

Accreditation of Prior Learning, Experiential Learning, Work-based Learning, Short Courses, Continuing Professional Development and other forms of Lifelong Learning

Middlesex University recognises that learning occurs throughout life, especially through work and active participation in short courses (often referred to as Continuing Professional Development [CPD]). Learning also occurs in non-employment situations including in the home and in voluntary work. The outcome of this learning is often the acquisition of skills and/or knowledge which may also be accessed through learning at Middlesex University and other Institutions of Higher Education. Such learning can be accredited towards specific qualifications and is often recognised by professional bodies and, implicitly, in terms of career progression by industrial, commercial, public sector and voluntary organisations.

The University believes that these kinds of learning should be accredited to provide: motivation for and recognition of continuing education and training; a means of ensuring greater equality of opportunity and practice in career progression; a means for widening and deepening access to its programmes of study; and to ensure that students entering higher education are awarded credit for previous learning achievements such that, where appropriate they are enrolled on programmes of study with advanced standing. Such accreditation also gives “learners” opportunities to negotiate a programme of study building upon their achievements and meeting their needs.

Accordingly, it is the University’s policy to actively promote the accreditation of learning however and whenever it occurs including through: prior learning, experiential learning, work-based learning, short courses, continuing professional development and other forms of lifelong learning.

[It should be noted that this Policy Statement does not refer to the methods by which the learning is received].

In implementing this policy the University will:

- provide relevant, responsive quality assurance and record-keeping systems for the accreditation of learning, including experiential learning, short courses, prior and work-based learning;
- implement a range of methodologies for identifying and recognising learning achievements from experiential and certificated learning;
- actively market the availability of accreditation of experiential and work-based learning and the benefits of such accreditation to industry, commerce, public sector and voluntary organisations, professional bodies and to individuals;
- provide staff development programmes to include training in techniques for the accreditation of short courses, prior learning and work-based learning;

- include intake targets for work-based learning programmes in its student number targets;
- whenever appropriate credit rate full time University short courses of one week or more duration and planned programmes (clusters) of short courses for those who demonstrably achieve the expected learning outcomes of such courses and programmes;
- exceptionally consider credit rating of full time short courses of less than one week's duration;
- offer to industrial, commercial, public sector and voluntary organisations a service to accredit in-house training programmes (including short courses), based upon demonstrable achievement of expected learning outcomes, which may ultimately lead to University awards;
- facilitate opportunities for those not in employment (eg family responsibilities) or those working in a voluntary capacity to have their learning in these situations accredited;
- ensure that its admissions procedures take full account of and accredit appropriate prior learning achieved by applicants (see also APS7, the University policy statement on admissions);
- provide advice to students entering the University from a background of non-traditional learning to maximise the value of their prior learning;
- monitor the intake and progression of students awarded credits for prior learning; and
- provide adequate administrative and professional support to ensure the implementation of this Policy including an appropriate student records scheme which can track various kinds of students and, where necessary, fast-track registration and enrolment processes.

The original policy and implementation strategy was approved by Academic Board at its meeting on 24 June 1992. It was reviewed during the academic years 1994/95, 1999/2000 and, 2003/04. This version was approved by Academic Board at its meeting on 16 March 2011. It is due for review in March 2016.

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