

Roles and Responsibilities of the Academic Deans – Heriot-Watt University

Academic Deans provide an independent academic perspective within the University's governance framework and support Senate in its responsibility for the academic governance, quality and standards of the University.

1. Governance Framework

The role of the Academic Deans is defined and governed by:

- University Charter (2019): Establishes the University's powers and statutory bodies.
- Statutes (2019): Prescribe the appointment, duties, and removal of officers including Academic Deans.
- Ordinances: Details the appointment, duties and removal of Academic Deans and Associate Academic Deans.
- Academic Regulations (2026/2027): Provide operational frameworks for the academic work of the University, student discipline, and ceremonial functions.

Academic Deans are appointed from within the academic staff of the University to provide an independent voice on matters within Senate's remit and responsibilities.

2. Appointment and Tenure

- There are three elected Academic Deans of the University, who are elected by members of the academic staff of the University.
- Each Academic Dean serves a three-year term, renewable once.
- The role comprises 50% of academic duties and includes an honorarium.
- Academic Deans report administratively to the Vice-Principal of the University and may resign giving three months' notice.
- They have no executive or line management responsibilities.

3. Core Responsibilities

A. Academic Matters

- Ensure consistent application of Academic Regulations across all Schools and campuses.
- Scrutinise External Examiner reports for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, and Chief External Examiner reports.
- Approve nominations for External Examiners for taught programmes.
- Approve nominations for Honorary, Visiting and Emeritus Titles for onward consideration by the Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SCIBE).
- Participate in Internal Audit Teams.
- Provide academic regulatory advice to academic and professional services colleagues.
- Serve on Primary Senate Committees as required.
- Attend Award Boards as independent observers.

B. Student Discipline

- Be a member of the University Discipline Committee (UDC).

C. Academic Appointments and Promotions

- Serve on academic appointment panels (Ordinance F2).
- Collaborate with the Executive Deans on Early Career Academic Development (ECAD) targets and review.
- Participate in Promotion Boards and interviews for all grades of academic staff, including Senior Academic Promotion Boards.
- Convey staff views on Executive Dean appointments (Ordinance F8).
- Approve nominations for Approved Teachers and Approved Markers (Ordinance P6).
- Countersign nominations for Honorary, Visiting, and Emeritus titles.

D. Citizenship and Ceremonial Duties

- One Academic Dean is elected by the Senate to serve on the Court.
- All Academic Deans are ex-officio members of Senate.
- Attend graduation ceremonies and ceremonial processions.

4. Committee Membership and Representation

Committee	Academic Dean's Role	Constitutional Basis
Court	One Academic Dean elected by Senate	Statute 4.1.a.v
Senate	All Academic Deans ex-officio	Statute 5.1.a.iii
Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SCIBE)	Two Academic Deans as elected Senate members	Senate agreement
University Committee for Quality and Standards (UCQS)	One Academic Dean appointed; others eligible to attend	Senate agreement
University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT)	One Academic Dean appointed; others eligible to attend	Senate agreement
University Committee for Research and Innovation (UCRI)	One Academic Dean appointed; others eligible to attend	Senate agreement
University Discipline Committee (UDC)	All Academic Deans ex-officio	Regulation A13
HDWG	One Academic Dean appointed, others eligible to attend	Regulation A9

Committee	Academic Dean's Role	Constitutional Basis
Academic Appointment Panels	Academic Dean or nominee per Ordinance F2	Ordinance F2
School Audit Panels	All Academic Deans eligible	University Policy

Roles and Responsibilities of the Associate Academic Deans – Heriot-Watt University

Associate Academic Deans provide support to the Academic Deans to undertake some aspects of their roles as outlined above.

1. Appointment and Tenure

The appointment process shall be in line with Ordinance L1.

- There are nine Associate Academic Deans. Each Academic Dean appoints one Associate Academic Dean in each geographical location (UK, Dubai and Malaysia).
- Each Associate Academic Dean's term runs concurrently with the term of appointment of the Academic Dean. The term of office of an Associate Academic Dean shall end on the last day of office of the appointing Academic Dean.
- The role comprises 10% of academic duties and includes an honorarium.
- Associate Academic Deans report to the Academic Dean who appointed them and may resign with three months' notice.
- They have no executive or line management responsibilities.

2. Core Responsibilities

A. Academic Matters

- Ensure consistent application of Academic Regulations across all Schools and campuses.
- Represent the Academic Dean on Award Boards.

B. Academic Appointments and Promotions

- Serve on Appointment Panels (Ordinance F2).
- Approve Approved Teachers and Markers (Ordinance P6).

C. General

- Act as an occasional substitute for an Academic Dean at meetings (excluding any Court and Court Committee or Senate and Senate Primary Committee meetings) and Promotion Boards as provided for in Ordinance L1.
- Provide cover, as required, during an Academic Dean's absence from the University.

For any queries, please contact Deans Administrator deansadministrator@hw.ac.uk or the Clerk to the Senate at secretariat@hw.ac.uk.