

## **Academic Policy Statement APS 7:**

### **Admissions Policy**

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#### **1. Introduction**

Middlesex University is an international institution with roots in London. The University is committed to meeting the needs and ambitions of a culturally and internationally diverse range of students by providing challenging academic programmes underpinned by innovative research, scholarship and professional practice.

This policy details Middlesex University's aims for the admission of students onto taught programmes and explains the principles which are used to select and admit new UK, EU and international students. The principles outlined in the policy are applicable to the admittance of students to Postgraduate Research awards with supplementary Admissions processes documented in Section 17 of the Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook. It relates to all programmes offered by Middlesex University delivered at our London campus and overseas campuses except where there are local structures and legal requirements in place and agreed as exceptions.

This policy is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education, as defined in the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code<sup>1</sup> and the Schwartz Recommendations for Good Practice<sup>2</sup>, and complies with current legislation affecting the admission of students.

The policy is owned and reviewed annually by the Head of Admissions and approved by Academic Board. The maintenance of the policy is undertaken by Academic Registry. If interpretation of any aspect of The Policy is required, the final interpretation will be that determined by the Academic Registrar, which will be final.

#### **1.1 Principles**

The University aims to ensure that its admissions processes are fair, open and transparent and aims to admit students who, regardless of their background, demonstrate potential to successfully complete their chosen programme of study where a suitable place exists and where entry criteria are met. The University values diversity and is committed to equality in education and students are selected on the basis of their individual merits, abilities and aptitudes. The University ensures that the operation of admissions processes and application of entry criteria are undertaken in compliance with the Equality Act.

#### **2. Entrance requirements**

##### **2.1 General and programme specific entrance requirements**

The University sets out the minimum standards required for entry to undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes in the University Regulations, available at [http://www.mdx.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0026/248840/Regulations-2016-17v10.pdf](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/248840/Regulations-2016-17v10.pdf), This policy supplements these regulations. The University publishes separate entry requirements (which may be higher than the minimum standard) for each programme of study on its website.

##### **2.3 Expression of offers**

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<sup>1</sup> The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Quality Code. Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education–

<sup>2</sup> Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (2004) Fair admissions to higher education: Recommendations for good practice

### **2.3.1 Undergraduate Programmes**

The University makes offers to applicants expressed in the UCAS tariff, or for qualifications not included in the tariff, the appropriate mark scheme of the qualification being taken. For entry to undergraduate programmes the University will accept points achieved from a selection of qualifications as outlined in '*Middlesex Acceptable UK Level 3 Qualifications*' to a maximum of 3 GCE A levels (or equivalent) when an applicant is fulfilling their academic entry criteria. Not all qualifications included in the tariff will be accepted as meeting the academic entry criteria, a list of these exceptions are published on the Middlesex University website.

### **2.3.2 Postgraduate Programmes**

The University will make offers to applicants in the appropriate grade scheme of the qualification being offered as meeting the published entry requirements.

## **3 Acceptability of international qualifications**

The University receives a large number of applications from applicants holding international qualifications. All applicants are expected to have met the minimum entry requirement for their intended programme of study. International qualifications will be benchmarked against GCE A level qualifications for entry to undergraduate programmes and against a British Bachelor degree to entry to postgraduate programmes.

When establishing the equivalence between an international qualification and its UK counterpart, the University will use a number of sources. The University will reference UK NARIC, the UK's National Recognition Information Centre, which provides advice on comparisons of international qualifications against UK qualification framework levels. In addition to this the University will use information from UCAS and its own experience of the international qualification. The decision of the University on the equivalency of an international qualification and its suitability for entry will be final.

To this end, the University will use the procedure '*Middlesex Acceptable International UG Qualifications*' or '*Middlesex Acceptable International PG Qualifications*' to ensure consistency and fairness when assessing and accepting international qualifications.

## **4 English Language Requirements**

In addition to academic entry requirements, the University requires all applicants whose first language is not English, or who have not been educated wholly or mainly in the medium of English, to demonstrate that their level of English (where the language of instruction of the programme is English) is sufficient to allow successful completion of their chosen programme of study. A full list of accepted qualifications and equivalences is available on the Middlesex University website.

Some English qualifications have a limited validity period (e.g. an IELTS score is only considered to be valid for two years after the test has been taken). Applicants must ensure that their English qualification is still within the validity period at the point their programme of choice is due to commence.

If an international applicant satisfies all of the academic entry requirements but has not achieved the required standard of English, an offer may be made conditional on successfully completing a suitable Pre Sessional Academic English language course run by the University.

In addition to achieving the required standard of English as determined by the University, international applicants who will require a visa to study will also need to satisfy the level of English as regulated by the Home Office. The University reserves the right to change minimum English Language requirements during an application cycle in accordance with any new or revised compliance guidance released by the Home Office in order that the University can continue to comply with Home Office requirements. In the event of a change in Home Office policy which affects entry requirements, and in particular which may impact on offers already made, the University will notify affected applicants in writing (normally by email).

## **5 Professional Registrations**

Some of our programmes of study receive recognition from professional bodies and the requirements of these bodies must also be met, where appropriate, when applying for that programme. Applicants will be made aware of the professional registration requirement during their application which may include, but is not limited to, additional English language requirements, Occupational Health Clearance and or Enhanced Disclosure and Barring checks.

## **6 Selection of Applicants**

### **6.1 The selection process**

The University looks for motivated individuals with the necessary academic (and non-academic) preparation as detailed in the entry requirements for each programme, who will benefit from the University's learning environment and demonstrate through the application process they can successfully complete the programme of study. Applications are considered not only against the published entry criteria but also against the cohort of applicants against which they are applying and against the number of places available.

The fairness and consistency of offer making for each programme is managed by the Head of Admissions.

When assessing the academic suitability and potential of applicants the following information is normally considered:

1. Prior achievement in awarded qualifications or equivalent achievement through work experience
2. Predicted achievement in qualifications currently being studied, where applicable
3. Personal statement or statement of purpose, for evidence of motivation and commitment to the chosen subject area(s)
4. Reference(s), for confirmation of academic potential and personal qualities
5. Details of time spent at another Higher Education (HE) institution, even if the programme was not completed.

In addition to the above considerations, some programmes of study may also use additional methods to assess the suitability of the applicant, as follows:

1. Portfolio of work
2. Audition
3. Interview
4. Work experience, evidenced by a CV and/or references
5. A skills or admissions test
6. Set piece of work

Where a programme uses an additional method of selection to assess the suitability of applicants this information will be outlined in print and electronic programme material available to the applicant prior to the submission of the application.

For those applicants where a full and complete application is submitted for a programme with a standard admissions process, the majority of applicants will receive an outcome within 10 working days. For programmes requiring an interview, portfolio or other non-standard selection process, and where a full and complete application form is submitted, applicants are informed or invited to the selection process within 10 working days of the receipt of application. The University will seek to keep decisions to within these time frames but at peak periods during the application cycle it may take longer for decisions to be reached.

The decision on the application will be communicated directly to the applicant via the Middlesex University applicant portal for direct applicants or UCAS Track for applications made via UCAS. If an offer of a place is made, any academic or financial conditions that need to be achieved will be outlined along with the date that these conditions should be met. An academic offer of entry to the University does not guarantee sponsorship for international applicants requiring a Tier 4 visa to study at the University.

### **6.2 Age of Applicants**

The University admits students on individual merit and does not discriminate on the grounds of age. Some programmes of study are bound by external professional or placement requirements concerning age. The University is also bound by the Home Office rules regarding Tier Four ('general student') visas; this means that the University is unable to sponsor (for visa purposes) students under the age of sixteen years.

The University will not act in *loco parentis* for any student.

Where the age of an applicant would raise issues of safety, child protection, visa-sponsorship, personal support or issues of care, the Director of Student Affairs or their nominee, should be notified in order to liaise with appropriate managers to and make appropriate arrangements for the admittance of the applicant.

The University welcomes applications from applicants who have had a significant break in studies and these applicants will be considered on an individual basis. Mature applicants with non-standard qualifications have the opportunity to present other forms of learning which may include relevant work experience or other professional qualifications. Section 10 outlines the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning process.

### **6.3 Applicants declaring a disability or specific learning difficulty**

The University welcomes applications from all prospective students including those who declare a disability. Application decisions are based on academic merit and potential relevant to the programme applied for, determined by published entry criteria and assessment as per the standard admissions process. Consideration of any support requirements will remain an entirely separate process. The Academic Policy Statement: Disability and Dyslexia Support outlines the support that applicants who are offered a place may be entitled to. An offer of a place is not a guarantee of eligibility to receive any government or University disability specific funding including the Disabled Support Allowance.

Applicants who have declared a disability and are considered academically suitable for their chosen programme of study will be invited to register with the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support Service team (or equivalent at the University's overseas campuses). This team can assess the needs of the individual applicant. If relevant and required, the University will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of the applicant.

Very occasionally it may not be possible to make the adjustments required to enable an applicant to undertake the course that they have applied for. This may be because the person is unable to meet the programme's competencies or because the adjustments required to support the applicant could not be considered reasonable under the terms of the Equality Act (or equivalent legislation as it applies to students at the University's overseas campuses). In these instances the University will offer the applicant support in submitting an application to an alternative programme (if available) for which adjustments can be made. In the rare occurrence that there are concerns that an applicant's ability to practice in a professional programme may have been impaired due to health or disability they may be referred to the Fitness to Practice policy. Further information can be found in the Fitness to Practice Policy.

In exceptional circumstances (for example late applications or where complex reasonable adjustments may be required) the applicant may be required to defer their place until the next available intake. This is to ensure that all reasonable adjustments can be in place before the applicant begins their programme.

### **6.4 Extenuating circumstances**

During the course of their pre University studies, some applicants will have been affected by extenuating, mitigating or medical circumstances. Where an applicant feels that these circumstances have affected their studies, they must ensure that the relevant examination board or awarding body is informed.

The University will assume that this has been done and these circumstances have been taken into account by the awarding body when issuing the appropriate grades to the qualification. An applicant may submit evidence of their extenuating circumstances to the University along with any supporting documents, from a school or college for example, and these may be taken into consideration if an applicant has accepted an offer and missed the requirements for entry.

## **7. Application Process**

### **7.1 Residential Category Assessment (Fee Status)**

As part of the application process, the University requires applicants to indicate their residency status for fee paying purposes. The University uses this information to determine whether the applicant is eligible to pay Home, EU or Overseas fees.

If the University cannot make this assessment from the information in the application form, further information will be requested. If the applicant does not reply to requests for further information, the applicant will be classified as an overseas fee payer.

The applicant will be notified of the residential category decision at the point of offer. If the applicant decides to accept the offer on the basis of the assessed fee then this is binding. If the applicant contests the Residential Category after the offer is accepted the University reserves the right to withdraw the offer. Once an applicant has enrolled, the Residential Category will not alter, except in a small number of instances (for example, if the applicant's country of nationality joins the EU or if a Student or applicant is given Asylum). An applicant can appeal their Residential Category decision and this should be done in writing to the Head of Admissions, details of this appeals process can be found in section -8.

## **7.2 Requests for deferred entry**

The University understands that some applicants may wish to defer their entry for an academic year for a variety of reasons. Where specific programmes do not accept applications for deferred entry, due to external restrictions on placements or allocations, this will be outlined in print and electronic publications.

Applicants wishing to apply for deferred entry should do so at the point of application or at any stage up to the end of the second week of the commencement of the programme of study, in writing.

Deferred applications will be assessed using the same academic criteria as for non –deferred applications and applicants holding a deferred place must meet all academic conditions of their offer during the current application cycle. Deferral candidates should check that the academic criteria have not changed.

Deferral is normally only permitted for one academic year. In exceptional circumstances (for example to undertake national service) applicants may request to defer for an additional academic year. This must be done in writing to the Head of Admissions (or equivalent at overseas campuses), who may approve the request in consultation with the relevant academic lead for the programme of study.

Applicants wishing to defer for longer than two academic years will not be considered and should make an application in the relevant entry cycle.

The University would not normally allow applicants entering through UCAS Clearing to apply for deferred entry unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## **7.3 Re-applications from previously registered students**

The University may consider applicants that have previously withdrawn for re-entry to the University on the same or alternative programme of study. As with all applications, all cases will be considered entirely on their merit. Applicants who have previously studied at the University and who have a financial hold on their student record will be required to make arrangements for this hold to be cleared before the application can be received.

If an applicant has been withdrawn from a programme of study within the previous two academic years and wishes to re-enter that programme, requests for re-entry must be made via UniHelp (or equivalent at overseas campuses) to the Head of Progression and Support or their nominee, and the decision will be made in conjunction with the relevant academic lead for the intended programme of study. A full application is not required, but a statement of intent should be submitted.

If an applicant has been withdrawn from a programme of study for longer than two academic years, or wishes to re-enter into a different programme of study, a new application is required and will be considered in the normal way through the application process.

If an applicant has had previous study terminated, or was in poor academic standing at the point of their withdrawal, the University reserves the right to not consider their application to any programme of study.

#### **7.4 Applicants declaring a previous criminal conviction**

Where a programme of study requires applicants to have a Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) check to gain admittance, applicants will be required to declare any relevant criminal convictions at the point of application. The programmes of study where a DBS check is required is included in the relevant programme information.

Applicants for all **other** programmes of study are not required to declare information relating to any relevant criminal convictions during the application process as such information is not a pre-condition for enrolling on and successfully completing such a programme. It is the responsibility of an applicant with any relevant criminal convictions ( who chooses a programme of study with the intention of then proceeding to practice in a specific profession) to check that they will be able to join their chosen occupation or profession before proceeding with the programme of study that might meet occupation and professional standards, but will not necessarily lead to being permitted to register as a practitioner with a relevant professional regulatory body. This check on suitability to enter such professions does not form part of the admission process and it is not a function performed by the University.

#### **7.5 Fraudulent Applications**

The University requires full and complete applications to be received at the point of submission. All information submitted should be accurate and true with no omissions. Applicants are required to sign declarations to this effect and the University considers the act of making an application as agreement to the above terms.

The University considers the omission of any qualification or period of study at other institutions, even if not contributing directly to the qualifications required by the programme applied for, to be an act of fraud.

Any application suspected of containing fraudulent information or considered fraudulent by omission of information will be fully investigated by the Head of Admissions or their nominee. The University will follow the *'Procedure for assessing an allegation of fraud'*. The University will where appropriate refer the applicant to other agencies, including but not exclusively, the UCAS Fraud and Verification Unit, the Home Office, The Student Loans Company, the Police, and Examination & Awarding bodies.

If the University, at any stage of application or subsequent study, discovers that an offer has been made on the basis of an application, which at the time or later, is found to contain statements or refer to documents which are fraudulent, untrue or misleading, or if key information has been omitted from the application, will reserve the right to cancel an application, withdraw an offer or terminate a student from studying at the University

The University will not consider any subsequent applications, in any future year, from applicants that have had their application cancelled or withdrawn, from either their study or application, due to fraud.

UCAS, on behalf of all member institutions, check all personal statements for plagiarism using the Copycatch system. If these anti plagiarism checks find a significant level of similarity in an applicant's personal statement, UCAS will notify the applicant that a report detailing the similarities has been sent to all institutions to which applications have been made. Depending on the seriousness of the plagiarism, the University may request a new personal statement and/or reserves the right to reject the application without further consideration or appeal. Any appeals relating to accusations of plagiarism in a personal statement should be made directly to UCAS.

#### **7.6 Verification of qualifications**

As part of the admissions process, all applicants are required to provide documentary evidence (for example certificates and transcripts) to demonstrate that they have achieved the entry requirements of their chosen programme of study and achieved the conditions of their offer. The date by which academic conditions should be met will be confirmed at offer.

The University will accept scanned or photocopied documents during the application process and these copies should be of sufficient quality. All applicants must be able to provide original documents upon request and not being able to provide such documents could result in the withdrawal of an offer or termination of a student from studying at the University.

The University will also accept the secure online verification of qualifications either with the awarding body, or via a third party, such as UCAS. In these instances, documents are not required from the applicant. The exceptions to this include some English qualifications (for example IELTS) which can be verified online using unique score codes. The University will accept the unique code to verify a test score as part of the application process but will require a copy of the certificate to match the code, score and photograph prior to enrolment. All qualifications completed and certified under an alternative name to the applicant's details as stipulated on the application form will need to be supported with documentation to demonstrate a legal name change (e.g. marriage certificate). Applicants are advised to use their full legal name during the application process.

Where an applicant submits documents in any other language than English, the applicant, at their own cost, must provide a certified translation alongside the original document.

## **8. Feedback, Appeals and Complaints**

### **8.1 Feedback**

The University is committed to providing full and constructive feedback of the reasons for rejection to help applicants make successful applications in the future.

Applicants applying via UCAS or UCAS Teacher Training (UTT) will normally receive a short summary of the reason for rejection, which is visible in the online UCAS Track system and can request further feedback from the University within fourteen working days of the decision being made.

Applicants applying directly to the University should request feedback from the University within fourteen working days of the decision being made. Applicants will receive a response in writing from the University within fourteen working days of the feedback request being received.

All requests for feedback must be made in writing and feedback will only be given in writing.

Where an applicant believes they have been rejected in error, or wishes to appeal the decision, they may do so using the complaints and appeals procedure below.

### **8.2 Appeals**

Applicants wishing to appeal the outcome of their application should do so, in the first instance to the Admissions Operations Manager or their appointed nominee, who will investigate the grounds for appeal consulting with staff involved in the selection decision where appropriate. Application decisions will only be overturned where an applicant can provide fresh and compelling evidence of their academic competence in the relevant subject and evidence as to why this was not available at the time of original submission, or the review of the original application is shown not to have followed policy and procedure.

### **8.3 Complaints**

Following a review by the Admissions Operations Manager or their nominee, if an applicant still feels they have reason for appeal they should refer to the *'Applicants Complaints and Appeals Procedure'* for resolution.

Any appeal or complaint at any stage of the admissions process which questions the academic grounds for rejection will not be considered. Only points of procedure or implementation of policy can be appealed.

The University will not respond to any anonymous complaints.

Due to the Data Protection Act, the University may be unable to enter into communication with any third party with respect to an applicant's individual circumstances, unless the applicant has given the University direct and explicit written consent.

## **9 Discontinued/Changed Programmes**

Academic Policy Statement APS 28: Making Changes to Published Programme Related Information available at [http://www.mdx.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0021/219540/Making-changes-to-published-programmes-APS-28.pdf](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/219540/Making-changes-to-published-programmes-APS-28.pdf) outlines the commitment to students offered places on programmes and the circumstances in which changes to programmes will be communicated to offer holders and applicants.

The University is committed to delivering the programmes that it is offered, however, if, due to unanticipated developments, such as legal or PSRB requirements the University determines that a programme should be withdrawn or cancelled, then the University will give as much notice as possible to applicants who have accepted places, and will make every effort to offer alternative programmes to such applicants. If an alternative programme is unavailable or unsuitable then for undergraduate applicants who have applied via UCAS we will support their substitution to another institution via UCAS.

The University will fulfil all of its obligations as noted in the University's Financial Regulations for Students, and in the University Regulations.

### **10. Advanced Entry and Recognition of Prior Learning**

This section relates to entry into undergraduate programmes at years other than the initial year of the programme of study.

#### **10.1 Advanced Entry**

The University will normally accept applicants for advanced entry to level 5 or 6 (i.e. into year 2 or 3) onto many, but not all, of the undergraduate programmes of study. Applicants will need to have successfully passed a full qualification suitable for entry into the next academic level. This could be the award of a Higher National Diploma or a Foundation Degree which would award applicant 240 Higher Education credits and would allow entry to the final year of a related undergraduate programme. Applicants must also be able to show that their qualification has covered sufficiently similar subject material to that of the intended programme of study.

#### **10.2 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (Transfer of Credit)**

An applicant's prior learning at another institution may be considered to allow for direct entry to level 5 or 6 (i.e. year 2 or 3) of many, but not all, of the undergraduate programmes of study. Applicants will need to have successfully passed their previous years of study and must also have been awarded the requisite number of Higher Education credits, usually 120 per level of academic study. Applicants who have a credit deficiency from a previous year's study are not normally admitted with credit transfer. The University Accreditation Board will have oversight of all the decisions on the recognition of prior learning for entry to level 6 to ensure consistency of decisions.

The University will not normally accept applicants where a previous attempt to study at that level has resulted in academic failure.

Where the University has an articulation and progression agreement in place applicants who meet the requirements and are applying for programmes covered within the agreement will be offered a place of study. Where applicants are applying to progress for programmes outside of progression agreements a further assessment of suitability may need to take place.

#### **10.3 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)**

The University will consider applicants who do not hold formal qualifications, but have substantial work experience in an area relevant to the programme of study. Such applicants should make explicit their intention to claim RPEL credit on admission so that the Programme Leader/Admissions Tutor can liaise with the applicant to advise on the form of evidence of learning that should be submitted for assessment. The relevant University School/Department will then assess the evidence supporting the claim and make a recommendation to the University Accreditation Board with respect to any award of academic credit. This process must be completed before an applicant commences on the programme of study.

## 11 Additional Procedures

- A) 'Middlesex University Approved English Language Tests'
- B) 'Applicants declaring a previous criminal conviction admissions procedures'
- C) 'Procedure for assessing an allegation of fraud'.
- D) 'Applicants Complaints and Appeals Procedure'
- E) 'Middlesex Acceptable International UG Qualifications'
- F) 'Middlesex Acceptable International PG Qualifications'
- G) Acceptable UK Level 3 Qualifications

<b>Revision history</b>	The revisions to this policy were considered and approved by the Assurance Committee on 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2018.  Revisions to section 7.4 were considered and approved by the Assurance Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2018.  This policy is due for review in May 2019.
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