

# Buildings and Facilities Naming Policy

February 2021

POLICY

Approving authority:	Infrastructure Services Management Board
Consultation via:	
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Responsible Executive:	Governance and Legal Services
Responsible Office:	Jointly: Governance and Legal Services / Assistant Principal (Development)

**HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY  
BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES NAMING POLICY**

**CONTENTS**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 Purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 Objectives</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4 Scope</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5 Lines of responsibility</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6 Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7 Implementation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 Related Policies, procedures and further reference</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>9 Definitions</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>10 Further help and advice</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>11 Policy Version and History</b>	<b>8</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This policy provides clear and consistent governance for allocating and revoking names of University buildings, facilities, roads and campus features. This policy applies to all University campuses worldwide.

It recognises that naming provides an opportunity to promote University values by celebrating the contributions of outstanding individuals who may serve as role models and reflect the diversity of the University community.

The policy also provides a transparent framework for recognising philanthropic gifts from individuals, trusts and foundations and corporate donors. Such donations play a vital role in University life by enabling the University to enhance its facilities for Students, Staff and the public. It is recognised that the University may also seek and obtain philanthropic donations and sponsorships for revenue purposes such as academic Chairs and scholarships. Decisions made under this policy shall align with the overarching governance for all such donations.

## 2. PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

- Set out a formal approval process for assigning and revoking building and facility names and for documenting such decisions and the reasons for them;
- Establish clear principles and procedures to promote consistency of practice;
- Promote transparency of decision making processes, while respecting confidentiality and privacy;
- Manage expectations of donors, sponsors and the University community;
- Support effective due diligence and careful consideration of reputational and financial factors when assigning names.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

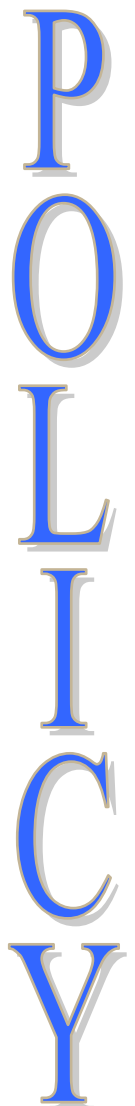
### 3.1 Authority to assign and revoke names

The [Infrastructure Services Management Board](#), or equivalent body on each campus, has authority to assign and revoke building and facility names. Where naming is intended to recognise philanthropic donations and sponsorship, the Board has delegated authority for naming up to a value threshold to be set by the [Governance and Nominations Committee](#) and for recommending naming above that threshold for consideration by that Committee. The Board may appoint members to an ad hoc or standing [Naming Advisory Group](#) to recommend names to the Board. The Board may also delegate project boards for building developments and refurbishments to propose names for consideration by the Board.

### 3.2 Overarching Principles

All naming shall align with the following overarching principles to:

- Promote the University mission and values;
- Celebrate diversity and inclusivity of the global University community;



- Recognise exceptional contributions to the University’s mission and to wider society;
- Provide inspirational role models, to current and future Students, colleagues or philanthropists;
- Honour long-term and significant financial contributions to the University;
- Apply due diligence and consider immediate and long term reputational factors when assigning names, to avoid controversy, and help ensure that enough time has elapsed for an individual’s contribution to have stood the test of time.

All naming shall comply with consistent practice:

- Avoid naming whole buildings after the functions based in them e.g. Physics, to avoid confusion and costs of updating signage, mapping, branding, as functions relocate. Room and facility names are easier and less costly to change;
- Names should be simple, clear, and descriptive, avoid duplication and assist people navigating around a campus. Avoid duplication of naming or inconsistency e.g. Hall/ Residence or walkway/path;
- We should remain alert to unconscious bias and make efforts to avoid stereotyped naming patterns e.g. naming all science blocks (“work”) after men, and all student residences (“home”) after women.

### 3.3 Naming criteria and duration

Following the overarching principles set out in section 3.2, the University will assign names under one of the following criteria.

- 3.3.1** To honour outstanding achievement within the University community i.e. someone who has made a significant contribution to the University’s history and development or an individual who may not be directly linked but has made a pioneering or internationally recognised contribution to their field, relevant to our mission.

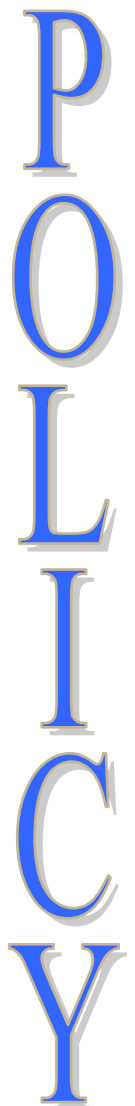
*Duration:* long term, indefinite, unless a radical change in function or reputation takes place.

- 3.3.2** To recognise substantial donations and encourage philanthropy and sponsorship to further the University’s mission; following a consistent scale of contribution to earn naming rights.

*Duration:* fixed term, to be agreed at outset and subject to a gift agreement and other conditions These will include a sliding scale of contributions and durations of naming to be agreed by the Governance and Nominations Committee. For example it may be appropriate to set a recognition period of 3-5 years for corporate sponsorship of spaces, whereas naming a building would require a substantial contribution from a potential donor and a substantial proportion of the donation paid in advance with a defined recognition period between 10-20 years.

- 3.3.3** To commemorate significant events in our history and development or important landscape features.

*Duration:* long term unless a radical change in function takes place.



### 3.4 Name recognition: events and acknowledgement

Building and facility names can add value to the University brand and wider reputation by association. and appropriate steps will be taken to promote the names and strengthen relationships by acknowledging and thanking donors, sponsors and family members. Each development and refurbishment project involving naming shall include a budget, to be agreed in advance with the relevant teams, for signage, display panels and a naming event, ceremony or thank-you photo call and refreshments, proportionate to the scale of the development. Each building or facility assigned a name shall have a Blue Plaque and contextual display panel explaining the significance of the names, an entry on a “names” section of the University website, and where appropriate, a ceremonial opening plaque.

### 3.5 Reviewing and revoking names

The Infrastructure Services Management Board will delegate the Naming Advisory Group authority to review and recommend revoking names in defined circumstances, consulting, where appropriate, with relevant stakeholders, such as corporate sponsors and next of kin or executors of the named individual. These shall include the following scenarios:

- Where the reputation of the named donor, sponsor or distinguished person changes substantially so as to compromise the University’s reputation by association;
- At the request of a donor or the family of a distinguished individual;
- When the term of a naming period agreed with a sponsor or donor has elapsed;
- If a sponsor or donor fails to maintain payments on a pledge or donate to the value agreed;
- When subsequent building development makes the name of a building or facility obsolete e.g. a building is demolished or vacated by the University or undergoes significant alteration;
- In order to redress any imbalances in representation of traditionally underrepresented groups, e.g. women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and the Black and Minority Ethnic community, or stereotyped naming patterns;
- In accordance with a periodic review process to be defined by the Board.

## 4. SCOPE

The policy includes all buildings, facilities e.g. a laboratory or conference suite, structures, e.g. bridges and walkways and landscape features that the University owns or is legally entitled to name on any of its campuses.

## 5. LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY

### 5.1 Governance and Nominations Committee

The [Governance and Nominations Committee](#) is responsible for setting approval thresholds and procedures for the acceptance of philanthropic donations and sponsorships for capital and revenue purposes and for approving naming proposals that recognise gifts above the relevant thresholds.

## 5.2 The Infrastructure Services Management Board or equivalent body on each campus

The [Infrastructure Services Management Board](#) has authority to assign names, up to an agreed donation value threshold as set out in the [Charitable Gifts Acceptance Policy](#), recommend names above that value threshold for consideration by the Governance and Nominations Committee, and to revoke names. The Board will appoint members to an ad hoc or standing Naming Advisory Group to recommend names to the Board and where directed, review existing names.

The Board will notify the University Executive (UE) of all names assigned and revoked.

## 5.3 Naming Advisory Group

The Naming Advisory Group has delegated responsibility to consider and recommend names, following the process set out in section 7 below. The Group should include senior representatives of the primary users of the building or facility under development or refurbishment, together with other stakeholder and specialist representatives including Campus Services, Development and Alumni, Marketing and Communications and the Archivist, representatives of the wider University community and where names other than donors are under consideration, a representative of the Student Union.

Consideration should be given to ensuring broad diversity in the membership of the Naming Advisory Group including representation of traditionally underrepresented groups e.g. women and the Black and Minority Ethnic community.

## 5.4 Assistant Principal, Development

The Assistant Principal, Development is responsible for:

- Leading philanthropic fundraising activities and applying best practice to recommend ethical naming criteria, sponsorship thresholds and durations of naming buildings and facilities recognising sponsors;
- Liaising with potential sponsors and donors, making naming recommendations and negotiating gift agreements in line with the donation thresholds agreed by the Governance and Nominations Committee;
- Reporting to the [Donations and Investments Committee](#) on fundraising activities and plans for disbursement of funds; making requests to the Donations and Investments Committee for disbursement of any sums of money for specified purposes;
- Organising (in partnership with Marketing and Communications) ongoing stewardship and donor events.

## 5.5 Global Director of Estates and Facilities

The Global Director of Estates and Facilities is responsible for allocating funding within building and facilities development and refurbishment projects for signage, display panels and naming events.

## 5.6 The Archivist, Information Services

The Archivist is responsible for:

- Verifying the accuracy and suitability of names suggested as having connections to the University and relevance to University values and may recommend candidates for naming under these criteria;
- Working jointly with Marketing and Communications to coordinate the development of commemorative plaques and display panels;
- Verifying the accuracy of information in plaques and display panels and promotional communications.

## 5.7 The Director, Marketing and Communications

The Director, Marketing and Communications is responsible for:

- Liaising with executors, family members and other stakeholders to consult them where a naming proposal recognises outstanding achievement;
- Organising (in partnership with Development and Alumni) naming events and associated promotional communications including news and social media, as appropriate to reflect the benefit to be gained, the scale of development and the wishes of family members/loved ones and donors.

## 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Infrastructure Services Management Board will appoint the Naming Advisory Group to conduct a formal review of names and the naming policy either annually or on an agreed cycle. The review will also consider the diversity of nominations and of the final names selected.

## 7. IMPLEMENTATION

The Infrastructure Services Management Board, or equivalent body on each campus, will appoint delegates to the Naming Advisory Group to meet as necessary when building developments or refurbishments are planned that present new naming opportunities or have an impact on existing names. The Group will also have the responsibility to consider and recommend revoking names under certain circumstances, set out in section 3.5.

Where naming proposals arise from philanthropic donations or sponsorship, the Governance and Nominations Committee will be asked for input and approval for gifts over a value threshold to be set out by that committee.

In all cases where a proposal involves names of donors, sponsors or individuals who are likely to have immediate family, surviving partners or executors, approval will be subject to the agreement of these and other relevant parties.

In all cases a naming proposal must remain confidential until the naming, and any public acknowledgement, has been formally approved by the University and the parties concerned.

## 8. RELATED POLICIES

Data Protection Policy

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/heriot-watt-university-data-protection-policy.pdf>

Equality and Diversity Policy

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/docs/EDPFinal.pdf>

Ethical Business: Charitable Gifts Acceptance Policy

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/ethical-business-charitable-gifts-acceptance-polic.pdf>

Ethical Business: Conflict of Interest Policy

(Policy for University Court and Court Committee members)

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/secretariat/Conflict-Interest-Policy-governors.pdf>

Ethical Business: Gifts and Hospitality Policy

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/ethical-business-gifts-hospitality-policy.pdf>

Museum and Archive Collections Development Policy

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/collections-development-policy.pdf>

## 9. DEFINITIONS

Facilities Includes: component units within buildings e.g. a laboratory, meeting room, lecture theatre or conference suite; structures, e.g. bridges and walkways and landscape features

## 10. FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

Development and Alumni

[watt.club@hw.ac.uk](mailto:watt.club@hw.ac.uk)

+44 (0)131 451 3510

Archivist, Information Services

[heritage@hw.ac.uk](mailto:heritage@hw.ac.uk)

+44 (0)131 451 3638/3218

Secretariat, as Clerk to the Infrastructure Services Management Board

[Secretariat@hw.ac.uk](mailto:Secretariat@hw.ac.uk)

## 11. POLICY VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority	Brief Description of Amendment
V.1	7 August 2018	UE	This is a new Policy to establish consistent practice. Feedback and advice was received from: Campus Services Management Board; Assistant Principal, Development; Marketing & Communications; Governance & Legal Services; the Head of Information Governance; and the Athena Swan Project Officer
V.2	15 February 2021	Infrastructure Services Management Board	

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