

Graduate Apprenticeship Guidance



Academic Session 2022-23

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Supplements

In order to reduce unnecessary duplication or contradiction all programme-specific information has been included in the following Supplements to this Guidance:

Business Management (including Financial Services)

Construction and the Built Environment

Civil Engineering

Data Science

Engineering: Design and Manufacture (Mechanical and Electronic)

Engineering: Instrumentation, Measurement and Control

IT: Management for Business

IT: Software Development

This Guidance provides general information on the requirements of Graduate Apprenticeship programmes of study. Please note this Guidance is subject to regular updates particularly in light of COVID-19 and ongoing guidance from the UK and Scottish Government.

Please note that the following sections are standard sources of information provided to all Graduate Apprentices and Work-based Mentors. However, certain aspects are programme-specific and you should refer to the Supplement relevant to the specific programme where directed. Be advised that the University will make changes to study programmes and progression requirements from time to time in accordance with strategic developments and it is therefore important to ensure that you check the most recent version for up-to-date information.

1. Important Information

1.1 Key Contacts for the GA Programmes



Director of Apprenticeships (Academic)

	Dr Robin Westacott	SR1.06	R.E.Westacott@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 3140
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GA Programme Director – Engineering: Design and Manufacture (Electronic & Mechanical)

	Dr Alan Faulkner-Jones	JN2.02	Alan.Faulkner-Jones@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 4381
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GA Programme Director – Engineering: Instrumentation, Measurement and Control

	Prof Gerard Markx	JCNM9	G.H.Markx@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 8349
	Dr Grishma Banakar		Grishma.Banakar@forthvalley.ac.uk	

GA Programme Directors – Data Science

	Dr Saman Gule	EM1.03	S.Gule@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 3357
	Dr Hebatallah Shoukry	EM1.03	H.Shoukry@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 3357

GA Programme Director – Civil Engineering

	Dr Laurent Galbrun	ECG.22	L.G.U.Galbrun@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 3145
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GA Programme Director – Construction and the Built Environment

	Dr Graeme Bowles	EC1.19	G.Bowles@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 4626
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GA Programme Director – Business Management, Business Management: Financial Services & IT: Management for Business

	Dr David Steinberg	MB1.2A	D.Steinberg@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 3497
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GA Programme Director – IT: Software Development

	Dr Diana Bental	EM1.05	D.S.Bental@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 3367
	Dr Idris Skloul Ibrahim	EMG.32	I.S.Ibrahim@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 3772

Head of Talent Partnerships (B2B)

 Jen Henderson	SR1.08	Jennifer.Henderson@hw.ac.uk
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Business Relationship Managers

 Lynne Somerville	SR1.13	L.Somerville@hw.ac.uk
 Derek Thomson	SR1.13	D.Thomson@hw.ac.uk
 Dan O’Gorman	SR1.13	D.O’Gorman@hw.ac.uk

General Enquiries

 GA Office	SR1.13	GA@hw.ac.uk	0131 451 8369
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1.2 Remote Learning

Graduate apprenticeship programmes at Heriot-Watt will remain accessible remotely. Learners will have the option to attend campus (depending on any restrictions in place) or to access learning from their workplace or home. **Apprentices will not be disadvantaged in any way should they choose to study remotely rather than on campus.**

1.3 Providers of the Graduate Apprenticeship Programmes

As part of their delivery of the Graduate Apprenticeship programmes, Heriot-Watt University has partnerships with two other providers, Borders College and Forth Valley College, to deliver Years 1 and 2 of some Graduate Apprenticeship programmes. The relevant college will contact those Graduate Apprentices and their employers directly to explain any additional/ alternative arrangements.

1.4 Significant Dates in the Academic Year

Friday 2 Sept 2022	Induction Session
Friday 9 Sept 2022	On-campus Day
12 Sept 2022 – 2 Dec 2022 (Exams 5 Dec 2022 – 16 Dec 2022)	Semester 1
19 Dec 2022 – 6 Jan 2023	Winter break
9 Jan 2023 – 31 Mar 2023	Semester 2
3 – 21 Apr 2023 (Easter: 9 Apr 2023)	Spring break
24 Apr - 28 Jul 2023 (Exams 24 Apr 2023 – 19 May 2023)	Semester 3 (including Semester 2 exams)
3-11 Aug 2023	Semester 3 exams / Resits
14 - 15 Nov 2023	Graduation (TBC)

If there are no exams scheduled for a specific semester then teaching may continue through the unused exam period.

1.4.1 UK campus holidays 2020-21

The University buildings - except for student halls of residences - will be closed on:

- 26 December 2022 – 3 January 2023 (inclusive)
- Friday 7 April 2023 (Good Friday)
- Monday 10 April 2023 (Easter Monday)

Other buildings closed days to be confirmed.

1.5 Links to Further Information/Services

University Website	http://www.hw.ac.uk
University Academic Registry	http://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry.htm
Student Support	https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/student-support.htm https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/information-governance/access/foi/student-administration.htm
Student Administration	https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/information-governance/access/foi/student-administration.htm
Online Course Material / Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) - Canvas	https://canvas.hw.ac.uk/
Student Portal	http://portal.hw.ac.uk/
Student Self Service	https://www.hw.ac.uk/selfservice
The GA Hub*	https://heriotwatt.sharepoint.com/sites/gap

*Can only be accessed by a GA once they have completed online enrolment and received their HWU student login credentials.

2. Welcome and Introduction

2.1 Welcome to Heriot-Watt University from the Director of Apprenticeships

Welcome to Heriot-Watt University and the start of your Graduate Apprenticeship Programme. You are unique and among the growing number of degree-level apprentices in Scotland undertaking a learning experience which combines work-based activities and learning with academic studies to gain valuable skills enabling you to further develop within today's fast and ever-changing modern business environment.

Graduate Apprenticeships are a way of working towards a degree. The backgrounds of apprentices on these degree programmes are diverse, from school leavers in their first job to highly experienced employees who chose to work rather than continue in education when they left school. This rich, supportive learning environment will enable you to share and learn from the breadth of experience from employees of over 190 companies while you are a Graduate Apprentice at Heriot-Watt University.

You have not chosen an easy route to a degree success. The challenge you face is different, but no less than for students pursuing a traditional degree. You will gain invaluable personal skills in balancing work, life and learning with support of your company and staff at Heriot-Watt University. Your Personal Tutor will provide the guidance and support you need to progress through your apprenticeship and, together with the Programme Leader, ensure you that receive the best experience during your apprenticeship.

Welcome once again, and good luck!

Robin Westacott BSc(Hons), PGCert, PhD, MRSC, FHEA

3. Graduate Apprenticeships

3.1 Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is written as an introductory guide to allow employers and apprentices to gain further understanding of the Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) Scheme. The support that apprentices will get from their employer and the University is detailed and the processes for gaining additional support is described.

Employers will find information to help them work effectively in partnership with the University to maximise the impact of the GA programme on the growth and development of the workforce. Apprentices will be provided with what they need to know to navigate their way around the University.

3.2 About Graduate Apprenticeships

Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs) are a ground-breaking initiative, creating degree-qualified employees with the skills companies are looking for. Employers and universities collaborate to shape GA programmes around the needs of the industry. This approach guarantees that the content and study practices are easily implemented in, and relevant to, the workplace of the apprentice. GA programmes are open to existing employees and new recruits.

GA programmes involve both traditional University education and work-based learning. Graduate Apprentices will be employees, working for their employer and being “released” to attend University. Work-based learning is learning delivered and assessed in the workplace; apprentices learn and reflect through their activities at work, working with others on real-life challenges. This concept is described in more detail in [Section 5.1](#). Workplace activities will be assessed against a framework of outcomes, and this assessment will contribute to the degree alongside the traditional academic learning at the University. This framework has been designed by a group of experts from the industries relevant to each programme.

The University will work with employers to devise the process through which the apprenticeship will be delivered. The split between University attendance and work-based activities will be common for all apprentices in each programme regardless of the company they work for. The release day for attending University may be different depending on the stage of the programme an individual apprentice is enrolled on.

Activities undertaken by apprentices in the workplace will provide them with opportunities to:

- Gain new knowledge and learn new skills in the workplace;
- Apply their knowledge of the subject in the workplace;
- Relate their academic learning to how this is used in the workplace;
- Identify and analyse why theoretical concepts need to be modified to suit real-world applications, and discuss these with experienced professionals;
- Experience the workplace environment including workload allocation, resourcing and identification and achievement of company objectives;

- Develop the workplace and interpersonal skills that enable employees to work efficiently as individuals and in teams to achieve a set of goals; and
- Acquire new knowledge through independent and collaborative learning both at university and in the workplace.

3.2.1 Graduate Apprenticeship Requirements

Eligibility

From the commencement of their Graduate Apprenticeship Programme and for the duration of their Programme, the Apprentice must:

- have been living in the UK, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for the three years immediately before the start of their course, and must also be living (ordinarily resident) in Scotland on the day their course starts.
- be 16 years old or over;
- work in Scotland for their Employer in a role which enables them to consolidate the skills acquired during their Programme;
- be under a contract of employment with the Employer relevant to the Programme;
- be employed by the Employer for a minimum of 21 hours per calendar week;
- have been informed by their Employer in writing of the work and study arrangements of their Graduate Apprenticeship;
- be directly managed by their Employer whilst performing apprenticeship tasks on a daily basis with the apprenticeship tasks being undertaken as part of the Apprentice's employment during working hours;
- be subject to the same policies and procedures as other employees of the Employer;
- not be enrolled on any other public-funded course, training or learning programme (e.g. a Modern Apprenticeship, HND, etc) at the time the Graduate Apprenticeship programme starts;
- not be in receipt of, either directly or through their employer, any other public funds for the purposes of education and training;
- not be subject to an employment restriction and/or to a time limit on their stay in United Kingdom;
- not be in custody as a prisoner or on remand in custody; and
- meet the Programme admission requirements set by Heriot-Watt University.

From the 2021/22 AY, part of the funding for the graduate apprenticeship is now provided by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). Each apprentice must apply to SAAS before starting their Programme with us. There is more information on eligibility for this funding on the [SAAS website](#). **Failure to secure the SAAS component of the funding may make the apprentice ineligible for the programme.**

The Employer and Apprentice must notify Heriot-Watt University as soon as possible if a change in the circumstances of the apprentice would lead to no longer meeting any part of this Eligibility Criteria or if they intend to change or leave their Employer.

Entry

The entry requirements vary by programme (see the supplement specific to the relevant programme). They are flexible to allow for recognition of prior experiential (as well as

certificated) learning.

Advanced entry to second (or third year in extraordinary cases) may be possible if the candidate possesses more advanced prior learning or experience. Interest in advanced entry should be communicated to the Programme Director during the application process. Please note that advanced entry is at the discretion of the University.

Progression and Graduation

In general, the minimum requirements to progress and eventually graduate are no different from any other University programme:

- Achieve 120 credits each year to progress to the next year
- Achieve 480 credits in total to graduate

Specific progression and graduation requirements are described in the supplements specific to each programme.

Portfolio

Each apprentice is required to keep a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates their learning and skills development in the workplace. This, in conjunction with the Individual Learning Agreement (ILA; see [Section 5.1.2](#) for more information on this), will form the basis of discussion at the quarterly meetings with the apprentice(s), Work-based Mentor and Personal Tutor. This amounts to a minimum of keeping the outputs described in the ILA, any feedback received and any reflection on that output or feedback.

There may be additional requirements for your particular programme (see the supplement specific to the relevant programme). This may be because there are particular requirements of the relevant Professional and/or Regulatory Body.

3.2.2 Learning Outcomes

The Graduate Apprenticeships are based on a Framework containing essential Learning Outcomes. Each GA programme has its own Framework that has been developed by Skills Development Scotland in collaboration with relevant employers and universities. For each Framework there are a set of high-level outcomes that must be evidenced as part of the assessment process.

Each of these high-level outcomes have been broken down into a number of lower-level outcomes in each course within the programme listed in the Course Specification documents. These lower-level outcomes can be flexibly weighted based on the requirements of the programme and opportunities available to each individual apprentice in the workplace. The assessment of these outcomes could be by coursework, examination (more likely only for the taught elements), observation or demonstration.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Apprentice Responsibilities

Apprentices are expected to:

- follow all safety regulations and procedures at all times, and follow the instructions of University and company staff with regard to safety;
- adopt a professional approach to their work and study at all times, and to put in the necessary level of effort to achieve a successful outcome;
- attend all timetabled classes for their programme of study, and to participate fully in the work of the class and to supplement the material given in those classes by reading appropriate texts. It is the responsibility of the learner to catch up on any missed classes using the materials provided (which may include audio or video-recorded classes) and get advice from their Personal Tutor;
- attempt tutorial questions in advance of the tutorials and use the timetabled sessions to get help with any problems they might have;
- submit all fully-completed assignments and technical reports on schedule and by the appropriate route. Late coursework is subject to penalty and coursework handed in by an inappropriate route that is discovered after the deadline is still late. It is a programme requirement that all coursework is submitted and failure to do so may require remedial coursework to be completed;
- in any cases where they experience difficulty, apprentices are expected to discuss (in confidence) the matter with their Personal Tutor or their Work-based Mentor as soon as possible; and
- if they miss any classes or work, apprentices are expected to inform their Personal Tutor as soon as possible. For prolonged periods (i.e., more than 3 days), this must be accompanied by a medical certificate or equivalent.

There are a number of things that apprentices must do as a bare minimum to ensure that they stand the best chance of progressing through the programme. Apprentices **MUST**:

- attend quarterly meetings with their Personal Tutor and Work-based Mentor;
- attend other scheduled meetings with their Personal Tutor or Work-based Mentor or advise him/her in advance if they cannot attend;
- submit ALL coursework by the deadline and by the agreed route;
- attend lecture, tutorial and laboratory classes as timetabled, and advise the appropriate lecturer or laboratory supervisor of any absence (in advance, if possible);
- take good notes in lectures;
- check their University e-mail account and log into Canvas regularly;
- attend ALL examinations for the courses they are taking – it is their responsibility to ensure that they know the dates and locations of the relevant exams; and
- NOT schedule holidays during any teaching or exam period, including the resit period in August. The dates of teaching and assessment periods are shown in the dates of the academic year in [Section 1.4](#).

4.1.1 Enrolment

It is apprentice's responsibility to make sure they are enrolled properly and that they are enrolled on the correct programme. If an apprentice is not enrolled, or believes their enrolment is incomplete or incorrect, they **MUST** contact their Personal Tutor.

Apprentices must also make sure that the University knows how to contact them and their Work-based Mentor by both telephone and e-mail. **The University will use the apprentice's University e-mail address and it is up to the apprentice to check this e-mail regularly. The University accepts no responsibility if an apprentice does not check their University e-mail.** It is also the apprentice's responsibility to ensure that they inform their Personal Tutor if their contact details, or those of their Work-based Mentor, change during the apprenticeship. The Apprentice should also inform the GA Office Team by completing the [Change of Details form](#) that can be found on the [GA Hub](#) (please note that the GA Hub cannot be accessed until the apprentice has completed online enrolment and has access to their HWU student login details).

4.1.2 Good Working Practice

Experience obtained from monitoring learners in workplace environments over many years tells us that apprentices will get the most out of their apprenticeship if they understand what they are being asked to do, why they are being asked to do it and are proactive about how they approach the work. Proactive apprentices are more likely to gain experience and be a more highly valued member of the team, and therefore be given more interesting, challenging and responsible tasks.

Throughout the apprenticeship the apprentice will represent Heriot-Watt University and their employer. They are expected to behave in a professional way at all times. Bringing the University into disrepute during the apprenticeship could lead to formal disciplinary procedures which could impact on the outcome of the apprenticeship and their degree. The following are some examples of behaviour which is considered unprofessional:

- Work performance fails to meet a given standard, especially over a period of time, due to incompetence, laziness, neglect or inability to perform duties;
- Chronic absence, lateness or other attendance issues;
- Unprofessional manner or inappropriate conduct;
- Damage caused to the employer or contractors through negligence;
- Minor violations of workplace rules, despite advice from Work-based Mentor or Personal Tutor.

There is also a requirement that apprentices adhere to their employer's policy on confidentiality of information, both business and personal. Apprentices are very strongly advised to consider all information they receive as confidential and get advice from their Work-based Mentor if they have any doubt. There can be serious implications for anyone who willingly or unwillingly divulges confidential information.

4.1.3 Email communication

Each apprentice is allocated a Heriot-Watt email account for the duration of their studies. This is the email address we will use when contacting you.

You can access your Heriot-Watt email account via any internet connection by using:
<http://outlook.com/owa/hw.ac.uk>

This can be accessed on your mobile device – instructions are available at:
<https://www.hw.ac.uk/is/it-essentials/email.htm>

Apprentices must ensure they check their Heriot-Watt e-mail regularly as this will be the main method of communication between staff and apprentices.

4.2 Work-Based Mentors

All apprentices should be appointed a Work-based Mentor who, where possible, is independent of their line manager. The Work-based Mentor is part of the support structure for apprentices that includes the Personal Tutor from the University. The role of Work-based Mentor is essential to the success of the apprentice as this person will support them in the workplace and help them to ensure that they can deliver the requirements of the apprenticeship from their activities in the workplace. Some of this will require the Work-based Mentor to discuss with the apprentice's line manager and their Personal Tutor opportunities for the apprentice to undertake work relevant to the learning outcomes required by the programme framework as listed in each Course Specification document.

The opportunities that are identified must include sufficient tasks (number and difficulty) to allow the apprentice to learn or demonstrate skills, knowledge, behaviours and competencies that are work-relevant in terms of their own development, employer needs and their job role. Such opportunities can also be used to demonstrate learning in its broadest sense against the Outcome Framework. The opportunities should be used to identify milestones towards a goal, and these milestones used to identify assessment opportunities and deadlines. In certain cases, a single opportunity can be used to meet multiple learning outcomes. Equally, multiple opportunities may be required to meet a single learning outcome.

Some of these opportunities will arise naturally as part of the apprentice's job role. Other opportunities may have to be created in order that some of the learning outcomes can be met. This may involve a secondment to a different department in the workplace or a piece of coursework designed through discussion with the Personal Tutor.

The initial tasks of a Work-based Mentor should involve making sure that an apprentice who is new to the company goes through an appropriate induction into the company and completes any required health and safety training including that for on-going vigilance. New apprentices should also be introduced to the people they will work with, as well as any relevant company policies and procedures. Additionally, the Work-based Mentor has the responsibility to:

- Discuss with the Personal Tutor and the apprentice how the work programme fits the GA Framework Outcomes and contribute to the writing of an Individual Learning Plan for the apprentice as part of the Individual Learning Agreement. The Plan may be reviewed throughout the apprenticeship should the apprentice's role change;
- Contribute to the assessment of coursework and the apprentice throughout the programme (NOTE: the academic types of assessment will be the responsibility of academic staff; however, a contribution to these types of assessment where use of a

company-specific process or piece of equipment is required, for example, may be required and this can be discussed with the Personal Tutor during design of the contextualised coursework);

- Arrange meetings with the apprentice to discuss progress – these may be regular or ad hoc;
- Monitor the progress of the apprentice and provide feedback directly to the apprentice throughout the programme;
- Notify the apprentice's Personal Tutor of any problems that arise;
- Meet with the Personal Tutor during the visits to discuss the progress and performance of the apprentice, and reflect on the Individual Learning Agreement; and
- Submit any feedback to a Business Relationship Manager at the end of each year.

It is also the role of the Work-based Mentor to support the apprentice to make the link between work-based activities, work-based learning and academic content. This will include ensuring they have sufficient time to do this (0.5 days per week, approximately).

In many cases, the Work-based Mentor will need to ensure that appropriate certification is made for outcomes that require a workplace deliverable; such as use of a company procedure to perform a task etc. This may mean getting evidence from a colleague so that the apprentice's Individual Learning Agreement can be signed.

4.2.1 Industrial/Project-based Mentor

For some GA programmes, a temporary Mentor may be assigned to apprentices (i.e., for specific industrial projects). In these instances, they may take on some of the technical responsibilities of the Work-based Mentor and may attend any review meetings while they occupy the role.

4.3 University Staff Responsibilities

The University's goal is to provide apprentices with the best possible academic and vocational education. To do this we will work in partnership with their employers, and possibly other organisations:

- we will give apprentices the support, encouragement and the technical back-up to develop skills as a practising professional;
- we will work with the employing organisations to set coursework designed to challenge the knowledge, skills and understanding of apprentices;
- we will provide each apprentice with a Personal Tutor who will guide them through the entire apprenticeship and be the primary contact for their training and education at the University;
- we will make available any advice to make the GA programme successful for the employing organisations; and
- we will monitor the progress of the apprentices and discuss this with the apprentice and Work-based Mentor at regular intervals.

Apprentices should not expect University staff to provide all the information required to successfully complete a programme. Higher education does not seek to produce graduates who can simply memorise and reproduce facts but seeks to develop each learner's analytical

skills by requiring him/her to seek out information and apply independent thought to it; that is, to produce graduates who can think for themselves. Learners who acquire new skills, are prepared to think about problems and start to become professionals in their chosen area are the learners who find it easiest to progress.

4.3.1 Lecturers

There will always be a member of academic staff responsible for the academic content of a course. The lecturers will be the academic staff at the University who are delivering the taught material and interacting with the apprentices on campus or electronically throughout the GA programme. There will be a large number of lecturers involved over the four years of the programme. These lecturers will also be involved in assessment either through examinations and/or coursework for the taught courses, or contextualised coursework for the blended work-based learning courses.

If there is a technical issue with the content of a course, for example a problem with a tutorial question or assignment, then the lecturer or teaching assistant should be the first contact. Apprentices should attend the tutorial sessions and make use of these to address questions that might arise first before making any additional arrangement with a member of staff. It is often easier to arrange to see the lecturer concerned by making an appointment, as lecturers' other duties may mean that they can't see you immediately if you just turn up at their office.

4.4 The Personal Tutor

Each apprentice will be assigned a Personal Tutor from the School who administers their GA programme. This person will be a member of academic staff of the University. The Personal Tutor will work with the apprentice and their Work-based Mentor for the duration of the programme. This will provide a single point of contact at the University for academic, administrative and personal matters directly related to the apprentices. If your Personal Tutor cannot help you directly, he or she is very likely to know someone who can. In an emergency you should visit your Personal Tutor's office without an appointment if you are on campus; if you're off-campus you should call (via phone or Microsoft Teams) your Personal Tutor (and leave a message with a number where you can be contacted) and go to your Work-based Mentor.

Conversations between an apprentice and their personal tutor are confidential except where the Personal Tutor has a moral, legal or contractual obligation to share information.

A summary of the role of the Personal Tutor is:

- someone for the apprentice to contact for advice on academic and non-academic issues, which might include programme options as well as health, financial and welfare problems;
- providing examination marks from previous semesters;
- monitoring progress;
- discussing Individual Learning Plans as part of the Individual Learning Agreement;
- advising on University processes and procedures;
- providing support in difficult circumstances; and
- representing the interests of the apprentice at meetings of the Board of Examiners.

The Personal Tutor will meet with each apprentice at least 4 times per year, but additional workplace visits or MS Teams/video conference calls can be arranged as required. These visits fulfil several requirements:

- To agree and update Individual Learning Agreement and supplementary progress reports;
- To check that the work and projects set are appropriate;
- To check that the requirements of the apprenticeship are fully understood;
- To check that the apprentice is progressing well through the programme and for the company;
- To encourage the Work-based Mentor and the apprentice to reflect on experiences and review the apprentice's portfolio of evidence;
- To address any difficulties and conflicts that occur;
- To help identify other opportunities to support apprentice development;
- To evaluate and record apprentice progress; and
- To discuss the content of reports.

At the very least, **APPRENTICES MUST SEE THEIR PERSONAL TUTOR FORMALLY ONCE PER QUARTER**. This will allow for regular discussions between the apprentice, Work-based Mentor and Personal Tutor covering how things are going, evidence of learning and competence against the Learning Outcomes in the Course Specifications and, where necessary, updating the Learning Plan of the Individual Learning Agreement. For this reason, it is important that the Personal Tutor and Work-based Mentor helps their apprentice(s) keep their portfolio of evidence up to date.

4.5 Programme Director

The Programme Director is responsible for running the Graduate Apprenticeship for a particular programme framework. Ultimately, any decision regarding problems encountered by apprentices and their employers will reach the Programme Director. You can contact the Programme Director directly to discuss any issue, although you will see the Personal Tutor on a regular basis. Amongst other things, the Programme Director is responsible for:

- making sure that the programme runs smoothly;
- ensuring that appropriate examination questions and papers are produced for assessment;
- ensuring that other forms of assessment are appropriate;
- collating the marks and grades after each examination diet; and
- advising apprentices on any issues arising from assessment results that might hinder the apprentice's progression to the next year of the programme.

4.6 Business Relationship Managers

The Business Relationship Managers provide a conduit between apprentices, their employers, Heriot-Watt University, Personal Tutors and Work-based Mentors. Primarily, the Business Relationship Managers will be involved with the non-academic relationship, however support will be available where required.

5. Programme Delivery

GAs are work-based learning degrees, currently to SCQF level 10 (Bachelor with Honours), and this is the same level of qualification that would be obtained by a learner following the traditional route to a degree.

GA programmes are full-time and each shall be completed within four (4) years. Each academic year is 12 months in duration, split into 3 Semesters over 40 weeks. The programmes are delivered following an approximate 80:20 split of work-based learning to on-campus learning. To this end, the apprentice must learn through work-based activities, supported by academic provision online, through print and on campus. Typically, the apprentice will attend Heriot-Watt University on day release once a week where they will attend timetabled sessions and undertake self-directed and supported learning. The remainder of the working week the apprentice is based at their employing company. For approximately 0.5 days per week the apprentice will be engaging in planning their work and assimilating knowledge etc. The summer semester and year 4 have more flexible attendance as apprentices undertake project work. Further details of this can be found in the relevant programme guidance supplement.

Teaching methods range from lectures, tutorial classes and mentor sessions, to workshop and laboratory activities supported by group and individual work-based activities. Most of the credit for the GA programme will come from learning that happens in the workplace because this is where the formal learning needs to happen, the University will support this by providing directed learning materials. This will be backed up by reflective practice and project courses that are linked directly to the apprentice's role in the workplace. As far as possible, the apprentice's activities in the programme courses (the project courses especially) should be aligned with their normal work activities. Assessment is by examination, contextualised coursework and presentations, the balance being appropriate to the different teaching methods used in each course

5.1 Work-Based Learning

There are many models that describe how people learn, but work-based learning is based on the premise that learning and doing are integrated, and that further learning and improvement is based on critical reflection on knowledge, skills and application to discover the next stages of learning. In the workplace, this happens for things directly relevant to a job role.

Work-based learning is driven by the need to learn to do a job. For GAs, which lead to a degree and therefore degree-level roles, the structure of GA programmes needs to be more flexible and the assessment more contextualised in order that apprentices at this level can meet the wide range of needs of graduate employers and vice versa. The expectation is that success in the workplace through learning to do a job, perform a role, undertake a project etc. is driven by deep learning – the need to understand the how and why – rather than the surface learning that is part of the learn, pass, forget cycle that many learners may fall into in modular programmes. Apprentices can learn in the traditional way, but also from other apprentices and other colleagues, and this form of learning promotes thinking and reflection.

Traditional academic programmes deliver the same teaching and learning to every learner at the same stage of the programme and assess each learner in the same way, commonly using

formal examinations as well as coursework. With work-based learning, because every job role is different, there is the opportunity to provide unique learning and assessment opportunities for each apprentice within the same degree framework.

To make work-based learning degrees work, the relationship between the apprentice, their Work-based Mentor and their Personal Tutor is essential to allow the apprentice to make the necessary progress and demonstrate the required outcomes. This will require detailed and regular discussion to identify the opportunities and maximise flexibility. The roles of the apprentice, Work-based Mentor and Personal Tutor are discussed in [Section 4](#).

Learning in the workplace can be social or solitary. In many job roles an employee may be required to work on their own, as part of a team or both. Where an apprentice must work as part of a team and this work is to be used as assessment material, the assessment must clearly contain a critical summary of the individual apprentice's contribution to the work that can be ratified in some way (e.g. corroboration by other team members).

Ideally, the work-based component of the GA should be developed as a consequence of the apprentice's job role and this should be easier as the apprentice progresses through the programme. The University will work with the employing organisations to develop the specific components of the programme that will allow the apprentice(s) to deliver the outcomes in the relevant GA Framework. This Framework, which has been split into Programme and Course Specification documents for ease of use, will be provided to you by the University. In the early stages, it might be necessary to create opportunities for the apprentice to demonstrate some of the outcomes, rather than let them occur naturally as part of their job. In the later years, we would expect these opportunities to arise naturally as part of the apprentice's job. The apprentice, the Work-based Mentor and the Personal Tutor will work together to identify these opportunities, devise the Individual Learning Plan and ensure that evidence to support meeting the outcomes is provided in an appropriate way, for example coursework, work-based projects, observations, and that these activities are reflected on by the apprentice(s).

5.1.1 Work-Based Assessment

For a work-based degree a large part of the assessment will be done in the workplace. Unlike the traditional Vocational Qualifications (VQ) assessments, these GA assessments won't be mapped against a rigid set of outcomes – there will be some defined learning outcomes, but it is up to the apprentice, Work-based Mentor and Personal Tutor to devise ways that the apprentice can demonstrate the required outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies to the appropriate level. Some of this assessment may be similar to VQ assessments in the sense that it amounts to “has the apprentice demonstrated competency in using a procedure or piece of equipment to the required standard”, but many will look like traditional academic assessments contextualised to the workplace of the apprentice.

In the early years of the programme, assessment is likely to be clearly defined with some flexibility to contextualise according to the apprentice's job role. In later years, the apprentice should be identifying opportunities to demonstrate the required outcomes and discussing them with their Work-based Mentor and Personal Tutor. It is often easier to think of work-based assessment in terms of projects rather than rigid pieces of coursework. These projects

will allow the company and the apprentice to devise activities that are work-relevant, and in discussion with the Personal Tutor ensure that the deliverables of the project map to the relevant Learning Outcomes, and how those deliverables will be presented for assessment. It is not necessary for the only deliverable for the project to be a final project report, milestones should be linked to deliverables that can be used to contribute to the overall assessment of the project.

To make work-based assessment work, it is essential that the relationship between the apprentice, their Work-based Mentor and their Personal Tutor is strong. The dialogue within this group must be regular in order that the Personal Tutor can ensure that as much of the workplace activity as possible counts towards the assessment.

All assessments will count towards the degree, in the early years this is more likely to be in the sense of credit award, but in later years the assessments will also count towards classification of the degree award.

5.1.2 Individual Learning Agreement

At the start of each academic year, the Personal Tutor will contact the Work-based Mentor to discuss the role and responsibilities for the apprentice in the coming year. This discussion will include what parts of these will be assessed and how this assessment will be done. The Personal Tutor will do this by comparing the roles and responsibilities to the relevant Learning Outcomes of the GA Framework to construct an Individual Learning Plan which will be unique for each apprentice.

The Personal Tutor will work with the apprentice and the Work-based Mentor to:

- Identify the learning needs of each apprentice and any immediate development needs;
- Identify any circumstances (personal or otherwise) that may affect the apprentice's progress on the programme;
- Identify additional learning or support that may be required by the apprentice;
- Establish an Individual Learning Agreement to ensure that work undertaken by the apprentice can be used to deliver the required framework outcomes;
- Regularly (at least once per quarter) review and update the Individual Learning Agreement with the apprentice and the Work-based Mentor;
- Meet regularly with the apprentice to provide support and guidance.

The Individual Learning Agreement will be used as a guide for both formal and informal progress monitoring. For informal monitoring and during contact with the Personal Tutor, this should be used in conjunction with the relevant Course Specifications. The Individual Learning Agreement will specify which Course Specifications are relevant for the current period of study.

Apprentices will need to state how the evidence they have provided demonstrates how they have met the relevant outcome. They will also be required to evaluate their learning and that any further learning or development opportunities have been identified.

5.2 University-Based Learning

We have attempted to minimise the time that apprentices spend away from the workplace and only require attendance on campus where this is required to teach material best taught in this format, and to provide support. Any compulsory attendance is based on a period each week where the apprentice is released to attend the University and is largely confined to the traditional academic parts of the year (September to December and January to April). There may be some requirements to attend the University during the summer months (May to August) that will be announced by the end of semester 2, but this will be more flexible and less frequent. We will act on feedback in an attempt to reduce this, but there are some elements of the programmes that are more suited to face-to-face teaching (whether in-person, or virtual) than independent distance learning.

The release days will include timetabled activities that generally happen at the same time every week. Some of this will be formal lectures, some will be tutorial support, seminars or workshop exercises.

Each apprentice will need additional time to study, but some of this should overlap with their need to learn in the workplace. Approximately 0.5 days per week should be allocated in the workplace for this purpose. Additional study by the apprentice will be required.

5.2.1 COVID-19 and Responsive Blended Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic means that we have adapted the way we deliver learning and teaching across our campuses to enable us to continue to offer an inspiring learning experience, whatever pandemic-related restrictions may be in place.

Our approach is called **Responsive Blended Learning (RBL)**.

- **Responsive** to the changing environments our students are living and learning in, to the wellbeing concerns of students and staff, and to the diversity of students' learning needs at this challenging time.
- **Blended** to combine the very best use of online and on-campus teaching, learning and student support. The exact balance of this blend of online and on-campus learning will flex depending on local conditions and individual student context.

Our Responsive Blended Learning approach means that you will be able to learn, interact and collaborate with your classmates, whether you are on campus or studying at a distance. It will enable you to access materials, collaborate and learn alongside your class cohort, and build and strengthen friendships, wherever you begin your studies from. This means our response will flex with the local conditions, and with your particular circumstances. It will also allow us to slowly and safely phase the return of students and staff on to our campuses, when conditions allow. This approach means we can react to changes in the national guidance, but also apply some flexibility around the need to attend campus.

As this is an improving situation, this may change and some attendance at campus may be allowed. We will pay attention to any concerns that you and your employer have in how we adjust delivery of the programmes in line with updated government guidelines. No apprentice will be disadvantaged because where they choose to do their learning: online or on campus.

You can discuss any issues around your learning or your wellbeing with your Personal Tutor

and with the University's support services.

5.2.2 Timetables

Timetables for each semester are published on the [GA Hub](#) under your Programme-Specific page. The GA Hub can only be accessed once you have fully enrolled with the University and received your student login credentials. If you would like to view your timetable before you are enrolled, please contact ga@hw.ac.uk with this request and a member of the GA Office Team will be able to provide assistance.

5.2.3 Coursework Submission

Each piece of coursework or project work will have a formal submission date. Those pieces of coursework related directly to courses taught during the release period will have fixed submission dates and the mode of submission will usually be electronic, either through Canvas, by e-mail, or by other route as directed by the relevant academic. Apprentices will receive clear instructions on this. Late submission of this coursework is likely to attract a late submission penalty unless there is some approved mitigating circumstance (see [Section 6.7.1](#) for more information on Mitigating Circumstances).

Apprentices will be provided with support for using our Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas).

Submission of coursework related to work-based learning is more flexible, although to gain the required credit to proceed to the next year of the programme the required credits must be accumulated by the end of the year. The Personal Tutor will advise suitable submission dates and agree them with the Work-based Mentor and the apprentice.

5.2.4 Examinations

Some of the courses in the GA programmes are assessed via examination (more details on specific courses are available in the supplement specific to the relevant programme).

It is the apprentice's responsibility to check all relevant examination timetables (including resits) on the Registry web page <https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations.htm>

Should an apprentice be required to be re-assessed in any examinations, they must make themselves available to take them. All exams must be taken at the Edinburgh campus, or other venue as prescribed by the University. A student of the University cannot choose where they sit an exam.

5.2.5 Progress Monitoring – formal and informal

Personal tutors will speak to apprentices regularly to discuss progress and for apprentices to identify any issues that may affect their progress. The Personal Tutor will inform the Work-based Mentor and Programme Director so that necessary support can be put in place.

Lecturers will have contact each week through the on-campus (or virtual) activities. Lecturers will record attendance and monitor progress (e.g., lack of preparation, failure to submit coursework) and advise the Personal Tutor. The Personal Tutor will raise any issues with the apprentice and escalate to the Programme Director and Work-based Mentor as appropriate.

The Individual Learning Agreement may also be used as a guide for both formal and informal progress monitoring of elements of University-based learning. This should be used in

conjunction with the relevant Programme and Course Specifications.

Provisional assessment results for taught courses are released online following the relevant Course Assessment/Review Boards which take place in January, May and August (resit diet). For Work-based Blended Learning courses (which run throughout the entire academic year) and Industrial Project Courses (which finish during semester 3), results will be released following the Progression Board in August.

The Progression Board meets at the end of the academic year to formally decide the next stage of the apprenticeship. Apprentices will receive an email from the University containing a link to a summary of your results for the year, the Board's progression decision, and information regarding any required reassessment.

All academic decisions will be made by the University.

5.2.6 Staff-Student Liaison

Apprentices are asked to elect a class representative at the start of every academic year. These representatives will keep the staff up to date with any problems which apprentices in the year have identified, and they also keep apprentices informed of actions taken by staff to address these problems. The School Officer is a student appointed by the Heriot-Watt Students Union to work closely with the class representatives and staff to make sure that the students' and apprentices' needs are met.

Any requests or suggestions about a course should be directed to the lecturer in question, or the relevant class representative can be approached. Alternatively, apprentices can talk to their personal tutor, the year supervisor or the Programme Director.

5.2.7 Feedback

Feedback is a two-way process. Feedback is provided to apprentices in a variety of ways in order to help them to reflect on and to evaluate their progress and to assist them to take steps to improve before the next relevant assessment. For most courses, apprentices can expect feedback on assessed coursework within three teaching weeks of the coursework due date.

Feedback is sought from students via Student-Staff Liaison Committees and various surveys so that the University can continue to enhance the Student Learning Experience (SLE). Your feedback is valued by the University, so please be sure to provide feedback whenever it is sought.

5.3 Workplace Visits

The Personal Tutor will need to make periodic visits to the workplace to liaise with the Work-based Mentor and the apprentice. These visits are to review progress and provide feedback on all aspects of the apprenticeship, to support the reflective practice of the apprentice and to discuss progress against the agreed Individual Learning Agreement. They also give the Personal Tutor the opportunity to see the apprentice in the workplace.

Workplace visits would normally happen once per quarter, and will be arranged between the employer, apprentice, Personal Tutor and Programme Director. The majority of these visits will be in person, especially in the early years where COVID guidance from the government

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and COVID-relevant safe-working practices of employers and the University allow. Additional “visits” can be arranged, and these can be conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams, Skype or tele-conference, if more convenient.

Regular contact outside these visits will be maintained by the Personal Tutor and the Programme Director.

5.4 Apprentice Portfolio

To act as a focus for your regular discussions with their Personal Tutor, and to provide an overview of apprentice performance, apprentices are required to keep an up-to-date portfolio of evidence. This document will help apprentices, their employers and the University keep track of what is being learned and what experience is being gained. The portfolio will form the basis of discussion at the formal quarterly meetings with the Personal Tutor and must demonstrate how the Learning Outcomes in each Course Specification document are being met. It must also include a reflective summary of the apprentice’s activities that demonstrates how the apprentice has thought about their experience, it should also act as a chart of the apprentice’s academic development and highlight their individual learning needs.

Apprentices should also be encouraged to look back at their self-development profile, and hence identify any changes that could be made, or any additional help needed, to achieve a successful outcome. The value of these documents is directly proportional to the effort invested in them.

The portfolio of an apprentice on a GA programme is not the same as the log books that other types of apprentices are required to keep, it is at a higher level and as such has different requirements. We would encourage our apprentices to keep a log of their activities to aid in the creation of evidence for their portfolio.

5.4.1 Evidence

The evidence you must supply in your portfolio can take many forms and each piece of evidence can count towards more than one learning outcome. The following are examples of evidence that you can provide:

- Letters of Certification;
- Authenticated copies of certificates and academic transcripts;
- Diaries;
- Documents, including any coursework;
- Completed project work (either the report or the product of that project);
- Published material;
- Critical Incident Analyses;
- Records of on-the-job training;
- References;
- Log books;
- Work samples;
- Video recordings

When preparing your portfolio you should use the following list to help you ensure that the evidence to support your claim meets the standards required. Your evidence must be:

- **Valid**
 - Is your evidence sufficiently related to the subject or specific learning outcome?
- **Authentic**
 - It is clear that the evidence you are presenting is your own work and not the work of others? You can ask your Work-based Mentor or Supervisor to authenticate the work.
- **Current**
 - Is your evidence up to date with current practice? If not, it may be simple to update this. The oldest evidence you can use is five years previous to the date of your submission.
- **Sufficient**
 - Is the evidence that you will supply enough to demonstrate that you have achieved the learning outcome?
- **Reliable**
 - Can the evidence that you are providing be reproduced by you?
- **Relevant**
 - Is the evidence of your learning relevant? This means it must be the required (SCQF) level and cover the specified knowledge and skills.

6. Information about the University and its Processes

6.1 Schools within the University

The University is structured into a number of schools that administer the degree programmes and manage the teaching resources allocated to specific subject areas. All undergraduate programmes in the University have several members of staff who specifically teach in one discipline area. Some of the Graduate Apprenticeships may take material from other schools, you will be associated with the school that delivers the majority of the programme and the Personal Tutor for the apprentice(s) will come from this school.

6.2 Navigating the University campus

Timetabled sessions can be spread across the campus and your timetable will indicate which room and which building you are meant to be in. Buildings across the campus are designated by a two-letter code, some examples are:

DB	David Brewster	JW	James Watt Study Hub
EC	Edwin Chadwick	LT	Lecture Theatres
EM	Earl Mountbatten	MB	Mary Burton
GR	GRID	PG	Postgraduate Centre
JC	John Coulson	SR	Scott Russell
JM	John Muir	WA	William Arrol
JN	James Nasmyth	WP	William Perkin

If in doubt, don't be afraid to ask, but keep a copy of the campus map handy (<https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/edinburgh-campus-map.pdf>).

6.3 Wi-Fi

University Information Services provides the eduroam wireless service for staff and students on campus: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/is/it-essentials/wifi.htm>

6.4 Virtual Learning Environment

Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) are systems that support a range of learning contexts, ranging from conventional, classroom implementation to offline, distance learning and online learning. Many of the courses that you are taking have a presence on the VLE and therefore you may be required to access information or complete and submit online assignments within courses on the VLE.

You will automatically be registered for a VLE course based on the courses that you register for either at the start of the year or any changes made after registration. The VLE can be accessed from any computer with internet access. The VLE can be accessed from the webpage <https://canvas.hw.ac.uk/>.

If you find you are missing a course on Canvas, please contact the relevant course organiser in the first instance.

6.5 Student Support

The University has a very efficient and helpful Student Support service designed to aid students with any academic, personal or financial problems that may arise.

Student Wellbeing Services aim to provide a range of support, guidance, activities and advice to help students to be their best and get the most from their University experience. The Wellbeing Centre is located in the Hugh Nisbet Building and their services include:

- Disability support
- Counselling (free and confidential)
- Mental health support and mentoring
- Wellbeing support

Please note that Student Wellbeing also offer virtual appointments with their Counselling, Disability support and other services. There is information on [their website](#) on how to book these.

The [Student Service Centre](#) is located in the Hugh Nisbet Building, just along from the Students

Union Shop and their services include:

- Issue of ID cards
- Update of contact details (including change of name)
- Transcripts and confirmation of status letters
- Providing advice and signposting for students to other University departments

Additional advice can be sought from the [Advice Hub](#), which is operated by Heriot-Watt's Student Union. Your Personal Tutor may suggest that you make an appointment or may offer to make an appointment on your behalf. Either way, your conversation with an advisor or counsellor from Student Support is confidential.

6.6 How is University Different from School or College?

Although on the face of it, both types of institution may seem to have the same purpose, there is a wealth of difference in the learning process between the two levels of education. At Heriot-Watt, as with any good university, the Lecturers and Personal Tutors will do their utmost to help apprentices learn. The ethos of Graduate Apprenticeships is based on the development of independent learners, and due to this, the emphasis moves away from formal teaching and **places responsibility on the apprentice to keep pace with their learning**, ensuring they are submitting work on time and attending classes.

It is up to the apprentice to take responsibility for learning under the guidance of their Personal Tutor and Work-based Mentor. The University reserves the right to remove students from programme if they do not perform or attend at the required level. It is very important that apprentices adopt a **professional attitude** to their studies. Those who have just completed another academic qualification may find this easy to do. Others may find it easy as their learning runs parallel to their work. However, those who have been out of the education system for a while may find the studying more difficult and will need to be identified and offered additional support. The same approach may not work for everyone, so apprentices will need some support to work out what works best for them. Guidance on how to study and learn is freely available from the Personal Tutor, and via the [Skills Hub](#).

Progress through the programme will not only rely on apprentices remembering what they've learned, but also understanding the subject matter and why they've learned it. As independent learners this should help apprentices to reflect on their learning and help them to decide the next stage in their learning.

6.7 Mitigating Circumstances, Appeals and Grievances

The University has policies, processes and procedures to address most issues that are faced by students during their studies. Most of these will be relevant to apprentices.

6.7.1 Mitigating Circumstances

Events that distract learners from their studies are commonplace. Apprentices must make their Work-based Mentor and their Personal Tutor aware if there are any circumstances at work, in the University or in their personal life that may affect their performance on any element of the apprenticeship. Information of this type is **CONFIDENTIAL** and should not be shared, even between the Work-based Mentor and the Personal Tutor, without the permission of the apprentice – the apprentice should be advised that allowing you to share

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this information would allow appropriate support to be provided. Circumstances that would normally be recognised as grounds for consideration of mitigating circumstances might include:

- Significant illness or accident affecting the learner;
- Bereavement – death of a close relative or significant other;
- Significant adverse personal or family circumstances;
- Other significant exceptional factors that are outside the student's control (e.g. Jury Service, although assessments would normally be a reason for a student to be permitted to stand down), or for which there is evidence of stress caused;
- Circumstances affecting the University's ability to schedule, set or deliver courses and/or assessments, including marking of assessments, e.g. staff participation in industrial action, or problems affecting infrastructure or IT systems; or
- Severe adverse weather, political unrest or natural disaster.

Events or circumstances that would not normally be considered grounds for consideration of mitigating circumstances include:

- Holidays or other events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected;
- Assessments that are scheduled close together or on the same day, or that clash due to incorrect registration by the learner;
- Misreading the timetable for examinations or otherwise misunderstanding the requirements for assessment;
- Inadequate planning or time management;
- Last-minute or careless travel arrangements; or
- Exam stress or panic attacks not supported by medical evidence.

Further information on the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and the application process can be found at:

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm>

6.7.2 Temporary Suspension of Studies

In some situations, it may be in an apprentice's best interests to suspend their studies temporarily. It sometimes helps to take time out to deal with issues that are preventing an apprentice from studying effectively – such as health or personal issues – and return to University at an agreed date. A temporary suspension of studies (TSS) is when a student stops studying at the University for an extended period of time, usually no longer than one academic year. You can apply for it on the basis of medical, personal or financial reasons.

If an apprentice is thinking of applying for a TSS, it is important that they first discuss this with their personal tutor, and also inform the GA Office at ga@hw.ac.uk. The GA Office Team will be able to advise the apprentice on how to apply for a TSS. The GA Office may need to initially seek approval for a TSS application from the relevant funding body before the apprentice can apply via the University's online process.

Apprentices should note that a TSS application will only be considered provided that the applicant has valid evidence to support their reasoning for applying. More information on Temporary Suspension of Studies can be found at:

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/leaving/temporary-suspension-studies.htm>

6.7.3 Appeals

An academic appeal is a formal request by a learner for the review of a decision made by the University on the learner's progression, assessment or academic award. There are valid and invalid grounds for an appeal. Appeals made on the basis of academic judgement (if a learner thinks they deserve a higher mark than the one awarded) or not being aware of published procedures are not grounds for an appeal.

It is worth noting that prior to the formal appeal process there is a capacity for informal resolution and apprentices should be advised to discuss issues with their Personal Tutor at the earliest opportunity in order that it can be resolved effectively and on an appropriate timescale. Also, the University will not address appeals, complaints or grievances that are brought to its attention after a significant delay unless there is a good reason.

Details of the University's Student Appeal Policy and Procedures can be found at <https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/doc/appealprocedures.pdf>

A formal decision on the appeal will be provided at the conclusion of the investigation of the appeal. In exceptional circumstances it may be difficult or impossible to maintain complete confidentiality, for instance if a criminal offence has been committed. In some instances, it may be difficult to investigate the appeal completely if confidentiality has to be maintained. This should be discussed with the Personal Tutor.

The [Advice Hub](#) can provide you with support and independent advice with regards to academic appeals. They can help you decide whether you have grounds for an appeal, assistance with drafting an appeal letter, and advice on any supporting evidence you might need.

6.8 Withdrawal of the Apprentice

If an apprentice decides that they would like to withdraw, it is important that they first discuss this with their Personal Tutor in order to explore alternative options. In some cases, if there are circumstances that are affecting an apprentice's studies, a Mitigating Circumstances (see [Section 6.7.1](#) for more details), or Temporary Suspension of Studies (see [Section 6.7.2](#)) application may be a more appropriate route, both of which would allow the apprentice to avoid withdrawal from the University.

We hope this doesn't happen, but for any reason that the apprentice needs to be withdrawn from the programme please contact the relevant Programme Director as soon as possible as there is a defined process to follow which has been set by the funders. We are required to seek a University Withdrawal Form from a participant who wishes to withdraw. Additionally, we are required to inform Skills Development Scotland of their withdrawal within 10 days of receiving confirmation from a participant that they wish to withdraw from the University.

7. Legal Considerations

7.1 Health and Safety

The University recognises that health and safety is of paramount importance in the workplace. The University has a duty of care to ensure that the apprentices' safety is protected while they are at work as described in the University's Health and Safety Policy (which also covers GAs): <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/information->

[governance/HealthSafetyPolicyJune2018.pdf](#).

It is the apprentice's responsibility to ensure that they follow the health and safety rules of their employer and the University. Apprentices not following the health and safety rules of their employer or the University will face disciplinary action. The employer induction process for new apprentices should include details of the company's health and safety policies and procedures.

Apprentices should include details of any element of health and safety in which they are involved in their portfolio of evidence. This should include any type of risk assessment, LOPA and HAZOP. Apprentices are required to report any safety incidents they are involved in to their Work-based Mentor and Personal Tutor immediately. Even the most minor incident should be reported.

7.2 Anti-discrimination legislation and regulations

University policy and practice is directed at the prevention of any action deemed to be discriminatory and on the promotion of equality and justice. Discrimination can be direct or indirect, or covert or overt. It is illegal to discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, culture, nationality, colour or race. It is also illegal to discriminate on the grounds of disability except where it is lawful to do so.

7.3 Apprentice Information

Information on each apprentice is held on the University's Student Record Database which includes contact addresses, academic records and notes regarding financial information. Staff across the University have partial access to key items of information on this database. Additional information, such as medical certificates, letters to apprentices, appeals etc. are also held electronically. All information is regulated under Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

7.4 – Cyber Security

Heriot-Watt has Cyber Essentials Plus certification and must undergo independent technical verification annually to renew this. This is a UK government scheme to provide assurance that organisations have appropriate security controls in place to protect them against a wide range of cyber security attacks. The link to the public record of the University's certification is on the National Cyber Security Centre website here: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberessentials/search>.

The University also has its own Information Governance and IT policies which sit alongside our Cyber Essentials Plus certification: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/about/policies.htm>.