

# Heriot-Watt University's Mapping to the UK Quality Code

## Student Engagement

---

### Contents

Regulatory contexts for the Quality Code

Terminology

Expectations and Practices

Guiding Principles with a Mapping from HWU Practices

### Regulatory contexts for the Quality Code

The Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) are mandatory for higher education providers in all parts of the UK. Common practices are mandatory in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and while providers in England may choose to work towards them, they are not required to do so as these are not regulatory requirements and will not be assessed as part of the OfS's regulatory framework. National regulators and QAA are not bound by the information in this advice and guidance and will not view it as containing indicators of compliance. This guidance does not interpret statutory requirements.

### Terminology

**Stakeholder:** Used to define and describe anyone with an interest in student engagement, and may include the following:

- students
- students' union, association or guild
- academic and professional services staff
- the provider
- employers
- regulatory bodies, such as professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
- the wider external community, for example, service users
- alumni.

**Student body:** Used to describe the entire student population. Depending on the context, this may include:

- individual students
- groups of students with a common experience or interest (such as a club or society)
- formal representatives of a group (such as students' union, association or guild), or groups of students.

**Students' representative body/organisation:** Used to describe a formal body that represents and promotes the interests of students. This may be a students' union, a students' association or guild.

**Partnership:** For the purposes of this Theme, 'partner' and 'partnership' are used to define and indicate joint working between students and staff (or the students' union, association or guild and the provider). The level of each partner's engagement will vary depending on the context and aspect of the student experience.

Partnership working is based on the values of: openness; trust and honesty; agreed shared goals and values; and regular communication between the partners. It is not based on the legal conception of equal responsibility and liability. Instead, partnership working recognises that all members in the partnership have legitimate, but different, perceptions and experiences. By working together to a common agreed purpose, steps can be taken that lead to enhancements for all concerned. Partnerships reflect a mature relationship based on mutual respect between students and staff.

Partnership working can occur both in informal and formal arrangements, including representation mechanisms involving a students' union, association or guild where one exists.

**Co-creation:** Defined as the act of bringing different stakeholders together, to jointly produce a mutually valued outcome. Students can be engaged as co-creators at different levels, ranging from curriculum design negotiated jointly with staff, to participation in policy and strategy development.

**Quality system:** Covers any formal or informal quality enhancement or quality assurance policy or process used by a higher education provider.

**Students:** The term 'student' refers to all individuals studying a higher education course regardless of demographic, mode of delivery, level of study, subject area or geographic location.

**Course:** An approved pathway of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads towards a qualification. UK higher education courses must be approved and validated by UK degree-awarding bodies. They might also be referred to as programmes, units or modules.

## Expectations and Practices

The advice underneath the Expectations and Practices is not mandatory for providers but illustrative of a range of possible approaches.

This Theme describes the meaningful participation of students in quality assurance and enhancement processes, which results in the improvement of their educational experience as well as benefiting the wider student body, institution and sector. For student engagement to contribute effectively to quality assurance and enhancement processes, it needs to capture the voices of all students, irrespective of location, mode of delivery, level of study, or discipline.

### EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

- *Learning is a partnership; the effort and engagement of students is an essential aspect of their achievement. Students provide an invaluable perspective on the conditions needed for a high-quality academic experience and how this can be continuously improved. Students can provide feedback, work collaboratively with staff and other stakeholders as they consider feedback and other quality indicators and work as co-creators of the curriculum. These activities will contribute to effective course design and approval, periodic review and the recognition of high-quality teaching.*

*HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Expectations for Quality. Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below, as well as the mapping document to the "Learning & Teaching" and 'Monitoring and Review' themes.*

#### Core Practice (Quality)

1. **The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.**  
*In practice, this means that effective, meaningful and inclusive student engagement requires continuous effort to ensure the development of new and innovative approaches. Students can engage individually in their learning and in quality processes, which might involve working in partnership with individual staff, or groups of staff and other students. However, individual student feedback is not a substitute for formal structures of collective student representation. Collective student engagement involves students considering, deliberating and developing informed views, independent from the provider, which are representative of the wider student body. Collective engagement will happen primarily through the student representative structures such as course/class/faculty representatives, and where they exist through the students' representative body (such as the students' union, association or guild).*

#### Common Practice (Quality)

1. **The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.**  
*In practice, this means that it is widely accepted throughout the sector that the views of all students, both individually and collectively, should inform activities undertaken by providers. This should, in turn, inform quality processes and practice with the purpose of ongoing improvement of the student experience, for current and future cohorts.*

*HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Core and Common Practices (Quality). Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below, as well as the mapping document to the 'Learning & Teaching' and 'Monitoring and Evaluation' themes.*

## Guiding Principles with Mapping from HWU Practices

A 'Reference' document is available to use in conjunction with this mapping document.

The guiding principles given here are not mandatory for any provider. They are a concise expression of the fundamental practices of the higher education sector, based on the experience of a wide range of providers. They are intended as a framework for providers to consider when establishing new or looking at existing higher education provision. They are not exhaustive and there will be other ways for providers to meet their requirements.

Guiding Principles	Heriot-Watt University Practice
<p><b>1. Student engagement through partnership working is integral to the culture of higher education, however and wherever provision is delivered - student engagement is led strategically, but widely owned.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership working is a key concept for student engagement in higher education – students and staff fulfil mutually important roles in shaping the student experience that enables staff and students to recognise and value the impact of student engagement in enhancement and quality assurance.</li> <li>By fostering a culture of mutual respect, openness and sharing of information, providers can benefit from the insights, views and effective engagement of students. Where they exist, providers work with their students' representative body (such as students' union/association/guild) to set mutual goals and desired outcomes from student engagement activity at a strategic level, to orientate students and staff towards a shared understanding of success.</li> <li>Providers in partnership with their student body should determine how the partnership will work in the context of their own institution. For example, in some providers the students' representative body is the primary vehicle for achieving partnership in institution-wide activities. In others, formal representative structures for partnership working may be embedded throughout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heriot-Watt University has a long and proud tradition of student engagement in institutional governance, representation structures and quality processes. The HWU Student Partnership Agreement 2018/19 (SPA) is a global agreement with the Student Council (Dubai),e Student Association (Malaysia) and Student Union (Scotland). It is strategically-led by the Principal and Secretary of the University and is operationally overseen by the Assistant Registrar, Student Services. This document has seen a step change in how the University works in partnership with student representatives at University, Campus and School-levels. The high-level priorities are 'Academic', 'Community' and 'Wellbeing'.</li> <li>A formal, established and systematic student representation system is in place (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research), which operates at, and links between, the course, School and University levels. The School Officer system is very well regarded both institutionally and nationally as a key link for university and student leaders to work with and take forward enhancements. School Officers meet every week and often invite University staff members to discuss issues, develop actions on the SPA and share areas of best practice and development across Schools.</li> <li>Student Staff Liaison Committees are forums where the students' collective or individual voices can be heard. These are chaired by the Head of School or Director of Learning and Teaching and, following leadership from the Student bodies, will be run in a more standard format across the University to allow incoming School Officers, who often sit on these Committees, to be briefed about their crucial role in representing students.</li> <li>The student body is formally represented on School and University level Committees which discuss/consider matters pertaining to learning and teaching, and quality (e.g. strategies, policies, procedures, new programmes (<i>School level</i>) etc). Since ELIR 3, there has been widespread moves to not only have student representatives from all campuses on University-level committees, but to actively shape the agenda by having focused discussions led by students. This has been most widely embedded within the University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT) which has oversight for strategic direction of learning and teaching across the institution.</li> <li>A University-wide Academic Management Structure is in place at all campuses. The structure provides clarity around the roles and responsibilities of School Management structures, including School committees. For research degree programmes, responsibilities for Schools and the wider University are provided within the Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice.</li> <li>Student representatives participate as full members of Academic Review teams. This role was primarily undertaken by School Officers but from 2018/19 Class Representatives were also invited. In future years, there are intentions to extend the opportunity to participate to the wider student body. In addition to the support provided by Academic Quality, the Student Union provides training and support to students participating as a Review Team member. An element of the Academic Review process is the Enhancement Workshop which the student representatives will participate in, as well as students from the discipline being reviewed.</li> <li>Students are involved in monitoring and review activities at all levels (from course to University). Opportunities to engage in the monitoring and evaluation of their courses are provided through various mechanisms, such as surveys, Student Staff Liaison Committees and representative structures (Sabbatical Officers, School Officers and Class Representatives) and Academic Review.</li> </ul>

**2. Higher education providers, in partnership with their student body, define, promote, monitor and evaluate the range of opportunities to enable all students to engage in quality assurance and enhancement processes.**

- Higher education providers ensure that students and staff can define, own and promote the full range of opportunities for student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement processes.
- Providers regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their approach to student engagement. Students play an active role in these monitoring and evaluation activities, including identifying appropriate key performance indicators to be used to measure progress, and demonstrable enhancements to the educational experience

- The University has in place an established, effective, and systematic student representation system which is supported by the Student Council (Dubai), Student Association (Malaysia) and Student Union (Scotland).
- Annual meetings take place between Sabbatical Officers, the Principal, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and Schools to discuss action plans for addressing issues emerging from surveys. This is done at various levels. At School-level, the Student Staff Liaison Committees provide platforms for student representatives to engage with School leaders to take forward enhancements in educational experience. At Campus-level, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fora (LTEF) allow partnership working to take forward both academic and non-academic activities. LTEF are a good example of the University's vision of global partnership with locally-led solutions. At an Institutional-level, the Student Partnership Agreement is one of several formal exemplars of co-creation of objectives and measures to assess progress. A key example of this has been the increased role of student representatives in operational and strategic committees which involve in quality assurance and enhancement work.
- University-level learning and teaching issues arising from surveys are recorded, addressed and progress monitored through actions and/or enhancements taken forward via the Student Learning Experience Committee and the University Committee for Learning and Teaching. For example, SLEC manages the Course Feedback Survey which is administered to all taught students each semester. This ensures the questions remain relevant and appropriate to the University's Learning and Teaching priorities and for enhancing the student learning experience. Standard and optional questions for each School are agreed. Academic Quality, Directors of Learning and Teaching in Schools and Student Representative bodies' work together to promote the merits of engaging in feedback to ensure a high response rate. Likewise University-level Professional Services' issues arising from surveys go through the Professional Services Leadership Board, and research issues through the Research Degrees Committee.
- Relevant matters arising from surveys are taken forward through local action planning processes by Schools, relevant Professional Services, the three student representative bodies (Scottish Campus Student Union, Dubai Student Council and Malaysia Students Association) or campus-specific groups. Staff and students have the opportunity to consider survey results and actions through relevant fora, such as School Learning and Teaching Committees or student representative bodies.
- Actions taken to enhance the student experience as a result of surveys are used for promoting engagement with future surveys by highlighting the benefits of providing feedback and influencing change. Actions taken as a result of surveys are communicated promptly to students as part of the process of closing the loop on student feedback.
- In 2018/19, the SPA has provided a driver for student leaders to evaluate the progress made in terms of demonstrable enhancements to the educational experience. In developing the 2019/20 SPA, consideration of what did and did not work, has been part of the process as well as aligning priorities to the manifestos of the Sabbatical Officers and Strategy 2025's *pioneering education* strategic theme.
  - During 2018/19 Closing the Feedback Loop for Course Feedback Surveys, was a funded research project as part of the QAA Enhancement Theme which aimed to reflect the University's commitment to partnership-working by encouraging staff to communicate back to students, actions being taken as a result of their feedback. This work is part of a long-term commitment of the University to link more of quality assurance and enhancement processes to the graduate attributes, with this being an example of the 'Professional' attribute. The Project's report provides clear roles, timelines and dissemination for stakeholders involved in the process.
  - Directors of Learning and Teaching (with support from the Student Learning Experience Committee) encourage staff at course level to close the feedback loop within the semester that the feedback was gathered. Feedback is provided through the Virtual Learning Environment and /or face-to-face.
- Student representatives participate as full members of Academic Review teams. This role was primarily undertaken by School Officers but from 2018/19 Class Representatives were also invited. In future years, there are intentions to extend the opportunity to participate to the wider student body. In addition to the support provided by Academic Quality, the Student Union provides training and support to students participating as a Review Team member. An element of the Academic Review process is the Enhancement Workshop which the student representatives will participate in, as well as students from the discipline being reviewed.
- Students are involved in monitoring and review activities at all levels (from course to University). Opportunities to engage in the monitoring and evaluation of their courses are provided through various mechanisms, such as surveys, Student Staff Liaison Committees and representative structures (Sabbatical Officers, School Officers and Class Representatives) and Academic Review.

**3. Effective student engagement supports enhancements, innovation and transformation in the community within and outside the provider, driving improvements to the experience of students.**

Student engagement can produce changes that help build a dynamic and inclusive learning community. A provider-wide approach will demonstrate multiple student engagement activities at all levels. Providers demonstrate how approaches to student engagement drive enhancements to the educational experience at each level.

Within the institution, student-led approaches may look at issues and approaches to the curriculum, the wider learning environment, student service delivery and policy development. Outside the provider, student partnership activities might focus on initiatives such as widening access, or community and employer engagement.

- In 2018/19, Heriot-Watt University created an enhanced transcript to capture and celebrate enhancements and co-curricular learning both within and outside the University. This was a key operational deliverable from the Student Partnership Agreement and has been developed by the Student Administration Revitalisation Programme (SARP) in partnership with student representatives and staff at all campus locations.
- The EmPower programme, introduced at the Malaysia Campus during 2018/19, is an innovative programme that encourages students to hone their soft skills. It is a four-level structured programme that is aimed at future-proofing graduates, to unleash their potential and to prepare them to stand out and have an impact in a highly uncertain world. As students go through the programme, they accumulate 'Watts'. Students will have a transcript that will document their developmental journey. The first level (Watt level), where students may accumulate up to 999 Watts, is delivered through a course that is aimed at "Self Leadership" and "Defining Impact". The other three levels are achieved through a more personalised approach where different students will work with their Personal Tutors. Through progression, students are able to have an impact on communities and enterprises which aim to make a difference to people whilst also furnishing students with the graduate attributes. These are student-led approaches to community and employer engagement as students are responsible for creating these links which are then supported and developed by the University thereafter.
- The University, in partnership with Student Representative bodies, undertook a series of focus groups from January 2018 to map out authentic student journeys and issues (academic and non-academic). The focus groups were co-facilitated by the Student Union and involved a range of student representatives and other students who took part in order to identify issues and solutions. The outcomes were three graphic illustrations which were highlighted areas of best practice and areas to develop, as well as supplementary reports to Committees which focused on specific issues (e.g. PGR focus groups have linked in with the Building our Commonality project and the Research Degrees Committee). Twelve individual workshops were held across all five campuses, involving students at all levels and staff and amounting to over 150 participants.
- In 2019/20, the University will launch a new Widening Access Strategy (2019-2023) and associated operational plan. The Widening Access Strategy is, like Heriot-Watt University, globally focused and locally delivered. Over the next four years, the University will use its reach and capabilities to transform the social and educational narratives of its students. It takes a whole University to educate a student, and Heriot-Watt University is committed to delivering an experience which embraces the privileged position it has to transform peoples' lives.
- Students are actively involved in shaping community and employer engagement activities both an institutional and School levels. For example, through Schools and Careers Services which are located in Dubai, Malaysia and Scotland, the following are undertaken:
  - Careers Advisers attend a number of student/staff liaison committees to get better understanding of student experiences within their study programmes and how they might better engage within them.
  - Students are asked automatically for feedback on all individual careers appointments, workshops, seminars. This allows students to shape future activities, both for their own and other students' benefit, fatter their interactions.
  - The Careers Service meets with the Student Representative bodies to discuss partnership opportunities to maximise support for students across the University, supporting activity and also cutting out duplication.
- Employers are using some students who have been undertaking internships with them as Brand ambassadors. They are used to help promote the company to their student colleagues. This is still relatively informal, and small scale at present. The University contacts former students to come back into the University to support the Careers programme/workshops etc. The Careers Service has been building its relationship with Development and Alumni to work on how it can maximise this collaboration further. The University has tended to focus more on alumni than current students in terms of shaping and co-creating services which is an area for development.
- The University's Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Temporary Suspension of Studies Policy have been reviewed. New policies, processes and system solutions are being designed to address a number of areas and bring about efficiencies (for implementation in 2019/20). Student Engagement has taken place through the Advice Hub (Scotland) and through LTEF and regular discussions with Sabbatical Officers.

**4. Arrangements exist for effective representation of the collective student voice at all organisational levels including decision-making bodies.**

Providers work with their student body and students' representative body (such as students' union, association or guild) to ensure there are mechanisms in place at all levels to allow for the collective view of students to inform and shape the student experience. Collective student engagement involves students considering, deliberating, and developing informed views, independent from the provider, which are representative of the wider student body. Collective engagement will happen primarily through student representative structures such as course/class/faculty representatives, and where they exist through the students' representative body.

- Heriot-Watt University has a long and proud tradition of student engagement in institutional governance, representation structures and quality processes. The HWU Student Partnership Agreement 2018/19 (SPA) is a global agreement with the Student Council (Dubai),<sup>e</sup> Student Association (Malaysia) and Student Union (Scotland). It is strategically-led by the Principal and Secretary of the University and is operationally overseen by the Assistant Registrar, Student Services. This document has seen a step change in how the University works in partnership with student representatives at University, Campus and School-levels. The high-level priorities are 'Academic', 'Community' and 'Wellbeing'.
- A formal, established and systematic student representation system is in place (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research), which operates at, and links between, the course, School and University levels. The School Officer system is very well regarded both institutionally and nationally as a key link for university and student leaders to work with to take forward enhancements. School Officers meet every week and often invite University staff members to discuss issues, develop actions on the SPA and share areas of best practice and development across Schools.
- Student Staff Liaison Committees are forums where the students' collective or individual voices can be heard. These are chaired by the Head of School or Director of Learning and Teaching and, following leadership from the Student bodies, will be run in a more standard format across the University to allow incoming School Officers, who often sit on these Committees, to be briefed about their crucial role in representing students.
- The student body is formally represented on School and University level Committees which discuss/consider matters pertaining to learning and teaching, and quality (e.g. strategies, policies, procedures, new programmes (School level) etc). Since ELIR 3, there has been widespread moves to not only have student representatives from all campuses on University-level committees, but to actively shape the agenda by having focused discussions led by students. This has been most widely embedded within the University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT) which has oversight for strategic direction of learning and teaching across the institution.
- A University-wide Academic Management Structure is in place at all campuses. The structure provides clarity around the roles and responsibilities of School Management structures, including School committees. For research degree programmes, responsibilities for Schools and the wider University are provided within the Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice.
- Student representatives participate as full members of Academic Review teams. This role was primarily undertaken by School Officers but from 2018/19 Class Representatives were also invited. In future years, there are intentions to extend the opportunity to participate to the wider student body. In addition to the support provided by Academic Quality, the Student Union provides training and support to students participating as a Review Team member. An element of the Academic Review process is the Enhancement Workshop which the student representatives will participate in, as well as students from the discipline being reviewed.
- Students are involved in monitoring and review activities at all levels (from course to University). Opportunities to engage in the monitoring and evaluation of their courses are provided through various mechanisms, such as surveys, Student Staff Liaison Committees and representative structures (Sabbatical Officers, School Officers and Class Representatives) and Academic Review.
- The University has in place an established, effective and systematic student representation system which is supported by the Student Representative bodies and the University. This includes representation on School and University level Committees,<sup>3</sup> including 'Court', the University's governing body. In 2018/19, this was enhanced further by the enhanced role of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fora (LTEF) at all campus locations.
- Throughout 2018/19, the Digital Learning Forum (DLF), which is Chaired by the Global Director of Information Services and has 8 global student representatives in its membership, defined key requirements in formulating a business case for a new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and e-portfolio. These were then formulated into a business case which was approved for delivery in 2019. Student involvement in this group has been noted by the University Committee for Learning and Teaching as being exemplary as it includes students studying online, across campuses and at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- Part one (Student Experience) of the four-part Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes provides further information on student representation and feedback mechanisms for off-campus students. Some examples are Student Ambassadors (Approved Learning Partners) course feedback surveys, end of year surveys and discussion boards.
- Academic Review Teams meet with students from programmes/disciplines being reviewed to obtain feedback on their experience. The view of off-campus students is usually sought through an e-survey.<sup>9</sup> If possible, arrangements will be made for Review Teams to meet with students studying independently or through an Approved Learning Partner.
- In 2018/19, the Student Union (Scotland) transformed their representative structure. In an approach not taken by another student organisation (and one which is being closely watched by NUS), the Union has introduced from 2019/20 a structure - a Student Parliament - which enables students to get involved with the Union on the basis of particular issues or causes which they would wish to champion. The Student Parliament is made up of 21 Members of Parliament (MPs), split over 5 areas: Scottish Borders Campus; Community; Academic; Wellbeing; Open. Each of the four named areas comprises a full-time Sabbatical Officer, one or two groups (which have an open membership, enabling students to input directly to the Union) and a number of MPs; while the Open Zone makes provision for 5 MPs who have no specific remit and who can stand for these positions based on whatever matters they are strongly committed to.



<p><b>5. Providers recognise and respond to the diversity of their student body in the design and delivery of student engagement, partnership working and representation processes.</b></p> <p>Providers ensure that approaches to student engagement and representation are designed to include the diversity of their student body, identifying and removing barriers to participation, to ensure that the full diversity of student voices can contribute to enhancement and assurance activities. Consideration is given to students' modes of study, the composition and demographic of the student population, and the different backgrounds that students have, to ensure effective engagement and representation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2017/18, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fora (LTEF) were developed to provide a mechanism for in-depth discussion of campus-wide learning and teaching issues and for detailed scrutiny of proposed learning and teaching enhancements in support of the University Learning and Teaching Strategy. This includes student representation and acts as a useful space for students and staff to have dialogue about issues and, where possible, can be resolved in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Throughout 2018/19, the Digital Learning Forum (DLF) is Chaired by the Global Director of Information Services, which has 8 global student representatives in its membership, have defined key requirements in formulating a business case for a new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and e-portfolio. These were then formulated into a business case which has been approved for delivery in 2019. Student involvement in this group has been noted by the University Committee for Learning and Teaching as being exemplary as it includes students studying online, across campuses and at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.</li> <li>• In response to survey feedback that the Student Union (Scotland) in its current format did not resonate with students and was overly focused on liberation groups, the Student Union at the Scottish Campuses undertook in 2018/19 a major review of its democratic structures in order to engage with a much wider group of students. The Student Union (Scotland) transformed their representative structure. The Student Parliament is made up of 21 Members of Parliament (MPs), split over 5 areas: Scottish Borders Campus; Community; Academic; Wellbeing; Open. Each of the four named areas comprises a full-time Sabbatical Officer, one or two groups (which have an open membership, enabling students to input directly to the Union) and a number of MPs; while the Open Zone makes provision for 5 MPs who have no specific remit and who can stand for these positions based on whatever matters they are strongly committed to. As a consequence, the Union has shifted radically away from the sector-wide framework of Officers with specific remits, which required students to stand for one of the pre-defined roles instead of being able to stand for specific issues or causes. In an approach not taken by another student organisation (and one which is being closely watched by NUS), the Union has introduced from 2019/20 a structure - a Student Parliament - which enables students to get involved with the Union on the basis of particular issues or causes which they would wish to champion. This enhancement has been based on reflection of representing the diversity of their student body and has attempted to be more agile in how it operates.</li> <li>• As mentioned at Guiding Principle 3 above, the University, in partnership with the Student Representative bodies, undertook a series of focus groups from January 2018 to try and map out authentic student journeys and issues. This covered academic and non-academic issues. The focus groups were co-facilitated by the Student Union and involved a range of student representatives and other students who took part in order to help identify issues and solutions. The outcomes were three graphic illustrations which were honest and highlighted some areas of best practice as well as identifying many areas to develop as well as supplementary reports to Committees which focused on specific issues (e.g. PGR focus groups have linked in with the Building our Commonality project and the Research Degrees Committee). This went further than traditional representative structures and included often under-represented students (e.g. PGR students, international students). The University recognises that there are a wide range of student voices and has sought to institutionally capture and amplify those voices that have not traditionally been heard.</li> <li>• At a strategic-level, the three Student Representative Bodies (Student Union at the Scottish Campuses, Student Council at the Dubai Campus, Students Association at the Malaysia Campus) support the diversity of the student body by providing training tailored to the needs of different groups of student representatives. It is through the multi-campus representative structures that the University collaborates with students in developing the institution-wide Student Partnership Agreement</li> <li>• The University runs a Summer School in September of each year which recognises the diverse nature of students entering the University. This will take place in Edinburgh, Borders and Malaysia campuses. Students who fit the Widening Participation criteria and hold conditional or unconditional offers are invited to register. Summer School is an exciting opportunity for students to get a head start at university. Many students find the move to university to be challenging, however, Summer School will help make the transition easier by allowing them to find out about, and find their way around, the University at an early opportunity. In Dubai, the Degree Entry Programme is designed to help students bridge the gap between their School qualifications and the demands and skills required for a University degree. The programme helps students prepare for studying their subject whilst providing a firm foundation in IT, research and writing skills, academic English as well as assessment and examination techniques. The Campus also offers a range of scholarships and, in view of the devastation caused by the recent 2018 floods in Kerala, Heriot-Watt University Dubai has announced the Kerala Hardship Scholarships. In Malaysia, the Foundation Programme is a direct pathway to the students' choice of a range of professionally relevant degrees. The focused academic content is taught in a way that introduces students to independent learning with their development monitored through regular assessments and feedback. There are a number of scholarship schemes available in Malaysia to help widening access for specific target groups, e.g. the Women in Engineering Scholarship with a commitment to widen this to more STEM areas in Malaysia, the Financial Hardship Scholarship, and other scholarships partnered with the industry that also provide opportunities to widening access students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Student engagement and representation processes are adequately resourced and supported.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective student engagement requires clearly identified resourcing at a strategic level. Students and staff benefit from induction and ongoing training and support relating to student engagement.</li> <li>• Providers offer and evaluate the training and support provided to ensure it is appropriate for the role. The students' representative body requires adequate resource to lead on facilitating student academic representation, and providers often work with them on the delivery of induction and training activities. Consideration is given to ensuring training supports students to develop informed views, independent from the provider, which are representative of the wider student body.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Student Council in Dubai is supported by a full-time member of staff who is employed by the University. In Malaysia, from 2019/20, the Student President will be a Sabbatical Officer and will not be required to do this job alongside their studies. They are supported by colleagues at the Malaysia campus.</li> <li>• In 2018/19, the Student Union (Scotland) transformed their representative structure. In an approach not taken by another student organisation (and one which is being closely watched by NUS), the Union has introduced from 2019/20 a structure - a Student Parliament - which enables students to get involved with the Union on the basis of particular issues or causes which they would wish to champion. The Student Parliament is made up of 21 Members of Parliament (MPs), split over 5 areas: Scottish Borders Campus; Community; Academic; Wellbeing; Open. Each of the four named areas comprises a full-time Sabbatical Officer, one or two groups (which have an open membership, enabling students to input directly to the Union) and a number of MPs; while the Open Zone makes provision for 5 MPs who have no specific remit and who can stand for these positions based on whatever matters they are strongly committed to. As well as the Sabbatical officers, the Student Union Advice Hub staff undertake casework and support the elected student representatives.</li> <li>• In Scotland the Student Union is a separate organisation to that of the University. In both Malaysia and Dubai, the Student Representative bodies are part of the University due to national laws prohibiting the existence of any Union.</li> <li>• Students and Staff from the three Student Representative bodies are involved in extensive induction processes across the University and with external organisations (e.g. NUS and sparqs). Indeed, Student Presidents and staff members visit the Edinburgh campus in August of every year as part of this induction.</li> <li>• Students and Staff from the three Student Representative bodies are also encouraged to undertake training and support relating to their roles in delivering effective student engagement across the University. This can be done internally (e.g. presenting at learning and teaching conferences) or attending workshops held nationally.</li> <li>• The University provides induction training and documentation for incoming Sabbatical Officers to help them in the roles on Committees. For new Sabbatical Officers, there are a series of meetings organised with University staff involved in learning and teaching from strategic through to operational matters. These initial meetings allow sharing of ideas and exploring ways by which student manifestos can align with University objectives and activities which continue throughout the year.</li> </ul>



**7. Providers work in partnership with the student body to close the feedback loop.**

All stakeholders are clear about their role in the dissemination of feedback related to the student experience.

Providers recognise and promote joint recognition and value of enhancements made to the student educational experience, and the contribution of students in achieving these successes.

Providers devise effective and appropriate ways of communicating with students how, when and where their feedback has been used and acted upon. Where action is not taken in response to student feedback, the rationale for this decision should be effectively communicated to students.

- All student surveys are available electronically, are fully accessible and available to complete across a range of devices. The University is committed to equal opportunities for all, regardless of disability, and is committed to the principles of The Equality Act 2010 and The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. The University is constantly working towards being accessible and usable as possible.
- The process for gathering and responding to student feedback is outlined in the University's Student Survey Framework. The Framework, which was put in place by the Student Survey Management Group (SSMG) covers all key external and internal surveys. SSMG manages and coordinates the survey framework (both process and enhancement aspects) across the institution. The Survey Framework encompasses six surveys which run annually. Three surveys are external and run nationally, thereby offering comparative data from other institutions. The remaining three surveys are internal and exclusive to Heriot-Watt, although the Annual Survey, which is based on NSS questions and is targeted at all non-NSS undergraduate student populations, enables benchmarking of the final year experience across the Scottish, Dubai and Malaysia campuses. Each Survey has a dedicated lead person who liaises with the relevant individuals in the management and acquisition of survey population data, the technical set up and management of the Survey platform and the technical analysis and communication of results.
- University-level learning and teaching issues arising from surveys are recorded, addressed and progress monitored through actions and/or enhancements taken forward via the Student Learning Experience Committee and the University Committee for Learning and Teaching. For example, SLEC manages the Course Feedback Survey which is administered to all taught students each semester. This ensures the questions remain relevant and appropriate to the University's Learning and Teaching priorities and for enhancing the student learning experience. Standard and optional questions for each School are agreed. Academic Quality, Directors of Learning and Teaching in Schools and Student Representative bodies work together to promote the merits of engaging in feedback to ensure a high response rate. Likewise University-level Professional Services' issues arising from surveys go through the Professional Services Leadership Board, and research issues through the Research Degrees Committee.
- Relevant matters arising from surveys are taken forward through local action planning processes by Schools, relevant Professional Services, the three student representative bodies (Scottish Campus Student Union, Dubai Student Council and Malaysia Students Association) or campus-specific groups. Staff and students have the opportunity to consider survey results and actions through relevant fora, such as School Learning and Teaching Committees or student representative bodies.
- Actions taken to enhance the student experience as a result of surveys are used for promoting engagement with future surveys by highlighting the benefits of providing feedback and influencing change. Actions taken as a result of surveys are communicated promptly to students as part of the process of closing the loop on student feedback.
- In 2018/19, SLEC and UCLT have driven enhanced emphasis on closing the feedback loop more effectively. For example, there has been strong leadership at Director of Learning and Teaching (DLT) level about survey design, promotion and communicating enhancements back to students. During 2018/19 Closing the Feedback Loop for Course Feedback Surveys, was a funded research project as part of the QAA Enhancement Theme which aimed to reflect the University's commitment to partnership-working by encouraging staff to communicate back to students, actions being taken as a result of their feedback. This work is part of a long-term commitment of the University to link more of quality assurance and enhancement processes to the graduate attributes, with this being an example of the 'Professional' attribute. The Project's [report](#) provides clear roles, timelines and dissemination for stakeholders involved in the process.
- Directors of Learning and Teaching (with support from the Student Learning Experience Committee) encourage staff at course level staff to close the feedback loop within the semester that the feedback was gathered. Feedback is provided through the Virtual Learning Environment or face-to-face.
- Students have opportunities to provide individual feedback at the subject level through methods such as surveys (Course Feedback, NSS, PTES, PRES, Welcome Survey, Annual Survey). Informal mechanisms are also available, such as 'open door' policies, approachable staff, tutorials and laboratories, and email). The variety of these surveys ensure that students have the opportunity at both course and University-level to feedback on their experiences.
- Annual meetings take place between Sabbatical Officers, the Principal, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and Schools to discuss action plans for addressing issues emerging from surveys.
- In terms of recognising and promoting joint recognition and value of enhancements made to the student educational experience, the University has moved away from a "you said, we did" approach towards one of partnership. The success of the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) in 2018/19 illustrated how working with student representatives and wider feedback, led to changes across academic and wellbeing environments on all campuses.

