Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed to the meeting, as a member of the Board, Dr M Sargeant, Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Management and Languages.

1.2 Apologies for absence were as recorded above.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board approved the Minutes of the meeting of 9 December 2016.

Matters Arising Not Otherwise on the Agenda

3.1 The Board noted the report on matters arising from the meeting on 9 December 2016.

3.2 Staff Development for ALP Approved Tutors (Minute 102.2)

The Board noted that, in response to QAA ELIR Actions, a meeting had been held to consider staff development requirements and opportunities for ALP Approved Tutors. A proposal had been drafted, and would be reported to the Board in due course for consideration.

3.3 NSS Action Plans (Minute 145.3)

The Board noted that all Schools, relevant Professional Services, the Student Union and West London College would be invited to submit updates on their NSS Action Plans by 22 February 2016, for consideration by the Board as a whole on 2 March 2016.

3.4 Report from the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)

The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) reported that the University Executive had approved a revised Brand Statement for the University, which would be circulated to the Board in due course. It was noted that the HW Graduate Attributes had been referenced in the Statement.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

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

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

The Board noted that all Schools were due to submit updated Learning and Teaching Strategies and Enhancement Plans as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review documentation (due 31 January 2016); updates would likewise be provided by Directors of
relevant Professional Services prior to Learning and Teaching Strategy meetings in spring 2016. It was noted that the Head of Academic Quality could meet individually with Directors of Learning and Teaching and Directors of Professional Services to provide support and assistance in updating the documents.

Action
M.King

4.2 Committees and Groups

The Board noted the updates from the various groups involved in supporting the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, which included:

- The first meeting of the Learning Environment Committee would be held on 2 February 2016;
- A new Chair was being sought for the VLE Management Group;
- The Student Survey Management Group met on 12 January 2016; agenda items included NSS and draft questions for the planned Annual Survey.

4.3 Graduate Attributes: Curriculum Working Group

4.3.1 The Board noted that the Curriculum Working Group had held its second meeting on 19 January 2016, with the focus of the meeting being on identifying and discussing mechanisms for helping Schools to develop their plans for implementing the HWU Graduate Attributes.

4.3.2 The Chair of the Curriculum Working Group reported that the meeting had been particularly successful in gaining a wide range of ideas for supporting Schools in the Graduate Attributes. It was noted that the Chair would provide a written report for the Board at its next meeting on 2 March 2016.

J.Hansen

4.4 Graduate Attributes: Learning and Teaching Colloquium

4.4.1 The Board noted that the Learning and Teaching Colloquium, the aim of which was to support the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, would be held on the afternoon of Thursday 10 March 2016. As agreed by the Board at its meeting on 9 December 2015, the Director of Learning and Teaching, School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences, met with the Academic Programme Leader (Centre for Academic Leadership and Development) and the Head of Academic Quality to discuss potential themes for the 2016 Colloquium. From this meeting, it had been proposed 2016 Learning and Teaching Colloquium should focus on helping Schools to embed the HWU Graduate Attributes in their curricula.

4.4.2 The Board agreed that the 2016 Learning and Teaching Colloquium should focus on helping Schools to embed the HWU Graduate Attributes in their curricula. In its discussion, the Board raised or noted the following with regard to the Colloquium:

- The event should be postponed to provide sufficient time for planning: the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), the Chair of the Curriculum Working Group and the Head of Academic Quality should meet to determine an appropriate alternative date;
- The event should be promoted more widely and in different forms, and attendance should be actively and positively encouraged;
- The Colloquium should be structured as a “workshop” type of session, enabling Schools to make progress and to be given support in Graduate Attributes;
- The importance of the event should be made clear not only to academic staff, but also to Heads of School: Schools would need to be ready to start implementing the Graduate Attributes from 2016/17 and the Colloquium would be a key mechanism for helping Schools to be prepared;
- The Enhancement session, which had recently been introduced into Academic Review, could provide a model for a more practically-oriented event;
- Student participation in the Colloquium was emphasised.

J.Sawkins
J.Hansen
M.King

4.5 Graduate Attributes: Awareness and Promotions

The Board noted that, following approval of the awareness and promotions campaign for the HWU Graduate Attributes at its meeting on 9 December 2015, the Director of Media Services had produced a revised design for the Graduate Attributes diagram. It was noted that the main purpose of the design was to raise awareness of the Graduate Attributes, through use of a mousemat, amongst members of staff and senior managers, and it was recognised that
there would be different types of promotion materials for different audiences. Board members provided a range of suggestions for modifying the design, and agreed that these should be taken forward by the Head of Academic Quality and the Director of Media Services.

4.6 Learning and Teaching Academy

The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) provided a verbal report on the proposed Learning and Teaching Academy, the concept for which the Principal and Vice-Chancellor had introduced to the Board at its meeting on 11 November 2015. It was noted that the Board would continue to be updated on the Learning and Teaching Academy as discussions progressed.

5 Retention Strategy: Draft Operational Plan

5.1 The Board noted that, at its meeting on 9 December 2015, it approved a University Retention Strategy 2016, which had been developed around a series of Four Key Principles and had been shaped around the concepts of a “framework for student engagement” and “retention as everyone’s responsibility”. It had been noted that the next stage would be to produce an Operational Plan based on the strategy.

5.2 The Board noted that a draft Retention Strategy Operational Plan had been produced by the Head of Academic Quality, in which the actions had been presented as “Areas for Consideration”, rather than agreed actions, in accordance with the Board’s recommendations. It was also noted that, in due course, proposals for actions, timescales and indicators would put forward to the Learning and Teaching Board for consideration by the various groups/committees responsible for taking forward each activity; as such, the Plan would be subject to ongoing revision.

5.3 Areas for Consideration: Priorities, Timescales, Responsible Persons/Groups, Indicators

Members of the Board divided into four groups in order to discuss priorities, timescales etc for each of the Areas for Consideration within the Four Key Principles.

5.4 Next Steps

The Board agreed that the Head of Academic Quality should use the outcomes of the group discussions on priorities, timescales etc, to produce a further draft of the Retention Strategy Operational Plan for consideration by the Board at its meeting on 2 March 2016.

5.5 Update on Short-Term Retention Actions

5.5.1 The Board noted that, at its meeting on 9 December 2015, a series of immediate actions designed to improve retention would be progressed by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Academic Registrar in collaboration with key individuals; three such areas for action had been identified: review of mentoring; development of an alert system (as part of the Student Administration Revitalisation Programme (SARP) project); report on, and evaluation of, SIMD20-40 course failure rates for semester 2, 2014/15.

5.5.2 In terms of updates, the Board noted that, following a review of the current academic mentoring arrangements, a revised proposal had been presented to the University Executive on 18 January 2016 and would likewise be presented to the Student Learning Experience Committee on 20 January 2016.

6 Academic Management Structures: Board of Studies/Senior Director of Studies

6.1 At its meeting on 9 December 2015, the Board considered the results of the “one year on” review of the Academic Management Structures. As an outcome of the review and the Board’s discussion, the following recommendations were made with regard to the Board of Studies and the Senior Director of Studies:

• The Board agreed that the operation/remit of the Boards of Studies and the roles of Senior Director of Studies/Programme Director of Studies should be discussed more
fully at the next meeting on 20 January 2016, with a view to determining how the functionality of multi-location, equal collaboration and team-working in matters such as curriculum development, assessment and teaching delivery could be realised in practice;

- It was further agreed that consideration should be given to a briefing/training session for the Senior Director of Studies.

6.2 Boards of Studies/Senior Director of Studies

6.2.1 The Board agreed that the remit of the Board of Studies and the role descriptor for the Senior Director/Director of Studies were clear, and it was noted that the overall Academic Management Structures had been highlighted positively by the ELIR Team. Difficulties such as timezones, co-ordination of meetings and the limitations of technology for multi-site meetings all compromised the effectiveness of the Boards of Studies. However, it was noted positively that, on a day-to-day basis, there was increased collaboration between academic staff in different locations.

6.2.2 The Board noted that there was still work to be done in embedding the Board of Studies and Senior Director of Studies functions across all campuses, and there was a need to raise awareness and clarify inconsistent information, particularly for those not directly involved in either area.

6.2.3 The Board noted that one of the means of improving the effectiveness of the Boards of Studies could be for the multi-campus Programme Directors to meet more informally and regularly in small groups, with the Board of Studies meeting formally at the end of the academic year to approve proposals as appropriate. It was further noted, as another solution, that it had been suggested at the last meeting that Programme Directors of Studies could meet in small groups, with the Senior Director of Studies acting as a co-ordination and focal point for reporting to the School Learning and Teaching/Studies Committees and was, in effect, discharging in this way the remit of the Board of Studies.

6.3 Outcomes of Discussion

6.3.1 The Board endorsed the approaches outlined in Minute 6.2.3 above, noting that the remit of the Board of Studies did not specify how it should be operating. It was agreed that there was no need to make structural changes to the Board of Studies, but that more support should be provided to those in the role of Senior Director of Studies.

6.3.2 The Board agreed that communication and engagement were key to the successful operation of cross-campus programme teams, with the opportunity for academic staff at overseas campuses to become involved in curriculum development or to act as Course Leaders being particularly important. It was noted that the remit of the Senior Director of Studies had highlighted that, in time, Programme Directors at the Dubai and Malaysia Campuses should be given the opportunity to take on this role. It was agreed that the Directors of Learning and Teaching had a critical role in promoting understanding of and embedding the Academic Management Structures in their Schools across all campus locations.

6.3.3 The Board agreed that the most effective training and support for the Senior Director of Studies would be to provide an opportunity for the Senior Directors of Studies to come together as a group across all Schools (perhaps facilitated by the Directors of Learning and Teaching or a Dean of the University) to share experiences and to develop the role further.

6.4 Academic Management Structures: Different Forms of Communications and Briefings

6.4.1 The Board noted that, at its meeting on 9 December 2015, it had been agreed that there should be some further and different forms of communications and briefings regarding the Academic Management Structures to enable staff to understand better the purposes and key features of the structures. It was noted that the Quality and External Partnerships Team had issued a variety of information, including summaries, remits of committees and boards, role descriptors and a Learning and Teaching Briefing Paper. The Board was, therefore, invited to consider additional forms of communication and briefing.

6.4.2 The Board made the following suggestions with regard to communications and briefings:
The Academic Management Structures should be incorporated into the induction sessions provided for academic staff. It was noted that there would be refresher sessions every four years for research supervisors; perhaps there could be something similar for learning and teaching, which could be utilised for communicating key initiatives, such as the Academic Management Structures or Graduate Attributes.

- Terminology should be clear and used consistently across the University: the use of different, School-specific names for the committees and roles in the Academic Management Structures added to the confusion and lack of understanding, particularly at the overseas campuses where there was a much greater degree of School-to-School interaction.
- The Academic Management Structures should clarify the role and position within the structure of the various Exam Boards (Award, Progression, and Assessment).
- The Academic Management Structures could be highlighted by the Principal as one of the differentiating features of Heriot-Watt University. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) should meet with the Director of Marketing and Communications to discuss this further.

**Discussion Item: Teaching Excellence**

7.1 The Board noted that, the present discussion item – Teaching Excellence – had been prompted by a variety of factors, including: UK Government Green Paper (see Minute 12); the Principal’s proposals for a Learning and Teaching Academy (see Minute 4.6); and Discussion Topics identified by the Board at its meeting on 9 December 2015 (suggestions included “teaching excellence and its recognition”). It was further noted that there were current discussions across the UK sector regarding “teaching excellence”, and Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee had established a working group to scope out a possible draft statement for the Scottish HE Sector. Therefore, it was noted that it was timely for the Board to discuss Teaching Excellence: What is it? How do we recognise it? How do we reward it?

7.2 The Board agreed, due to time constraints, to defer discussion of Teaching Excellence until the next meeting on 2 March 2016. In addition, this would provide an opportunity for Board members to discuss the paper more widely with their colleagues, and thereby provide a more informed discussion at the Board.

**Strategy Away Day: Agenda**

8.1 The Board noted that its annual strategy away day would take place on Tuesday 8 March 2016. As noted by the Board at its meeting on 21 October 2015, one of the main items would be a continuation of the Board’s discussion on an Integrated Approach to Student Learning Skills and Staff Academic Development, which the Board had discussed initially at its meeting on 16 September 2015 and, as part of the Matters Arising at the 21 October meeting, it had been noted that this topic would be an item for the Away Day. The discussion would be framed around the theme of Student Learning Skills and Staff Academic Development: Visibility, Accessibility and Global Vision and would be facilitated by Ms R J Moir, Assistant Principal (International). It was noted that the following individuals had been invited to participate in the discussion: Director of Information Services; Director of Human Resources Development; Director of Student Support and Accommodation; Head of Careers Service.

8.2 As agreed by the Board at its meeting on 9 December 2015, the second session would focus on Technology-Enhanced Learning, which would feature contributions from Ms C Dobson, VLE Manager, and Mr M Fowler, Director of IT, EBS. It was noted that the Student Union had selected the following topic for its session: ALP and IDL Student Representation.

8.3 The Board approved the revised agenda for the Away Day.

**Progress towards ELIR Action Plan**

9.1 The Board noted that, as part of its Standing Agenda Items and to facilitate reporting to QAA Scotland and to the Scottish Funding Council, it considered on an annual basis (each January) progress towards the action plan associated with the outcomes of the most recent
Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR). It was noted that the ELIR Action Plan was also used to track progress towards actions emerging from QAA UK Transnational Education Reviews (TNE).

The Board considered and approved the latest version of the ELIR3 (review in January/March 2015) and TNE Action Plan, and noted that the updated plan would be provided to relevant parties, such as the Audit and Risk Committee and the Quality and Standards Committee, in due course.

**10 Thematic Review: Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching**

10.1 The Board noted that, at its meeting on 11 November 2015, it had approved a framework for the first Thematic Review on *Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching*. It was noted that the scope of the Thematic Review had been further developed and, as a consequence, additional proposals had been put forward.

10.2 The Board noted the following:

- The Principal’s project to develop HWU as sector-leading in one aspect of technology-enhanced learning and teaching would precede, and be progressed independently of, the planned Thematic Review. The project would, however, inform the Thematic Review;
- The anticipated outcomes of the *Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching* Thematic Review were: Vision/Strategic Framework; Objectives; Workstreams;
- The focus of the review would be on pedagogy, rather than technology, and on enhancing learning, teaching and assessment using technology; the review would not be systems-driven, although consideration of technology would not be excluded;
- The review would include: online assessment, both formative as a means of reflecting on, and improving, learning, and summative (eg credit-based examinations); the various VLE’s currently in use at HWU; digital literacy skills for academic staff;
- The review event would take place over 2 days in semester 2 (proposed dates: 3-4 May 2016), and a review team had been proposed;
- The initial framework document, as based around the five questions outlined in the introductory section, was being edited by the VLE Manager;
- The Head of Academic Quality had produced a first draft of the Scoping Document.

10.3 The Board approved the additional proposals, as outlined above, including the membership of the review team. It was noted that the Student Union would make arrangements for two students to be members of the review team (the timing might be better suited to 1-3 year students or PG students).

**11 SFC-HWU Outcome Agreement 2016/17**

11.1 The Board noted that the University was currently engaged in finalising its Scottish Funding Council Outcome Agreement for 2016/17, and that, at its meeting on 21 October 2015, the Director of Planning had provided an overview of the University’s activity and progress in the specific topics for the 2016/17 Outcome Agreement. It was further noted that, as per the Board’s Standing Agenda Items, the Board was being given an opportunity to comment on the final draft of Outcome Agreement prior to its submission to the Funding Council.

11.2 The Board noted that the Director of Planning had provided a Summary of the Outcome Agreement for information, and had highlighted that there were no substantial changes to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience sections, as these remained very similar to the 2015/16 document. It was noted that some additional information on care leavers was due to be added, and that the University was currently improving its data collection mechanisms to capture such information.

11.3 The Board noted that there was an opportunity to enhance the “Research” section by including showcase examples of additional Heriot-Watt initiatives. It was agreed that any
UK Government Green Paper: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice

The Board noted that, on 15 January 2016, Heriot-Watt University had submitted its response to the UK Government’s Higher Education Green Paper: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice. The Board had been invited by the Principal to contribute to the University’s response, focusing in particular on the proposals related to learning and teaching, namely the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework. An e-copy of the University’s response had been circulated to the Board on 18 January 2016.

Quality Enhancement Officer

The Board noted that the period of appointment of Dr I J Glen, as Quality Enhancement Officer, would be ending on 29 February 2016 and, as a consequence, Dr Glen was attending his final Learning and Teaching Board as a member of the Board. The Board thanked Dr Glen for his significant contributions to the work of the Board and to enhancing learning and teaching, and wished him well for the future.

Papers for Information

The Board noted the following papers, which had been tabled for information:

- Proposal for Guaranteed Campus Transfers and Formal Progression Pathways from the Malaysia Campus to UK campuses (as approved by the University Executive at its meeting on 11 January 2016);
- Curriculum Working Group: Briefing Paper on Graduate Attributes (as considered by the Group at its meeting on 19 January 2016).

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Learning and Teaching Board will be held on Wednesday 2 March 2016, 2.15 pm, Anderson Room, Library. The meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the Directors of Learning and Teaching at 1.15 pm.

The Learning and Teaching Board Strategy Away Day will take place on Tuesday 8 March 2016.