



Middlesex
University
Strategic
Plan
2012-17

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A photography student in the Grove building, Hendon campus

Foreword



The renewal of our Strategic Plan comes at a time of significant and rapid change for higher education within the UK. Everything from government policy and the economy to communications technology has changed radically in the past few years. Middlesex has had to quickly adapt to the changes to continue to provide an outstanding student experience and maintain excellence in our teaching, research and knowledge transfer.

As we considered the options for success over the next five years, it became clear that we must continue to embrace change, while strongly positioning the University to compete in an ever more competitive world. Maintaining the status quo was not a sustainable option, given the change to a new teaching funding regime that will no longer provide the same resources to universities with different missions.

Neither did we want to enter this new era competing on price alone, which would have a detrimental impact on academic quality and success. If Middlesex is to truly compete on an international stage, it must focus – and compete – on quality. In doing so, it will become a first choice destination for many more ambitious and talented students and high performing, inspirational staff from around the world.

The achievement of this new vision will involve a renewed emphasis on academic and research leadership. We have already taken important initial steps to put the University on the right course to achieve this - though much remains to be done. As we continue the process of securing the University's position as a leading global provider of quality British higher education, I am certain that our staff will continue innovating and meeting the fresh challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

We must now commit to ensuring that we remain on the right track over the next five years by regularly reviewing progress and seizing opportunities to advance our goals and maintain financial sustainability. Our new direction is ambitious, matched only by the high aspirations of our students and staff.

Professor Michael Driscoll
Vice-Chancellor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Driscoll". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Introduction

We have a long and proud history as a provider of high quality education and can trace our roots back to 1878. In 2012 we mark twenty years since being granted university status. Over that time we have established a reputation as a leading London-based international university. Recently the higher education sector has experienced unprecedentedly rapid change, and that will continue: we expect the coming five years to be the most challenging in our history. To ensure sustainability and continuing success in the UK and overseas, we need to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances and to find the resources to invest in developing our reputation in a turbulent higher education marketplace, globally and domestically.

High among the risks we face are the continuing stagnation of the UK and other European economies, the tightening of restrictions on UK visas for international students, the transition to a free market for higher education in England and the implications of rapid change in information technology, especially in digital media. The continuing recession in the UK and much of Europe may reduce both the demand and supply for higher education as governments struggle to control financial deficits.

Universities in England may also face further cuts in capital and research funding. The loss under new student immigration regulations of the automatic right to two years post graduation work in the UK for international students has already damaged the international market for UK universities, especially in South Asia, and has introduced a high level of risk from enforcement by the UK Borders Agency. The planned move from taxpayer to student funding for universities alongside greater competition for students and a cap on overall numbers, means that student numbers and revenue will face downward pressure in most universities. Changes to the way in which people are communicating and accessing services, including higher education, are providing exciting opportunities for those organisations that have the experience and capacity to benefit from change. To not only survive, but thrive in these challenging times, we need to enhance our strategic and operational capabilities and invest in strengthening our academic reputation.

In a world where fee levels and reputation will be the main drivers of success, our ability to build a reputation that enables the university to secure the income to finance quality higher education will be

critical to success. Our standing among external stakeholders, especially those who influence student choice, will depend entirely on the stature and talent of our staff and students. For this reason, over the planning period, our highest priorities will be in strengthening the performance of our academic staff and attracting the best prepared and most ambitious students. We will look to achieve greater efficiency in general management and administration, enabling us to rebalance the spend on staff towards academic and research staff to promote academic excellence.

We are also reorganising our academic provision into six new schools (Art & Design, Business, Health & Education, Law, Media & Performing Arts, Science & Technology) to better enable us to drive major developments in distinct areas of excellence. The new schools will allow academic staff to focus on producing internationally renowned research and forging new partnerships with business and practice worldwide. The schools will also better reflect professional career paths to help boost student employability.



A photography student in the Grove building, Hendon campus

The University is well placed to meet the challenges of the new environment. Overall student demand is strong. We are investing heavily in strengthening our research reputation. Our teaching programme is adaptable, attractive and relevant to the world of work. With the further consolidation of teaching and research at our Hendon campus, the quality and efficiency of our estate continues to improve. We have strong staff teams in our corporate services and academic schools. We benefit from an experienced and effective international team that is well placed to ensure the University can capitalise on its excellent international reputation in many of the world's most rapidly developing countries.

Much uncertainty surrounds what lies in the future for UK universities. We will only succeed if we have a clear strategy

and credible plans to which everyone is committed. We must also maintain the qualities that have delivered our success to date: flexibility; adaptability; speed of response; credibility; a culture which embraces change and innovation; excellent governance; strong leadership and management and high performing, dedicated academic and professional services staff.

This plan sets out the objectives and key drivers for Middlesex and how we are intending to achieve our goals in the next five years. The key elements of the plan are set out on one page at the back of this document.



Students at our Dubai campus

Context

Deep and rapid change in the environment in which we operate will present new challenges and opportunities for Middlesex. Although we cannot foresee all that will arise, our corporate plan is based on the following assumptions:

Economic

- There will be no significant, sustained recovery in the UK and European economy within the first half of the period
- Opportunities for profitable growth will be greatest outside the UK
- The market for consulting and Continuing Professional Development customers will be driven by the overall performance of the economy
- After a period of wage and salary restraint, the unit cost of staff will rise in real terms over the second half of this period
- The unit cost of space, equipment and utilities will continue to rise in real terms.

Government policy & funding

- The market for undergraduate home and EU students will continue to be restricted by the Government's cap on new student numbers
- The amount of HEFCE grant funding available to Middlesex will continue to fall and by 2015 the University will be reliant on student paid fee income
- The market for international students will continue to grow but become more volatile and competitive
- The market for postgraduate home and EU students will become more volatile and competitive
- The availability of public funding for research will decline and will become more concentrated among the more research-intensive universities.

Student choice

- Student choice of university will increasingly be driven by reputation and, to a lesser extent, price
- The market for on-campus part-time provision will decline
- The market for online courses will grow significantly
- Graduate employment prospects will become increasingly important as students are asked to invest more in their own future.

Technology

- New technology will continue to provide opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administration, teaching and learning
- The costs of keeping up with and maintaining new technology will place an increasing burden on capital expenditure and most capital funds will have to come from the University's revenue
- Developments in digital and social media will continue to have an impact on how we engage globally with students and key stakeholders.



The TV and film facilities in the Grove include two Sony designed and equipped studios

Our distinctive strengths

As we look to the future, we must also acknowledge strengths that have helped us succeed in the past. We must continue to develop them in order to achieve our vision.

Our teaching and learning framework

The experience we offer our students is marked by its distinctiveness. We have moved decisively away from a modular structure to a teaching and learning framework that ensures a rich, effective and sustainable learning experience for all of our students. Our teaching and learning framework:

- promotes student engagement in life-long learning
- embraces varied, flexible, innovative and sustainable modes of learning, teaching and assessment, informed by research
- celebrates and values the diversity of the academic community.

Our flexible and adaptable framework has succeeded in raising levels of student satisfaction and has improved their ability to realise their full potential, by helping them achieve better than expected academic results. Further developing this framework will be an important factor in improving quality and building our reputation.

Our international reach and expertise

We have a deserved reputation as a leader and innovator in trans-national education. Growth in the UK will be limited, so our capacity for sustainable growth in the rest of the world will be crucial; it will not only contribute to our financial stability but will also further enhance our international standing.

Our presence in London, one of the world's greatest and most appealing cities in which to study, will continue to be an important factor in attracting international students. In addition to our London location, our campuses in Dubai, Mauritius, alongside a strong network of academic partnerships around the world will further increase our ability to compete internationally. We will protect and grow revenue from our international operations by continuing to invest in international development expertise, devoting time and resources to these activities and by growing student recruitment from key markets.

Our vision for the future

Our vision is to become a leading University of choice, recognised internationally for excellence in all that we do.

We will seek to be:

- The first choice for students, staff, partners and employers
- Home to staff who are academically outstanding and enjoy strong reputations among research peers as well as policy and practice stakeholders
- Recognised as a leading international university
- Known for delivering sought-after courses which are considered amongst the best available in higher education
- A partner of choice to both the education and business sectors.

We will achieve this vision by focusing our activities, resources and energy, both in the UK and overseas, behind the following two strategic priorities:

- Enhancing student achievement and satisfaction
- Strengthening leadership and staff performance

In doing this we will hold fast to the key values characteristic of Middlesex: striving for excellence; always placing the needs of our students first; promoting diversity and inclusiveness; freedom of academic enquiry; and professionalism.

By being determined in the pursuit of this vision, we will deliver our mission of producing a growing global community of staff, students and partners who make vital contributions to the economic, cultural and social wellbeing of the societies in which they live and work.



Our state-of-the-art laboratories

Enhancing student achievement and satisfaction

Prospective students and those people who inform their choice of university – teachers, parents and other influencers – expect Middlesex to have an excellent reputation. That expectation will be influenced by the feedback that students provide from their own experience, including their record of success in their studies and in the job market on graduating.

Students who are capable and well prepared for university will set themselves ambitious goals which they have the potential to achieve. Students who are highly engaged with their studies and enthusiastically involved in the life of the University will contribute to the experiences of fellow students as well as their own. Such students will also be rewarding to the staff who teach and support them. Successful and satisfied students are likely to continue to engage as alumni and be strong advocates and ambassadors for the University.

Objectives

- Attract students with the ability and determination to excel
- Provide modern and innovative student support services
- Increase levels of student satisfaction
- Increase levels of achievement
- Enhance graduate employment prospects.
- Supporting policies and strategies

We will strive to attract the best students by developing policies and strategies to maximise student performance, their satisfaction with teaching, and with student services and the quality of student life at Middlesex. We aim to:

- Raise our entry requirements
- Attract and retain inspirational and high reputation academic staff
- Provide excellent facilities and equipment for students and staff
- Offer a single student helpdesk for all enquiries, services and support
- Organise our schools to provide subject coherence and drive academic excellence
- Develop opportunities for career entry or enhancement.

Measures of success

By 2017 we plan to achieve the following levels of student quality, achievement and satisfaction:

- UCAS tariff entry profile of 300 points for undergraduates
- A NSS overall satisfaction level of better than 90%
- An undergraduate first year progression rate of at least 90%
- An undergraduate completion rate of at least 80%
- At least 65% of our students achieve a good honours degree (1st or 2:1)
- 90% of undergraduates in work or further study six months after graduation



Students relax in the Grove, an inspirational home for our art, design and media courses

Strengthening leadership and staff performance

We need excellent leaders and managers who are committed to the success of the University and our students.

The reputation of our academic staff and leaders is of fundamental importance and will be a particular focus for enhancement. Inspirational teaching will remain a necessary requirement for all our academic staff, although more will be expected in terms of contribution to research and engagement with professional practice. We will support passionate and motivated staff to take their research forward and keep up-to-date with developments in industry. This will create a rich, research-excellent environment in which to work and that will have a significant impact on building our reputation.

Staff in our corporate services will provide excellent frontline support to our students as well as professional expertise to enable the University to implement efficient processes that provide value for money and enhance the overall student experience and success of our academic staff.

Objectives

- Increase the number of staff who are research active
- Raise levels of research and knowledge transfer income
- Improve the quality of our research
- Develop stronger involvement between our staff and industry partners
- Improve the delivery of efficient professional services
- Enhance the achievement and satisfaction of our students.

Supporting policies and strategies

We will attract and retain the best leadership and staff by:

- Changing the balance of spend on staff towards academic staff
- Developing teaching, research and professional service staffing models to improve efficiency and enhance performance
- Improving student services including centralising all school administrative support and the expansion of high quality, outsourced and off-shored support services
- Operating a single, well-resourced, attractive London campus
- Continuing to target 'value for money' and 'spend to save' initiatives in order to promote academic excellence.

Measures of success

By 2017 we plan to achieve the following levels of management and staff performance:

- Achieve 60th position in the REF league table
- Research income of £15M
- Improvements in student quality, achievement and satisfaction.



Students at graduation

Achieving our vision

Our vision for the future can only be realised if all our strategies and policies promote the achievement of our priorities. We will focus on the following areas to ensure that we are a well run organisation that can achieve its goals.

Developing our people

We need talented leaders, able to quickly adapt, who see themselves as sources of innovation and change. We must recruit and retain inspiring academic staff who make a distinctive contribution to research, impacting on society through professional practice and knowledge transfer. Our professional services staff must be focused on enhancing quality, achievement and satisfaction.

Developing an outstanding environment in which to study and work

Completing the transfer of teaching to our Hendon campus will achieve our long-held aim of consolidating onto a single, well-resourced, attractive north London campus. We intend to invest further in providing excellent facilities for our students and staff, so that they rate their campus experience ever more highly.

Efficient business tools and processes

The investment required to become a more research-engaged University will be achieved by continuing to drive efficiency on costs across the University, particularly on administration. We will continue to review business processes, as well as off-shore back office functions where appropriate. Our business systems aim to ensure that students and staff worldwide have convenient, reliable 24/7 access, both on- and off-campus, to networked resources and associated support services. We will also ensure that all staff and students are confident and skilled in the use of IT.

Excellence in marketing and communications

Improving the effectiveness of all our marketing and communications operations is a major challenge in a changing and increasingly competitive global higher education sector. We will continue to enhance our programme portfolio to ensure we offer sought after courses that are considered among the best in higher education. Through clear, distinctive and targeted marketing and communication we will seek to recruit capable and ambitious students, enhance advocacy with each of our stakeholder groups and build and protect our reputation.

Maintaining financial sustainability

We must ensure that the University has a strong and robust financial position, which is essential to underpinning the achievement of our vision. We can only achieve this if we regularly generate operating surpluses to provide sufficient resource for normal operations, to invest in academic initiatives and infrastructure and to provide for contingency against risk.

Being a responsible and sustainable organisation

We take our social responsibility seriously. We aim to uphold high standards in our dealings with the communities in which we operate, our students, staff and partners. We are committed to ensuring our staff and students are able to learn and work in a socially responsible environment and are working hard to integrate social and environmental considerations across all of our operations, and in the way we interact with people.

We continue to value our partnership with the London Borough of Barnet and are committed to building a mutually supportive and beneficial relationship with the Council and the wider Barnet community.



The Rickett Quadrangle is the centrepiece of our Hendon campus

Our plan

Our vision

To become a leading university of choice, recognised internationally for excellence in all that we do

Strategic priorities

- Enhancing student achievement and satisfaction
- Strengthening leadership and staff performance

Objectives

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- Enhance graduate employment prospects.
- Increase the number of staff who are research active
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- Improve the quality of our research
- Develop stronger involvement between our staff and industry partners
- Improve the delivery of efficient professional services
- Enhance the achievement and satisfaction of our students

Measures of success

- UCAS entry points
- NSS satisfaction level
- Progression rate
- Completion rate
- Good honours rate
- Employment Performance Indicator
- HEFCE Research Excellence Framework (REF)
- Research and knowledge transfer income
- Staff engagement in professional practice
- Balance of recurrent staffing investment
- Improvements in measures of student quality, achievement and satisfaction

Our distinctive strengths

- Teaching and learning framework
- International reach and expertise

Organisational development

- Developing our people
- Efficient tools and processes
- Developing our environment
- Achieving financial stability
- Corporate responsibility and sustainability

Our values

- Striving for excellence
- Putting students first
- Promoting diversity and inclusiveness
- Freedom of academic enquiry
- Professionalism

Stakeholder expectations

Students, staff, alumni, partners and funders expect an excellent experience from a leading university with an excellent reputation

Our mission

To produce a growing global community of staff, students and partners who make vital contributions to the economic, cultural and social wellbeing of the societies in which they live and work

A new look for Middlesex



Our refreshed University logo, based on the historic Middlesex county crest, is being introduced in time for the start of the 2012/13 academic year. For the first time we have introduced 'London' into the logo to ensure it is clear that we are based in London.



We retain a 'Middlesex University' logo (left) for specific use, including graduation, and will also continue to use a Dubai and Mauritius version.





The Grove, Hendon campus

www.mdx.ac.uk