Heriot-Watt University

Heriot-Watt University was founded in 1821 as the world's first Mechanics Institute, a college for working people. It became a university in 1966, and has close links with industry, commerce and the professions.

Heriot-Watt University has five campuses: three in the UK – Edinburgh, the Scottish Borders, where textile courses are taught, and Orkney – and campuses in Dubai and Malaysia.

Courses and students

Around 100 undergraduate courses are taught through six academic schools:

- Edinburgh Business School
- Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society
- Engineering and Physical Sciences
- Mathematical and Computer Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Textiles and Design.

The university has around 9,000 students in its UK campuses, one third of those from outside the UK, making Heriot-Watt one of the most internationally diversified of any UK university.

The Go Global programme allows students to study for a year abroad at the Dubai and Malaysia campuses.

Facilities and Services

The main campus is set in the Edinburgh suburb of Riccarton. Oriam, the £33 million state-of-the-art Scotland's Sports Performance Centre is located here, featuring indoor and outdoor football pitches, rugby pitches, sports hall, climbing wall, squash courts, fitness suite and excellent facilities for sports science and medicine students. Over £9 million is being invested in refurbishing the library and learning common areas.

The Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels specialises in textiles, fashion, and design. Courses are offered in conjunction with Glasgow Clyde College and there is also a partnership with Borders College delivering higher and further education and sharing new campus facilities.

The Orkney Campus in Stromness is the International Centre for Island Technology (ICIT) and offers postgraduate courses in marine and environmental sciences.

The Dubai Campus specialises in Architecture and Built Environment, Computer Science, Engineering and Finance. It offers excellent facilities including a well-equipped library, IT and audio-visual facilities, a 700-seat auditorium and student apartments situated close to shops and local amenities.

The Malaysian Campus is the country's first 'green campus' and offers degrees in science, engineering and business. Situated in the stunning lakeside city of Putrajaya, it has state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities and express links to Kuala Lumpur.

Ranking

In the Guardian University Guide 2026, ranked 7th in the UK and 2nd in Scotland for Economics, 2nd in Scotland for Mechanical Engineering, Construction, Surveying and Planning, and 3rd in Scotland for Chemical Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Fashion and Textiles, Interior Design, Languages and Linguistics, and Physics.

In the Times Higher Education World University Rankings by Subject 2026 guide, ranked in the UK Top 40 for Arts and Humanities, Computer Science, Engineering and Physical Sciences.

Runner up as Scottish University of the Year in The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026 and ranked in the Top 10 in the UK in six subject areas.

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