

**Master of Science/  
Postgraduate Diploma**

**Actuarial Management**

**Programme Handbook**

**2024/2025**

**All students registered for the programme are expected to have read and to be familiar with the contents of this Handbook**

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the contents of this handbook are accurate at the time of printing. Unforeseen circumstances may necessitate changes to the procedures, curricula and syllabus described

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## How to Use This Handbook

This handbook provides you with:

- An overview of your programme, its structure and its courses.
- Contact information for key staff in your programme.
- Details of support and resources available to you as a Heriot-Watt student.

This handbook should be used in conjunction with the school/university-wide information that is provided on the Canvas induction site.

Take time to look through the information provided, but also use it for reference if you are unsure of anything, if you want to contact someone, or if you want to find out more about any aspect of your studies. This Handbook is not just for your first week or two at University, nor is it something to be read once and discarded, you will find it useful to refer back to its contents in the coming weeks and months. If you can't find the information you are looking for then you can ask your personal tutor.

## Programme Overview

### 1. CONTACT DETAILS

#### **Programme Director**

Jane Gormley FIA

(Office: CM F.05 , Email: [j.gormley@hw.ac.uk](mailto:j.gormley@hw.ac.uk) )

Jane Gormley is responsible for all academic matters relating to the programme.

*Appointments with the Programme Director may be arranged by email.*

Students can access administrative support via the Student Service Centre located in the Hugh Nisbet Building. The Student Service Centre is open daily from 10am to 4pm.

Support can also be accessed via the Student Information Desk on the Student Self Service Portal (<http://www.hw.ac.uk/selfservice>) or by emailing [macs-student-support@hw.ac.uk](mailto:macs-student-support@hw.ac.uk).

The student helpline can be contacted on 0131 451 8899, Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Updating personal information, such as a change of address, is done through the Student Self Service Portal (<http://www.hw.ac.uk/selfservice>).

### Information Resources and Links

Resource	Description	Location
University Student Website	The main University website for information and resources.	<a href="https://www.hw.ac.uk/students">https://www.hw.ac.uk/students</a>
Student Portal	Access to the University Student Portal (e.g. email, room bookings, timetables).	<a href="https://portal.hw.ac.uk">https://portal.hw.ac.uk</a>
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	All courses have materials available at the University's Learning Environment - "Canvas".	<a href="https://canvas.hw.ac.uk/">https://canvas.hw.ac.uk/</a>
Student Self Service	You can update your address and where you will get your on-line results.	<a href="https://www.hw.ac.uk/selfservice">https://www.hw.ac.uk/selfservice</a>
Student Service Centre	Students can also get advice on a range of Finance, Hospitality Services and Academic Registry issues	<a href="mailto:studentcentre@hw.ac.uk">studentcentre@hw.ac.uk</a>

**Course Information**

Details on all the courses offered on the programme can be found at <http://www.macs.hw.ac.uk/students/ams/pg-programmes/msc-actuarial-management/>.

Each course will also have on-line material available at the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) which can be found at: <https://canvas.hw.ac.uk>. You will have access to information for all the courses for which you are enrolled.

**Programme Codes**

MSc in Actuarial Management – F7AM-ACM

Postgraduate Diploma in Actuarial Management – F7AD-ACM

Postgraduate Certificate in Actuarial Management – F7AC-ZZZ

## 2. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

The University provides information for new students at: <http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/index.htm>.

### 2.1 Enrolment

All student enrolment is completed online. You are responsible for ensuring your enrolment details are correct, and that you have enrolled for all courses that you wish to take. If you have any questions about enrolment you should contact [macs-student-support@hw.ac.uk](mailto:macs-student-support@hw.ac.uk).

You should enrol in eight courses. Two of these are mandatory and the others must be selected in pairs. Please see section 5 for more information. It is possible to try courses and make your final selection before the end of week 2. To do this, please select eight courses as above, but for any that you also wish to consider, contact the lecturer directly and ask to be added to “Canvas” as an “observer”. If you wish to change your enrolment to such a course then you **MUST** complete this officially on the enrolment system by the **end of week 2**. It is the courses you are enrolled in on the system that you will sit exams in.

You must enrol for either the PG Diploma in Actuarial Management or the MSc in Actuarial Management. If you change your mind and wish to change programme you may only do so before **22 September 2023** by advising the Programme Director in writing. International students should be aware that any programme changes will be notified to the UKVI and this may have implications for your student visas.

No refunds of programme fees will be provided to students who leave the University without completing the programme for which they are registered for any reason (*i.e.* regardless of whether this departure is voluntary or because students have failed to qualify for the desired award).

### 2.2 Timetable

Timetables can be found at: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/timetables.htm> Occasionally it is necessary to make adjustments to the timetable, such as rescheduling a class – all changes will be notified on the course Canvas pages or by email.

Classes are timetabled to start and finish on the hour. The standard Heriot-Watt practice is that classes start on the hour and finish at 10 minutes to the hour. Please be courteous to staff and fellow students by ensuring you arrive on time to all your classes.

### 2.3 Attendance

In order to achieve course and programme learning outcomes, students are expected to attend all scheduled course learning sessions (e.g. timetabled lectures, tutorials, lab sessions, etc). This is **especially important** for students who are in the UK **on a Student Visa**.

If anything is affecting your ability to attend classes, or perform/study as you normally would, then you **MUST** let your **personal tutor** know, and discuss the situation with them. In particular, you **MUST** discuss whether it is sensible for you to submit an application for **Mitigating Circumstances** which is how you formally inform the university of a situation which is affecting your ability to perform/study as you normally would. Such an application often requires the provision of evidence such as a medical certificate. If in doubt, contact your personal tutor! (Please see section 4.4.)

Students who fail to satisfy course attendance requirements may, after due warning, be disallowed from presenting themselves for examination in the course (see <https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/doc/compulsorywithdrawal.pdf>).

Coursework must be handed in by the stipulated dates. Students who fail to submit compulsory coursework may also be disallowed from presenting themselves for examination in the relevant courses.

Students are required to see their personal tutors at agreed times.

All lectures and tutorials are compulsory and registers of attendance may be taken.

If you are absent from class due to illness you must inform your personal tutor.

Students here on a Student Visa will be advised on the monitoring requirements required by the University in order to fulfil their obligations to UKVI.

## **2.4 Computer Facilities**

You will enrol as a user of the University computer network. This will give you an email account, and access to word-processing facilities and various packages which will be needed for some courses. Once you have completed on-line enrolment you will print out a letter which confirms your enrolment. Along with this letter are details of your University user name and password. Your user name will also be your email address eg user name ab111 will have the email address [ab111@hw.ac.uk](mailto:ab111@hw.ac.uk).

You will be credited with a printing quota for use over the year. While an additional allocation may be made in the summer for those proceeding to the MSc, you are advised to use your quota sparingly.

Abuse of the computing facilities will result, at the very minimum, in a ban from the facility.

Information about our Information Services can be found at: <http://www.hw.ac.uk/is/guides/getting-started.htm>.

## **2.5 Note from the Programme Director**

The programme is very demanding. In order to be successful you will have to work extremely hard. Also, poor attendance at classes is likely to lead to poor performance.

Certain courses on the programme have prerequisites, meaning that an adequate standard of attainment in specified subjects must have been reached in earlier study. The fact that you were accepted on the programme does not automatically mean you should expect every course to be accessible to you. You might wish to discuss with your personal tutor the most appropriate courses for you to take in order to succeed on the programme.

Anyone who finds they are struggling with any aspect of the coursework should alert the course lecturer at the first available opportunity. Staff are always happy to help but cannot do so if they are not aware that there is a problem.

Your academic personal tutor (see Section 4.4) is also available during the year to provide support when needed. It is a programme requirement to meet with your personal tutor at least once a semester.

### 3. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

#### 3.1 Key Dates

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/study/apply/uk/academic-calendar.htm>

#### 3.2 Summer Work Dates

2024/25 dates	Activity
26 May – 30 May 2025	Preparatory Week
2 June – 4 July 2025	1 <sup>st</sup> Case Study
7 July – 8 August 2025	2 <sup>nd</sup> Case Study
11 – 13 August 2025	Assessment Week (CP2 and CP3)

#### 3.3 Consolidation Week – Week 6 of Semester 1 and Week 6 of Semester 2

The Consolidation Week is an opportunity to pause within the semester. It will allow both staff and students to reflect on courses, catch-up with outstanding pieces of work and consolidate material that has been covered in the first half of semester to determine aspects of the course that may need to be revisited, re-enforced, etc. There will also be the opportunity for students to engage in additional induction and wellbeing activities, careers sessions, etc.

The following outlines the main expectations for both staff and students:

- The Consolidation Week is not a vacation/break. It is intended to slow the pace, somewhat, and allow reflection and consolidation of learning. Support activities will still take place during this week.
- No new material will to be covered during Consolidation Week.
- There will be no assessment submissions for students during Consolidation Week.
- Schools can continue to actively support student learning activities, for example, laboratory, studio and workshop sessions as this helps to consolidate theoretical learning that has taken place.
- For example, during Consolidation Week, instead of providing activities which staff actively lead, students can be asked to work independently, catch up with coursework/tasks, undertake some revision and reflection activities, and so on.
- Staff are not expected to fill the timetable up with additional activities in Consolidation Week – remember this is meant to be a change of pace at a point in the middle of semester.

#### 3.4 Examinations

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

For both examination blocks, it is important that students do not make any travel arrangements until the final examination timetable has been published. However, please note that changes to the final timetable may still be required after it has been published due to circumstances beyond our control.

#### 3.5 Results Timings

Result Type	Approximate Timing
Semester 1 Exam Results - Online	Mid-February
Semester 2 Exam Results - Online	Mid-June
Summer Work Results and Final Award - Letter	Mid-October



Exemptions - Letter	Mid-November
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When results are available, you will receive an email to your university email account to inform you when you can view them via <https://www.hw.ac.uk/selfservice> .

You will receive a final assessment results letter with your award recommendations in mid-September.

You will receive your letter in respect of any exemptions you have attained from Institute and Faculty of Actuaries' examinations in November.

Information on graduation can be found at:  
<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/graduation.htm> .

## 4. GENERAL INFORMATION

### 4.1 Teaching Accommodation and Staff Accommodation

Classes may be held in any teaching rooms on campus. Students on other programmes may join the class for certain courses or lectures.

The academic staff of the Department of Actuarial Mathematics and Statistics all have their offices in the Colin Maclaurin (CM) building.

### 4.2 Contacting You

The Programme Director and lecturers will regularly communicate with you by email. All emails will be sent to your Heriot-Watt email address and NOT to any personal email address you may have.

It is your responsibility to find out what arrangements have been made and what information has been sent to you.

***You are expected to check your email in-box regularly, at least once each working day.***

You should also **check Canvas regularly** for announcements and updates.

Students should communicate with academic and administrative staff via approved Heriot-Watt University internal channels (e.g. official Heriot-Watt email and telephone, Skype for Business, MS Teams and Canvas). Students should NOT use personal social media profile (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) or other personal channels for any communications with staff (e.g. personal mobile use for calls, text / WhatsApp, personal emails, etc.).

### 4.3 Finance

Students are reminded that tuition fees are due prior to or at enrolment and are payable immediately. Anyone who is experiencing difficulty in meeting their repayments should contact the Student Service Centre immediately. The University has a strict policy regarding the payment of invoices and students who fail to meet this will have their student privileges withdrawn and may in some cases be subject to legal proceedings.

If you are experiencing difficulties in meeting your payments it is essential that you contact the Student Service Centre at the first available opportunity. You may also wish to seek advice from your personal tutor who can liaise with Finance Office on your behalf.

If you are paying by recurring card plan the payments will be taken in six, equal monthly instalments on specific dates. This option is not flexible and one missed payment will result in the agreement being revoked and the remaining balance will be due for immediate payment.

No student with outstanding debt will be permitted to graduate from the University, and in some cases students with debt may be prevented from continuing to the MSc project work stage of the programme.

### 4.4 Personal Tutors

All Heriot-Watt students are allocated a personal tutor <https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/personal-tutors.htm>. If you have any academic, personal or financial problems during the year your personal tutor will be very willing to advise or help you within their competence. If they cannot help you they will advise who you should speak to for more expert advice.

You are required to meet with your personal tutor at least once each semester. For international students this counts as a required contact point for attendance monitoring purposes.

#### **4.5 Faculty of Actuaries Students' Society (FASS)**

All MSc/Diploma in Actuarial Management students are entitled to become affiliated members of this society without becoming full student members of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries. There is a small membership fee.

Membership is recommended to students.

The society meets about five times during the year for discussion of papers which cover a variety of topical actuarial issues. It also gives you the opportunity to meet other actuarial trainees in Edinburgh. Most meetings are preceded by tea, coffee and biscuits. The annual dinner is preceded by a meeting at which there will be a distinguished speaker.

FASS Student Representatives will contact you during the first semester with details on how to join.

#### **4.6 Class Representatives**

Early in semester 1 the class will elect one or two class representatives who will liaise with the Programme Director whenever any problems arise which are of a general nature for the class. It is intended that formal meetings with class representatives of all postgraduate programmes will be held once a semester where any such matters can be discussed.

## **5. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

### **5.1 Programme Aim**

The aim of the MSc/Diploma in Actuarial Management is to give students, in a postgraduate setting, a good grounding in the applied mathematical and business-related aspects of actuarial management. Specifically, the programme will cover the syllabuses of Subjects CP1, CP2, CP3, SP2, SP4, SP5, SP6 and SP9 of the education strategy of the UK actuarial profession (the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries).

The principal aims of the programme are:

- Apply mathematical and statistical techniques to the solution of real world actuarial problems, such as those found in the area of financial services and - indeed - more widely.
- Formulate solutions to complex actuarial issues or problems in a business environment.
- Build actuarial models, apply them and/or appraise a wide range of information in order to communicate and recommend the best solution for a company or client.
- Decipher and highlight the most important, or relevant, aspects of a problem in order to recommend the most appropriate solution for an actuarial client or company.
- Apply ethical judgement and integrity when taking action and making recommendations.
- Investigate extended actuarial problems by selecting appropriate methods and drawing balanced conclusions.
- Provide exemptions from the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries professional exams, as described in detail elsewhere in this handbook.

### **5.2 Taught Programme**

All students commence with the taught Diploma in Actuarial Management courses. Twelve courses are available for the Diploma. These correspond in total to Subjects CP1, CP3 (partial), SP2, SP4, SP5, SP6 and SP9 of the actuarial profession's current education/examination strategy. The courses are listed below, with information about the lecturer, the course weight and when it is taught and examined and the corresponding professional actuarial subject.

Full details of courses can be found at: <http://www.macs.hw.ac.uk/students/ams/pg-programmes/msc-actuarial-management/> .

<b>Course</b>	<b>Course code</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Course weight</b>	<b>Examined in</b>	<b>Professional Subject</b>
<b>Actuarial Risk Management 1</b>	F71CA	1	1	December	CP1
<u>Lecturer:</u> Andrew Stott FFA.					
<b>Pensions A</b>	F71PC	1	1	December	SP4
<u>Lecturer:</u> Peter Ridges FIA.					
<b>Life Insurance 1</b>	F71LA	1	1	April/May	SP2
<u>Lecturer:</u> Jane Gormley FIA.					
<b>Derivative Markets and Pricing</b>	F71DV	1	1	December	SP6
<u>Lecturer:</u> Dr Anke Wiese.					
<b>Quantitative Risk Analysis</b>	F71QR	1	1	December	SP9
<u>Lecturer:</u> Dr Giovanni Rabitti.					
<b>Financial Markets</b>	C31FM	1	1	December	SP5
<u>Lecturer:</u> Dr Bing Xu.					
<b>Actuarial Risk Management 2</b>	F71CB	2	1	April/May	CP1/CP3
<u>Lecturer:</u> Andrew Stott FFA.					
<b>Pensions B</b>	F71PD	2	1	April/May	SP4
<u>Lecturer:</u> Peter Ridges FIA.					
<b>Life Insurance 2</b>	F71LB	2	1	April/May	SP2
<u>Lecturer:</u> Jane Gormley FIA.					
<b>Advanced Derivative Pricing</b>	F71AP	2	1	April/May	SP6
<u>Lecturer:</u> Dr Abdul-Lateef Haji-Ali.					
<b>Risk Management: Techniques and Tools</b>	F71TT	2	1	April/May	SP9
<u>Lecturer:</u> Dr Alfred Chong.					
<b>Finance and Investment</b>	C31FV	2	1	April/May	SP5
<u>Lecturer:</u> David Semmens CFA.					

### 5.3 Which courses should you take?

To qualify for progression to the MSc, or the award of PG Diploma, you must pass eight courses. **Therefore you must ensure you are registered for eight courses.**

Actuarial Risk Management 1 and 2 are mandatory courses; you must register for them. Other courses listed above, which must be taken in **corresponding pairs** over both semesters, may lead to exemptions from subjects SP2, SP4, SP5, SP6 and SP9. The actuarial profession requires students to pass TWO SP subjects in order to qualify as a Fellow. However, a student who has passes in THREE SP subjects will have broader employment prospects, and may go on to qualify as a Fellow with a choice of three SA subjects. You should choose three pairs of courses – where the courses in a pair are linked by the **same** “Professional Subject” from the table above – in addition to the mandatory courses.

Note also that the profession is strongly encouraging students and qualified actuaries to take subject SP9 which leads to the extra internationally-recognised qualification of Chartered Enterprise Risk Actuary (CERA).

It may be possible (depending on timetabling constraints) to take one or two courses offered on the BSc in Actuarial Science or the MSc in Actuarial Science, leading to possible exemption from one of the Core Principals subjects, in the place of one or two of the optional courses listed above. Please discuss this possibility with the Programme Director if you wish to consider this. Note that students with a BSc, Postgraduate Diploma or MSc in Actuarial Science from Heriot-Watt University may **NOT** repeat a course **ALREADY** taken on the earlier programme.

Any student who has been granted credits under the University’s Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) policy should contact [macs-student-support@hw.ac.uk](mailto:macs-student-support@hw.ac.uk) prior to registering.

If you are unsure of which courses to take then you may wish to try extra courses in the first week of semester 1. To do this, select the 8 courses you are most likely to choose and enrol on them, but then separately email the lecturer of any other course you are interested in and ask to be added as an “observer” to the “Canvas” for that course. If you decide you like the course and want to choose it (and its semester 2 partner) in place of a course (and its semester 2 partner) that you have already enrolled in then you **MUST** update your enrolment before the **end of week 2**. To be clear, it is the courses you are enrolled in on the system that you will sit exams in.

You may have been accepted on to the programme on the basis of previous studies in actuarial science at a university that does not have an accreditation agreement or exemptions from the UK actuarial profession (Institute and faculty of Actuaries – IFoA). Your previous study may, possibly, be accepted by the IFoA for the purpose of granting exemption from some of the Core Principles subjects. However, it should be noted that it is not possible for us to decide whether the previous study is sufficient for an exemption from the corresponding professional actuarial subject - these exemption decisions can be taken only by the IFoA and then only after you have joined the IFoA.

### 5.4 Feedback

Feedback is a two-way process. Feedback is provided to students in a variety of ways in order to help you to reflect on and to evaluate your progress and to assist you to take steps to improve before the next relevant assessment. For most courses, students 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 School can continue to enhance the student learning experience. Your feedback is valued by the School, so please be sure to provide feedback whenever it is sought.

At the end of each course you will be asked to complete a Course Questionnaire online. This will give you the opportunity to say what you thought was good and what was not so good about that course.

It is important for us that you take these questionnaires seriously - we do. We listen to what you say and always aim to improve the programme wherever possible. You are benefiting this year from improvements to the programme which have been made as a result of past students' comments.

The UK actuarial profession also offer an online questionnaire and your participation in this would be appreciated. This questionnaire will be available for completion for a short period in Semester 2.

## 5.5 Award and Progression Requirements

*The University operates Heriot-Watt Assessment and Progression System (HAPS) which specifies minimum progression requirements. Schools have the option to apply progression requirements above the minimum University requirement, which are approved by the Studies Committees. Students should refer to the programme specific information on progression requirements. This information is detailed below.*

For each course you will receive a mark and grade based on your performance in the examination and related coursework. The University's standard grade classification is as follows:

Grade	Range of Marks
A	70 – 100%
B	60 – 70%
C	50 – 60%
D	40 – 50%
E	30 – 40%
F	0 – 30%

However, these grade boundaries may be changed by the Board of Examiners.

For MSc Project Work the Examiners will award a mark and grade based upon the following classification:

Grade	Range of Marks
A	70 – 100%
B	60 – 70%
C	50 – 60%
Resubmit for Grade C Pass	50% after resubmission with satisfactory amendments.
Fail	0 – 50%

The Board of Examiners' Meeting will be held each June and September to consider Award and Progression decisions based on the following criteria:

### ***PG Certificate***

Award of PG Certificate in Actuarial Management requires a credit weighted average of at least 40% over 4 courses at grades A-E.

### ***PG Diploma***

Award of PG Diploma in Actuarial Management requires a credit weighted average of at least 40% over 8 courses at grades A-E.

Award of PG Diploma in Actuarial Management with Merit requires a credit weighted average of at least 60% over 8 courses at grades A-C.

Award of PG Diploma in Actuarial Management with Distinction requires a credit weighted average of at least 70% over 8 courses at grades A-C.

### ***Progression to MSc***

Progression to MSc requires a credit weighted average of at least 50% over 8 courses at grades A-D.

Progression to MSc carrying Merit requires a credit weighted average of at least 60% over 8 courses at grades A-C.

Progression to MSc carrying Distinction requires a credit weighted average of at least 70% over 8 courses at grades A-C.

The Examiners reserve the right to exclude from progression to MSc anyone who meets the minimum progression requirements but whom they consider to be unsuitable for project work.

***No student will be permitted to progress to the MSc before meeting the specified coursework requirements.***

Students who have registered for the MSc programme and who wish to transfer to the lower fee PG Diploma may only do so during the first two weeks of the academic year. No fee refunds will be permitted after 30 September.

MSc Project Work will normally be carried out over the summer immediately after the end of the summer semester - a period of 12 weeks is specified for this.

### ***MSc***

Award of MSc in Actuarial Management requires a credit weighted average of at least 50% over 8 courses at grades A-D **plus** project work (or other form of assessment) at a minimum of grade C.

Award of MSc in Actuarial Management with Merit requires a credit weighted average of at least 60% over 8 courses at grades A-C **plus** project work (or other form of assessment) at a minimum of grade B.

Award of MSc in Actuarial Management with Distinction requires a credit weighted average of at least 70% over 8 courses at grades A-C **plus** project work (or other form of assessment) at a minimum of grade A.

(A precise statement of the requirements for the award of the degree is contained in the University Regulations. In cases of apparent conflict the Regulations take precedence.)

### ***Re-Assessment Opportunities***

Students will be able to be re-assessed in a **maximum of 3 courses**.

A student who has been awarded a Grade E or a Grade F in a course may be re-assessed in that course. A student who has been awarded a Grade D in a course may be re-assessed in that course in order to proceed to, or be eligible to receive the award of, Masters.

If you have already passed eight courses at D Grade or above but have not qualified for progression to the MSc (as your average in the best eight courses is lower than 50%) you may resit up to three courses where you achieved no more than a D Grade at first attempt in order to increase your average in the best eight courses and proceed to the MSc.



You **must** take the resit examinations at the next available opportunity. **For most students this will be in the August examination diet.** *Only one resit opportunity will be permitted.* All reassessment is based on examination results only, even in courses which include assessable coursework. All reassessments take place on the Edinburgh Campus and so you may need to plan travel and visa applications well in advance in order to take your reassessment exams.

Special arrangements may apply where a student has presented mitigating circumstances in relation to the first attempt.

Students who achieve the standards required to progress to the MSc following reassessment will be invited to return to the University in September 2025 to complete the project work.

Students who fail to meet the standards required for the PG Diploma following reassessment may be awarded the PG Certificate in Actuarial Management provided they have met the requirements above.

## **5.6 MSc Project Work**

Students who have been allowed to progress to the MSc may go on to undertake project work leading to the award of MSc. The project work will normally take place during a 12-week period from the end of May until mid-August in the same academic year and students are expected to be on campus full-time during this period and available for regular meetings with academic staff.

The project work begins with a preparatory week of courses including a course on Actuarial Modelling which is linked to the subject CP2 of the UK actuarial profession. That is followed normally by two case studies, each undertaken over about five weeks. Immediately following that, additional written assessments take place (in the final week) - these are linked to exemptions from UK actuarial profession subjects CP2 and CP3.

Students normally have a choice of two case studies. At the end of each case study, the student submits a substantial written report for assessment. Both count equally for the award of the MSc. The assessment of the first case study should normally be completed, and feedback given to the student, before the student begins to write the report on second case study.

The second case study, and the written assessments taken after the case studies, all contribute to possible exemptions from UK actuarial profession subjects CP2 and CP3.

In exceptional cases (e.g. a student intending to undertake a research degree, or a student on an industrial placement) the two case studies may be replaced by a single research dissertation. In this case, the dissertation will contribute to possible exemption from UK actuarial profession subject CP3.

A list of case studies being offered will be made available during Semester 2 and allocation will be made after the Board of Examiners meeting. Please note that student preferences will be considered but cannot always be guaranteed.

## **5.7 Graduation**

Students who qualify for an award following the May Examiners' meeting (usually those taking the PG Diploma) are eligible to graduate in June.

Students who qualify for an award following the September Examiners' meeting are eligible to graduate in November/December.

Students eligible to graduate will find all the relevant graduation details on Academic Registry's website <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/graduation.htm>.

It is your responsibility to complete and return the required forms and payment to the Student Service Centre before the specified deadline to ensure you are included in the graduation ceremony. No student with outstanding debt will be permitted to graduate from the university.

### **5.8. Programme and Course Content**

The content of our programmes and courses is reviewed annually to make sure it is up-to-date and relevant. Individual courses are occasionally updated or withdrawn. This is in response to discoveries through our world-leading research; funding changes; professional accreditation requirements; student or employer feedback; outcomes of reviews; and variations in staff or student numbers. In the event of changes the University will consult and inform students in good time and will take reasonable steps to minimise disruption.

## 6. EXEMPTIONS FROM PROFESSIONAL EXAMS

Recommendations for exemptions from professional exams based on performance in the Diploma examinations will be agreed following the Examiners' Meetings in May. Recommendations for exemptions from professional exams based on performance in the MSc will be agreed following the Examiners' Meetings in September.

### 6.1 University courses and correspondence with CP/SP subjects

<b>UK Actuarial Profession Subject</b>	<b>Courses</b>	<b>Course Code</b>	<b>Semester</b>
<b>CP1</b>	Actuarial Risk Management 1 & Actuarial Risk Management 2	F71CA/F71CB	1 and 2
<b>CP2</b>	Semester 3 preliminary week course & written assessments in August	F71MD	3
<b>CP3</b>	Actuarial Risk Management 2 & MSc project work (with written assessment in August)	F71CB/F71MD	2 and 3
<b>SP2</b>	Life Insurance 1 & Life Insurance 2	F71LA/F71LB	1 and 2
<b>SP4</b>	Pensions A & Pensions B	F71PC/F71PD	1 and 2
<b>SP5</b>	Financial Markets & Finance and Investment	C31FM/C31FV	1 and 2
<b>SP6</b>	Derivative Markets and Pricing & Advanced Derivative Pricing	F71DV/F71AP	1 and 2
<b>SP9</b>	Quantitative Risk Analysis & Risk Management: Techniques and Tools	F71QR/F71TT	1 and 2

### 6.2 Accreditation

The MSc programme is accredited by the UK actuarial profession. Students with an overall average ("the accreditation average") of at least 60% in all courses taken from the table above (excluding results for CP2) will be eligible for block exemptions from all UK actuarial profession subjects in the table above (except CP2) where they have achieved a C Grade pass or better (at first attempt) in each of the underlying exemption courses, **except** for subject SP9. (Note - the final CP3 result is treated as a single course for the purpose of calculating the accreditation average.)

If a student takes Quantitative Risk Analysis/ Risk Management: Techniques and Tools, their marks in these subjects *will* be included in the accreditation average, but exemption from subject SP9 is available *only* to students who meet the subject-by-subject exemption standard for subject SP9. (The reason for this special treatment of subject SP9 is that it leads to the additional CERA qualification. This is an international qualification and the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries is itself overseen by the International Actuarial Association as a body entitled to award CERA status.)

If a student chooses to take courses from an undergraduate programme or the MSc in Actuarial Science leading to possible exemption from a Core Principals subject, their marks in these courses will **not** be included in their accreditation average, and they will be eligible for exemption from the Core Principals subject on a subject-by-subject basis only.

Exemption from subject CP2 (Modelling Practice) is only possible on a subject-by-subject basis and is via two assessed pieces of work, taken in the week after the second case study finishes. Each will last one day, and will consist of a project released in the morning, to be completed and written up in a report to be submitted at the end of the afternoon.

Exemption from Subject CP3 (Communications) is on the basis of two assessed pieces of work, as follows:

- communication aspects of the second case study, or (exceptionally) research dissertation, undertaken during the summer (weight 60%); and
- a communication written test undertaken at the end of the summer project period (weight 40%).

The PG Diploma is not accredited by the UK actuarial profession, because project work is a requirement for accreditation. Students graduating with the PG Diploma are eligible for subject-by-subject exemptions, see below.

### 6.3 Subject-by-Subject Exemptions

Students who do not achieve an overall average of 60%, or who graduate with the PG Diploma, are eligible for exemption on a subject-by-subject basis.

The exemption level varies among subjects but usually lies in the range 60% to 65%.

Exemption levels are determined in May and September by Independent Examiners appointed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries. No information is available regarding exemptions prior to the May meeting.

Following the Board of Examiners' Meetings in September, the Independent Examiners will write to the UK actuarial profession (that is, the education offices of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries) listing the specific exemption recommendations for each member of the class.

Once the exemption recommendations have been accepted by the UK actuarial profession, we will provide each student with a letter confirming the exemptions for which they have been recommended. This letter is expected to be issued by end of November.

### 6.4 Resits for Exemption

***The actuarial profession has a policy on resits for exemption. The general principle is that an exam or other form of assessment may be considered for exemption only if the student is required to take it for progression or graduation.*** That is, there are no exams or other assessments taken for exemption purposes alone.

For **exemption purposes**, the mark in any resit exam or other assessment will be **capped at 50%**. This means that it will not usually be possible to gain an exemption on the basis of resits. However, the rules are more lenient if section 7.3 of this handbook applies to you.

Any resits taken in accordance with this policy are for the purpose of subject-by-subject exemption only. Results from these examinations will **not** be included in calculating your accreditation average, and therefore will not affect your entitlement to exemptions under the accreditation agreement.

## **6.5 Claiming your exemptions**

To claim your exemptions, you must join the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries as a student member. You must then apply for exemptions using your account on the IFoA website.

You should apply under Route A (Accredited Degree Courses):

<https://www.actuaries.org.uk/studying/exam-exemptions/university-courses-exemptions-route>

You will need to supply a copy of your university transcript. Your copy of your transcript will not usually need to be certified, but sometimes the IFoA might request a certified copy. You do not need to provide a letter confirming your exemption recommendations as the IFoA will match your application with the information provided by the Department and then confirm your exemptions. More information is available from the IFoA website.

Your exemptions are determined by the IFoA and they retain discretion over this. The information given above is how exemptions normally operate, but in principle the IFoA can change their approach.

## 7. HELP DURING THE YEAR

If you have any problems during the year you are encouraged to seek help as soon as possible. There are many sources of help available for students at Heriot-Watt, and staff are always happy to help.

### 7.1 Programme Problems

If you are having some problems with a particular subject then you should first see the lecturer for that course. It is common for staff to use an appointments system. If he or she is not able to help you then you should speak to your personal tutor and/or the Programme Director.

### 7.2 Administrative Help

The Student Service Centre provides a single location for students to deal with the Finance Office, Hospitality Services and Academic Registry teams. It is located in the Hugh Nisbet Building, along from the shop and the bank. It is open Monday – Friday 10.00 – 16.00.

The principal areas of services that the Centre will offer to students are:

- ◆ Issue of ID cards
- ◆ Council Tax exemptions
- ◆ Transcripts and certifications – see <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/registry-operations.htm> under Student Records
- ◆ Graduation applications – see <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/registry-operations.htm> under Graduation
- ◆ Processing payments and dealing with payment-related enquiries including tuition and accommodation fees

You can contact them at [student-services-uk@hw.ac.uk](mailto:student-services-uk@hw.ac.uk).

Common administrative requirements could include:

(i) Letters/confirmation of enrolment

Students often require letters for their sponsor, visas, banks etc to confirm their enrolment on the programme. All students are issued with a certification letter upon enrolling with the University. Please do not lose this letter. However, you can reprint this letter by logging back into the on-line enrolment facility: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/selfservice>.

ii) Updating contact details

It is important the University has up-to-date contact details for all students. If your contact details change during the year you can update them at: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/selfservice>.

### 7.3 Mitigating Circumstances

If you experience any mitigating circumstances, such as illness or bereavement, which affect your ability to complete your assessments you must notify us as soon as possible.

You should read the University's Policy on Mitigating Circumstances in Relation to Assessment at: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm> and then complete the application form. Evidence submitted after your results have been published cannot be taken into account.

If you have, or think that you may have, a disability, medical or mental health condition, or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia which may impact your studies you should contact the Disability Service (<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/health-wellbeing/edinburgh/disability.htm>) via their

email [disability@hw.ac.uk](mailto:disability@hw.ac.uk) . They can make sure you receive the support you need. For instance, they can ensure exam and coursework adjustments are available and applied to all your courses.

#### **7.4 Important**

It is very important that if you have a problem you seek help as soon as possible, and notify us of the situation. The Examiners will always take such circumstances into account where appropriate, but the later the notification, the less scope there is to do so. Notification of mitigating circumstances **MUST** be given before the Exam Board meeting is held. Late notification will normally mean that no consideration can be taken of the circumstances.

Any information which you provide to us will be used solely by the Board of Examiners to determine how best to help you, given the circumstances. We will not share the information with other students or services of the University without your consent.

#### **7.5 Temporary Suspension of Studies**

If students are unable to study for a considerable period (i.e. more than one diet) they should inform their personal tutors, so that such periods of non-study can be taken into consideration when reviewing the students continued registration on the Programme.

If students continue to be unable to study for a specific known period (for example, more than one year) due to other external factors (for example, maternity), then they should seek to temporarily suspend their studies.

If you intend to apply for a suspension of studies you can find useful information here: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/leaving/temporary-suspension-studies.htm> .

#### **7.6 Withdrawing from Study**

Students may find that the Programme is not suitable for them and they may decide to withdraw from it.

Students should think very carefully before they do withdraw. If they do so, it may well be that sometime later they decide that they would like to continue with their studies.

Before making a final decision about withdrawing, students should discuss their situation with their personal tutor.

The University has a “Thinking of Leaving” Service which you can use. Please see more information here: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/leaving.htm> where you can find a range of information and advice that can help you make the final decision.

## **8. IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ASSESSMENT**

### **8.1 Unauthorised Material**

You must not have any unauthorised electronic devices or pre-printed materials in the examination room. Cheating in an examination is treated very seriously by the University. If you do have any material relevant to the exam which you have brought in by mistake, you must hand it over to an invigilator before the start of the examination. Invigilators will carry out checks on authorised materials and calculators.

### **8.2 Calculators, Dictionaries & Electronic Devices/Mobile Phones**

Where a calculator is required for the completion of an examination, a student may use any basic scientific calculator, except the following: graphics calculator, programmable calculator and a calculator which features text storage or retrieval facilities.

You must provide your own calculator: they will not be provided for you in any exams. Calculators can be purchased from the student union shop.

No translation dictionaries are permitted in any of the University's examinations. The only exception to the policy is in the case of individual students who had been assessed by the University's Disability Service as requiring access to a translation dictionary.

Students are not allowed to have mobile phones or other communication devices on or about their person during examinations. Phones may be left at the front of the examination room but must be switched off.

### **8.3 Coursework Submission Policy**

The University recognises that, on occasion, students may be unable to submit coursework and dissertations by the submission date. As such, the University has agreed a policy which states:

- No individual extensions are permitted under any circumstances (unless course coordinators decide to give an extension to an entire class).
- Standard 30% deduction from the mark awarded (for submission from above zero to up to five working days late).
- Coursework submitted over five working days late scores no grade and no feedback is provided.
- Alternative options if students cannot submit coursework or their dissertation on time.

In the case where you submit coursework up to five working days late and you have valid mitigating circumstances, the mitigating circumstances policy will apply and appropriate mitigation will be applied.

Formative feedback will be provided on all coursework submitted up to five working days late.

There will be no extensions granted to coursework (this includes undergraduate and postgraduate taught case studies or dissertations).

A link to the policy can be found here:

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/learning-teaching/policies/submissionofcoursework-policy.pdf>



## 8.4 Plagiarism

The University has a strict policy on Plagiarism – passing off as one's own the ideas or writing of another.

Plagiarism undermines every academic principle.

Plagiarism is cheating and the Department, the School, and the University treat it very seriously indeed.

This is relevant for all students and has implications for Diploma exams and MSc project reports, case studies or dissertations.

The sanctions for plagiarism range from the discounting of the assessment completely, to the withholding of the degree or Diploma concerned, to expulsion from the University.

Anyone indulging in plagiarism of any kind can expect no sympathy or understanding from the University.

All students should be familiar with the University's policy on plagiarism, which can be downloaded from: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/examinations/plagiarism.htm>.

If you have the slightest doubt about any aspect of this matter and of how your own work relates to it, you must discuss it with the Programme Director before submitting any work.

- If you use someone else's ideas, or quote from someone else's work, you must cite the source (*i.e.* provide a reference).
- If the way in which you are using the source is unclear, make it clear.
- If you received specific help from someone in writing the dissertation, acknowledge it.

### What is Plagiarism and Why is it Important?

In college programmes, we are continually engaged with other people's ideas: we read them in texts, hear them in lecture, discuss them in class, and incorporate them into our own writing. As a result, it is very important that we give credit where it is due. Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information.

### How Can Students Avoid Plagiarism?

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings, any pieces of information that are not common knowledge;
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or
- paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

The university's discipline policy is available here:

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/doc/discguidelines.pdf>

## 8.5 Professionalism and Academic Integrity

At Heriot-Watt University (HWU) we adopt the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI) definition of Academic Integrity: 'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage'. Academic integrity is at the heart of the University's core values and ethical practice, and is a commitment, always, to promote trust, honesty, and fairness. It is an integral part of ensuring that our skilled graduates are respected throughout the global community. Academic integrity underpins all our educational activity at Heriot-Watt University.

It is essential that you always practice proper academic and professional conduct, as per the guidance provided, and act with integrity and honesty when you are working on your assessments, regardless of the type of assessment.

A range of resources are designed to help you understand the importance of academic integrity and the strategies you can use to avoid academic misconduct, including a range of resources on good academic practice available through the Skills Hub.

The ambition to become the best professional graduate one can be is something most students proudly strive for. To continue to protect that ambition, to ensure that professional standards are always met, and to respect all students and staff, Academic Integrity will always be at the forefront of what we as a university deliver.

There are a wider range of resources available to support you throughout your studies. The following links summarise the key websites to refer to:

- [Policy and guidance - Heriot-Watt University \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Student-Academic-Misconduct-Policy.pdf \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Student Guide – Academic Integrity Matters \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Student Guide - Avoiding Plagiarism \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Student Guide: Guidance on how to avoid Academic Misconduct \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Student Guide: How to avoid academic misconduct in Final Online Assessment \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Contact Cheating – student guide \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Using Turnitin with Canvas \(sharepoint.com\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
- [Ensuring academic integrity - Heriot-Watt University \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)

You can also find more information about Student Resources and student support in the following links:

- [Resources for students - Heriot-Watt University \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Skills Hub - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
- [English Gym – Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
- [Academic Writing Centre - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
- [Global Effective Learning Service – Heriot-Watt University \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Liaison librarians - Heriot-Watt University \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [One-to-one academic skills consultations – Heriot-Watt University \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Student support - Heriot-Watt University \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Examinations and assessment - Heriot-Watt University \(hw.ac.uk\)](#)

### **Artificial Intelligence**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) describes technologies and methods which simulate thinking and show rational behaviour i.e. they act as if they were intelligent, rather than actually thinking independently or having developed consciousness. It underpins many technologies in use in higher education and wider society.

Permitted uses of AI:

- The use of artificial intelligence technologies is permitted on a course-by-course basis. Consult your course handbook, course site on the VLE or speak to your course leader to check what is permitted on your course.
- If use of artificial intelligence technologies is permitted on your course, you must ensure that any such use is appropriately identified and referenced.

You can find out more about how artificial intelligence can be used to support your learning on the [Student Skills Hub](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

## 8.6 Useful Text

A recommended text for all students when starting their MSc project work in the summer is:

Higham, N.J. (1998) Handbook of Writing for the Mathematical Sciences (second edition). SIAM, Philadelphia USA.

Although mathematics is highlighted, this book has much useful advice on writing precise technical material. Chapter 5 is entitled "When English is a Foreign Language". The advice in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 may be particularly useful in week 1 of the MSc project work.

## **9. OTHER INFORMATION**

### **9.1 National Degree Standards**

All the undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes offered by the Department of Actuarial Mathematics and Statistics (School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences) are believed to be compliant with the requirements of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

### **9.2 Race Equality and Equal Opportunities Policies**

Heriot-Watt University is committed to the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination; and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Heriot-Watt University is also committed to equal opportunities for all, irrespective of sex, colour, ethnic origin, disability, marital status, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction.

Policies relating to race equality and equal opportunities can be obtained from the following website: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/information-governance/access/foi/8-12-equality-diversity.htm>.

### **9.3. Globally Connected Learning**

Our University teaching model is Globally Connected Learning, an approach that blends on-campus teaching with online activities, support and resources to create a rich student learning experience. Throughout your studies at Heriot-Watt you will be able to learn, interact and collaborate with your classmates and your academic teaching team through a range of inspiring activities and learning events.

If you are enrolled on our campus-based programmes you will be able to take full advantage of all that campus life offers. Our campuses are at the heart of our community and campus-based learning is core to the Heriot-Watt student learning experience. You will be expected to attend campus-based teaching and undertake any assessments or examinations scheduled on campus. Your studies are supported via our Virtual Learning Environment, Canvas, and may include other online activities.

If you are enrolled on our independent distance learning programmes you will undertake your studies online. You will be expected to participate in online teaching, assessments and examinations set on your programme.

The specific balance of on-campus and online learning on individual courses will depend on the subjects you are studying and the activities and resources your course team have designed to help you engage effectively with your studies.

Our approach is founded on a commitment to student partnership. That means you are encouraged to take responsibility for your own learning, to actively participate in the opportunities open to you. Your course team will support you to plan your time carefully to [make the most of Globally Connected Learning](#).

Making the most of your time at university is not just about study. Your health and wellbeing is vitally important. You can discuss any issues around your learning or your wellbeing with your [personal tutor](#) and with the University's support services.

### **9.4. Student Wellbeing**

Starting at University inevitably brings change and lots of new experiences. This can be exciting, fun, and interesting, but may also feel overwhelming and challenging at times.

Heriot Watt recognises that your academic achievements and student experience are affected by your physical and emotional wellbeing and want to help you to get the best out of your student days.

We encourage you to take care in looking after yourself and others, and each campus has a range of [Student Wellbeing Services](#) which are available to all students.

You may not think you will need to use the University's Wellbeing Services now, but they are easily accessible to you if you do. Students contact Student Wellbeing Services for a variety of reasons: you may find that you are having difficulties because of an unexpected life event, you may feel anxious or stressed and find it difficult to study, you may be concerned about a mental or physical health issue. For these and other reasons, you can speak to someone in Student Wellbeing Services and if you are not sure about using our services, just ask. There is also a range of self-help and other resources which you can access out of hours and in your own time. We also organise a range of events and sessions to help students take time out from studying to relax, to meet others and to engage in a creative or social activity.

### **9.5. University Regulations**

Heriot-Watt has a detailed set of rules that govern how the University operates, these are the University's [Ordinances and Regulations](#). Ordinances are set by the Court, which is the University's governing body, outline how the University is governed. University regulations provide the framework for the University's academic work and the education of our students and they define the policies, procedures and support available to our students.

### **9.6. Your Student Portal**

The Student Portal brings together your services and relevant information in one place. Below is a summary of the services available to you via the portal:

- Office 365 suite: through single sign-on, all of your Office 365 services will be accessible through the Portal.
- Library: whether you want to search for books or view your loans & reservations, the Portal allows you to do this on your phone or desktop.
- Canvas: access your courses here, including announcements, tasks and assignments.
- Student Information: all university-level regulations and policies relating to your studies can be found on the Portal.
- Campus and School News: the Portal enables the University to promote events and experiences which will help you develop your skills.
- Personalised: You can hide, add and move tiles on your dashboard.
- AskHWU: You can find everything you need to help you navigate your time at HWU through the new AskHWU search tile. Ask questions of the University and enquire directly with members of staff to get information about ID cards, student finance, confirmation of studies letters, exams, enrolment, Careers, Wellbeing Services and much more.
- Appointments: book appointments with a range of different services (Student Wellbeing Services, Careers, Finance etc.) through your student portal.

You can access your student portal [here](#).

### **9.7. Your Virtual Learning Environment**

Heriot-Watt's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is called [Canvas](#). It is a vital learning and communication tool for you and your lecturers, so make sure you log in and check Canvas every day. For further support see the [Canvas Student Guides](#).

### **9.8. A to Z Guide: Essential Student Information**

This [A to Z guide](#) covers essential information about the support and resources available to you as a Heriot-Watt student.

## **10. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **10.1 Programme progression and award requirements**

**FAQ 1** *I have not passed eight courses after the second semester exams. Can I take the resit exams while undertaking my MSc project work this summer?*

You will usually be required to resit the examinations in August and will not undertake the project work in the summer. If you are successful in meeting the progression requirements after the August reassessment diet, you will be invited to return in September 2025 to undertake your MSc project work.

**FAQ 2** *I have passed eight courses after the second semester exams but my best eight average is less than 50%. Can I take resit exams to improve my average while working on my MSc project work this summer?*

See answer to FAQ 1.

**FAQ 3** *I am progressing to the MSc project work this summer. Can I resit the courses I failed (or did not attempt) during the year to improve my average / make my transcript look better / get exemptions?*

No. Once you have progressed to the MSc dissertation stage you have met all the University's requirements for the taught coursework. There is no provision for you to take any further exams for academic purposes, and it is not possible to alter your results or improve your coursework average.

**FAQ 4** *Now that I have completed the taught coursework, can I come back in a few years and do the MSc project work once I have some work experience / more money / taken a holiday?*

Under normal circumstances, the answer to this question is no. The University requires full-time MSc students to complete their degree within 12 months, so you are expected to continue to the MSc project work immediately after completing the taught coursework.

The Board of Examiners may allow students to defer their MSc project work for one year in extenuating circumstances. Requests for deferral must be made in writing to the Programme Director for discussion by the Board of Examiners at their May meeting.

**FAQ 5** *For various reasons I am unable to complete the requirements for the MSc during the Summer of 2025. Is it possible to arrange to complete the MSc, by undertaking the project work during the 2025-26 academic year so I don't have to return next Summer?*

If you are successful in meeting the progression requirements after the August reassessment diet, you will be invited to return in September 2025 to undertake your MSc project work..

### **10.2 Accreditation and Exemptions**

**FAQ 6** *To qualify for exemption from CP1, CP2, CP3, SP2, SP4, SP5, SP6 or SP9 on a subject-by-subject basis do I have to meet the required exemption standard in each relevant course separately?*

No. Your average mark in the underlying courses must meet the required exemption standard for the subject as a whole. However, each underlying course must have a score of at least 50%.

**FAQ 7** *To qualify for exemption from CP1, CP2, CP3, SP2, SP4, SP5, SP6 or SP9 on a subject-by-subject basis do I have to achieve at least a pass in both courses?*

Actually – more than a pass. It is a requirement of the IFoA that you score at least 50% in each course contributing to an exemption.

**FAQ 8** *I am eligible for block exemptions because I am progressing to the MSc and my overall average is higher than 60%. Will I get an exemption even when I failed one of the underlying courses?*

You would not get an exemption for a UK actuarial profession subject if you failed one of the corresponding Heriot-Watt courses.

**FAQ 9** *Can I resit for exemption if I failed the course at the first attempt?*

Yes, as long as you are required to resit for progression or graduation purposes, but for exemption purposes your mark will be capped at 50%.

**FAQ 10** *I need to resit some exams for progression. Will my results count for exemption purposes?*

Yes, but for exemption purposes each resit course mark is capped at 50%.

### **10.3 Medical Certificates**

**FAQ 11** *I have not passed eight courses after the second semester exams although some of these exams are covered by a medical certificate. Can I take the resit exams while undertaking MSc project work this summer?*

No. All students must complete the taught coursework requirements before progressing to the MSc.

**FAQ 12** *I am eligible for block exemptions as I am progressing to the MSc and my actuarial average was greater than 60%. However I did not get all available exemptions due to illness.*

(a) *Can I resit the exam(s) for exemption while I undertake my MSc project work?*  
(b) *Will the resits count under the accreditation block exemption policy or on a subject-by-subject basis?*

(a) No, this is not possible. See response to FAQ 1.  
(b) The resit will be under the accreditation arrangement – we will recalculate your accreditation average after the resit diet and the block exemptions criteria will be applied if your average remains over 60%.

## 10.4 Administrative Information

### **FAQ 13**      *How do I get a letter for my bank/sponsor/landlord confirming my student status?*

All students are issued with a certification letter upon enrolling with the University.

If you require an updated letter during the academic year, please see section 7.2 of this guide for the required procedure. Please bear in mind that support staff are extremely busy during the year and it is your responsibility to plan ahead and give sufficient notice. Please do not ask for a letter to be produced while you wait, as this will be refused.

### **FAQ 14**      *Where can I find the exam timetable?*

Timetables for all examination diets are prepared by Academic Registry and posted on their website. It is your responsibility to ensure you check the timetable for the correct date, time and location of the exams.

See: <http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/examinations/timetable.htm>

### **FAQ 15**      *When will I get my results?*

Provisional results from the December examinations released on-line following the Assessment Board in January. Final results will be released on-line by Academic Registry after the April/May examination diet (around mid-June) and after the programme Award Board around mid-October. You will be sent an email to your university email address to let you know when your results are available. You can access your results at: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/selfservice> .

Official academic transcripts will be prepared by Academic Registry and mailed to your correspondence address in late October.

The Department will notify you separately about your Exemptions after our recommendations have been accepted by the UK actuarial profession. We expect letters to be distributed around the end of November.



## APPENDICES

### Course Descriptors

Course Code	Course Title	Semester	Credits	Mandatory/Optional	Exemption
<a href="#">F71CA</a>	Actuarial Risk Management 1	1	15	Mandatory	CP1
<a href="#">F71PC</a>	Pensions A	1	15	Optional	SP4
<a href="#">F71LA</a>	Life Insurance 1	1	15	Optional	SP2
<a href="#">F71DV</a>	Derivative Markets and Pricing	1	15	Optional	SP6
<a href="#">F71QR</a>	Quantitative Risk Analysis	1	15	Optional	SP9
<a href="#">C31FM</a>	Financial Markets	1	15	Optional	SP5
<a href="#">F71CB</a>	Actuarial Risk Management 2	2	15	Mandatory	CP1, CP3
<a href="#">F71PD</a>	Pensions B	2	15	Optional	SP4
<a href="#">F71LB</a>	Life Insurance 2	2	15	Optional	SP2
<a href="#">F71AP</a>	Advanced Derivative Pricing	2	15	Optional	SP6
<a href="#">F71TT</a>	Risk Management: Techniques & Tools	2	15	Optional	SP9
<a href="#">C31FV</a>	Finance and Investment	2	15	Optional	SP5
<a href="#">F71MD</a>	MSc Project	3	60	Mandatory for MSc	CP2, CP3

You should choose 3 optional courses in each semester which lead to an SP exemption