The Learning and Teaching Board

Minutes

Wednesday 6 April 2016

Present:
Professor J W Sawkins (Chair)
Ms P J Calabrese Dr M A Storey
Professor T M Chrisp Dr S Thomas
Professor S J Dewar Dr G B Thomson
Professor J Hansen Dr M King (Clerk)
Professor J M Ritchie

In attendance
Ms E J Bailey (Minute 36) Dr J W Sanders
Dr R Neiland (Minutes 38 + 39)

Apologies:
Ms H Frances Dr M Sargeant
Professor L Galloway Mr P Travill
Ms D McCaig

32 Welcome and Apologies

32.1 The Chair welcomed to the meeting: Dr G B Thomson, who was attending her first meeting of the Board as Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Engineering and Physical Sciences; Dr J W Sanders, Director of Academic Quality, as deputy for School of Management and Languages; Ms E Bailey, Planning Manager, who was attending for the item on Retention and Progression (Minute 36); Dr R Neiland, who was attending for the items on ALP Tutor Development and Learning and Teaching Colloquium (Minutes 38 and 39).

32.2 Apologies for absence were as recorded above.

33 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board approved the Minutes of the meeting of 2 March 2016.

34 Matters Arising Not Otherwise on the Agenda

34.1 The Board noted the report on matters arising from the meeting on 2 March 2016.

34.2 Alternative Progression Routes on Undergraduate Programmes at Overseas Campuses (Minute 18.2)

The Board noted that the proposal for a general Honours degree for overseas campuses was still under development and was currently involving discussions with the Associate Heads of School at the Malaysia Campus. A proposal would be presented to the Undergraduate Studies Committee in due course.

34.3 Inter-School Transfers (Minute 18.3)

The Board noted that the comments from the Studies Committees on the proposed revisions to the Inter-School Transfer policies and procedures had been taken on board by the Clerk of Student Learning Experience Committee and a revised proposal was being produced.

34.4 Teaching Excellence (Minute 22)

The Board noted that the discussion on Teaching Excellence would be continued by the School of Textiles and Design at their Learning and Teaching Committee; other Schools might conduct similar discussions.
The Board noted that the NSS 2016 response rate had increased to 68.0% as at 1 April. The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) thanked all those who had been actively involved in encouraging greater participation and highlighted the need for further efforts to reach the 75% threshold in a number of areas.

35 Learning and Teaching Strategy

The Board noted the following updates regarding the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

35.1 Updating Learning and Teaching Strategies and Enhancement Plans (Schools and Services)

The Board noted that meetings were now taking place with Schools and relevant Professional Services regarding their updated Learning and Teaching Strategies and Enhancement Plans. At this stage, AMR/LTS meetings had been held with two Schools and three Professional Services. It was noted that a summary report would be provided to the Board for consideration at its meeting on 15 June 2016.

35.2 Committees and Groups

35.2.1 The Board noted the updates from the various groups involved in supporting the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, which included recent meetings of the Learning and Teaching Administrators Forum and the Student Survey Management Group. As per the recommendation from the Student Survey Management Group, it was agreed that Directors of Learning and Teaching should promote PTES, which would be launched on 28 April 2016.

35.2.2 The Board noted the revised committee/reporting structure for the Learning and Teaching Board, which had resulted from the discontinuation of the Learning Environment Committee and the Learning Spaces Management Group. The Terms of Reference of the Student Learning Experience Committee had been revised to incorporate the relevant aspects of the remits of both groups, and would be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 6 April 2016, with a view to approval by the Board at its meeting on 11 May 2016.

35.3 Graduate Attributes

The Board noted various developments with regard to the HWU Graduate Attributes:

- An Internal Communications Plan on Graduate Attributes had been developed by the Quality and External Partnerships and Communications teams. The Plan was aimed at HWU staff; a similar plan needed to be developed for internal communications to students;
- Posters had now been produced and were being disseminated across all campuses; the mousemats would be available in due course;
- A presentation on the Graduate Attributes, using the new visual, was provided by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) to the Senate at its meeting on 23 March 2016 and to the University Executive at its meeting on 4 April 2016;
- A Learning and Teaching Quick Guide for Students on Graduate Attributes had been produced (see Minute 40); a similar guide for staff would be made available for the Learning and Teaching Colloquium on 28 April 2016 (see Minute 39);
- An editable version of the Graduate Attributes visual had been made available to Schools so that discipline teams could adapt the text around the four attributes to suit their own subject areas; this could be done as a cross-campus teaching team activity;
- The report from the Curriculum Working Group on Graduate Attributes could provide Directors of Learning and Teaching with some ideas as to how they could begin to get support for, and embed, the Graduate Attributes within their School.

35.4 Learning and Teaching Academy

The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) provided a verbal report on the proposed
Learning and Teaching Academy: the University Executive had received a further presentation at its meeting on 21 March 2016; the proposal was continuing to develop in response to recommendations from the University Executive and regular reports would be provided to the Board.

36 Retention and Progression

36.1 The Board noted that, at recent University Executive and Senate meetings, retention had been a key topic for discussions. The University Retention Strategy 2016 and accompanying Operational Plan, as approved by the Learning and Teaching Board on 9 December 2015 and 2 March 2016 respectively, were provided to the University Executive (7 March, 4 April) and the Senate (23 March). It was further noted that, at the University Executive meeting on Monday 7 March, the Principal requested an update on actions related to retention, including from Schools, for consideration at the UE meeting on 4 April 2016. The Board considered both the School updates and also the Retention/Progression Performance Data Report (March 2016).

36.2 Retention KPI: Presentation by the Planning Manager

Ms E J Bailey, Planning Manager, provided a presentation on the University's Retention KPI from 2003/4 to 2014/15 entrants, including an initial overview of 2015/16 entrants. The key points covered in the presentation were as follows:

- There had been a significant drop in the University’s HESA Retention PI: the Planning Office and the Management Information Officer were currently investigating this, with possible explanations being the fact that the HESA data included 2nd and 3rd year direct entrants (HWU’s own KPI included first years only) or that leavers had been recorded differently;
- The University’s improved retention position (by its own KPI) had not been maintained for 2014/15 entrants progressing into second year: 11.3% as opposed to 8.3% and 8.4% for previous cohorts; the largest drop-off had been over the summer period, with slight increases as late enrolments were factored in;
- Although numbers were relatively small in some cases, the most significant categories of leavers were: SIMD40; 21 + over; overseas;
- Dubai had maintained its improved position (12%) and retention in Malaysia had been tracked for the first time (12%);
- Initial data indicated that the pattern for 2015/16 entrants was similar to previous years, but better than last year at 1 March; an update would be provided in July;
- The institutional pattern was replicated across all Schools.

36.3 University Executive; School Plans; Secretary’s Board

The Board noted that, at its meeting on 4 April 2016, the University Executive had further considered the issue of retention, and a similar discussion had been held at the Secretary’s Board. The following key points were highlighted:

- The University Executive endorsed the need for a managed, co-ordinated approach to retention through Learning and Teaching Board;
- There should be regular reports on retention, including from the Schools and on the Operational Plan, at the Learning and Teaching Board;
- The presentation and discussion on retention at the Secretary’s Board on 5 April had been aimed at raising awareness and engagement across the Professional Services and the School Directors of Administration;
- The Academic Registrar and the Head of Academic Quality were currently investigating how the Registry Services Directorate could most effectively support the implementation of the Retention Strategy and Operational Plan;
- The following comments were made with regard to the Operational Plan:
  - The role of the Student Union should be more prominent in the Operational Plan, particularly given the strategic theme of “retention is everyone’s responsibility” and that the Student Union could be integral to creating the strategy’s envisaged sense of community and belonging;
  - The “indicators” column should be completed for each of the activities in the Operational Plan, to provide a means of tracking;
36.4 Discussion

The Board raised or noted the following points in its discussion of retention:

- It was encouraging to note the agreement that retention should be managed in a co-ordinated way through the Board and that recent discussions at the University Executive and the Secretary's Board were aligned with that approach, rather than each committee undertaking a separate series of actions;
- The School Reports showed a great deal of consistency in the way in which Schools were trying to tackle retention;
- It would be useful to have a standard report template for Schools to use for each of the quarterly reports to the Board so that core information could be provided consistently; this would also facilitate comparability and tracking. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), the Academic Registrar and the Head of Academic Quality should develop a proposed report template for consideration by the Board at its next meeting;
- Schools were individually beginning to investigate the reasons for students leaving and to fund a range of retention-related initiatives; however, it was recognised that, in preference to Schools operating in isolation, there was a need for a more integrated, structured approach which could more consistently focus on early interventions and provision of support, as well as on mechanisms such as more independent exit interviews.

36.5 Summary

In summary, the Board agreed the following with regard to retention:

- There should be quarterly reports on retention, including from the Schools and on the Operational Plan, at the Learning and Teaching Board;
- The Academic Registrar should provide, at the next meeting, a report on how the Registry Services Directorate could most effectively support the implementation of the Retention Strategy and Operational Plan;
- The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), the Academic Registrar and the Head of Academic Quality should develop a School retention report template for consideration by the Board at its next meeting;
- The Retention Strategy and Operational Plan would be formally launched in due course.

37 Away Day Report and Actions

37.1 The Board considered the report from the Away Day on 8 March 2016, which summarised the presentations in each session and concluded with an overview of key actions and points of agreement in each section:

- Graduate Attributes
- Academic Management Structures
- Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching
- IDL and ALP Student Representation

37.2 The Board endorsed the key actions and points of agreement in the above sections, noting that:

- A revised version of the key principles for the Graduate Attributes and the Academic Management Structures would be presented to the Board for consideration in due course;
- The Thematic Review would address the recommendations made in relation to Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching;
- The Student Learning Experience Committee would consider, and take forward, the proposals related to IDL and ALP Student Representation.

38 Discussion Item: ALP Tutor Development

38.1 The Board noted that, the present discussion item – *ALP Tutor Development* – had emerged
from the University’s ELIR Report (March 2015), where it was emphasised that the University could strengthen its approach to the management of collaborative activity by considering how to ensure that the outcomes of phase 3 of the GlobalPD programme could be extended to all ALP Tutors. It was noted that a working group had been established to consider ALP Tutor Development in light of the ELIR recommendations. Dr M Storey, Director of Quality and Standards in EBS, as member of the working group, had produced a paper ELIR: Support for Staff in Partners.

38.2 The Board noted that the University was due to provide a response to QAA Scotland on all ELIR-related actions (the One-Year On Follow-On Report) at the end of June 2016. Therefore, the discussion of ALP Tutor Development by the Board would inform that report.

38.3 Dr M Storey highlighted that the paper proposed a framework, which Schools could use to map out their current (and their partners’) provision on ALP Tutor Development. The framework approach reflected the fact that there was a huge spectrum of role specifications and teaching expertise across ALP Tutors; this framework would recognise that, for example, the GlobalPD, which was designed for Tutors with very little teaching expertise, was only one of a diverse range of ways in which development was provided for ALP Tutors.

38.4 Dr R M Neiland, Head of Academic Leadership and Development, explained that while ALD was not responsible for providing development for ALP Tutors, the GlobalPD had been offered as a pilot of the type of provision which could be provided if required; an extension of the pilot would require resources within ALD and input from Schools.

38.5 Discussion

The Board raised or noted the following points in its discussion:

- The framework was received positively as a means of demonstrating that Schools were fulfilling their contractual obligations with regard to the development of ALP Tutors; yet, it was sufficiently flexible to accommodate the wide spectrum of types and teaching expertise of tutors;
- Other Schools could use the framework to map out their current provision and identify any gaps;
- The framework would recognise the diversity of provision, eg GlobalPD; HWU academic staff delivering in-person training at ALP’s;
- Some ALP’s would be keen for Tutors to undertake, and receive, a formal teaching qualification; it was recognised that GlobalPD was not designed for that purpose.

38.6 Framework for ALP Tutor Development

The Board endorsed the framework approach to ALP Tutor Development, and agreed the following:

- All Schools with ALP provision should adopt the framework proposed in the paper for specifying the development available to ALP Tutors;
- Schools should use the framework to map out current provision and identify any gaps;
- The framework should be added to the formal ALP contract;
- As a second stage, the Board would consider the gaps identified through the mapping process and the means by which these could be addressed.

38.7 ELIR One-Year On Follow-On Report

The Board agreed that the ELIR One-Year On Follow-On Report should reflect the outcomes of above discussions regarding ALP Tutor Development and the GlobalPD pilot. It was further agreed that the Head of Academic Quality should, in advance of the report’s submission, discuss with QAA Scotland the University’s position on the GlobalPD pilot and its agreed approach to ALP Tutor Development.

39 Proposal for Learning and Teaching Colloquium

39.1 The Board noted that the second Learning and Teaching Colloquium would take place on 28 April 2016 (the Colloquium had been established in 2015 to promote implementation of
the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy and associated strategies and enhancement plans of Schools). As previously noted by the Board, the 2016 Learning and Teaching Colloquium would focus on Graduate Attributes, specifically on launching the Graduate Attributes to staff (all staff would be invited; parallel launch events would need to be provided for other campus locations) and on getting Schools started. It was noted that the Colloquium was being organised jointly by Quality and External Partnerships, Academic Leadership and Development and the Chair of the Curriculum Working Group.

39.2 The Board noted that, as of 6 April 2016, only 9 individuals had registered for the Colloquium (seven of whom were from the School of Management and Languages). It was agreed that Directors of Learning and Teaching should encourage key academics to attend the Colloquium, since the successful embedding of the Graduate Attributes would be dependent on the engagement of, and ownership by, individuals responsible for discipline areas, programme/course design, etc. It was noted that information would be provided via Staff News and posters would be used to publicise the event.

39.3 The Board noted that ALD was trying to arrange for colleagues in Dubai to link in; however, it was agreed that there was a need for a similar event on Graduate Attributes at each campus, so that colleagues there could participate more actively in discussions and could consider how they too would embed the Graduate Attributes in their programmes and courses.

40 Learning and Teaching Quick Guides

40.1 The Board noted that a series of Learning and Teaching Quick Guides for Staff and Students had been introduced and developed by Quality and External Partnerships. The first three such guides had been produced:

- Student Guides 1 + 2: Making Feedback Work For You; Graduate Attributes
- Staff Guides 1: Providing Effective Feedback

The Board noted that the next in the series would be a Staff Guide on Graduate Attributes, which would be produced in time for the Learning and Teaching Colloquium on 28 April 2016 (see Minute 39).

40.2 The Board was very positive about the Quick Guides, noting that one Director of Learning and Teaching had already used the Feedback Guide on the LEADS programme, where participants had been very supportive of the Guide. It was noted how useful it would be for the Guides to be disseminated at other campuses, particularly if Schools could use these as discussion points with new colleagues or teaching teams in Dubai or Malaysia.

40.3 The Board endorsed the series of Quick Guides and agreed that these should be disseminated electronically for Schools to use. It was noted that the Guides would be located, together with other learning and teaching reference information (Briefing Papers, Policy Bank), in due course on the Learning and Teaching Matters website at: http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/learning-teaching.htm

40.4 The Board agreed that suggestions for additional Guides in the series (for staff and/or students) should be forwarded to the Head of Academic Quality.

41 Updated Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers

41.1 The Board noted that two of the Learning and Teaching Briefing Papers had been updated and were now being re-issued:

- No.2: Policy on Programme Titles, Learning Outcomes and Courses (statement on HWUM programme titles/MQA approval)
- No.12: Graduate Attributes (new visual)

41.2 The Board noted that, with regard to the MQA processes, there was an expectation that, in time, greater responsibility for programme/course modifications and approvals would be devolved to Heriot-Watt; Mrs D S Skidmore, Accreditation Manager, could provide further information on request.
Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Engineering and Physical Sciences

The Board noted that the term of office of Professor K J McCullough as Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Engineering and Physical Sciences, had ended on 31 March 2016. The Board thanked Professor McCullough for his contribution to the work of the Board and to the learning and teaching enhancement agenda, and wished him well in his new role of Director of Internationalisation.

Papers for Information

The Board noted the following paper, which had been provided for information:

- Scottish Commission on Widening Access: Executive Summary and Recommendations

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Learning and Teaching Board will be held on Wednesday 11 May 2016, 12.45 pm, Anderson Room, Library. The meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the Directors of Learning and Teaching at 12.15 pm.