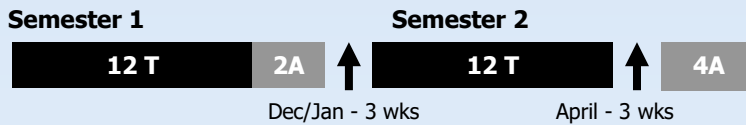


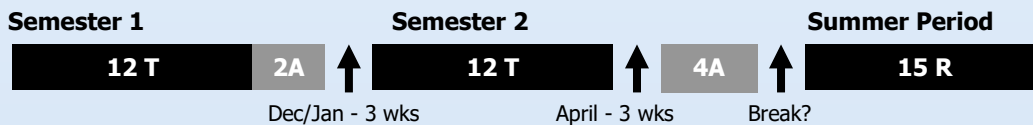
STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR

The Academic Year at Heriot-Watt

Undergraduate, Graduate and Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma



Postgraduate Masters (Taught)



T = no. of teaching weeks; A = no. of assessment weeks; R = typical no. of weeks for dissertation (it is recognised that Masters dissertations will often commence during, or at the conclusion of, Semester 2)

Academic Year – Issues

As Heriot-Watt University has expanded its provision, assessment and progression processes have become more complex and challenging. Assessment deadline dates – once achievable when multi-location/mode activity was relatively small scale or managed as a separate business - have become increasingly difficult to meet, resulting in significant pressures for staff involved. Common issues include:

- progressing resit students in time for the start of the academic year;
- marking and moderating exam scripts from overseas, at the same time as UK programmes, in time for results processing deadlines;
- tight turnaround time between Semester 1 assessment and Semester 2 teaching;
- workarounds to manage programmes with different start dates.

The session's early September start has also been highlighted as a recruitment barrier, eg for PGT students. Various process improvements have been introduced, eg online results and discontinuation of resit applications. A more systematic process and timing review is, however, required.

Continuation of Current Structure

The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Secretary of the University have confirmed that the **current 2-semester structure** - with semester 1 assessment concluded prior to end of December – **remains fit for purpose**. Processes and timings should, however, be reviewed.

Review of Processes and Timings

On behalf of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT) and in conjunction with the Professional Services Leadership Board, the Student Learning Experience Committee will continue to review processes and timings associated with the academic year in order to alleviate pressure points and improve the student experience.

As part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2018-2025 and in order to realise its *Inspiring Learning* vision, the UCLT will review the structure of the academic year

Consultation and engagement of staff and students in all locations will be central to the review.

Contacts, References and Further Information

Contact: quality@hw.ac.uk Structure of the Academic Year: <http://intranet.hw.ac.uk/ps/registry/ar/lt/Pages/RAY.aspx>

Learning and Teaching Policies and Procedures: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/learning-teaching/policy-bank.htm>

Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers

This briefing paper has been produced by Academic Quality and is one of a series related to Learning and Teaching. The briefing papers aim to provide a concise, informative overview of key policies, and include links to relevant procedures and templates.