

Student Protection Plan

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1. Our assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, how those risks may differ based on students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

Students are at the heart of Middlesex University's mission and ethos, and as such there is a commitment to the delivery of an excellent student experience. Where, on occasion events occur which lead to unforeseen circumstances, the University is committed to acting in the best interests of students.

Our student protection plan sets out the measures in place at Middlesex University to protect students in the event that a risk to the continuation of their studies should arise. The plan applies to all students studying for a Middlesex University award across all campuses in London, Dubai and Mauritius, or at any of our partner institutions.

The student protection plan does not cover learners undertaking Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training or those undertaking a training programme with another provider which we have accredited.

The main risks to continuation of study are outlined below. The level of risk is assessed on the basis of how likely an event is to occur and what the impact of that event would be, there are five levels of assessed risk from the lowest level of negligible then to low then medium then high and finally very high.

1.1. Closure of the University

The risk that the University will no longer be able to deliver programmes at any of its three campuses is low since the financial management of the University is sound, as evidenced by

internal and external audit findings and demonstrated in our Annual Financial Return 2024 submitted to the OfS in March 2025. This shows that the University has adequate cash reserves to continue operations for the foreseeable future. The University ensures that forecasts of student recruitment and retention are based on realistic assumptions and are set with regard to the wider sector environment. Robust estimates are also made of potential cost increases over the forecast period. We benefit from strong support from 'local' stakeholder groups across our global institution. We also have business continuity plans to enable the recovery of key business processes following a disaster or incident.

1.2. Loss of Office for Students (OfS) registration / taught degree awarding powers

The risk that the University loses its OfS registration or taught degree awarding powers is low because we have robust governance, structures and systems in place to manage the institution and ensure alignment with the conditions of registration set by the OfS. We have a demonstrable track record in effectively managing quality and academic standards. We operate robust regulations, policies and procedures that assure quality and standards and data analytics platforms to enable key performance measures to be used for monitoring and enhancement activity. An annual compliance report to the University Board ensures high level oversight of the University's adherence to OfS conditions of registration including evaluation of risk and associated mitigation.

1.3. Loss of Student Visa Sponsor (Tier 4) Licence

The risk that the University has its Student Visa Sponsor (Tier 4) Licence revoked or suspended is low because we have robust processes to track engagement and attendance of sponsored students to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of their visa. In the event of a suspension or loss of licence, processes and support mechanisms are in place to minimize disruption and to enable enrolment with an alternative provider where regulations permit.

1.4. Loss of accreditation from Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies

The risk of loss of accreditation from PSRBs (for example the Nursing and Midwifery Council and Health Care Professions Council) is low because the University has a very strong track record in ensuring it operates in accordance with PSRB requirements. The University maintains strong stakeholder relationships with commissioning bodies and placement providers in health, with regular monitoring of performance which enables early intervention where issues arise.

1.5. Loss of Department for Education (DfE) funding for higher degree apprenticeship provision

The risk that the University loses DfE funding for apprenticeship provision is low. The University operates a robust model of apprenticeship focused governance, and through these mechanisms ensures relevant stakeholders are aware of apprenticeship funding rules, including any changes. Internal audits conducted by PWC have been undertaken with all recommended actions for improvement of process completed. All sub-contracting arrangements for apprenticeships are scrutinised by external auditors.

1.6. Removal from the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR)

The risk of the University being removed from the APAR is low due to the 'good' Ofsted inspection outcome in June 2022. We have robust processes in place for collating and managing a detailed annual self-assessment review and quality improvement plan (QIP). These processes are led by an experienced management team with relevant expertise.

1.7. Closure of a location of University Study

The risk that the University decides to close a location of study is low because we operate from campuses which are fit-for-purpose, with the potential for expansion as provision grows. Investment into facilities at all campuses continues. Where the University delivers provision involving professional practice in the workplace (for example in health), strong relationships with stakeholders ensures continuity of placement provision for students.

Provision at our international campuses will also be subject to local regulations. We monitor local regulations and compliance with them to ensure ongoing provision of programmes for students based at international campuses.

1.8. Closure of a course and/or subject area

The risk that the University closes a course and / or subject area is moderate, where the University determines that ongoing delivery is not sustainable. This may be due to changes in recruitment and market demand. However, the risk to continuity of study is low because it is standard practice (as outlined in the University's procedure for the suspension or withdrawal of existing courses) to teach out students for the remainder of their studies, either by continuing on the same programme or transferring to an alternative. Where courses are taught at more than one Middlesex University campus, delivery may continue at other campus where local (overseas) regulatory requirements permit. If the University closes a programme during the recruitment cycle all applicants are informed as early as possible to minimise disruption.

1.9. Termination of a partnership arrangement

The University strives to develop and maintain long-term and stable relationships with academic partners, and there is careful scrutiny of potential partners in order to effectively manage risk. The institutional risk of termination of a partnership is medium. Every precaution is taken to support students, and their continuity of study should teach out apply. A mutual commitment to protecting students' interests in the event of termination is outlined in all partnership collaborative agreements. There is a moderate risk that a partner may close a specific location of study, due to changes in student recruitment, business model, local estate restrictions and / or market exit. In the event that this happens, students will have the opportunity to complete their programme with teach out arrangements in place. This may either be within the University / partner institution or at another provider (utilizing student transfer arrangements and facilitating transfer of credit through use of relevant certification).

1.10. Disruption of University activities through sustained industrial action by university staff

In light of the current challenges within the sector regarding the sustainability of programmes and institutions, the risk of disruption of university activities as a result of sustained industrial action by University staff is moderate.

1.11. Disruption of University activities through public health emergencies

In light of the national emergency from the Covid pandemic, the risk of disruption of university activities as a result of a public health emergency is low.

1.12. Description of University activities through external threats to IT systems

The current cyber security risk to the institution is moderate. This is reflected in the institutional risk register and reviewed quarterly.

1.13. Disruption to course delivery as a result of the unanticipated departure or prolonged absence of key members of academic staff

The risk of disruption to course delivery as a result of the unanticipated departure or prolonged absence of key members of academic staff is low. We design our programmes to be taught by integrated teams of academic staff and have access to specialist part-time staff.

Routine changes to courses to secure ongoing enhancement will not trigger this plan. The university's approach to making such changes and the required consultation with students is detailed in the procedure for the approval of changes to existing courses. Changes may also be made in consultation with students as part of cyclical University course reapproval processes as outlined in the procedure for the reapproval of existing courses.

2. The measures we put in place to mitigate those risks that we consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

In the event that those risks that we consider to be moderate above materialise, we will take the following steps to mitigate the risks to students' continuity of study.

2.1. Closure of a course and / or subject area

The University's procedure for the suspension or withdrawal of existing courses outlines the approach to handling course closures both within the University and in partner institutions, including student consultation. The procedure has been informed by the expectations of the [UK Quality Code](#) and relevant consumer protection legislation. In order to seek approval for course closure, teams are required to provide an exit strategy (as part of a course discontinuation form) which outlines a clear plan for students to be able to complete their course without compromising academic standards and the quality of their learning experience. This exit strategy must be informed by full and early consultation with all affected students.

In the event of course closure, the University will, in the first instance, make arrangements to teach out current students through to completion. This means that we commit to the course can be completed within the University or relevant partner institution by all current enrolled students, even though the course is being discontinued and we will not recruit any further students to the same course. If the decision to close the course is prompted by concerns about quality or academic standards, we will secure internal and / or external academic advice and

guidance in order to ensure that academic standards are safeguarded, and the quality of the student learning experience is maintained during the teach out phase.

If, exceptionally, teach out is not possible, we will support individual students in transferring to an alternative course. Depending on the individual student's circumstances or aspirations, this may either be within the University / partner institution or at another provider (utilizing student transfer arrangements and facilitating transfer of credit through use of relevant certification).

In handling course closure and potential student transfers, we will be mindful of the needs of students, including those with protected characteristics, and will ensure full consultation and the availability of appropriate support services (in accordance with our course withdrawal procedure).

Where the closure of a course of study is through the termination of an agreement with a partner institution's market exit, additional steps will be taken to ensure that any commitments included in the partner institution's Access and Participation which impact the success or progression of students are upheld.

2.2. Disruption of University activities through sustained industrial action by university staff

The University has in place established frameworks for consultation and negotiation with recognised trade unions and is committed to working closely with trade union colleagues to achieve reasonable solutions to matters that may arise. In the event that there is disruption to continuity of study as a result of sustained industrial action, the University will seek to:

- ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible
- take all reasonable steps to fulfil its responsibilities to students in ensuring that any disruption is minimized, and that as far as possible students are not disadvantaged by the action with regards to their academic progress.

2.3. Disruption of University activities through external threats to IT systems

The University has robust business continuity and disaster recovery plans and procedures in place, alongside a strong focus on the mitigation of the cyber risk to the institution, particularly in relation to learning and teaching activities.

2.4. Termination of a partnership arrangement

All partnership arrangements are subject to due diligence scrutiny to ensure that there is a sound academic, financial and legal case to support the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and / or faculty level strategic objectives, in accordance with the [University's Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook](#). Legal agreements underpinning partnership arrangements are all required to include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures the quality of the experience of students is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement. Exit or transition arrangements would also apply in the case of a closure of a specific delivery location.

In the event of a termination of an academic partnership arrangement, the University will consider the following options in consultation with the partner institution and the students

concerned:

- wherever possible, withdrawing from the partnership in a gradual or phased approach, over a period of time that would allow current students to complete their studies at the partner institution
- where this is not possible, supporting students to transfer to appropriate courses at the University or at other providers (depending on their individual circumstances) and facilitating any associated credit transfer (this may involve courses being delivered via alternative means, including distance or blended learning, where this would be beneficial for the students concerned).

Students studying with any of our partners will be contacted by the Academic Partnerships office PartnerOps@mdx.ac.uk

3. Information about the policy we have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to our students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event we are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

Arrangements for the refund of tuition fees and the award of compensation in the event of course closure or the withdrawal of provision are outlined in the University's [Student Refund and Compensation Policy](#). Middlesex University is committed to ensuring that it maintains a strong financial base and effective structures and processes for financial management to achieve the University's strategic objectives. The University currently has, and foresees that the University will continue to have, substantial cash reserves which will be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for ad-hoc claims and requests covered by the [Student Refund and Compensation Policy](#) and as per this Student Protection Plan. The University will consider an appropriate award of compensation on a case-by-case basis, informed by the circumstances and context of the situation.

For partnership arrangements where the University is the lead institution responsible for the registration of students and the collection of tuition fees, the level of compensation will be determined in negotiation with the relevant partner institution. Where the partner is the lead institution responsible for the collection of tuition fees, students should refer to the Tuition Fee Policy (or equivalent) of the partner provider. We would regard refunds and compensation for students who may be affected by non-continuation of study as one such event.

In the event of termination, students will be contacted by the University's Academic Partnership Office who will explain next steps and options. Students can also contact the University's Academic Partnership Office by email using PartnerOps@mdx.ac.uk

4. Information about how we will communicate with students about our student protection plan

The University's Student Protection Plan will be published on the University's website to ensure that it is accessible to current and future students. It will also be signposted from other relevant student-facing documentation, and in relevant student events (such as induction).

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of the Student Protection Plan through incorporation of references to it in relevant University procedures and associated guidance (e.g., those relating to course modification, suspension and closure).

The plan will be subject to annual review as part of our established cycle of policy and procedure review and will be reported to both the University Executive and the Academic Board. Students are represented on Academic Board, facilitating student input.

More frequent reviews may be required where there are changes to the University's risk register that have implications in terms of preserving continuity of study for students, in order to ensure a joined up approach. This will be overseen by the University Executive.

The University will notify students of any changes which may affect their studies in a timely manner. Should this Student Protection Plan be triggered, individual students will be notified by the PVC Education's Office within five working days. Opportunities for collective and individual discussion of the implications for students and options to ensure continuity of study will be provided. Advice and support will be available for the PVC Education and Student Experience via PVCEducation@mdx.ac.uk . Additional independent advice and support is also available from the [Middlesex University Students' Union](#).

Material changes to courses that do not result in course closure will continue to be discussed and communicated with students in accordance with the timescales outlined in the procedure for the approval of changes to existing courses.

Students with concerns about the implementation of the Student Protection Plan may submit a complaint using the University's established complaints procedure. On completion of the procedure, if a student is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may have recourse to the [Office for the Independent Adjudicator](#) (OIA), the ombudsman for the higher education sector.