Learning and Teaching Policy Development

This document specifies the principles of the development of Learning and Teaching policies at Heriot-Watt University. It sets out the objectives of policy development and provides a step-by-step guide on how to develop a policy.

The University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT) operates with the delegated authority of the Senate to develop the policies in the following areas:

- learning and teaching;
- academic quality enhancement frameworks for taught programmes of study;
- the development of the academic attributes of students, and the academic practice and learner support skills of staff and students;
- the development of approaches for effective sharing of best practice in learning and teaching.

The University Committee for Quality and Standards (UCLT) operates with the delegated authority of the Senate to develop the policies in the following areas:

- the University's Quality Assurance Framework;
- academic and other entry requirements and the recognition of prior learning;
- conditions of registration, periods of registration, and changes of registration;
- assessments, examinations, feedback, and progression;
- the appointment of internal and external examiners;
- the granting of awards resulting from taught programmes of study;
- the deprivation and revocation of awards resulting from programmes of study.

In practice, the UCLT and the UCQS delegate the development and revision of policies to the Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Committee (LTAOC).

In this document, the term "learning and teaching policy" is used as a generic term to refer to all of the policies relating to taught provision developed by either the UCLT or the UCQS.

This step-by-step *Guide to Learning and Teaching Policy Development* and the accompanying *Framework for Developing Learning and Teaching Policy* are also available on the front page of the Learning and Teaching Policy Bank:
https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/policy-bank.htm

The Learning and Teaching Policy Bank provides a thematically grouped list of all policies, procedures and guidelines.

Principles

Policies are normally reviewed every 5 years	Policies are normally reviewed every 5 years. They can also be reviewed on a need basis (external/internal), or according to the priority list proposed by the Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Committee (LTAOC) and approved by either the University Committee for Quality and Standards (UCQS) or the University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT). The Senate may also determine the schedule of review of learning and teaching policies.
Policies are accessible	Policies are published on the Learning and Teaching Policy Bank so that requirements and expectations of learning and teaching are clear and transparent. The Policy Bank will be promoted to staff and students within staff induction materials, in the VLE, the Portal and in programme handbooks or equivalent.
Changes will be communicated	Colleagues will be advised by email of changes to policies. Academic Quality will provide colleagues with a summary list of new and revised policies at the end of each academic year as part of the Get Set information. Colleagues will also be notified of planned reviews at the start of each academic year. Briefing sessions may be arranged to provide additional information and guidance.
Policy development will enhance learning and teaching	Staff and students are encouraged to participate in policy development and to review and reflect on policies in practice. By doing this colleagues actively improve the quality of our learning and teaching. Policies are developed and reviewed within the University's Framework for Developing Learning and Teaching Policy.

Guide to Policy Development

What are the objectives?

Develop a new or revised policy	Write a new policy or revise an existing policy either within the 5-year review cycle or due to an identified external or internal need.
Carry out a consultation	Collaborate and consult with those who will be affected by the change and who have expertise, in particular, of the policy in practice. Consult across Schools, across campuses and include academic as well as Professional Services staff
Seek Committee approval	Recommendations should be made to LTAOC in the first instance for endorsement of the new or revised policy, so the drafting group should try to submit to the next scheduled meeting. Thereafter, LTAOC will recommend approval of the policy to UCLT or UCQS. Although policy development has been delegated by the Senate to UCLT and UCQS, there will be some instances (eg where there is a corresponding Regulation change) where policies require approval by the Senate.
Communicate and implement	Publicise the change widely (eg Staff News; the Portal or through Annual Updates on New/Revised Policies as part of Get Set) and provide support post-implementation.

How to develop a policy

Before you start	
Make the case	Make the case to LTAOC, as appropriate. State the purpose of the policy, the need for change, the nature of the changes, the scope of consultation, any operational aspects and the resource implications (including dependencies such as IT development or training).
Agree the detail	LTAOC will consider the case and recommend who should be involved in drafting, usually at least one LTAOC member and at least one UCLT or UCQS member and colleagues with relevant expertise, including the policy 'owner' (person from the area with functional responsibility).
Before the 1st draft	Consult with students and colleagues at all University campuses: - contact targeted individuals or groups with expertise - add the policy to relevant Committee agendas - ensure that operational aspects (eg procedures, guidelines, systems developments) are scrutinised and agreed - ensure that all modes and locations of delivery are considered - hold focus groups or workshops if there is a need for discussion - provide feedback to contributors, eg. next version of the document or summary of next stages of development Use and Make Reference to Internal Requirements - review the Expectations and Principles of the relevant section of HWU's own Global Code of Practice for the Management, Assurance and Enhancement of Taught Programmes (known as the "Global Code") and include any other relevant internal reference points - add a statement to the following effect: "This policy has been developed with reference to the University's Code of Practice for the Management, Assurance and Enhancement of Programmes, specifically Part … (*to refer to specific Expectation or Principle)*" Use and Make Reference to External Requirements - review the UK Quality Code for Higher Education against the proposed policy and include relevant references in the draft policy document - include any other relevant external reference points - add a statement to the following effect: "This policy has been developed with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education on …(*to specify)*"
Prepare supporting documents	Procedures, a briefing paper and any related forms (Equality and Privacy Impact Assessment – EIA/PIA),

	templates etc. should be prepared. These should be submitted to LTAOC together with the Policy.
Seek approval	Submit the policy to LTAOC for a recommendation: - meet the deadline for papers to next meeting - include the cover and policy document - recommend endorsement by LTAOC - LTAOC recommends approval to UCLT or UCQS - If the policy requires a Regulation change, the UCLT or UCQS recommends approval to Senate
After approval	
Communicate and Implement	The policy owner arranges for the policy to be added to the Learning and Teaching Policy Bank, emailed to LTAOC, UCLT or UCQS for wider distribution, emailed to those involved in the consultation and included in a list of new and reviewed policies produced by Academic Quality. Implementation also rests with the owner, who will address operational issues and amend supporting documents if required.
After implementation	In some cases a review 1-year post-implementation will be carried out so that the policy can be refined to address, eg unforeseen operational issues. Staff and students are encouraged to reflect on and raise concerns about policies at any time.

Supporting Documents

Document templates:	LTAOC cover sheet UCLT cover sheet UCQS cover sheet Policy Template Briefing Paper – samples (Quality and Learning & Teaching) Equality Impact Assessment and Privacy Impact Assessment Template

Further Information

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Version History

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