

# GETTING STARTED IN RESPONSIVE BLENDED LEARNING: A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Heriot-Watt University has adopted a Responsive Blended Learning model. This ensures you can start or continue your studies from wherever you are in the world and have confidence that you will be able to complete your studies on schedule. We know that blending online and on-campus learning will be new to many of you. Through this guide we highlight some key information and the wealth of support available to ensure you have a successful and inspiring year of study.

## WHAT IS RESPONSIVE BLENDED LEARNING?

Responsive Blended Learning (RBL) combines active, supported online learning with contextually appropriate face-to-face learning opportunities, responding dynamically to the changing external context. Heriot-Watt's RBL model will ensure you can begin – and complete – the academic year on schedule, wherever you may be in the world. As conditions change, it is anticipated that you will be able to access on-campus learning whilst other students may begin their studies wholly online. Wherever you access your learning, you will remain connected to your classmates, sharing and developing your studies together as part of our Heriot-Watt global learning community.

Our RBL approach is about more than the mix of on-campus and online learning. At the heart of our approach is an emphasis on student wellbeing and study support to help you engage in your studies with confidence, recognising the disrupted learning journeys all our students have had throughout 2020/21.

Our approach focuses on building connections and encouraging active learning. You will be part of a global community which offers academic support, vibrant ideas and friendship. Your classmates will want to share ideas with you, engage in conversations about your subject, and connect across a host of other interests. And our academic and student support teams are here to offer you guidance and support every step of the way.

## WHAT WILL RBL MEAN FOR YOUR STUDIES?

Our RBL approach will ensure you can actively participate in your studies and the wider University community in a range of ways. You'll be able to access study resources and support via your course hub on the VLE, work with classmates through online webinars, tutorials, discussion forums, collaborating on projects, sharing insights from practical activities.

When campus spaces become accessible, you will be able to make use of the resources there and take part in on-campus learning activities such as labs, studios, and small group sessions. However, the blend of online and on-campus will remain important throughout the year, keeping your whole group connected and learning together.

## RESPONSIVE BLENDED LEARNING IN PRACTICE FOR STUDENTS



## RBL AND ASSESSMENT

Coursework is submitted online and final assessments are mainly in the format of Take-Home Exams which are also conducted online. Your course team will give you plenty of opportunity to discuss and develop your learning and will support you to prepare for assessments.

## WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

Your Personal Tutor will be a key point of contact and will guide you throughout your year of study. And there's a wealth of support available to you across the University such as careers advice, wellbeing and disability support, study skills and library resources. Spend some time exploring all the services, people and resources that are here to help you.

Once you enrol for the year, you can begin to familiarise yourself with the online campus – the tools, resources and support available to help you succeed in your studies and enjoy your time at Heriot-Watt. Heriot-Watt uses a mix of tools to support active, inspiring online learning and to keep you connected to the University and your classmates, including Collaborate Ultra and Microsoft Teams. Take some time to get to know these tools so you can participate with confidence in live class sessions and activities, focusing on the people and ideas, and not worrying about the tech!

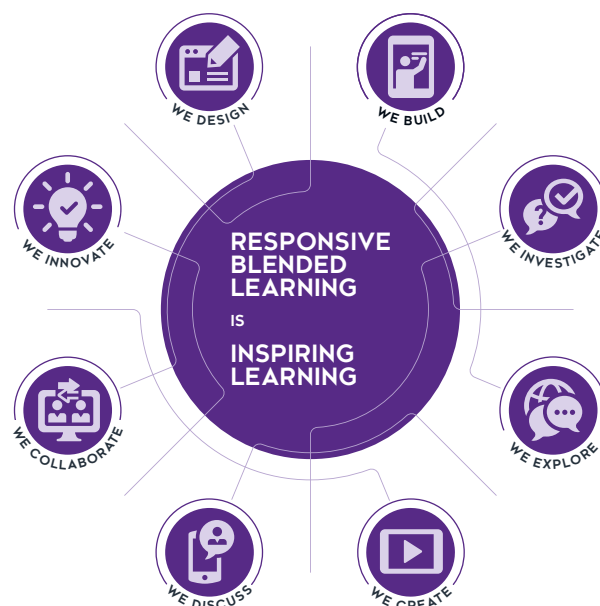
*Most importantly, be kind to yourself as you adapt to new ways of learning. This is an unsettling time for everyone. Give yourself time to adapt to a new learning environment.*

Most importantly, be kind to yourself as you adapt to new ways of learning. Give yourself time to adapt to a new learning environment. Be proactive with communicating with your classmates and University friends. And don't hesitate to ask questions and contact your course team, personal tutor or other contacts if you're unsure of anything.

## RESPONSIVE BLENDED LEARNING IS INSPIRING LEARNING

Building collaboration, learning communities, and friendships with others in your classes will be key to getting the most from your time at University - both on campus and online. In doing so, you will be able to develop your passion for your subject and build your sense of belonging to our Heriot-Watt learning community.

Our Responsive Blended Learning approach will enable you to do this with confidence. Take time now to explore the RBL guides and online learning tools that are available to help you make a positive start to your studies this year.



## FURTHER RESOURCES

Further information about Responsive Blended Learning can be found here:

<https://lta.hw.ac.uk/rbl-student-resources/>

Keep up to date with the latest information on the University FAQs page:

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/coronavirus/faqs.htm>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License