

Information for mature students (June 2020)

At Heriot-Watt, we welcome those of all backgrounds to our diverse student community. Each year around 1 in 5 of our new undergraduates are aged 22 or over.

Many of the mature students who join us at the University do so from a college course such as SWAP or a HNC or HND. There are a few differences in learning styles from college to university which it might be useful to consider.

- Less directed learning, more independent learning

On average you will spend less time in face-to-face learning environments than you would at college. The emphasis is much more on you reading around your subject and taking part in independent study for your topics. The academic staff are there to support you, but the expectation is much more on you to find information for yourself. They would expect you to bring things to them to discuss, rather than them 'teaching' you everything you need to know. However, they are always on hand to help if you need any help, you just need to ask!

- Larger classes

Many courses will have lectures, which can be up to 500 people in a room all listening to information and taking notes. There isn't really an opportunity to ask lots of questions, but each lecture will also have a tutorial which is a much smaller group session, allowing you to discuss the topic and ask questions. It is important to prepare for your tutorials by reviewing your lecture notes, and being clear on the things you understand, and the things you would like to discuss further.

We have found that our mature students are amongst the most dedicated and sought after of all our students. Many will come to the University with existing skills;

- Not being afraid to ask questions
- Time management
- Common sense
- Interpersonal skills
- Work experience
- Multitasking

Every student needs to learn new skills, and some you may wish to develop further include;

- Note taking in lectures
- Independent study
- Research methods
- Report writing
- Referencing

Student finance

Please make sure you have applied for all of the funding you are entitled to from the [Student Award Agency Scotland \(SAAS\)](#). There are some really [useful videos from SAAS](#) to help you through your application. You can apply for your SAAS funding at any time, you do not need to wait until you are holding an offer, or until you have decided on your firm or insurance choices.

Childcare support

Students who are parents and carers of children can be supported through the Childcare Fund or the Hardship Fund. We offer funding towards childcare costs for full-time students (as long as you are in receipt of the maximum SAAS funding available, and you are seeking funding for formally registered childcare in Scotland). We take into account your household income, but the good thing is that the funding doesn't just cover timetabled hours, it is based on the full-time education. You can apply once you are unconditional firm with us and have started the enrolment process. The application forms are available to download from the Student Portal.

Study support

- Power Hours

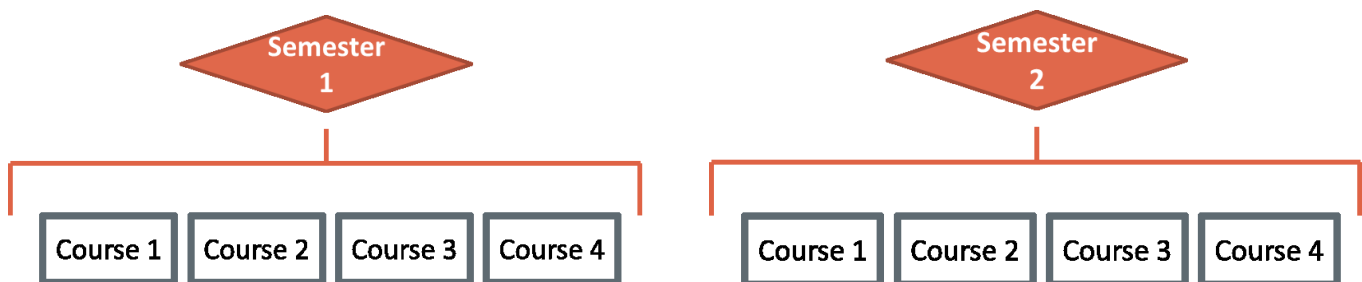
To help all students develop essential study skills we have a range of topics covered in our [Power Hours](#) sessions. These are open to any student in any year and run throughout both semesters.

- Maths Gym

If your degree programme includes any type of maths, from equations to statistics, we have a dedicated [Maths Gym](#) with staff on hand to support through drop-in sessions, small group appointments and online resources.

Academic year

Our academic year is split into two 12-week semesters. During each semester, your programme will consist of 4 courses each with their own lectures, tutorials and assessments. The 4 courses will run simultaneously.



Timetables are different each semester and can be viewed on our [website](#). The publication date for the timetables for semester 1 2020 is to be confirmed. The UK campus session dates can be found [here](#).

Additional support

- Parents and carers group

You can also choose to be part of the closed parents and carers [Facebook group](#) where you can take part in discussion threads and make contact with other students.

- Ask a Student Success Advisor

[Ask a Student Success Advisor](#) is a one-to-one email based support service available to students who have either an Unconditional Firm (UF) or Conditional Firm (CF) offer of a place at Heriot-Watt. Our Student Success Advisors (SSA) are all recent graduates of Heriot-Watt University from a range of different subject areas, including our Scottish Borders campus. The SSAs are part of the Student Wellbeing team.

- Unibuddy

If you would like the opportunity to chat to some of our current students or staff, check out our [Unibuddy](#) pages to see who is available to take your questions.

- Get Ready for Success

An exciting opportunity for you to get a head start at University. Our programme will help ease your transition and welcome you to the Heriot-Watt community. [Get Ready for Success](#) is a three-day event just prior to Welcome Week. We will be in touch via email to invite eligible students, which includes mature students.

Student Wellbeing

The [Student Wellbeing Service](#) aims to provide a range of support, guidance, activities and advice to help students to be their best and get the most from their university experience.

- Counselling

Being a student can be a very positive experience but there are also many challenges to deal with such as being away from home, being in a new country, exam pressures and building new relationships with friends. If you are worried about any issue or are thinking about dropping out of University we can offer you [counselling](#), support, and information to help you deal with the difficulties you may face. It may be that you only need one appointment but can attend more if you wish.

- Disability Support

The [Disability Service](#) can provide support and advice for students with a range of disabilities. It is important that you inform us if you have a disability so the appropriate support can be arranged and you may be eligible for additional funding from the Disabled Students Allowance.

- Discretionary hardship fund

The University receives money every year from the Scottish Government to assist students who are experiencing [financial difficulty](#). Money is awarded for help with living costs (not tuition fees) and is paid as a grant. The fund is discretionary.

- Effective Learning Service (ELS)

An [academic study skills](#) guide created by our team of Learning Advisors and Librarians. The aim of the guide is to provide useful advice, resources and contacts that can help you develop the skills you will need to be successful at University and beyond.

- Managing your Money

As a student you will find there is a lot to think about [financially](#). For some of you, studying at university will be the first time you have had to manage your money and keep your expenditure within a fixed budget. Advice and support on money matters is available at all Heriot-Watt campuses.

- Mental Health

If you experience a [mental health](#) difficulty while at the University, or have a pre-existing mental health condition, you can discuss any issues and concerns with a professional counsellor or Student Advisor.

- Personal Tutors

Every student has a member of academic staff allocated to them as a [personal tutor](#) who is your first point of contact if you need advice on any issue, both academic and non-academic. Personal tutors can also advise you of other support sources as appropriate. The name of your personal tutor is available on Student Self Service.

COVID-19

The new academic year at Heriot-Watt University will begin as planned this September. If you are joining the University for the 2020/21 academic session, you can expect your learning to follow our previously published dates. Our academic programmes will begin on 14 September, with welcome week activities for new students taking place beforehand.

The global response to the pandemic means we are now adapting the way in which we deliver our teaching in the UK, Dubai and Malaysia to an approach we are calling Responsive Blended Learning. This flexible approach will allow students to begin the academic year on schedule, wherever they are in the world.

Further information for offer holders relating to Coronavirus is available here;
<https://www.hw.ac.uk/coronavirus/offer-holders.htm>

Heriot-Watt University provides lots of additional support to our students. If you have any questions or individual requirements, please do not hesitate to contact us WP@hw.ac.uk. Please quote your UCAS ID or Heriot-Watt number in any correspondence.