MSc Strategic Planning
Student Handbook
1. The MSc Strategic Planning

The MSc Strategic Planning degree is based on the Strategic Focus Wheel. This concept expresses the way organisations focus their efforts and resources on delivering their intended strategic objectives by using four elements: Strategic Planning, Making Strategies Work, Project Management and Strategic Risk Management. These elements, along with Competitive Strategy, are the core courses of the degree.

Strategic Planning examines issues related to identifying the strategic options available to an organisation and selecting the most appropriate.

Making Strategies Work is concerned with the processes that connect the high-level strategic plan to the day-to-day activities critical to its delivery.

Project Management identifies the various means of ensuring completeness and control over physical realisation of the chosen strategy.

Strategic Risk Management deals with issues related to identifying, monitoring and managing the risk profile of the organisation. Major changes in the organisation’s profile will result in the need to revise risk strategies. Four main risk areas are covered: strategic risk, change risk, operational risk and unforeseeable risk.

Competitive Strategy provides a unified and integrated framework to assist in the process of strategy formulation.

2. Core Courses

The core courses are summarised below.

- Competitive Strategy
- Making Strategies Work
- Project Management
- Strategic Planning
- Strategic Risk Management

Information on each course is available at:
https://www.ebsglobal.net/programmes/msc-strategic-planning
3. Elective Courses
You can choose from a range of electives in order to assemble the four required for the MSc. At what stage and in which order you study the elective courses is a matter of personal preference.

The electives allow greater depth of study in areas related to the core elements. These courses have been designed to reflect and build on the core strategic courses. The electives build on the Strategic Focus Wheel, with its concentration on strategy, implementation and management processes. The electives have been designed to elaborate vital contemporary issues of concern to those who operate at the highest level.

You are encouraged to use your choice wisely. Following personal interest is clearly desirable. You may wish to emphasise those electives of immediate interest to your work. A long-term view rather than a short-term benefit should guide the choice.

See https://www.ebsglobal.net/programmes/msc-strategic-planning for more detailed information about the electives.

4. Sequence of Study
It is recommended that your study programme start with Strategic Planning, which provides a fundamental basis for the overall programme aims and objectives. Project Management can be studied alongside Strategic Planning; these two courses together with Strategic Risk Management and Making Strategies Work provide the core elements for strategy formulation.

Competitive Strategy and the elective courses of Mergers and Acquisitions and Alliances and Partnerships constitute the strategic environment theme. The remaining electives of Corporate Governance, Leadership and Strategic Negotiation provide the theme of strategic operations.

Stage 1 – Strategy Formulation
Strategic Planning
Project Management
Strategic Risk Management
Making Strategies Work

Stage 2 – Strategic Environment
Competitive Strategy
Alliances and Partnerships
Mergers and Acquisitions

Stage 3 – Strategic Operations

Corporate Governance

Leadership

Strategic Negotiation

5. On–campus Tuition

It is possible for distance–learning students to attend intensive four–day seminars or two–day revision sessions at one of our Campuses around the world: in Edinburgh, Dubai or Malaysia (located at Putrajaya). Attendance is not mandatory, and students can choose which, if any, of the courses they wish to attend as detailed below.

- Intensive four–day tutorials are delivered on campus in Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia. These seminars are based on the School’s experience of teaching to corporations, and on ten years’ experience of delivering value–added seminars. The seminars assume prior study of the course materials and provide practical applications and contextualisation.

- Two–day revision sessions in selected subjects are delivered on campus in Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia. These two–day sessions give advice on examination preparation.

Further details and a timetable can be viewed [here](#).

On–line Tuition

On–line tuition is offered to students through Edinburgh Business School’s global network of teaching partners. The services, provided by highly experienced tutors, include online revision to help prepare for exams, a series of structured online tuition guiding students through each course in full, and online mentoring where students can receive one–to–one support. All offerings are hosted on the Edinburgh Business School Adobe Connect webinar platform. Further details are available [here](#).

Approved Learning Partners

Edinburgh Business School has a network of Approved Learning Partners (ALPs), who provide academic and administrative support. ALPs are appointed only when they have satisfied the approval procedures of Heriot–Watt University and Edinburgh Business School.
Computer-based Assessment
Edinburgh Business School is embarking on a phased roll out of e-assessment commencing in 2016. Students will increasingly be given the option of using computers rather than pen and paper to take their examinations. More courses and exam centres will be added at each exam session until, by the end of 2018, all courses will be available for examination in most major cities.

6. Degree Awards
MSc Strategic Planning
After successful completion of nine courses, including all five core courses and four electives, you are eligible for the award of MSc Strategic Planning. In this context, ‘successful completion’ means passing all the examinations. This award is also subject to the conditions that you be matriculated onto the programme, pay all due fees and comply with all other Edinburgh Business School and University requirements.

MSc with Distinction
An MSc Strategic Planning with distinction is awarded to students who have passed all courses at the first attempt and achieved a minimum average mark of 70% across the programme of study as a whole.

7. Interim Awards
The MSc programme is structured to allow the greatest possible flexibility. You have the opportunity to receive interim qualifications en route to the MSc: the Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Planning and the Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Planning.

Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Planning
To be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Planning, you must be matriculated and have successfully completed Strategic Planning plus two other core courses.

A maximum of one exemption will be permitted for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate. Meeting the requirements of the Postgraduate Certificate allows you to enter the MBA programme without a first degree.
Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Planning
To be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Planning, you must be matriculated and have successfully completed the five core courses and one elective.

A maximum of two exemptions will be permitted for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma.

8. Guidance Notes
The following is a brief guide to the processes and regulations of the MSc programme. The Regulations and Ordinances of the University are updated on a regular basis. The online editions, available here replace all previous editions.

Purchasing a Course
Courses are purchased in one of the following ways.

- Students studying independently should use the course purchase pages on the website located here. Students can purchase either online or download and complete the Course Purchase Form.
- Students studying with an ALP should contact their course coordinator to make arrangements to purchase a course.
- Students studying under any other type of partnership or alliance should contact the relevant person within their organisation to make arrangements to purchase a course.

Registration (Matriculation)
On purchasing your first course you will receive an email welcoming you to your studies which contains a link to a Programme Entry Form. Students studying with an ALP will receive the form from their course coordinator.

Please complete the form in full and return it with all the necessary supporting documentation. Full details are provided in the guidance notes accompanying the Programme Entry Form.

To qualify for matriculation, one of the following must apply.

- You hold a first- or second-class honours business or management degree of Heriot–Watt University or any other university or institute of higher education recognised by Heriot–Watt University.
You meet the requirements for the Edinburgh Business School Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Planning by obtaining passes in three core courses, one of which must be Strategic Planning.

You hold another qualification deemed by Senate to be acceptable.

If you are not eligible for immediate matriculation, your form will be held on file and you will be matriculated when you have completed three core courses. One of these must be Strategic Planning.

**Student Identification and Registration Numbers**

Upon commencement of the programme you are allocated a Student Identification (SID) and a Registration Number (RegNo). These numbers are unique to you and will remain with you for the duration of your studies. You should use your SID in all communication with Edinburgh Business School and its partners.

The numbers are also used as access codes when logging in to the Student Portal. Your SID is used as a username and your Registration Number is your temporary password. You will be asked to change your password when you log in for the first time. Your username will continue to be your SID.

It is recommended that your password be at least six characters long and contain at least one character from each of the following categories: uppercase letters, lowercase letters and numbers. You can change your password at any time via the Manage Your Studies section of the Student Portal.

If you forget your username or password please follow the onscreen instructions on the login page.

**Exemptions**

Exemptions from specific courses may be granted to holders of recognised academic or professional qualifications if they are of degree level and if they have been obtained by examination. University regulations do not permit exemptions to be granted for degrees obtained at the same level. Therefore, exemptions are not awarded to holders of another Master degree even if it was obtained from Heriot-Watt University.

Professional qualifications obtained by examination within two years of application may lead to credits. For example, PMI members may be eligible for an exemption in Project Management.
Exemptions will be awarded if holders of approved qualifications can provide evidence of comparability of course content. Guidelines on the award of exemptions are available online.

If you wish to apply for an exemption you should complete the relevant section of the Programme Entry Form or download and complete the Exemption Application Form and submit it with the required supporting documentation to Edinburgh Business School, who are the sole authority on this matter.

Eligibility for exemption is based on academic achievement only, not on work experience.

**Examinations**

The assessment of each course is derived entirely from your performance in a single examination lasting three hours. To complete a course successfully you must obtain at least 50% in the examination.

All examinations are subject to rigorous scrutiny by both Heriot-Watt University examiners and external examiners from other leading UK universities.

To help you prepare for the examinations, the ten most recent Past Papers, Examiner’s Solutions and Selected Student Answers are made available on the Student Portal. (Note that solutions to examination multiple-choice questions are never provided.)

**Examination Sessions and Locations**

There are four examination sessions each year. At the June and December sessions, the University holds examinations for all courses at over 700 locations in more than 170 countries. While some travel may be required, we endeavour to arrange examinations as near to your location as is practical, on a worldwide basis.

At the March and August sessions only a small number of courses are examined at 50 locations worldwide.

The full examination timetable is available on the Student Portal.
Special Arrangements
You are permitted to record your answers by an appropriate alternative means approved by the School if you suffer from a disability that, in the opinion of the School, prevents you from completing an examination paper in writing. You are allowed extra time in which to complete your examination if you suffer from a disability that, in the opinion of the School, justifies it. You must contact the School in advance of the exam deadline providing certified copies of medical evidence confirming your particular disability.

Examination Registration Deadlines
The deadline dates for applications for the June and December examination sessions are 1 March and 1 September respectively. The deadline dates for applications for the March and August examination sessions are 7 February and 24 July respectively. It is your responsibility to be aware of and abide by these deadlines.

If you have purchased a course through an ALP you should contact them as they may have special arrangements for exam applications.

Registering for an Examination
You must have purchased a course before you can apply for an examination in that subject.

If you are eligible to attempt an examination you can register for it via the Manage your Examinations or View Examination Timetables sections of the Student Portal. Once you have confirmed the language, examination session and location, your selection will appear as an examination you are in the process of registering in the list of upcoming examinations with a status of Awaiting Payment. You can add multiple examination entries in this way before making payment.

You will have 48 hours to make an online payment by credit or debit card, or indicate that you are paying offline. If this is not done within 48 hours, the entry will disappear from your list of upcoming examinations and you will have to create a new entry.

All examination entries with the status Awaiting Payment will disappear from your list if payment is not made before the registration deadline for the relevant examination session.
Your examination entry is finalised only on receipt of payment, at which point its status will change to Registered.

Paying for an Examination
The examination fee of £140 applies to all examination entries and must be paid to finalise your registration. Exam fees are paid for an individual subject and are not transferrable or refundable.

Once you have added all the examinations you wish to register to your list of upcoming examinations, go to the Make Payment section and select the method of payment.

Online payment can be made with any of the following credit or debit cards: Visa, MasterCard, Delta, JCB, Switch and Solo. The cardholder name, email and billing address are required before you can proceed to the payment portal.

If you do not hold one of the above cards, you can make payment by a cheque or sterling bank draft, drawn on a UK bank and made payable to Edinburgh Business School. In the Make Payment section, select the appropriate payment method and download the payment form. Please ensure that the form is returned to the School by the closing date and is accompanied by the required fee. A secure method of posting is recommended: the School cannot be held responsible for applications that go astray in the post.

Once an online or offline payment has been processed, the status of the examination entry in the list of upcoming examinations will change to Registered. You will also receive confirmation by email. Please check the details of each registered examination and, if necessary, correct any mistakes by following the steps detailed in the ‘Amending a Registered Examination Entry’ section below.

Amending a Registered Examination Entry
If you wish to change the language or location of your examination or move it to a future examination session, you may do so without financial penalty, provided that you advise the School before the appropriate deadline date. Simply click on Amend beside the relevant examination in the list of upcoming examinations.
The deadline dates for amending examinations, without incurring any cost, are 1 May and 1 November for the June and December examination sessions respectively and 7 February and 24 July for the March and August examination sessions respectively.

**Rescheduling a Registered Examination Entry**

If you wish to move an examination to a future examination session after one of the above deadlines you may do so, but you will forfeit your examination fee. Simply click on Reschedule beside the relevant examination in the list of upcoming examinations and select a future exam session. This will create a provisional exam entry that will require payment of the £140 examination fee to finalise the registration, as outlined in the ‘Paying for an Examination’ section above.

**Withdrawing a Registered Examination Entry**

If the deadline for amending an examination entry has passed and you decide you no longer wish to attempt it you can withdraw your entry without rescheduling it for a future examination session. Simply click on Withdraw Examination beside the relevant examination in the list of upcoming examinations. To attempt the examination at a future session you will have to register and pay the £140 examination fee as detailed in the sections above.

**Examination Details Letter**

Approximately one month before the examination you will receive confirmation of the exact location and time of your examination. This letter, which will include your scanned photograph, is proof of your entry and must be taken with you to the examination centre on the day of examination. **Failure to produce this letter could result in the centre refusing to allow you to sit the examination.** If for any reason you do not receive this letter, please ensure that you have alternative proof of identification that includes a recent photograph such as your passport.

**Use of Calculators**

Edinburgh Business School does not supply calculators for use in examinations. However, the use of calculators is permitted, provided they are models approved by the University. Students are not permitted to bring into their examinations any calculator that has storage (other than basic memory functions), programmable or graphical functions. The majority of calculators that are programmable have the suffix ‘p’ after their name.
 Likewise, any calculator with the suffix ‘g’ will not be permitted. Invigilators have been instructed to confiscate any calculators that are not permitted.

**Absence**
Absence from an examination is not considered an attempt at the subject. However, your examination fee will be forfeited. To attempt the examination at a future session you will have to register and pay the £140 examination fee as detailed in the sections above.

**Absence on Medical Grounds**
If you are absent owing to illness you must confirm this by sending a certified true copy of your medical certificate to the University, within four weeks of the end of the examination session. If the University accepts that you were unable to attempt the examination owing to illness, your examination fee will be credited and you will be registered for the examination at a future examination session of your choice.

**Examination Results**
Examination results will be initially posted on the Student Portal, where you will also be able to access a Mark Breakdown that details your performance in each section of the examination. You use your full Registration Number and SID to access this site.

Results for examinations taken in English will be released approximately eight weeks after the end of the examination session. Results for other languages may take slightly longer owing to the extra quality control processes that are required. **Please do not contact the University about release dates; you will be notified as soon as results are available.**

Your official examination results and a Certificate of Achievement for each course you pass will be despatched directly to your correspondence address.

**Edinburgh Business School will not advise examination results over the phone or by email under any circumstances.**

**Appeals**
There are specific grounds under which an academic appeal can be submitted. These are set out in the Student Academic Appeal Policy and Procedures documents, which can be found at [http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/complaints/student-appeals.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/complaints/student-appeals.htm).
You are not permitted to dispute the decisions or question the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners once the results are released.

If you are considering submitting an appeal, it is important that you act promptly.

Under no circumstances will examination scripts be returned to you after the examination.

Re-sits
If you fail a course at the first attempt you will be permitted one further attempt in that subject. Edinburgh Business School may require a student who twice fails an examination in a core course to withdraw from the programme. However, a third attempt may be granted if you have completed four other core courses. Under no circumstances will a third attempt be permitted at an elective course. An alternative elective must be chosen to obtain an award.

You can register to re-sit an examination at a future session and pay the £140 examination fee by following the process detailed in the 'Registering for an Examination' section above.

Your Mark Breakdown, along with the Examiner's Solutions and Selected Student Answers available in the Past Papers section of the Student Portal will provide you with an indication of the standard required to pass the course and help you to prepare for a possible re-sit. (Note that solutions to examination multiple-choice questions are never provided.)

If you would like feedback on your performance you may request an analytical report on each case study and essay question. You will be required to indicate this by correspondence and to include a fee of £140 for each course for which the report is requested.

Special Circumstances
You should notify the School as soon as possible after the examination of any illness or other exceptional circumstances that may have adversely affected your performance and that you would like the examiners to take into account in making their decision. For further guidance please go to http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/resources/special-circumstances-policy.pdf.
Compensatory Passes

If you have successfully completed seven or eight courses and have failed narrowly in the remainder you may be awarded a pass by compensation, subject to the following conditions:

- Passes have been attained in at least seven courses.
- The mark to be compensated is not less than 45%.
- A pass by compensation will be awarded in a maximum of two courses.
- The total shortfall of marks shall not exceed 5%.
- All other requirements for award have been satisfied.

The relevant Committee awards compensatory passes when it meets to confirm the names of those eligible to graduate.

Graduation

When you have met the requirements for the MSc degree, your eligibility for the award must be confirmed by the relevant University Committee. Once this has happened, you will be sent a graduation pack that will contain all the information you need to apply to graduate with your degree. You are not considered to be an MSc graduate until the degree has been conferred at a graduation ceremony.

Graduation ceremonies are held in Edinburgh in June and November, with additional ceremonies in various locations worldwide in November/December. It is also possible to graduate in absentia in April or September.

Eligible students have the option to graduate in person at the next available ceremony, defer their graduation until a later ceremony or graduate in absentia. Students who graduate in absentia will also have the option to attend the next available ceremony in person.

European Diploma Supplement

A European Diploma Supplement (academic transcript) will be included in your graduation pack. It is designed as a supplement to the degree certificate and describes the nature, level, context, content and status of your studies. The European Diploma Supplement contains a full academic transcript (including an explanation of the University’s marking scheme), information related to your programme of study, a description of the higher education sector in Scotland and a description of Heriot–Watt University.
Additional copies can be obtained from enquiries@ebs.hw.ac.uk for a charge of £10.

**Changes to Contact Details**
You are responsible for notifying us of any changes to your contact details. You can do this directly through the [Student Portal](#). Changes in name should be notified to us in writing together with a copy of the legal documentation that confirms this change (marriage certificate, deed poll certificate, etc.).

**Changes to Fees and Programme Structures**
Edinburgh Business School reserves the right to make changes to its fees and the structure of the programme at any time. Students will be given advanced notice of any changes and steps will be taken to ensure that existing students are not disadvantaged.

**Data Sharing Policy**
Edinburgh Business School at Heriot-Watt University and its commercial partners work in partnership to deliver the courses and programmes. To ensure the programme is managed efficiently and students supported effectively, some information recorded as you progress in your studies will be shared between Edinburgh Business School and its partners. The full Data Sharing policy can be viewed [here](#).

**Complaints Policy and Procedures**
Heriot-Watt University is committed to providing an excellent education and high-quality services to its students, from enrolment through to graduation. The University values complaints and uses the information gained to help improve services. The Complaints Policy and Procedures apply to all services provided by Heriot-Watt University, including Edinburgh Business School and the Dubai and Malaysia campuses.

Comprehensive information is provided [here](#).
ACADEMIC REGISTRY
GUIDANCE ON CONDUCT
Regulation 9 – Assessments and Examinations
Extracts taken from Paragraph 8 (Conduct)

PARAGRAPH 8 – CONDUCT

8.3 A student shall act in accordance with any instructions issued by an invigilator.

8.4 A student shall not be permitted to introduce printed or other material such as dictionaries including electronic dictionaries into the examination room except such as may be authorised by the Head of School. Mobile telephones and other electronic equipment shall be switched off and shall be deposited with other personal items in an area designated by an invigilator. Checks may be made of any material or equipment brought into the examination room.

8.5 Where a calculator is required for the completion of the 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.

8.6 A student must bring his or her matriculation card to an examination and shall display it on the desk for the duration of the examination.

8.7 A student shall be admitted to the examination room not earlier than fifteen minutes before the start of the examination.

8.8 A student shall not normally bring food into the examination room but may be allowed to bring in one clear bottle of non-alcoholic and non-carbonated beverage, no larger than 500ml.

8.9 A student shall not be admitted to the examination room later than half an hour after the start of the examination except with the permission of an invigilator.

8.10 A student shall not leave the examination room earlier than one hour after the start of the examination except with the permission of the invigilator and shall not leave the examination room during the last thirty minutes of an examination. A student shall return all his/her examination scripts and, where appropriate, any papers or other materials and equipment belonging to the University.

8.11 A student who has to leave the examination room temporarily shall be accompanied by an invigilator or an examination assistant.

8.12 A student shall normally remain in his or her place whilst in attendance at a written examination except in circumstances provided for in paragraphs 8.10 or 8.11.

8.13 On the instruction of a Head of School or his or her nominee, absences from the examination room during the examination or late arrivals at and early departures from the examination room must be noted on a student’s examination script by the invigilator.

8.14 A student may begin writing and shall stop writing on the instructions of an invigilator.

8.15 At the start of an examination a candidate shall receive an attendance slip on which he or she shall immediately write his or her name, course, matriculation and seat number, the subject of the examination and the date and which he or she shall sign. A student who has completed an attendance slip shall be deemed to have taken the examination and his or her answer-book shall be assessed accordingly.
8.16 A student shall write answers in the answer-books or other examination stationery provided. At the end of an examination a candidate as instructed by an invigilator shall return all answer-books together with any other material with which he or she has been supplied, or on which he or she has written or drawn during the examination.

8.17 The answer books completed by a student during an examination shall thereafter become the property of the University and shall not be released except in accordance with the due process of law.

8.18 When a student receives permission to leave the examination room he or she shall do so expeditiously and quietly.

8.19 A student may not communicate with, receive assistance from or copy from the paper of another candidate or use any other unfair means during an examination. When an examination irregularity occurs, a candidate shall hand over to the invigilator any unauthorised material and shall normally be permitted to continue with the examination.

8.20 A student may be required by an invigilator to withdraw from an examination for good cause. The invigilator shall as soon as possible report any such withdrawal to the appropriate Dean, the Head of the student’s School or his or her Director of Studies and the Head of the School offering the module.

8.21 The answer-book of a student who has committed an examination irregularity or is required to withdraw shall be passed by the invigilator to the Examinations Officer who will forward this to the Head of School offering the module together with a note on the Examination Report Form explaining the circumstances of the withdrawal.

8.22 A student whose examination scripts are judged to be so illegible that assessment is impossible may be required to dictate them to a typist under supervision and at his or her own expense. A request from the examiners for such action shall require the approval of the Head of the School offering the module.

8.23 A student in any examination who wishes to type or dictate his or her answers may apply for permission to the Head of the School offering the class. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 10.1 an amanuensis who is not a member of the academic staff may with the approval of the Head of School act as invigilator. The student may be required to bear the cost of any special arrangement.

8.24 A student who disregards the procedures in this regulation concerning the introduction of printed or other material, electronic equipment, mobile telephones and calculators (other than those authorised by a Head of School) into an examination room, may be liable to disciplinary action.

NOTES/SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. Any legitimate concerns about the conduct of examinations organised off campus should be addressed to the Academic Registrar, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh EH14 4AS, Scotland, UK. Minor problems which can be easily resolved at the time of the examination should be addressed to the Invigilator.

2. Invigilators are only permitted to make general announcements to all candidates in order to explain any typographical errors in, or omissions from, the examination paper, or to convey other instructions from the examiners. Invigilators cannot discuss an examination paper with a candidate individually.
3. Penalties for cheating. Past cases of cheating in examinations have been dealt with severely. The Heriot-Watt University Senate wishes to stress that cheating in examinations, including the introduction or use of unauthorised material, is a very serious offence and that the penalties which may be imposed if an allegation of cheating is admitted or proved included:

- Exclusion, suspension or disqualification from examinations;
- Suspension from attendance at the University for a stipulated period;
- Expulsion from the University.

4. A candidate whose examination scripts are judged to be so illegible that assessment is impossible may be required to dictate the contents to a typist under supervision at the candidate’s expense. Such a request would require prior approval by writing to the Academic Registrar, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, EH14 4AS, UK.

5. A candidate in any examination who, for medical or other reasons, requires special arrangements to be made must submit the request to the Academic Registrar, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, EH14 4AS, UK.