

# DISBURSEMENTS GROUP

## Terms of Reference

### 1 Constitution and Purpose

- 1.1 The Disbursements Group has been established by the Donations and Investments Committee to oversee appropriate expenditure against all available philanthropic funds held or controlled by Heriot-Watt University, including those raised through the annual calling campaign and other fundraising activity in support of access bursaries, scholarships and small project grants are disbursed.
- 1.2 Disbursements decisions must align with the overall objectives of these philanthropic funds and the philanthropic/charitable intention of the original donors. A proportion of any monies raised will be committed to access bursaries and scholarships as well as small project grants. Guidance will be provided by the Head of Development & Alumni (or delegate) with the support of the Global Chief Financial Officer (or delegate).
- 1.3 The Disbursements Group, which reports to the Donations and Investments Committee, will have delegated authority to:
1. Commit up to £400k of expenditure in total in each financial year from the Alumni Fund and the Scholarships & Bursaries Fund. In the case of scholarship support and other initiatives, which may have multi-annual funding conditions/implications, the Group should consider the total value of support for the duration of the activities.
  2. Disburse from the Annual Fund to support Access Bursaries; Music Scholarships and Sports Scholarships and additional disbursement through grants.
  3. Oversee disbursement of all other available philanthropic funds held or controlled by Heriot-Watt University in line with agreed strategies and budgets, the value of funds available to spend and their individual restrictions.
- In the case of the first two items above, and subject to the stated conditions, the Disbursements Group will decide what allocations are to be made from the funds.
- In the case of the last item above, the Disbursements Group, on a quarterly basis, will review Schools and Departments' philanthropic fund expenditure to ensure that it is compliant and take action accordingly. The Disbursements Group will also work with Schools and Directorates to bring unused or underutilised funds into full use and provide guidance on aligning funds with University strategy.
- 1.4 A published set of criteria (currently under development) will be used to inform decision making concerning disbursement of funds.
- 1.5 The Disbursements Group will review reports on use of funds. To this end, the Development and Alumni Office will ensure that all successful applicants where applicable submit a project report detailing and highlighting where the support was used.

- 1.6 The Disbursements Group will bring oversight to the development and delivery by the Development and Alumni Office of a communications and publicity plan to highlight the impact of the funds.
- 1.7 The Group will require all projects supported by the funds to include a note of recognition and, where applicable, the Annual Fund logo. The same will also apply to all projects supported by the funds that are carried out in a public forum (e.g. conference presentation, sports equipment).
- 1.8 The Disbursements Group will ensure that financial records are kept by the Finance Directorate and note is made of any exceptional items and that all applications for funding will be retained by the Development and Alumni office along with appropriate scorecards for marking applications.
- 1.9 The Disbursements Group will, on a quarterly basis, review the income, expenditure and balances of funds including, where relevant, multi-annual funding commitments.

## 2 Remit

- 2.1 The Disbursements Group will consider how best to spend historic unspent reserves (backlog funds) in support of University strategic priorities that support and advance the wider student experience i.e. those activities that cannot normally be funded through core University funding.
- 2.2 The Group will take account of any existing and ongoing commitments and consider the following areas in relation to potential funding:
  - personal funding efforts;
  - benefit to student population;
  - benefit to wider population;
  - travel/accommodation limitations;
  - previous application amounts vs. current amount applied for (justification);
  - repeat applications/relationships; and
  - receipt of required reports on outcomes and impacts of any previous funding granted.
- 2.3 The Group will normally report at least twice a year to the Donations and Investments Committee.

## 3 Composition and Membership

- 3.1 The Group shall comprise:
  - Vice-Principal & Provost (Chair)
  - University Secretary (Deputy Chair)
  - Head of Development & Alumni
  - Associate Principal (Access & Inclusion)
  - One Head of School
  - Local representatives from other campus locations (considered and agreed annually)
  - Student Union or Council President or nominated representative, rotating annually across campus locations
  - Head of Student Life and Deputy Registrar

The Group shall be supported by a Clerk and a Financial Accountant.

#### **4 Equality and Diversity Statement**

- 4.2 The Group exercises its responsibility, as far as possible, to promote the diversity of representation within its membership and the membership of any working group or committee established by the Group. The Group, in carrying out its business, will also act to promote equality of opportunity for all.

#### **5 Quorum and Voting**

- 5.1 The quorum is at least four members of the Group, including either the Chair or Deputy Chair.
- 5.2 A member who presents a case for funding will not be involved in the decision making concerning that case.

#### **6 Group Chair**

- 6.1 The Chair of the Group shall be the Vice-Principal & Provost.
- 6.2 In the absence of the Chair of the Group, the Deputy Chair may act as Chair until such time as the Chair of the Group arrives.

#### **7 Frequency of Meetings**

- 7.1 The Group will normally meet quarterly to disburse funds ensuring that one meeting is always held within Semester One.
- 7.2 Extra meetings may be required which can be carried out via correspondence if required.

#### **8 Attendance at Meetings**

- 8.1 In addition to the members, and associated with agenda business, other members of University staff and external participants may be invited to attend on an ad-hoc basis for particular agenda items.
- 8.2 The Group will maintain a record of attendance at each of its meetings and will include this information in its reports to the Donations and Investments Committee.

#### **9 a) Reserved Business**

- 9.1 There may be occasions when the Group's business is designated reserved (confidential) and/or commercially sensitive. On such occasions, with the approval of the Chair, any persons in attendance may be asked to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of a particular reserved item of business.
- 9.2 The record of matters which the Chair and the Group are satisfied should be dealt with on a reserved basis and will be recorded separately.

## **9 b) Conflict of Interest**

- 9.3 Where it is identified that a member of the Group has a conflict of interest with respect to a given matter, the Chair may, on the advice of the Secretary, request that the member in question withdraw from participation in relevant business. Depending on the nature of the business, this may allow for participation in discussions without taking part in decision-making or may require complete non-participation and/or withdrawal from that part of the meeting.
- 9.4 All instances of identified conflicts of interest shall be recorded in the minutes.

## **10 Reporting Procedures**

- 10.1 The Group will normally report at least twice a year to the Donations and Investments Committee. The Chair will approve the content of reports before release including the redaction of any information deemed necessary for reasons of confidentiality.
- 10.2 Confidential minutes will be distributed to Members of the Group.
- 10.3 Matters requiring the approval of the University Executive and/or the Donations and Investments Committee will be highlighted in the Group's report.
- 10.4 The Group's records (agenda, papers and minutes) are included in the University's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme. Information will be readily accessible on request to members of the public under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOI(S)A) with the exception of information which is deemed to be covered by a specific exemption under the Act.
- 10.5 Minutes and reports of the Group will denote those areas of reported business which are deemed to fall within the designation of information which is 'exempt' under the FOI(S)A.

## **11 Forward Planning**

- 11.1 The Group will review its Terms of Reference and submit recommendations on these to the University Executive and Donations and Investments Committee annually for approval.
- 11.2 The Group will set its meeting dates two years in advance, aligned to the schedule of meetings of the University Executive and Donations and Investments Committee.
- 11.3 The Group will maintain a forward agenda plan of its business.

## Supporting Information

<b>Groups feeding in to the Disbursements Group</b>	
None	
<b>Effectiveness and lifespan</b>	
Lifespan ongoing.	
<b>Actions that may be taken by the Group</b>	
The Disbursements Group may:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note</li><li>• Receive</li><li>• Consider</li><li>• Endorse</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve</li><li>• Recommend</li><li>• Reject</li></ul>
<b>Most appropriate minuting style</b>	
Traditional/formal minutes highlighting the outcome and reasoning behind this for each project in accordance with internal University guidance.	
<b>Resources</b>	
Clerk	Iain Dods, Senior Governance Assistant, Policy and Governance
Financial Accountant	Kish Parmar, Senior Financial Accountant, Finance Directorate
Meetings	Quarterly ensuring that one meeting is always held in Semester One