ELIR@HWU: Progress and Planning

Quality Assurance Agency Review of HWU

The Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) will undertake its third Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR3) of Heriot-Watt University in 2014/15. The process involves submitting documentation, primarily a Reflective Analysis, and a 2 part review visit.

HWU’s ELIR preparations are being managed by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Academic Registry, with oversight being provided by an ELIR Steering Group and the Learning and Teaching Board.

ELIR: Being Informed, Getting Involved

Staff and student engagement is essential to the success of ELIR, not just participating in meeting with the Review Team, but getting involved in the preparations and being aware of what the ELIR review entails and its outcomes.

There are opportunities for staff and students at the five campuses to participate, as well as for West London College, and for students enrolled with a partner organisation or studying by independent distance learning. See page 4 for further information.
Importance of ELIR

In terms of importance, ELIR is seen as the Learning and Teaching equivalent of Research Excellence Framework. ELIR outcomes impact on the University’s reputation.

The overarching effectiveness judgement of the University’s arrangements for managing academic standards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience will be publically communicated. The Outcome Report is intended for applicants, employers, accreditting organisations etc.

ELIR focuses on the University’s approaches to:

- Enhancement, and how it is implemented at all levels and in all locations
- Self-evaluation, particularly how it evaluates its strengths, potential risks to quality and standards, improvements to the student learning experience
- Partnership with students

There are six areas for review in ELIR:

1) Institutional Strategic Framework
2) Student Learning Experience
3) Learning and Teaching Enhancement
4) Academic Standards
5) Self-Evaluation and Management of Information
6) Collaborative Activity

ELIR considers the experience of all students: UG, PGT, PGR, UK/overseas campus; students enrolled with a partner; independent distance learners.
International and Collaborative Activity

The ELIR Team will be keen to find out about the student experience at the Dubai and Malaysia campuses: academic and pastoral support; student representation structures.

The staff experience is also likely to be an area of interest: how do staff interact with colleagues in the UK and Dubai? What opportunities for development in learning and teaching practice are provided?

In HWU’s previous ELIR, the management of our Approved Learning Partners and the ALP student experience were key areas of interest, and are likely to be again. Our Associate Campus, West London College, may also be highlighted for review, as might our processes for identifying and managing cross-location diversity.

The diversity and scale of Heriot-Watt’s international activity is likely to be a key theme for the ELIR review.

Global Impact of ELIR

A positive outcome from the University’s QAA ELIR review will be taken into consideration by overseas government authorities, particularly those in Dubai and Malaysia.

The Quality Assurance Agency UK has a Memorandum of Understanding with Dubai’s Knowledge + Human Development Authority.

ELIR Outcomes impact on overseas government accreditation

HWU KEY ELIR DATES

Submission of documents to QAA Scotland, 14 November 2014

Review Visit: 2 Parts

- Part 1: 28+29 January 2015
- Part 2: w/c 16 March 2015

Key Themes Letter: 27 March 2015

Draft Reports: 30 May 2015
Getting Involved in ELIR Preparations

Students
ELIR considers the learning experience of all students, so all students are involved to an extent. The Student Union is running Focus Groups for campus-based students, and a questionnaire will be distributed to ALP and IDL students to seek their views on their learning experience.

Staff
Many staff members (academic and professional services) have already been involved in ELIR through drafting sections of the key document, the Reflective Analysis, or participating in briefing sessions at University committees.

A presentation will be distributed to Schools and Professional Services for Directors of Learning and Teaching and Directors of Services to encourage discussion of, and gain feedback on, key ELIR-related issues.

There will be further opportunities, for example, through commenting on the draft Reflective Analysis and providing local examples of activities related to the key areas of review, eg initiatives undertaken to enhance the student learning experience or to share good practice in learning and teaching.

Student representatives and members of academic staff involved in quality assurance and quality enhancement will meet the ELIR Review Team during Part 1. Nominations will be made via your Head of School and Director of Learning and Teaching.

Until the end of Part 1, we won’t know which staff and students will meet the Review Team during Part 2. However, it is likely that meetings will involve a range of students without representative roles (UG, PGT and PGR with a teaching role), academic staff (early career, newly promoted) and professional services involved in supporting the student learning experience.