

1. Assessment of risks

Middlesex University is a global institution that embraces inspiring teaching, lifelong learning and creative innovation. Our main campus is in Hendon, London, home to c19,000 students. We also have campuses in Mauritius, Dubai and Malta and deliver programmes through our partners across the world.

Middlesex University has as one of our four core Values 'We put students first'. We aim to provide an inspiring choice of courses and learning pathways that empower students with the ambition, skills and knowledge to succeed in graduate employment and to engage our students in active, practice-based learning, with teaching enriched by research and innovative practice that creates highly employable graduates. We take our responsibilities to our students seriously, and involve our students in our decision-making.

Our regulatory framework relating to continuation of study includes:

- robust processes for approval of new programmes, amendment of programme content and discontinuation of programmes that follow expectations set out in the QAA Quality Code
- strong budget setting and management processes and regular reporting
- active student representation and requirements for student engagement in key programme matters
- a clear Complaints Procedure that complies with the OIA Good Practice Framework
- a governance structure that meets good practice standards and ensures decision-making is evidence-based and transparent

Our Student Protection Plan is written within this context, and is based on our assessment of our risk profile in relation to the continuation of study for our students as at **10 May 2018**. As a dynamic institution there will be changes to our programme portfolio or other aspects of our learning and teaching environment and we are committed to ensuring we continue to keep our students (and applicants) informed.

Risk profile

The risk that the University will no longer be able to deliver programmes is negligible since the University is in a strong and robust position. The University engages in business continuity planning which provides for continuity of delivery and access to resources in the event of a major incident at the University. The campuses in Dubai and Mauritius are in a similarly robust position and there is negligible risk to delivery of programmes.

We are changing our partnership arrangements at our Malta campus so that in future we will manage the campus ourselves, without a partner. The risk to current students (currently 156 students) is low since we employ staff at Malta campus and will have access to staff at our Hendon campus to ensure that delivery to existing students can continue. We are continuing to recruit to programmes at the campus, including introducing new postgraduate programmes, and will undertake an annual review of the programme offer to ensure continuing cohort identity and financial viability. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Innovation) will continue to have executive responsibility for the campus and oversight of the partnership transfer is being overseen by the Chief Financial Officer and the Board of Governors.

The University has no current plans to close departments or subject areas and there is no current risk that departments will close since the University has remains in a strong and robust position.

The University keeps its portfolio of programmes under review and makes decisions about the future of programmes based on demand and currency of content. If the University closes a programme during the recruitment cycle, we inform applicants as early as possible in order to minimise the potential disruption to the application process. Current students will be consulted and provided with the opportunity to complete the programme or transfer to an equivalent alternative, as set out in this plan. We design our programmes to be delivered by integrated teams of academic staff and will secure access to specific subject experts as required to ensure that students can complete their programme.

The risk that only one subject expert/lecturer can deliver a specific core module on a programme, or research supervisor supervise a research programme, is low. We design our programmes to be taught by integrated teams of academic staff and have access to specialist part-time staff. We appoint teams of supervisors to supervise research students.

We recognise that there may be risks associated with apprenticeship programmes, such as the risk that we need to ensure continuity for students should the employer be unable to continue to support them. We continue to develop our approach to assessing and mitigating risks on apprenticeship programmes.

The risk that we close a programme at our Hendon campus that is delivered at one of our overseas campuses or franchised partners, or the risk of changes to overseas regulatory arrangements that affect one of our overseas campuses or franchise partners is low. We ensure that we maintain relationships with local regulators

so that we are aware of pending changes in local regulation or culture and can plan accordingly. We appoint link tutors and programme leaders who manage the relationship between the programmes offered at our Hendon campus and our overseas campuses and franchise partners and have oversight of the academic standards and quality of the collaborative programme. Many programmes use modules shared with other programmes, which enables us to keep programmes open for recruitment on another campus; or we may localise or tailor module content using our programme change processes to ensure that students have the opportunity to complete.

The risk that students at a collaborative partner organisation are no longer able to study a Middlesex University programme because of closure or financial failure of the collaborative partner organisation is low. We manage a programme of ongoing financial and quality due diligence for all our collaborative partners so that we are aware at all times of the financial and quality standing of collaborative partners and their continuing ability to deliver Middlesex University collaborative provision. The Collaborations sub-Committee has oversight of this process and if a partner were to close we would implement the contingency plan arrangements detailed in this plan.

2. Measures in place to mitigate the risks

The University will continue to deliver programmes as advertised and on which students are currently registered at all its campuses in London, Dubai, Mauritius and Malta. Our Business Continuity planning process helps to manage any risks to the delivery of University services and to minimise disruption to those services in the event of an incident. The plan is kept up to date and makes provision for continuity of delivery and access to specialist resources in the event of a major incident.

In order to manage the change in partnership arrangements at the Malta campus, we have established a project group led by the DVC (Learning and Innovation). We are putting in place the following actions:

- Reviewing the legal, financial, reputational, quality, staff and student implications of the change in partnership arrangement;
- Reviewing on an annual basis the programmes that we will offer, ensuring that any students recruited have sufficient time to complete their studies, according to our regulations, and that cohort identity for students can be maintained;
- Ensuring that contracted staff are in place, and managed and developed by the Campus Director;
- Identifying a communications plan.

For courses in complementary medicine and interpreting and translation, currently in the process of closure, we are committed to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to complete their studies and working with cohorts and individual students to manage the process. Recruitment to the complementary medicine programmes closed in 2016, and for interpreting and translation in 2017. Through integrated teaching teams, recruitment of part-time staff and continued use of the material on the virtual learning environment (Moodle) we will ensure that students can complete their studies within the parameters identified in the regulations.

If a programme closure is proposed, we implement our programme closure process which requires approval from the Academic Provision Approvals Committee. Our programme closure form (https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0028/437734/appendix-2e-Programme-Closure-form-updated.docx) requires a statement of how the programme will be phased out and students enabled to complete their studies, confirmation that this has been discussed with all affected students and a communication plan for all enquirers or prospective students holding offers for the course.

If the University closes a programme during the recruitment cycle, or makes changes to the programme, we inform applicants as early as possible in order to minimise the potential disruption to the application process. Where possible, we will offer an alternative programme in a similar subject area or offer the intended programme of study at another entry year. If an alternative programme is unavailable or unsuitable then for undergraduate applicants we will support their substitution of choice to another institution via UCAS. For current students, we communicate with all students, and ensure teaching and other resources continue to be provided. Where this is not possible for individual modules or years of study we work with students to confirm their options in relation to transfer to other programmes or modules and ensure dedicated academic and professional services support continues to be available, via Unihelp, our first port of call for general student enquiries, where students can seek general and specialist advice, and the Progression and Support team, who provide specialist advice and guidance on study options.

The Apprenticeship Steering Group has been established to oversee the arrangements for the establishment and management of degree apprenticeships, and that body will continue to review and manage risks relating to apprenticeships.

All our agreements with collaborative partner organisations include a contingency plan, which identifies the arrangements that will be used should the specific partner and/or programme close or fail as a result of financial or other means. The contingency plan represents the commitment by Middlesex university to ensure that all students at a collaborative partner have the opportunity to complete their award. Contingency plans fall

into one of the following categories:

- Where the programme is franchised or jointly delivered and delivered at a partner in the vicinity of a Middlesex University campus, to transfer to an alternative existing programme and a Middlesex university campus;
- Middlesex University will make arrangements to teach students through flying faculty and/or appointment of additional staff in local temporary premises;
- Middlesex University will teach out the programme through distance education and through locally appointed staff;
- Students will transfer to an alternative Middlesex University programme at another collaborative partner, where another partner operates locally and offers similar provision.
- Middlesex University will make arrangements for another HEI to teach the programme or provide a replacement programme through a combination of the contingency scenarios above

(see https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0019/425053/guidance5xi-Types-of-contingency-plans.doc)

Memoranda of Co-operation between Middlesex University and the collaborative partner set out the terms under which a programme can be offered by a collaborative partner. All programmes approved for delivery with a collaborative partner have a Memorandum of Co-operation in place. The Memorandum of Co-operation details the contingency plan in place for the specific programme, including the implementation plans and factors to enable continuity of operations should the plan need to be put into practice.

3. Refund and compensation policy

Based on the latest audited accounts the University has unrestricted reserves of £53m which would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation in the event that we need to make refunds and compensation payments. However, as identified in this document, we are committed to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to complete their studies. This commitment extends to students taught directly in the UK, to students at overseas campuses and to the students studying for Middlesex degrees through partner organisations.

The financial state of partner organisations is regularly assessed alongside academic quality. The reserves provide sufficient to meet teaching commitments or provide compensation where appropriate.

You can view our refund and compensation policy at: <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/courses> and at <http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/>.

4. Communication about student protection plan

We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students by:

- publishing the plan on our public website, and providing a link to the plan from the courses page on our website <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/courses> in order to make prospective students aware of it;
- providing an information page, including a link to our student protection plan, on the Unihub site <http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/> , which provides all Middlesex students with information about the study support, events and facilities available to them and the regulations which govern their study. We will also include a website link in all student programme handbooks.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implication of the student protection plan by:

- referencing the plan in our validation and review procedures <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/academic-quality/handbook/lqe-handbook-section-3> in order to ensure that academic staff are aware of the plan when proposing programme changes or programme closure;

We will review our student protection plan annually at Assurance Committee, a sub-committee of Academic Board, to ensure that it remains current and up-to-date. Assurance Committee includes student representation.

Communication

If the University closes a programme during the recruitment cycle, or makes changes to the programme, we inform applicants as early as possible in order to minimise the potential disruption to the application process. Where possible, we will offer an alternative programme in a similar subject area or offer the intended programme of study at another entry year. If an alternative programme is unavailable or unsuitable then for undergraduate applicants we will support their substitution of choice to another institution via UCAS.

Where we make major changes to programmes, or make a decision to close a programme, students are notified by the programme leader, and provided with the information required to enable them to continue to study and to complete the programme. Students have access to independent advice via Unihelp, our first port of call for general student enquiries, where students can seek general and specialist advice, and the Progression and Support team, who provide specialist advice and guidance on study options.