deans, defines the process for the appointment of Deans

4. Role of Deans (as at February 2020)

The Deans' role has evolved over time, and has four main themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Quality Assurance and Standards; • Student Discipline and related matters; • Academic Appointments and Promotion; • Promotion of citizenship and Representative/Ceremonial.
Academic Quality Assurance and Standards	
	<p>a) As defined in Regulations and Ordinances, as well as being embedded throughout policies and procedures, the Deans are expected to bring to bear their prior experience of, and insight to, the University's Academic Regulatory Framework.</p>
	<p>b) The Deans fulfil a central role in the assurance of academic quality and standards, bringing to bear their independent overview across the Schools and campuses, thus helping ensure clear and consistent application of the Regulations in each of the Schools.</p>
	<p>c) The Deans have a particularly integral role defined in the HWU Assessment and Progression System (HAPS), which requires that the Progression Board and Awards Board for every programme of the University (including the Dubai Entry Programme and the Malaysia Foundation Programme) must have a Dean (or a nominee) as an "observer"⁴. The views of Deans are especially sought in any instances of perceived 'high risk'⁵ attached to these Boards.</p>
	<p>d) To fulfil this requirement, given the volume of programmes offered by the University, the role of "Deans' representatives" has been created, and there are now over 50 "Deans' representatives" recruited from across the University, who attend upwards of 100 examination boards per annum on behalf of the Deans. The system is co-ordinated by the Academic Registry. All Deans' representatives (along with Chairs of Boards) must attend training for the role (delivered by the Deans and Academic Registry), to ensure familiarity with the requirements of the Regulations⁶. The Deans' representatives are required to minute any divergences from accepted practice at exam boards.</p>
	<p>e) The Deans scrutinise UG, PGT and Chief External Examiners reports. Also they "see and comment on" all responses to reports submitted by External Examiners of taught programmes (the documents are also reviewed by Academic Registry).</p>
	<p>f) The Deans approve the nominations of External Examiners and Chief External Examiners for both UG and PGT programmes.</p>
	<p>g) The Deans are members of the Compulsory Withdrawal sub-group of the University Committee for Quality and Standards (UCQS) which is responsible for approving the compulsory withdrawal of Students.</p>
	<p>h) A Dean is a mandatory member of the Internal Audit team. Internal Audit is one of HWU's periodic review processes for assuring and enhancing the quality and standards of programmes.</p>
	<p>i) The Deans are also often called upon between meetings to give advice on regulatory matters to academic and professional services colleagues.</p>
Student Discipline	
	<p>The Regulations require the Deans to fulfil an important role in the Student Discipline process. All the Deans are members of the University (Student) Discipline Committee (UDC), and the Senate has appointed one of the current Deans as Chair of the UDC. The Regulations also stipulate that the Deans shall be called upon to rule on instances of major breaches of discipline⁷.</p>
	<p>Deans consider and approve penalties imposed by Schools in cases of student academic misconduct considered as Category B cases.</p>

⁴ Cited in several Regulations.

⁵ Cited in several Regulations.

⁶ <https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/exam-guidelines.htm>

⁷ Reg 50 (Student Discipline), para 4.2 (Non-Academic Misconduct)

Other Student-related roles of the Deans prescribed in the Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Deans are to be consulted⁸ should a student wish to register on a second programme of study; or if a student wishes to register for five courses per semester.⁹ b) Deans receive from invigilators reports of misconduct in examinations¹⁰. c) Deans make other arrangements for a student who has missed an exam¹⁰. d) Deans are informed (along with the Academic Registrar) of a decision by a Head of School to not permit a student to sit an exam¹¹. e) Deans assist in the investigations involved in dealing with student complaints.
Academic Staff Appointments and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) As currently prescribed by Ordinance F2, each appointment and promotion panel for academic Staff is required to have a relevant Dean as a member. For appointment and promotion committees for positions below the grade of Professor, the Deans are permitted to nominate a person of professorial standing in their place. b) Currently new members of academic Staff are given a local mentor and probation targets, following consultation between the Heads of School and the Deans. c) The Deans currently attend the Advancement and Promotions Boards, which reviews probationary Staff and approves probation completion. The Deans currently are members of Senior Academic Promotions Boards. d) Under Ordinance F8 a Dean receives from Staff 'views on the appointment of a Head of School' and conveys these views to the other members of the committee established for the appointment or reappointment of a Head of School. e) Ordinance P6 states that a relevant Dean authorises Approved Teachers and Approved Markers as nominated by the relevant Head of School or nominee. f) The Senate has agreed procedures whereby a Dean countersigns a nomination for the conferral of an Honorary, Visiting or Emeritus Title (currently under review).
Representative / Ceremonial role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Statutes stipulate that a Dean shall be elected by the Senate to be an ex-officio member of the Court (Statute 4.1.a.v); and that all Deans shall be ex-officio member(s) of the Senate (Statute 5.1.a.iii). b) The Senate has agreed that all the Deans currently are members or attendees at: the Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SCIBE); the Honorary Degrees Working Group; and the University Committees for: Quality and Standards; Learning and Teaching; and Research and Innovation. These, and other bodies, are detailed in Appendix 2. It is expected that Deans will normally be present at all meetings of the committees of which they are members. c) The Deans currently have academic dress specified in the Regulations, and participate in processions at Congregations. Deans also have a role in selecting recipients of the Macfarlane prize.
Ordinance L1 permits each Dean to recommend the appointment of up to two Associate Deans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Associate Deans often deputise for Deans in appointment and promotion panels for academic Staff (except for Professors) and exam board activities. b) Although Associate Deans deputise for the Deans during extended periods of absence, they cannot be substitutes for the Deans in any of the statutory duties of the Deans, nor can they represent a Dean on the Court, the Senate or the SCIBE. c) There is currently no formally defined role for Associate Deans, nor is there a formally defined appointment process.

⁸ Regulation 1 (General Regulation)

⁹ Regulation 3 (Modular First Degree)

¹⁰ Regulation 9 (Assessments and Examinations)

¹¹ Regulation 44 (Mixed Mode Study – Modular First Degrees)

Miscellaneous matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) The Deans have no executive responsibilities, and no staff management responsibility.b) In the conduct of their roles as Deans, post-holders report to the Vice-Principal, and are given a contract to augment their extant contractual arrangements. An honorarium is attached to the post.c) A Dean may resign office by writing to the Vice-Principal giving three months' notice. The Vice-Principal shall report the matter to the Senate.d) The Senate can vote to remove a Dean from office, as stipulated in Statute 6.4.
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Professor Julian Jones
Vice-Principal

March 2020

Functions of Deans as Stipulated in Ordinances		
ORDINANCE	Title	Relevant Content
ORDINANCE A1	Definitions and Interpretation	"Dean" means a member of the Academic Staff who represents the academic community and whose constituency, responsibilities and process of appointment are defined in the Ordinances
ORDINANCE F2	Appointment of Academic Staff and of Professional Services Staff	A Dean shall be a member of a committee to appoint a Professor. A Dean (or a nominee of professorial status) shall be a member of a committee to appoint to the following roles: Senior Research Fellow or Associate Professor; Assistant Professor.
ORDINANCE F5	Disciplinary, Removal and Grievance Procedures for Members of Staff	Where a report from the Senate on any proposal for a new or modified procedure is being considered by the Staff Committee, then a Dean shall be in attendance at the meeting.
ORDINANCE F6	Honorary Titles	The nomination of an honorary title shall be considered by a Dean who, having considered it, shall make a recommendation to the Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness
ORDINANCE F8	Head of School	Views on the appointment (of Head of School) should be made to the appropriate Dean or, where the appointment concerns the Dean's School, to the other Dean with constituency responsibilities, who shall convey these views to the other members of the committee. The relevant Dean shall be a member of the Selection Committee
ORDINANCE L1	Deans of the University and Associate Deans	Dedicated Ordinance which specifies requirements for Appointment of Deans / Removal of Deans / Associate Deans
ORDINANCE P5	Approved Service Units	6. Boards of Studies - to be a member and to take the chair if required 7. Examinations - to countersign the examination results and recommendations.
ORDINANCE P6	Approved Teachers, Approved Tutors and Approved Markers	6. Approved Teachers shall be such persons as may be approved by a Dean, following completion of the approval process. 6.9 The status of Approved Teacher shall be valid for a period of up to five years in the first instance; modifications to the teacher's activities and duties within this period shall be submitted to a Dean for approval. 8.1 Approved Markers shall be such persons as may be approved by a Dean, nominated by the Head of School

Deans' Committee Responsibilities

Current Committee Title	Current Responsibilities of Deans	Constitutional status
Court	A Dean is a member elected by the Senate	As per requirement in Statute 4.1.(a) v.
Senate	All Deans are ex-officio members	As per requirement in Statute 5.1.(a) iii.
Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SCIBE)	One Dean is an ex-officio member as Chair of Discipline Committee; Two Deans have been appointed by the Senate in category of 'Elected members of the Senate'	As agreed by the Senate with effect from August 2017
University Committee for Quality and Standards (UCQS)	One Dean is a member appointed by the Senate – the other two are 'eligible to attend'	As agreed by the Senate with effect from August 2017
University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT)	One Dean is a member appointed by the Senate - the other two are 'eligible to attend'	As agreed by the Senate with effect from August 2017
University Committee for Research and Innovation (UCRI)	One Dean is a member appointed by the Senate - the other two are 'eligible to attend'	As agreed by the Senate with effect from August 2017
University Discipline Committee (UDC)	All Deans are ex-officio members as per Regulation 50.	One Dean currently is appointed by the Senate as Chair of the UDC
Studies Committee	The Terms of Reference state that at least one member appointed by the Senate would normally be a Dean of the University	One Dean currently is appointed by the Senate as Chair of the Studies Committee
Honorary Degrees Working Group (HDWG)	All Deans are ex-officio members as per Regulation 10	As agreed by the Senate with effect from August 2012
Academic Staff appointment, selection, and promotion Panels	Ordinance F2 stipulates that a Dean is a member of each Professorial appointment committee; and a Dean (or nominee of professorial status) is a member of each panel below the grade of Professor.	Ordinance F2 currently is under review (Jan 2020), any modifications will require Senate and Court approval
Examination and Progression Boards	A Dean (or nominee) is observer at all Boards as per current Regulations	Regulations currently are under review (winter/spring 2020), any modifications to the relevant Regulations will require Senate approval
School Audit Panels	All Deans can be members, as per current Policy	Should the relevant Policy be reviewed, any modifications may require Senate approval (via appropriate Standing Committee(s))
Academic Councils in Dubai and Malaysia	A Dean is appointed by SCIBE as an ex-officio member of each of the Academic Council (Dubai), and the Academic council (Malaysia)	