

Student Carer Support Action Plan 2019-20

“A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support” – Carers Trust Scotland

The Heriot-Watt University Student Carer Action Plan outlines the actions the University will take to **identify, support, and report** on student carers at the University. (See also the University’s [Supporting Student Carers Policy](#).) At the end of the current academic year, the plan will be reviewed by the Student Carers Support Working Group and a revised plan will be produced for the next academic year.

1. Identification

The University will develop ways to ensure that student carers are identified.

Action	Outcome	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and returning students have the opportunity at enrolment and re-enrolment to declare their carer status. • The Planning Office will produce a report after every enrolment period with details of enrolled student carers. • Student Wellbeing will contact all declared carers offering support and advice, clarifying carer responsibilities and liaising with the personal tutor, if agreed by student carer. Follow up email in teaching week 5 if no initial response. • Dedicated student carer webpages with information on support available to student carers include guidance on self-identification. • Devise an launch a campaign using student portal, social media and printed materials to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students with caring responsibilities have year-round opportunities to declare their carer status and receive support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience Team • Registry Services • Student Systems Unit • Planning Office

<p>encourage self-declaration timed to coincide with Carers Week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a video featuring student carer. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University will work with partners, particularly UCAS (for 2020 UG applications), to help develop ways for carers to declare their caring responsibilities during the application process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once UCAS declaration method is active [from 2020-1] the University will be able to identify student carers at the admissions stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Recruitment • Student Admissions • Registry Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are able to self-identify and update the University of their carer status at any stage of the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will have opportunities to update and review changes in their carer status with staff so that appropriate support can be put in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Wellbeing Services • Schools/personal tutors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of forms of evidence are to be recognised to confirm carer status, as detailed in the student carers policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will have more ways to verify carer status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Wellbeing Services • Schools/personal tutors

2. Support

Carers are being supported to give them a fair chance to be successful in their studies

Action	Outcome	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity for student carers to declare their carer status as part of their UCAS application (for 2020 UG applicants). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With identification at the admissions stage, student carers can be offered the range of pre-entry support available to Widening Participation students: Summer School, Ask a Student Success Advisor and eligibility to apply for an Access Bursary (worth £1,000 for each year of study). This will aid transition to university and help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience Team • Student Recruitment

	<p>them make a successful start to their university careers.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated support contacts both pre- and post-entry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a dedicated point of contact from application to graduation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Recruitment • Student Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Heriot-Watt Carers Support Working Group will continue to work towards enhancing support for student carers. • The Working Group will seek to involve carers in its work, including recruiting a “Carers Ambassador” from our student carers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers will have representation within the Carer Support Working Group ensuring that the groups’ work is informed by the student carer experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Support Working Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated student carer webpage is available with information on support for student carers. • The University will develop partnerships with local carer organisations, such as VOCAL, to support student carers. • Student carers will be updated by email about support resources, events and activities – both internal and external – available to them. • The University will work with the Student Union, including the Student Union Advice Hub, to publicise support for student carers. • The University will work with the Student Union Advice Hub to offer carers the opportunity to be involved in the activities and events organised by the Parents and Carers Circle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers will be made aware of the support that is available to them. • Carers have the opportunities to build social networks with other carers and non-carers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Experience Team • Student Recruitment • Student Union

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Carers Support Working Group will work with the Carers Trust to ensure training is available to staff supporting student carers. • Support for carers forms part of the training for personal tutors delivered by Student Wellbeing. This includes a student carer case study. • Guidance on supporting student carers is available in the Personal Tutor Handbook. • Contacts for carers support are included in the Key Contact For Support wall poster distributed to personal tutors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will be better prepared to support student carers in an effective and timely manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Support Working Group • Student Wellbeing Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University will continue to recognise Student Carers within our Widening Participation Strategy • Student carers are highlighted as a priority group within the University Contextualised admissions policy and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student carers have greater opportunities to study at Heriot-Watt University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Recruitment • Student Admissions

3. Report

Student carer progress is showcased and evaluation tools are used to celebrate achievements and make improvements

Action	Outcome	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Carer Support Working Group will produce an annual report on its activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will have a greater understanding of the experiences of student carers at the University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carer Support Working Group

- Student carer case studies which showcase the achievements of student carers as well as support available at Heriot-Watt will be publicised.

- The University will raise the profile of student carers and highlight good support practice at Heriot-Watt University to both potential and current students.

- Carer Support Working Group
- Student Union