Heriot-Watt University

Follow-up Report to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)

June 2016

Preface

One year after publication of their ELIR Outcome and Technical Reports, institutions are asked to submit a Follow-up Report to QAA Scotland. These reports are also submitted to the Scottish Funding Council. Follow-up Reports are written in the institution's own words and require to be endorsed by the institution's Governing Body prior to publication on the QAA website. Guidance on the content and structure is provided by QAA Scotland.

Institutions are asked to focus on the action they have taken since the review and to include an indication of the effectiveness of that action. ELIR reports highlight positive practice as well as areas for development, and institutions are encouraged to comment on key areas of activity relating to good practice that they have prioritised since the ELIR.

Follow-up Reports are discussed with institutions as part of the ELIR annual discussion meetings. They also form the basis of a follow-up event which involves institutions that were reviewed around the same time coming together to explore the ways they have responded to their ELIR outcomes. This activity is intended to emphasise the enhancement-led nature of the review method.

Heriot-Watt University

**Follow-Up Report to the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR)
June 2016**

1. Introduction

1.1 Endorsement of Report

This Follow-Up Report provides the formal response of Heriot-Watt University to the Outcome and Technical Reports of its 2015 Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR).

The Report was endorsed by the Court of Heriot-Watt University at its meeting on 27 June 2016.

1.2 ELIR Outcomes

The Enhancement-Led Institutional Review of Heriot-Watt University was undertaken in January-March 2015, and the Outcome and Technical Reports were formally published and made public in July 2015.

The findings of the University's ELIR indicated that "the University has **effective** arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience".

The University was delighted with the outcomes of its ELIR, particularly since the areas of positive practice highlighted by the review team were seen by the University as being fundamental to the ethos of "One Heriot-Watt" and of Heriot-Watt as a global institution:

- The University is implementing a clear strategic vision to become a genuinely international institution;
- The flexible provision of learning opportunities can allow students to switch easily between different modes of study and location;
- The University has taken a consultative and collaborative approach to ensure staff and student engagement with, and ownership of, its new Learning and Teaching Strategy;
- The University's global ethos is embedded in the institutional culture and operational processes, and, therefore, is recognised as part of everyday practice by staff and students
- There is a constructive and effective partnership between the University and the Heriot-Watt University Student Union;
- The University has developed a number of mechanisms for ensuring the effective management of academic standards, including securing these standards across the diversity of its worldwide provision.

The outcomes of the ELIR have been widely disseminated across all of the University's campus locations.

1.3 Consideration of ELIR Reports and Ongoing Management of ELIR Outcomes

Actions related to the University's ELIR (both those identified through the Review itself and by the University in its Reflective Analysis) have been managed, at the institutional level, by the Learning and Teaching Board. In the period immediately following an ELIR, the Learning and Teaching Board approves the initial Action Plan (the first plan following the 2015 ELIR was approved by the Board on 10 June 2015) and receives regular updates on progress. In between ELIR events, the Board considers an annual update (each January) on ELIR-related actions.

In addition to the Learning and Teaching Board, the Action Plans and Reports have been considered, and endorsed, by the following committees: Quality and Standards Committee; University Executive; the Senate; the Court. Independent monitoring of actions has been provided by the University's Audit and Risk Committee.

2. Preparation and Consideration of the ELIR Follow-Up Report

The ELIR Follow-Up Report was produced by the Academic Registry (Quality and External Partnerships) for consideration by the Learning and Teaching Board at its meeting on 11 May 2016 and by the Senate on 11 May 2016. A final version of the report was considered by the University Executive on 13 June 2016 and the Learning and Teaching Board on 15 June 2016.

Contributions to the initial drafts were also provided by the University's ELIR Steering Group.

Students are represented on all of the aforementioned committees and groups through the Student President, who is supported by a staff member within the HWU Student Union, the Student Engagement Manager.

3. Consideration of Areas for Development

The ELIR Reports invited the University to consider the five areas for development. The sections in italics have been replicated from the ELIR Outcome Report (a more detailed explanation of each can be found in the Technical Report). This section provides a report on how the University has responded to each of the areas for development.

3.1 Learning resources, support and environment – *review availability and monitor student access to online journals and eBooks, ensuring that students are fully aware of the ways in which they can access these resources. The University is asked to ensure that there is alignment between the demands of curricula and the resources available to support students achieving learning outcomes. In respect of the Dubai Campus, the University should make progress to improve the learning environment and learning support provision, giving appropriate considerate to student views.*

Information Services has undertaken a comprehensive range of actions related to student access to, and awareness of, online journals and eBooks, and stated, in a response to the ELIR actions provided in August 2015, that "we can now state that 100% of our e-resources have global availability". At the annual Learning and Teaching Strategy Discussion Meeting with Information Services (held on 20 April 2016), it was confirmed that issues of student access to materials had been resolved.

Multiple channels of information are provided to students with advice on how to access resources, eg web-pages, VLE courses, inductions, tours and in-class presentations and membership of Student-Staff Liaison Committees. As a means of ensuring accessibility to all students, Power Hour sessions (eg on "Finding and Evaluating Information") have been made available as video podcasts to all students. Recent Academic Reviews at the Malaysia Campus have indicated that there were no student concerns with regard to the Library and related resources.

The University's five-year plan includes the appointment of 25 additional staff at the Dubai Campus, half of whom have been, or will be, appointed in 2015/16. The post of Academic Development Co-ordinator has been appointed, complementing the existing support provided by the Centre for Academic Leadership and Development. The Effective Learning Advisor continues to provide direct support to students.

Various actions have been undertaken or are in plan regarding the enhancement of learning and teaching facilities at the Dubai Campus, including: group, individual and specialised study areas; refurbished classrooms, including IT provision. The need for a new, larger Library remains an area for consideration within the longer term planning for the Dubai Campus.

The Dubai Student Survey (mirroring the NSS), the Course Feedback Survey, Academic Reviews and Annual Monitoring and Review continue to provide institutional mechanisms by which students

at the Dubai Campus can make their views known regarding the learning environment and learning support provision.

3.2 Postgraduate research student induction and training – *ensure all postgraduate research students receive effective and consistent induction irrespective of when or where they commence their studies. In addition, the University is asked to review the policy and training provision for research students who undertake teaching related activities to ensure all students fulfilling this role are trained and supported to do so, and that there is appropriate linkage between training and teaching opportunities.*

Since the ELIR review took place, progress has been made in enhancing the induction and support for postgraduate research students at Heriot-Watt University in a number of ways, as follows:

- An additional "Postgraduate Research Student Induction" event organised by the Centre for Academic Leadership & Development has been added to the Semester 2 'Research Futures' programme to accommodate new postgraduate researchers who commence their research studies after the University Induction which takes place annually in October. The first delivery of this Semester 2 Induction ran in March 2016 and was attended by 20 new postgraduate students from all academic Schools at Heriot-Watt University.

- Heriot-Watt University has participated in the national PRES survey ('Postgraduate Research Experience Survey': https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/research/surveys/postgraduate-research-experience-survey-pres) between March and May 2015 and the analysis of feedback from postgraduate student participants is being undertaken by the Centre for Academic Leadership & Development. Initial analysis indicates a growing level of satisfaction amongst the postgraduate student body about the induction they received from the University and their School at the commencement of their research degree:

PRES 2015 responses to the statement "I received an appropriate induction to my research degree programme"

Year of Study	% (Definitely agree & mostly agree)	% (Definitely disagree & mostly disagree)	*No. of student responses*
1st Year	77%	8%	*86*
2nd Year	72%	20%	*88*
3rd Year	56%	30%	*62*

(Interpretation – overall satisfaction in induction has improved from 56% of student respondents three years ago, to 77% in the past year. Overall dissatisfaction has decreased from 30% to 8% over the same time period).

- A 'PGR Lifecycle Review' is being undertaken to identify key issues for PGR students at Heriot-Watt University (e.g. thesis completion times). A working group has been formed and surveys are being designed to collate further information from both students and staff.

- A 'Researcher Development Consultancy Exercise' has been undertaken by the Centre for Academic Leadership & Development with key senior academic stakeholders from all Schools to inform ongoing development and alignment of its researcher development training provision.

- Additional, new PGR student Supervisor Training is being provided by the Centre for Academic Leadership and Development in response to demand from the Schools/University. The first of the new workshops will take place on 16th May 2016 and will target new, aspiring and experienced Supervisors of postgraduate research students.

- The revised LEADS programme has been re-accredited by the HEA and >120 PGR students from all academic Schools have undertaken the programme in the past year. Academic staff have joined the tutor team to deliver discipline-specific aspects of the programme and engagement between the Centre for Academic Leadership & Development and senior representatives of the Schools (e.g. Directors of Learning & Teaching) is ongoing. This aims to progress further enhancement (such as further accessibility to the LEADS programme for students from distant campuses).

- Additional development opportunities for staff and postgraduate research students have been provided at the Dubai campus (e.g. Learning & Teaching Away-Day) via the newly appointed Academic Development Coordinator who works closely with more senior colleagues from the University's Centre for Academic Leadership & Development. Recruitment to a similar position at the Malaysia campus is currently underway.

3.3 Sharing practice on distance learning – *consider the ways in which the existing enhancement action plans, or systematic processes, could be used to share good practice, both current and emerging, in distance learning provision. This is in the context of the University delivering a very significant volume of distance learning provision.*

The alignment of the University's processes for School Annual Monitoring and Review and for annual review of the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy has had a positive effect in improving the sharing of good practice in key areas such as distance learning. Through the summary reports, the meetings with Schools and relevant Professional Services and through discussions at key committees such as the Learning and Teaching Board and the Secretary's Board practices in distance learning have been disseminated much more widely.

As a consequence, one of the key areas for discussion by the Learning and Teaching Board at its annual Strategy Away Day on 8 March 2016 was on Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching, which featured a presentation and discussion on the developments of Edinburgh Business School (the University's largest provider of distance learning) in areas such as online tuition, e-assessment and adaptive learning.

In September 2015, a VLE Manager was appointed within Information Services: the postholder has had a positive influence in sharing practice in distance learning, particularly through the establishment of a specialist interest group on Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching and the re-development of the VLE Management Group.

The University will be conducting its first Thematic Review (see section 6) on the topic of Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching in May 2016, which will draw in good practice from across the sector and within the University. As part of thinking about the new Strategic Plan for the University, the Principal has identified learning technology and new online global postgraduate provision as key areas to consider; existing practices in distance learning will inform such developments.

3.4 Student representation – *progress plans to create representative structures for students studying with an Approved Learning Partner or through independent distance learning, building on positive representation systems evident in the Edinburgh and Dubai campuses, and emerging in Malaysia.*

Analysis of best practice, both internally and externally, regarding the representation of Approved Learning Partner (ALP) and independent distance learning (IDL) students was undertaken by the Quality and External Partnerships team within Academic Registry. This analysis informed a discussion paper which was considered by the Student Learning Experience Committee at its meeting on 11 November 2015. The Committee agreed that ALP and IDL student representation should form part of the planned Student Administration Revitalisation Programme (SARP), which was launched in January 2016 (see section 5.1).

At the Learning and Teaching Board Away Day on 8 March 2016, the Student Union chose as its item for the "strategic student matters" slot on the agenda the theme of ALP and IDL student representation. The key areas covered were:

- Current representative structures
- Reasons for the focus on IDL and ALP student representation
- Possible directions
- Implications for the Student Union and for the University

At the Away Day, it was agreed that Student Union and key individuals on Learning and Teaching Board, whose Schools were active in IDL and ALP activity, should meet as a short-term working group to propose a common view of how to respond to the issues and questions identified at the Away Day. In this way, the issues would not just be the responsibility of the Student Union to resolve.

Directors of Learning and Teaching and Student Union representatives have volunteered to be part of a short-term working group (2 meetings) to take this forward and to report to the Learning and Teaching Board.

Since the Student Learning Experience Committee (reporting to the Learning and Teaching Board) had previously considered ALP and IDL student representation, this issued was delegated by LTB to SLEC. At its meeting on 6 April 2016, Student Learning Experience Committee considered a range of proposals and papers related to ALP and IDL representation, including comments from students provided as part of the new Annual Survey (March 2016). The Student Learning Experience Committee agreed, in addition to the actions approved by the Learning and Teaching Board at its Away Day, that the working group should meet once the new Student President was in post (from 1 June 2016).

The working group will be informed by the outcomes of the new Annual Survey (March 2016), which included questions for ALP and IDL students on representation, and the student survey undertaken in spring 2016 by Edinburgh Business School, which likewise included questions on representation.

3.5 Student transcripts – *consider recording the name of partner organisations and location of study on student award certificates or transcripts for those students studying with an Approved Learning Partner. In doing so, the University should consider the impact of its current policy on the clarity and transparency of information provided to stakeholders.*

In various discussions immediately following the ELIR visit, consideration was again given to the location of study on awards and transcripts – an issue which the University had highlighted to the ELIR Team that had been considered on four occasions by the Senate and the Quality and Standards Committee during 2008/09. The University's position, namely that awards and transcripts do not record the location/mode of study, was reaffirmed in the ELIR2 Follow-On Report in June 2012 and again by the Senate in 2013.

This approach reflects the Senate approved policy of "one HWU degree worldwide", which the University has been implementing through:

- The fundamental principle of "identical academic standards" (as articulated in summary form in L+T Briefing Paper No.9, November 2013; No.13, March 2014)
- Policy on Programme Titles, Learning Outcomes and Courses, May/June 2012
- Academic Management Structures (implemented Sept 2014)
- *Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Mode, Multi-Location Programmes* (February 2014)
- *Key Principles for Learning and Teaching* (see L+T Briefing Paper, No.14, July 2014)

The University's position on location of study has been affirmed by senior management at recent PSRB accreditation events.

In response to the matter of location of study being highlighted again in ELIR3 (albeit this time more specifically with reference only to Approved Learning Partners), the issue was considered by both the Quality and Standards Committee and the Senate in the period October-December 2015.

At its meeting on 14 October 2015, the Quality and Standards Committee agreed to recommend to the Senate that the University should continue in its current practice of not recording on certificates and transcripts the details of where the programme was delivered.

At its meeting on 2 December 2015, the Senate endorsed this recommendation, noting (Senate Minutes 15/93):

The Senate agreed that this practice reflected the University's approach that a programme would be of the same academic standards regardless of where it was delivered.

At its meeting on 16 December 2015, the Quality and Standards Committee confirmed that, although the ELIR Report had focused on Approved Learning Partners, the policy of not recording location of study on awards or transcripts "applied to all University awards, regardless of mode or location of study" (QSC Minute 87.1).

4. Consideration of Other Issues in the ELIR Technical Report

Within the ELIR Technical Report, there were several areas which the University was invited to consider in addition to the formal "areas for development". In a number of instances, these are addressed elsewhere in this report; here, a brief update is provided on the other matters:

1.4 Improving Communication to Students on Campus Transfers
Through its centrally managed and co-ordinated Go Global Programme and Go Global Team, improvements have been made in communication and application processes.

1.5 Using the Student Survey Framework across all Modes and Locations
Through the introduction of the new Annual Survey and the re-development of the existing Course Feedback Survey (twice per academic year), the University has more systematically sought and utilised the views of students across all modes and locations of study.

1.6 Increasing Pace of Implementation of Graduate Attributes
The University acknowledges that the pace of implementation of Graduate Attributes had been relatively slow following the approval of the Graduate Attributes by the Learning and Teaching Board in April 2013. This was due to the need to address other priorities related to learning and teaching. In 2015/16, the Learning and Teaching Board has, through its Curriculum Working Group, commenced a series of workstreams around Graduate Attributes (framed by an overall action plan). The annual Learning and Teaching Colloquium (held on 28 April and featuring speakers from the University of Glasgow) provided a forum for the launch of the Graduate Attributes to staff; similar events are planned for students once the new session commences.

1.7 Staff Development for Approved Tutors at Approved Learning Partners
The ELIR Team had commented positively on the GlobalPD programme in developing new, inexperienced Approved Tutors at a selection of the University's Approved Learning Partners, and had invited the University to consider extending the programme to other ALP Approved Tutors.

The University established a working group (from Learning and Teaching Board and from the International Strategy Board) to consider staff development for ALP Approved Tutors (who are employees of the partner and not of Heriot-Watt University). A framework for ALP Approved Tutor development was approved by the Learning and Teaching Board at its meeting on 6 April 2016, and has been incorporated into the ALP Contract Agreement. For the next stage, relevant Schools will undertake a mapping of provision to the framework (this has already been completed by the Edinburgh Business School as a means of illustrating how the framework could operate in practice).

1.8 Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Academic Councils in reporting to the Senate on Academic Matters
The effectiveness of the Academic Councils in reporting to the Senate on academic matters has been evaluated as part of the effectiveness review of the Senate and its committees (see Section 6). The Academic Councils will continue to be part of the revised committee structure under the Senate: the terms of reference will be reviewed with a view to improving their operation and their integration within the University's overall governance.

1.9 Externality in Programme Design and Approval
External members have been appointed to the University's programme approvals committees (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies Committees). As part of the recently launched Programme Approval Management System (PAMS), the programme approval templates are being re-designed and reference to external involvement in programme design will be incorporated.

1.10 Making External Examiner Reports routinely available to Students
In addition to the established process of considering External Examiner Reports through School Studies Committees featuring student representatives, External Examiner Reports have been made routinely available to all students via various mechanisms, such as VISION (VLE), and contact details for requesting access to reports have been placed on student webpages and the External Examiner webpages. At its meeting on October 2015, the Quality and Standards Committee approved the process for making External Examiner Reports available to students.

1.11 Introduce Externality into Bespoke, Interim Academic Review in Malaysia
The University has in place an interim, bespoke Academic Review process for programmes at the Malaysia Campus, which was introduced in order to meet requirements of the Malaysian

Qualifications Agency (MQA) and which in turn informs the Self-Review Report required for full MQA accreditation of programmes.

This interim, bespoke process features at present an internal review team (staff and students). The University has agreed to introduce external members on to the review team from 2017: a similar process was followed at the Dubai Campus (externals members of teams conducting subject reviews in Dubai), whereby Academic Review evolved as programmes became more established.

1.12 Engagement of Colleagues across Campuses in Decision-Making

The Academic Management Structures (see 5.4) have been instrumental in engaging a wider range of colleagues across campuses in decision-making. There has been increasing representation from all campus locations on key institutional committees, facilitated by Skype. One of the driving themes of the effectiveness review of the Senate (see section 6) was to "ensure that all of the University's campuses can actively participate in academic governance" through, for example, meetings being held at 9.15 am.

1.13 Better Understanding of Benefits of Partnerships

The University was invited to consider how it could better promote understanding amongst campus-based students of the benefits brought by partnership arrangements. This is an area requiring further development, although initial progress has been made through, for example, the new Annual Survey and the revised Course Feedback Survey in raising awareness of the contributions of different student groups. The work of the Student Union on the representation of Approved Learning Partner students and independent distance learning students (see section 3.4 above) is likewise increasing awareness amongst campus-based students.

5. Update on Areas of Positive Practice

The ELIR Reports highlighted six areas of positive practice. This section provides an update on how the University developed further the areas of positive practice.

5.1 Effective implementation of clear vision and strategy

The University is continuing to align its processes to operate effectively as one institution worldwide: updates are provided below in relation to student and staff mobility between different locations. In January 2016, the University launched its Student Administration Revitalisation Programme (SARP), as one of its key initiatives within the newly established "One Heriot-Watt Projects" (transformational change projects which address major issues relating to the effectiveness of global systems and processes).

SARP is, however, much more than systems enhancement: it will enable the University to modernise its key student administration processes and to improve the wider student experience, as it focuses on the student lifecycle as a whole. It will address the needs of all modes and locations of study, and aims to put in place more unified systems and processes.

Through the leadership of the new Principal and Vice-Chancellor, the University has now begun the process of developing a new institutional Strategic Plan. As per the previous Plan, consultation and engagement with the whole University community will be an integral part of the development process.

5.2 Flexible provision of learning opportunities

At the time of the ELIR visit, the University had in place a Campus Transfers Policy and Procedures, through which a small number of students had opted to spend a semester or academic year at another campus location (primarily Dubai to Edinburgh; a larger number had undertaken a permanent change of study location, ie moving to another campus location to complete their programme). Shortly after the ELIR, the Learning and Teaching Board developed a framework and key principles for a "Global Student Programme", which was launched in 2015/16 as the "Go Global" initiative,

The central "Go Global Team" provides an institutional locus for promoting and managing transfers between campuses, and the incorporation into its remit of scholarships and bursaries is ensuring that a campus transfer is an affordable option for a much wider range of students than previously. The

increasing programme provision at the Malaysia Campus has facilitated a large number of transfers from Edinburgh in the first year (some 30 students).

The Edinburgh Business School has further enhanced the flexibility of its provision: independent distance learning students can opt to attend a local Approved Learning Partner or one of three campus locations, providing a truly "mix and match" experience.

5.3 Staff and student engagement in institutional strategy

Through the Learning and Teaching Board, the University has continued to engage staff and students in the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The documented strategic process incorporates a dynamic, iterative consultation and engagement through: review and updating of the Learning and Teaching Strategy; annual meetings with relevant Professional Services and all Schools (involving student representatives).

Consultation with staff and students has recently resulted in two major developments: a University Retention Strategy and Operational Plan; a re-design and re-launch of the Heriot-Watt Graduate Attributes:
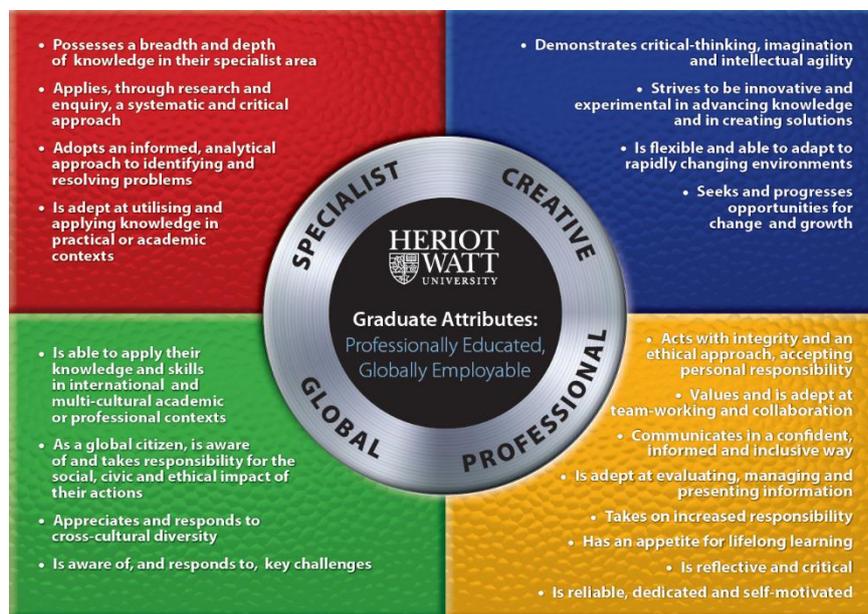
5.4 Culture of internationalisation

The University's global ethos has become further embedded in the institutional culture and operational processes. The emphasis on "One Heriot-Watt" worldwide has been further strengthened by the new Principal and Vice-Chancellor in all his communications and his visits to each campus.

As mentioned in 5.2 above, the University has launched a "Go Global" initiative, which provides a central co-ordination point for promoting and managing transfers between campuses, enabling students to spend a semester or academic year at another campus location. A brand re-design has been undertaken and the key messages of "see the world, then change it" are being promoted to applicants and students.

There has been a greater increase in staff mobility between campuses, which cultivates the spread of the Heriot-Watt global ethos and has been hugely beneficial in establishing relationships. From an operational perspective, improvements in Skype and in facilities for multi-campus meetings have facilitated increased interaction between colleagues across campuses. Cross-campus student projects have continued to develop across a number of Schools.

The Academic Management Structures, which provide a global framework for learning and teaching, have matured and become further embedded, and provide a key mechanism for facilitating cross-campus collaboration in areas such as course design and delivery, and assessment. A growing

number of Course Leaders are now based at the Dubai Campus (previously, the post of Course Leader was exclusively UK-based). A review of the Academic Management Structures (AMS) was conducted in late 2015/early 2016: the review concluded that while the AMS was operating effectively, there was a need for further development in relation to the cross-campus Programme Boards of Studies and to the role of Senior Director of Studies. The Learning and Teaching Board is co-ordinating these additional developments.

5.5 Student partnership

The University has continued to collaborative constructively and effectively with students through the Heriot-Watt University Student Union.

A review of the academic mentoring system has been undertaken and revised process – to be relaunched in September 2016 as the Personal Tutor system – has been designed, in consultation with students, to address some of the inconsistencies between Schools and campuses. A new Welcome Week Survey (introduced in September 2015) was used to inform the re-development of the mentoring/tutoring scheme.

With regard to the student experience, the University introduced in March 2016 a global Annual Survey to gather the student view worldwide, across all modes and locations of study, and to provide a basis for taking forward improvements to the student learning and wider experience.

Students have been actively involved in all initiatives taken forward by the Learning and Teaching Board, including: the refurbishment of learning and teaching space; the development of the Retention Strategy; Policy on Coursework Feedback; design of new surveys (Welcome Week and Annual Survey); the re-design and re-launch of the Graduate Attributes; the introduction of a series of Learning and Teaching Quick Guides (with leaflets for students and for staff in areas such as Feedback on Assessment and Graduate Attributes).

5.6 Management of academic standards across delivery modes and locations

The consistent and effective management of academic standards across all modes and locations remains a fundamental *modus operandi* for the University, encapsulated in the key principle of "identical academic standards" worldwide. The Academic Management Structures, which have become further embedded and are operatively effectively (see 5.4 above), have been instrumental in facilitating the global management of standards. Reports from External Examiners and Chief External Examiners have commented positively on the increasing alignment between programmes in different locations in terms of levels of student performance.

Following the ELIR review, the University has been invited to speak at a number of national and international conferences on its management of quality and standards globally, and it is clear that this is an area in which the University is recognised as being world-leading.

The University is currently undertaking a review of its *Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes* to ensure its continued currency and its fitness for purpose.

6. Recent and Planned Developments

Since the conclusion of the University's ELIR and the publication of the ELIR Reports, there have been several major developments which have shaped, and are continuing to do so, the strategic direction of Heriot-Watt.

A new Principal and Vice-Chancellor was appointed with effect from 1 September 2015. In late April 2016, the Principal launched, through a series of Open Meetings on the theme of "Thinking about our Future", the process for the development of a new University Strategic Plan. In parallel, the Learning and Teaching Board will begin to develop a new institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy. While this process has only just commenced, there are several key areas related to learning and teaching which the Principal has invited the University community to consider:

- New offerings of postgraduate taught programmes
- Multi-disciplinary provision

- Use of learning technology
- Innovation in learning and teaching

In 2015/16, the Secretary of the University commenced a review of the effectiveness of the Senate and the academic committee structure. The review outcomes and recommendations were presented to the Senate for consideration at its meeting on 11 May 2016. The overarching review outcomes were as follows:

- The Review concluded that, overall, the academic governance of the University can be judged to be reasonably effective;
- Some necessary modifications have been identified to enhance that effectiveness by building on strengths and addressing weaknesses. The Senate and the Court can then be confident that the University's academic governance arrangements can be held up to external scrutiny.

In terms of partnerships, West London College (an Associate Campus of the University) and Heriot-Watt University jointly agreed to move to a teach-out arrangement for the University-approved programmes at the College from 1 October 2015. Teach-out arrangements are being overseen by a joint Management Oversight Committee – this was noted to be satisfactory during the College's Annual Monitoring for Educational Oversight visit on 6 October 2015.

With regard to learning and teaching, in addition to the developments referred to in preceding sections, the University has introduced in 2015/16 a Thematic Review process: a topic-led approach to the institution-wide review of learning and teaching matters which have been identified (from internal and external drivers) as key priorities for the institution. The process has an enhancement focus and purpose.

The topics for the first of the five-year programmes of Thematic Review are as follows:

Academic Year	Topic for Thematic Review
2015/16	Technology-enhanced learning and teaching
2016/17	Assessment
2017/18	ALP and IDL student learning experience; PGT student learning experience
2018/19	Induction, Transition and Retention
2019/20	Employability and Graduate Attributes

There may be modifications to the above topic list due to emerging priorities in learning and teaching, both within HWU and across the HE sector.

7. Further Information

Further information on, or questions related to, any matter in this report may be directed to:

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