

Heriot-Watt University Fair Access Policy – from 1st September 2022

At Heriot-Watt University we realise that not everyone has an equal opportunity to evidence their full potential from school or college qualifications alone. We are committed to widening participation (WP) to students from all backgrounds, so we use what is called a contextual approach when looking at undergraduate applications. This means that we look at all the information on an application form to assess both current achievements and your potential to thrive at university.

To help us do this in a fair and transparent way we have developed a Fair Access Policy, in line with wider University strategic aims, including our Access and Inclusion Strategy strand of Inclusive Recruitment and Admissions. In addition to our standard entry requirements for UK undergraduate students we have created two other levels, minimum entry and adjusted entry, which apply to WP students. Which level applies to you will depend on which category you fall into.

Minimum entry offer

The University guarantees to make a minimum entry offer to anyone who would be considered a Home or Rest of UK (RUK) applicant and who has achieved, or can achieve, the required grades from the following categories: -

- Priority postcode areas – Home applicants from SIMD20 postcodes or RUK applicants from POLAR 4 quintile 1 areas – identified through Scottish and UK government targets
- Care experience – home or RUK applicants who have had experience of care, including adoption, kinship care, foster care and home supervision orders

N.B. For more information on what these categories mean please have a look at our webpages: -

- Priority postcode areas – <https://www.hw.ac.uk/study/widening-participation/coming-from-school.htm#SIMD2020>
- Care experience - <https://www.hw.ac.uk/study/widening-participation/care-experienced.htm>

The minimum entry offer requirements for each degree subject can be found in the table below. Reductions are also considered for someone who is studying other qualifications such as college qualifications, Open University, etc: -

Degree subject	Highers	A Levels
Accountancy, Economics and Finance	BBBC	BCC
Actuarial Mathematical & Statistics	ABBC (A in Maths)	ABC (A in Maths)
Architectural Engineering	BBBC (B in Maths)	BCC (B in Maths)
Biological Science	BBBC (B in a Science)	BCC (B in a Science)
Brewing and Distilling	BBBC (B in Maths and Biology or Chemistry)	BCC (B in Maths and Biology or Chemistry)
British Sign Language (BSL) degrees	BBBC (interview and experience of Deaf / BSL community)	BCC (interview and experience of Deaf / BSL community)
Business Management	BBBC	BCC

Chemical Engineering	BBBC (B in Maths and B in Chemistry)	BCC (B in Maths and B in Chemistry)
Chemistry	BBBC (B in Maths and B in Chemistry)	BCC (B in Maths and B in Chemistry)
Civil and Structural Engineering	BBBC (B in Maths)	BCC (B in Maths)
Combined Studies	BBBC (B in Maths and B in a Science)	BCC (B in Maths and B in a Science)
Computer Science	BBBC (B in Maths)	BCC (B in Maths)
Computer Systems	BBBC	BCC (B in Maths)
Construction Mgt. & Surveying	BBBC	BCC
Electrical Engineering	BBBC (B in Maths and B in Physics)	BCC (B in Maths and B in Physics)
Geography and Urban Studies	BBBC	BCC
Languages and Intercultural Studies	BBBC (B in language of study for advanced language courses only)	BCC (B in language of study for advanced language courses only)
Mathematics	BBBC (B in Maths)	BCC (B in Maths)
Mathematics with a Foreign Language	BBBC (B in Maths and B in Language to be studied)	BCC (B in Maths and B in Language to be studied)
Mathematics with Physics	BBBC (B in Maths and Physics)	BCC (B in Maths and Physics)
Mechanical Engineering	BBBC (B in Maths and B in Physics)	BCC (B in Maths and B in Physics)
Physics	BBBC (B in Maths and B in Physics)	BCC (B in Maths and B in Physics)
Psychology	BBBC	BCC
Sport and Exercise Science	BBBC (B in a Science)	BCC (B in a Science)
All Textiles degrees	BBBC (portfolio and interview may also be required)	BCC (portfolio and interview may also be required)

Adjusted entry offer

There are many other categories of WP applicant where we will make an adjusted offer which will ask for something slightly lower than our standard offer. These include: -

- Priority postcode areas – Home applicants from SIMD40 postcodes or RUK applicants from POLAR 4 quintile 2 areas – identified through Scottish and UK government targets
- Estranged students – students who are over sixteen who no longer has the support of their family due to a breakdown in their relationship where contact has now ended
- Student carers – students who have unpaid caring responsibilities for a friend or family member due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or addiction
- LEAPS eligible – a student from Edinburgh, the Lothians, Forth Valley or Scottish Borders regions who work with LEAPS - <https://www.leapsonline.org/node/1081>
- Low progression school – a student from a school with a low rate of progression to higher education, typically below an average of 35%
- SWAP eligible – mature students with no prior experience of higher education who are currently studying on a SWAP Access to Higher Education programme - <https://www.scottishwideraccess.org/>
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers

- Evidence of low income – students who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) or Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
- Adverse personal circumstances – students who have overcome significant difficulties in terms of serious illness, disability or bereavement which impacted on their ability to study

An adjusted offer can take a variety of forms, depending on existing qualifications and what you are currently sitting. Here are some examples using Scottish Highers as an example: -

- Reducing the standard entry requirements by up to two grades, e.g. AABB could be reduced to BBBB, AACC or ABBC.
- Reducing the standard entry requirements by one less Higher, e.g. AABB would be AAB or ABB
- Counting one Advanced Higher, taken in S6, in addition to the Higher taken in the same subject in S5
 - Standard practice for standard applicants would be to use Adv. Higher grades over Highers grades in the same subject – i.e. we would not count both qualifications

Similar adjustments can be made for eligible students who are studying other qualifications.

How to find out more

You can find out more about the different categories of widening participation students, and the additional support available, on our webpages - <https://www.hw.ac.uk/study/widening-participation.htm>

If you would like more information, or have any questions, our Widening Participation team are happy to help. Just get in touch – wp@hw.ac.uk – and we will help where we can.