

Global Approach to Quality: Assurance and Enhancement

January 2026

Context for Global Approach to Quality



QAA Scotland/Scottish Funding Council

Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework **All of HWU's provision across all modes and locations**

Quality Assurance Agency (UK)

Transnational Education Enhancement Reviews (TNE);
UK Quality Code; European Standards + Guidelines

In-country Accreditation Authorities – HWU Campuses

Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA)
Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA: UAE)

In-Country Accreditation Authorities - Partnerships

international accreditation of partnership programmes

Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PSRBs)

UK and international accreditation of HWU programmes

“One Heriot-Watt Degree Worldwide”

“Identical academic standards; diversity of learning experiences”

Global Academic Management Structures and Leadership Roles: University ↔ Campus ↔ Schools

Single, global quality framework (assurance and enhancement)

Commendations by QAA UK, QAAS, CAA, MQA

Why does HWU adopt the Scottish Approach as its Global Framework?



Scottish Approach to Quality:

The only external framework which:

- applies to all of our credit-bearing provision, wherever and however it is delivered (campus, academic/industry partner, online)
- considers the learning experience of all our students (foundation, UG, PGT, PGR)
- requires annual and periodic review and reporting on above and on strategies for L+T, student experience and student partnership

Although a small percentage of our tuition fee funding comes from SFC, our continued authority to award qualifications globally is dependent on our successful outcomes of annual and periodic quality reviews within the Scottish Quality Framework.

What is “Quality”?



Enhancement-Led Approach

“taking deliberate steps to improve the effectiveness of the student learning experience”

Strategic Approach

- Strategies for L+T, student experience + SPA
- Operational Plans
- Processes/evidence for evaluating impact/ success

Data and Evidence

Data and evidence (incl. external ref points) used by institution to inform:
its strategic decision-making relating to L+T and student experience

Evaluation of Processes

Evidence of ongoing evaluation of effectiveness of strategic and operational processes

Quality Assurance Processes

- Approval
- Annual Monitoring and Review
- Periodic Review

Outcomes drive enhancement

***Identical academic standards;
Diversity of learning experiences***

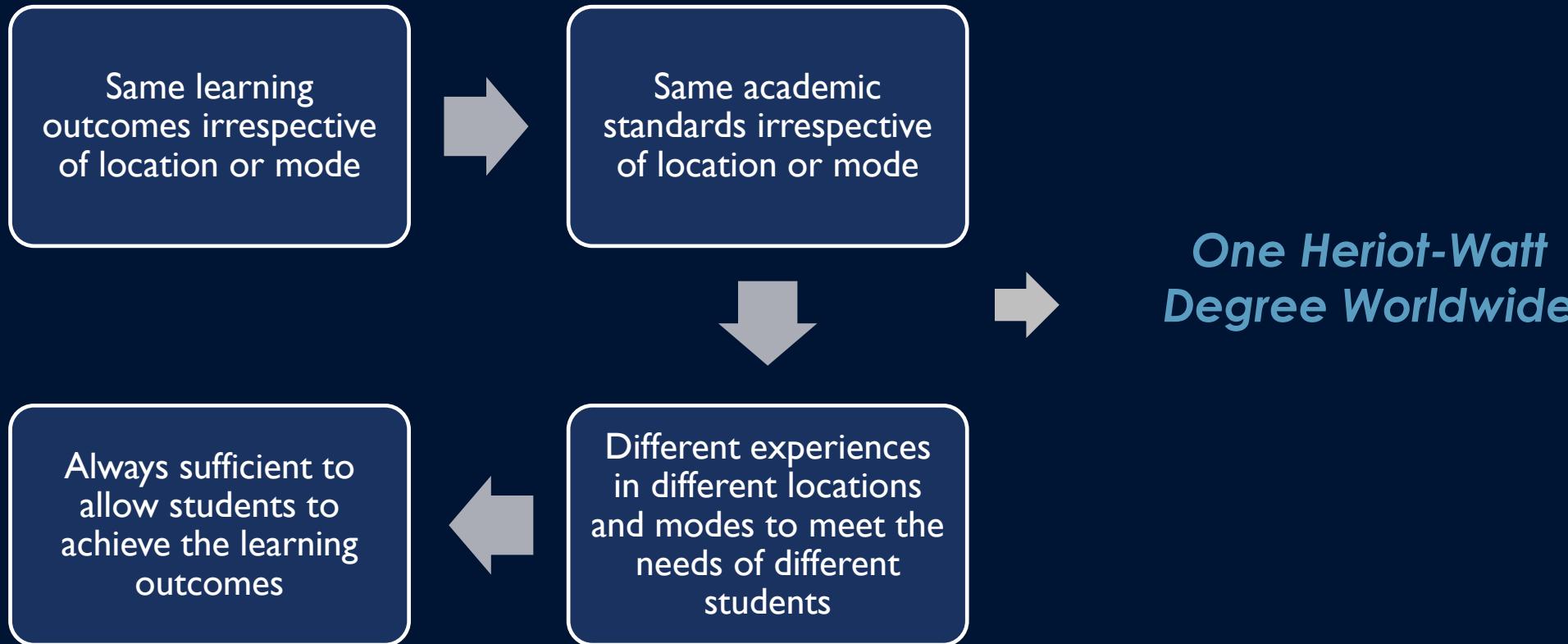
Single, global Quality Framework

Institutional (incl. global)

Key Principle for Assurance and Enhancement

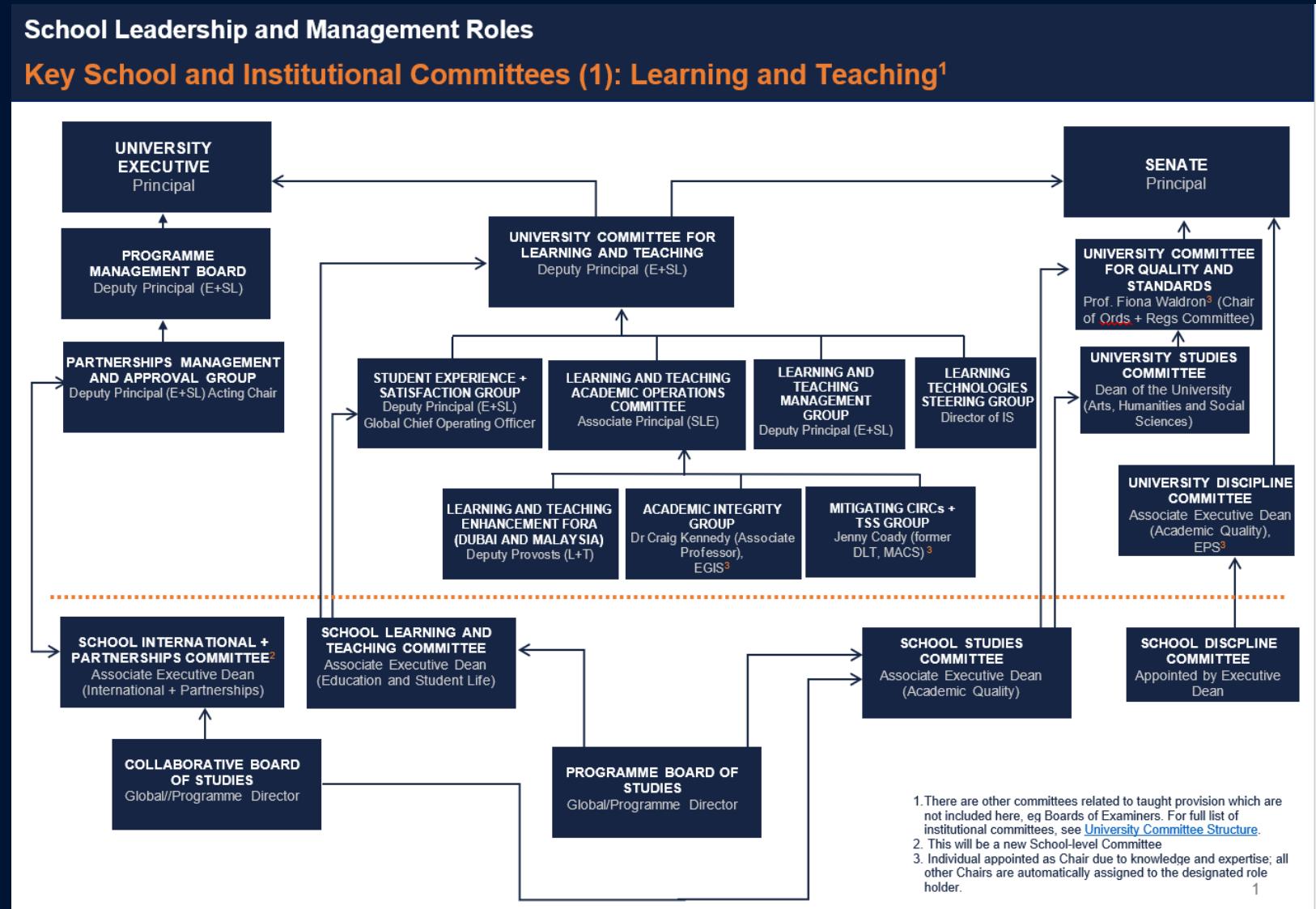


Identical academic standards; Diversity of learning experiences



... and the underpinning single, global quality framework

Governance Framework: Global Academic Management Structures

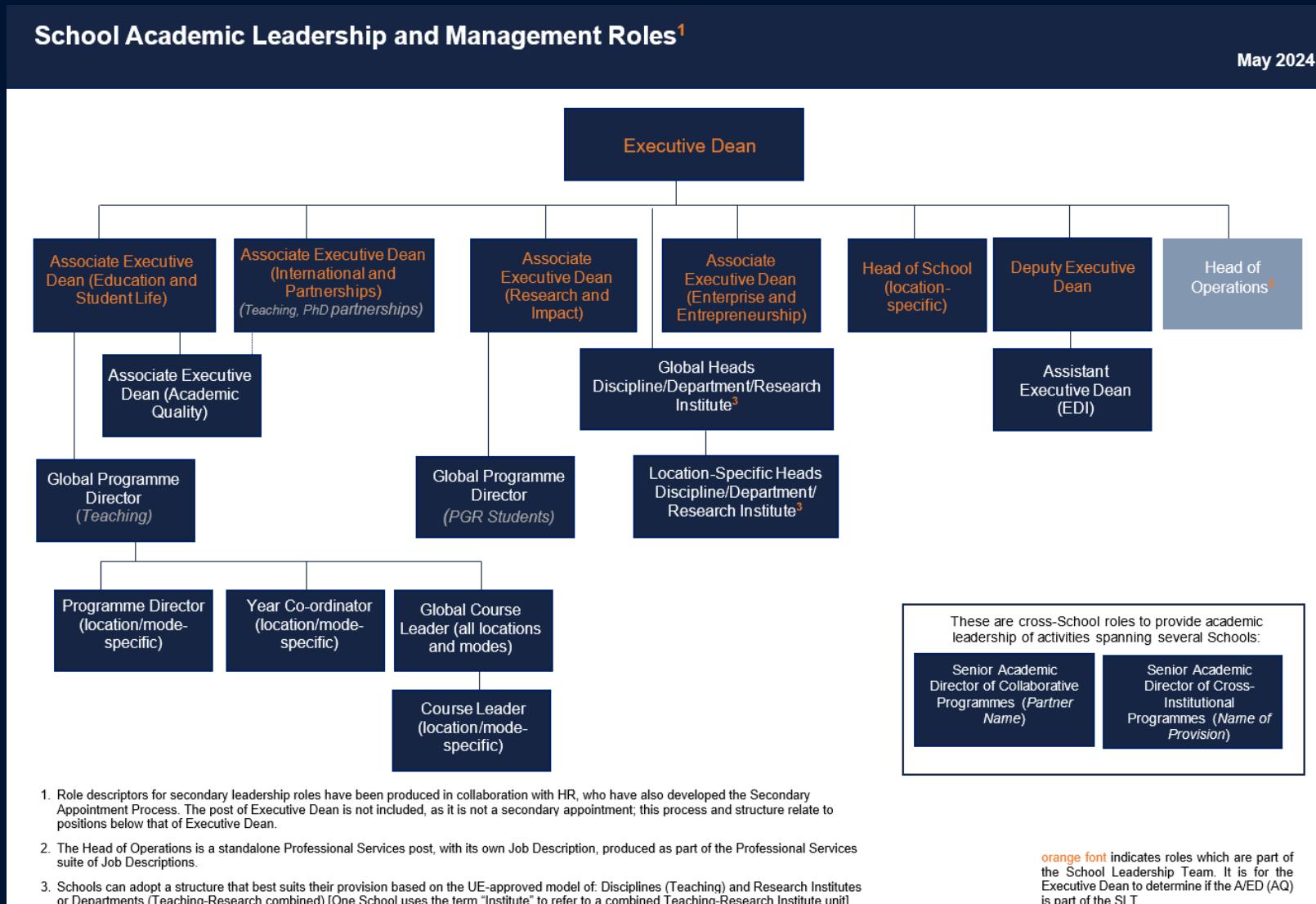


- University Structures reflected in School Structures
- Global Representation on all committees
- Student representation on key committees

Similar Framework for Research

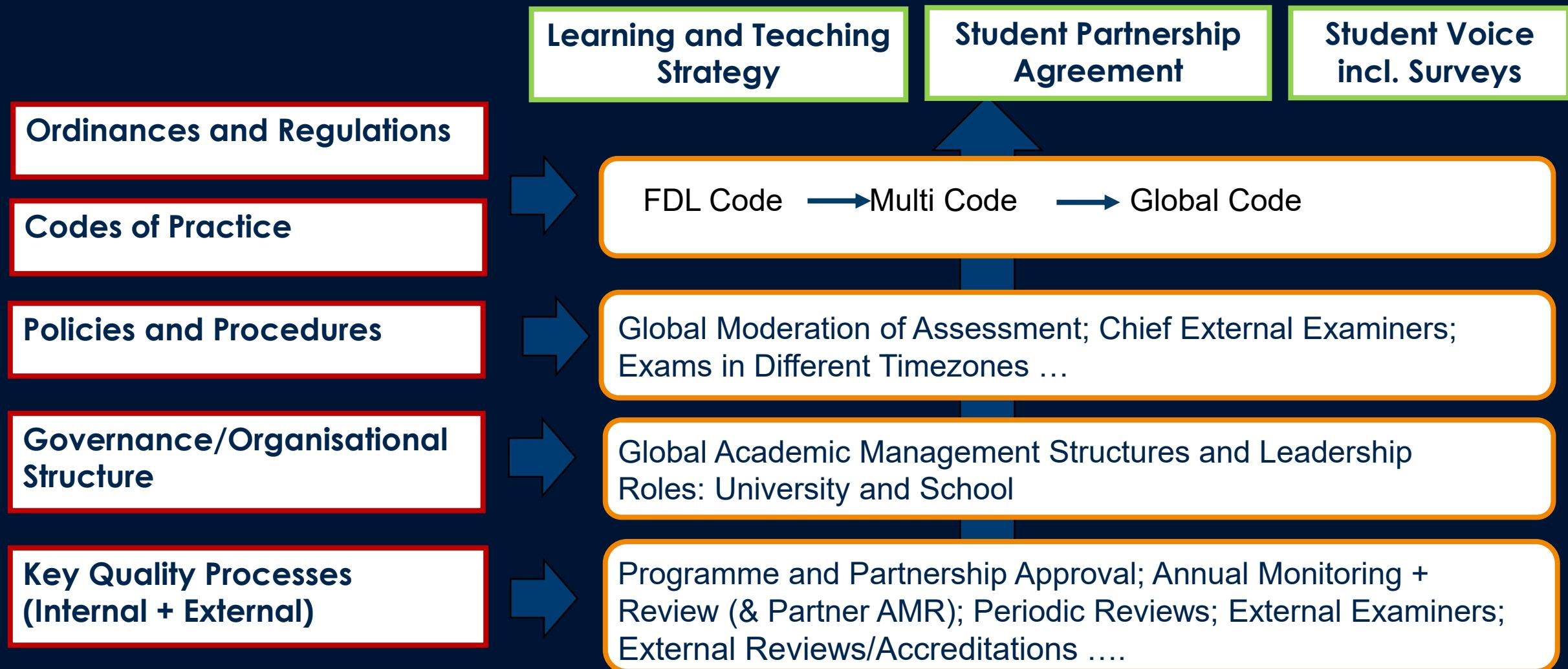


Governance Framework: University-School Leadership Roles



- University Leadership Roles reflected in School Leadership Roles
- Global roles in all locations
- Globally connected teaching teams
- And (not shown) globally connected Professional Services

A Single, Global Quality Framework: Assurance and Enhancement





Responsibility for Quality: The Senate

Charter Article 8 The Senate:

8.1. There shall be a Senate. Subject to the terms of the Charter and the Statutes, and to the powers reserved to the Court, **the Court shall delegate to the Senate all of its powers in relation to**

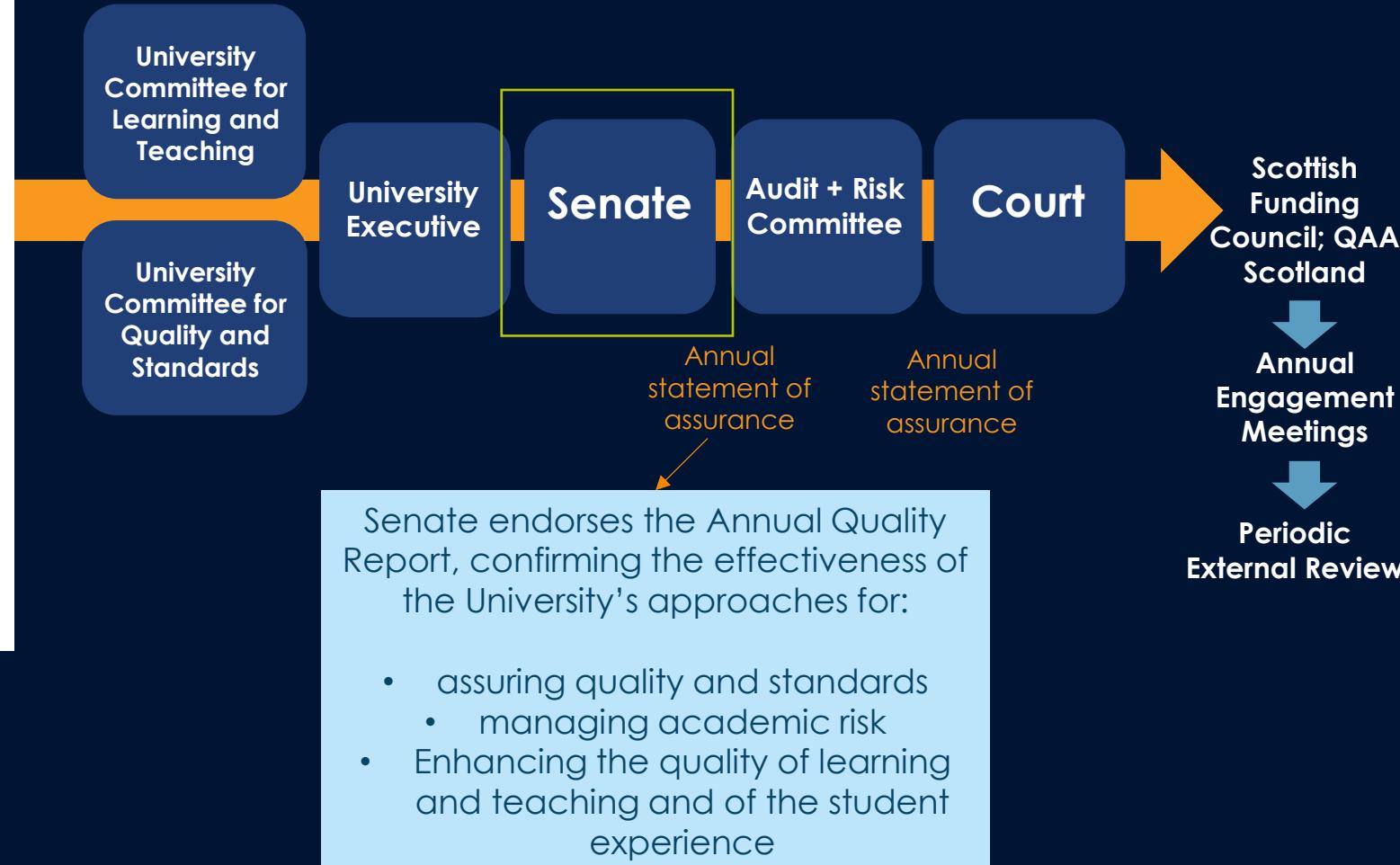
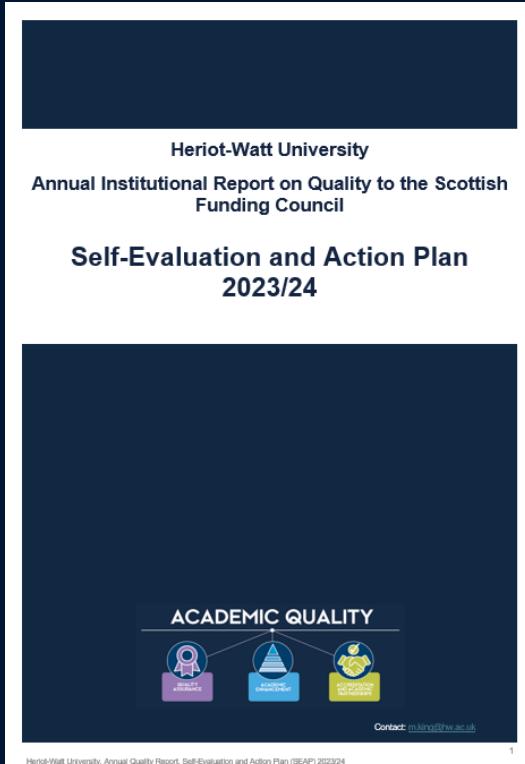
(a) academic work and standards so that the Senate shall be the body responsible for the academic work and standards of the University,

(b) Programmes of Study,

(c) teaching and research, and

(d) the regulation and superintendence of the education and discipline of the Students

Annual Oversight of Quality: The Senate



Based on 43 separate quality processes



Assurance to Enhancement

An “Assurance to Enhancement” Framework underpins a rigorous, transparent and managed approach to all educational provision, enabling robust assurance of quality and standards and effective management of academic risk.

The A2E Framework supports with confidence the phasing in of a more enhancement-focused approach, leading to collaboration, integration and global connectivity.

A
2
E



The Quality Model for KSA: Assurance+

In any educational initiative, particularly at scale, there is an element of academic risk. While partners may have experience of delivering educational provision in collaboration and Heriot-Watt has externally commended expertise in setting up additional campuses, the University still needs to operate a quality assurance framework which aligns with its own internal requirements and those of the Scottish TQEF.

A+

Consequently, an Assurance+ model should be adopted in the initial establishment phase, with additioality in:

- Programme approvals (business and academic)
- Partnership management and monitoring
- Annual (programme) monitoring and review
- Periodic review of the partnership
- Recruitment/approval, development and monitoring of teaching staff

Each to include process for managing issues

The Quality Model for KSA: Assurance+



Programme Approvals (Business + Academic)

In large-scale initiatives, proposals should be presented as one submission to PMB and then USC, enabling both to gain a holistic overview of, and ensure consistency across, provision as a whole, rather than programme by programme.

Specific process for SCQF Level 6 for foundation.

Specially convened PMB and USC meetings to provide sufficient time for scrutiny.

Senate approval expected by QAA, given scale.

Partnership Management + Monitoring

There are likely to be specific executive and operational boards. Additionally, UE and UCQS should request in-year and end-year management and academic reviews (as a single review document, ensuring totality of provision).

The Joint Collaborative Board of Studies will ensure partnerships are rooted into standard School structures and there is single forum for consideration of all academic matters.

Annual (Programme) Monitoring and Review

In time, partner/campus programmes and services will be monitored only via the standard AMR processes (and not as Partner AMR).

Initially, as well as reviewing provision through Programme AMR, there should be a bespoke Partner AMR process reviewing all provision within a single reporting template; Specific reporting for External Examiners; Particular focus for Boards of Examiners. All to be data-driven.

Periodic Review of Partnership

In time, the only periodic review of new provision will be at global discipline level through Academic Review.

Initially, as well as reviewing provision through Academic Review, the Academic Audit process will be used to review the effectiveness of the management of the partnership.

Prof Services will, in time, be reviewed via global Prof Services Periodic Review.

Teaching Staff

If teaching staff are not employed directly by HWU, they will need to be Approved Teachers, even if considered as HWU staff in every respect (for a new campus).

Staff development programmes will be put in place to ensure staff can teach in the "HWU approach".

Peer observation, PDR, student surveys to be used for monitoring performance.

External validation of HWU's robust, effective global quality framework



The University has a mature and effective institutional quality framework which is well-understood by staff across all campuses and is supported by the use of clear and accessible documentation.

Commendation in HWU's ELIR4, Nov 2020

- ***Academic quality and standards, applied globally across five campuses, are to be commended***
- ***The governance and management of quality assurance, based on Scottish (and wider UK) standards, are to be commended***
- ***The structures in place for the engagement of students and staff are commendable, particularly with students as co-creators of their environment***
- ***Effective operation of Academic Quality team across all locations***

Commendations in CAA Report, Dubai, April 2022, March 2024

Areas of positive practice highlighted for HWUM: identical academic standards across campuses; HWU's well-established, effective framework for quality assurance and improvement

MQA, 2024/255

HWU
commended for
the effectiveness
of its global
quality processes

External validation of HWU's robust, effective global quality framework



The University maintains the quality of its provision on a global scale to support 'One Heriot-Watt' as a single, global institution in which all campuses have equal standing.

The team commends the University on its development of a robust, enhancement-focused approach featuring clear recommendations for improvement and areas of positive practice, which not only gives the University effective oversight of global quality and standards but has also helped to develop multi-campus teaching and management teams, thus supporting the 'One Heriot-Watt' ethos.

Areas of Good Practice, HWU's QESR, April 2024

Heriot-Watt University is a globally integrated institution and adopts a "One Heriot-Watt Worldwide" ethos.

Heriot-Watt has mature quality assurance processes

HWU has significantly strengthened its data capabilities and is effectively integrating data into quality assurance processes across the institution ...In particular relating to student partnership

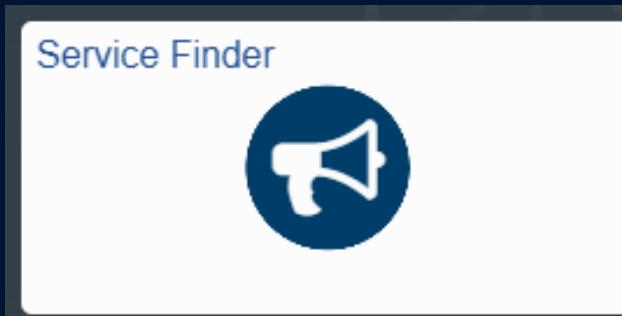
HWU's Annual ILM with QAA Scotland, June 2025

HWU is regularly invited to present nationally and internationally on our Global Approach to Quality

Recent presentations: Balkans, Sweden, Montenegro, British Council/AdvanceHE international sessions, AdvanceHE + Malaysia Govt Leadership Programmes



Further information



- Academic Quality Website
- Who's who in AQ and what do they do?
- Academic Quality SharePoint
- Learning and Teaching Policy Bank
- Global RAS: Operational Schedule, Services; Academic Programme + Student Service Finder