
5. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND STUDENT FEEDBACK

5.1 Quality Assurance

You may have not heard the terms 'quality assurance', 'academic quality', 'academic standards' before and now that you have, you may think they have nothing to do with you, however these terms are important to you and your programme. The below definitions explain why:

'Quality' refers to how well Middlesex supports you in your learning and covers the following areas: the teaching, the support available, the resources available, and how you are assessed.

'Standards' refers to the level of achievement you need to succeed on your course and get your qualification. In the UK, standards should not vary from one higher education provider to another.

Having both quality and standards means that you and everyone else can have confidence in your degree and your education.

Quality assurance is therefore mainly about maintaining standards and ensuring you have the best possible experience at Middlesex. The University has a range of quality assurance processes and procedures which include the following:

- Programme approval and validation –The process a programme must go through before it can run.
- Programme review – A process which looks at programmes every 6 years to see how they have been running.
- Annual monitoring – How the University reviews how programmes are doing every year.
- External Examining – Independent moderators who help ensure academic standards are being met but are also comparable nationally.
- Student feedback and representation – This includes student surveys, Programme Voice Groups and student voice leaders.

Further information on quality assurance and enhancement can be found here:

<http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/your-study/ensuring-quality>

To ensure high standards of Middlesex University provision, all Programmes are subject to the University's academic quality assurance procedures (which include those procedures related to programme approval, monitoring and review). A key feature of these processes is the input from external subject experts who ensure that awards of Middlesex are comparable to those of other UK universities, and that the programme curriculum, teaching, assessment and resources are appropriate. The University's policies and approaches to quality assurance and a range of related documents are available at <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/academic-quality>

Students have a very important role in enhancing Programmes, feeding back on a regular basis via feedback forms (surveys), Programme Voice Groups, Campus Forum meetings, and other mechanisms. Student feedback also plays a major role in programme monitoring and review.

Middlesex University's quality credentials are outstanding. Middlesex University is audited by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education and the Dubai campus is an integral part of this audit process. Our Dubai campus is subject to the same rigorous quality assurance procedures that have earned Middlesex University the highest possible endorsement from the QAA.

Middlesex University Dubai is also licensed by the Dubai government's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). Furthermore, the Universities Quality Assurance International Board at KHDA reviews programmes offered in Dubai to ensure that these are equivalent to those at the home campuses in London.

Academic programmes in Dubai have the same validation and monitoring system as in London, with the same examinations taken simultaneously in both cities, where applicable. The Honours Bachelors and Masters degrees awarded to Dubai campus students are therefore identical to those achieved by students at the London campuses, and students can transfer between campuses if they meet the relevant conditions.

5.2 Institutional Audits in the UK

UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for higher education (www.qaa.ac.uk/en)

Middlesex University has had the quality and standards of its provision confirmed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the UK. The QAA reviews UK universities to provide public information about the maintenance of academic standards and its audit processes are respected globally for their robustness. QAA's Higher Education Reviews are carried out by experts from other universities and colleges. Review teams include students, because QAA believes that students should be partners in the quality assurance of their education.

Most recently, a team of QAA reviewers visited Middlesex University in October 2015 and judged that its academic standards, the quality and enhancement of its student learning opportunities, and the quality of information about its learning opportunities all meet UK expectations.

You can read the full report here: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10004351

The previous Middlesex University review report published in 2009 identified as 'good practice' the meticulous attention given to the establishment, development and integration of the University's Dubai campus. The panel praised Middlesex Dubai for the meticulous methods and detailed attention to quality matters, and perhaps more importantly, for assuring that learning opportunities in Dubai are comparable to those available to students in London.

In 2014, QAA conducted a Review of Transnational Education (TNE) in the UAE which resulted in a positive report for Middlesex University Dubai. The pastoral and academic support provided to students was a particular strength noted in the review. The review found that “students have a range of opportunities for engaging with employers during their studies with employability embedded within the curriculum and extracurricular activities provided”. The report also offered an acknowledgement of ‘a growing research culture’ on campus. A range of students from across the university participated in this review and their contribution was instrumental in offering the QAA an insight into the strengths of our campus. The full report is provided at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports>

The QAA is an independent body that provides an integrated quality assurance service for UK higher education institutions. The agency promotes public confidence that quality of provision and standards of awards in UK higher education are being safeguarded and enhanced. The Agency's reviews cover public and private higher education in universities and colleges, including arrangements for collaboration with overseas partners; and by assessing the quality and standards of teaching and learning at subject level. These activities result in reports that are available to the public, as printed publications and on their website. For more information see: www.qaa.ac.uk

5.3 Programme Validation by Dubai Government

Dubai Government’s Knowledge and Human Development Authority (www.khda.gov.ae)
Middlesex University Dubai is licensed by the Government of Dubai’s Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). Established in 2006 by royal decree, the KHDA is responsible for licensure and quality assurance across the entire education and human development continuum covering schools and higher education institutions in the Emirate of Dubai.

In addition to annual licensure, all programmes at Middlesex University Dubai are reviewed by the KHDA’s University Quality Assurance International Board or UQAIB. This is a Board of influential academics and quality assurance experts from all over the world that has been assigned the responsibility for setting standards across international higher education on offer in the Emirate.

For more information, see:

<http://khda.gov.ae/en/directory/universities-search-results/university?id=774>

5.4 Student Feedback

At Middlesex we are always working to improve the student experience. We aim to ensure that you have a fantastic journey with us starting from the day you apply to come to Middlesex, all the way through your course and even after you graduate.

The best way for you to make the most of your time at University is to get involved, an important element of which is to communicate with us. Whether it is a compliment or a complaint, we are equally keen to hear from you. We will make every effort to act on your feedback, which will not only help improve things for you but also for other current and future Middlesex students.

There are a number of ways in which you can communicate with us and give us your feedback:

- Programme Voice Groups
- Campus Forum
- Becoming a Student Voice Leader
- Becoming a Student Council Member
- Module Feedback Surveys
- Programme Feedback Surveys for UG programmes (Middlesex Student Survey or popularly, MSS) and for PG programmes (Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey or PTES).
- Other Surveys

Programme Voice Group

The purpose of the Programme Voice Group (PVG) is to provide a forum for discussion between you and the staff members involved in all aspects of your Programme. Each Programme holds regular PVG meetings generally twice a year. The PVG membership includes:

- Student Voice Leaders
- Programme Coordinator
- Academic Staff aligned to the delivery of the programme or modules
- Support Services Representatives

Along with the feedback that Student Voice Leaders collect from their cohorts, the Groups will also discuss information relating to the quality of your programme and this includes;

- External Examiner reports
- Data and action plans from student surveys
- Updates from programme staff.

Formal minutes are kept of the discussion and decisions of each PVG meeting. The minutes are included with the programme-level Annual Monitoring & Enhancement report for consideration by the University. The points raised at the meeting are carefully recorded for issues arising, and the action taken upon them, and are available through MyUniHub student portal

<http://unihub.mdx.ac.uk>.

Campus Forums

The purpose of the Campus Forum is to optimise the student experience by asking students (through SVL) to raise campus-specific issues relating to the operation of administrative and

service support for students. These meetings do not deal with programme-specific curriculum issues, which are dealt with at the Programme Voice Groups. For clarifications, please check with the Quality Manager, Mr Mohammad Meraj (QualityOffice@mdx.ac.ae).

Campus Forums are usually held once per term. All students are welcome. In addition to SVL, all students are welcome. The membership includes:

- Pro-Vice Chancellor and Director of Middlesex University Dubai (Chair)
- Student Voice Leaders (contact the Quality Manager if you wish to attend – even if you are not a formal representative)
- Representatives of all support services such as the Library, IT, Student Office, Centre for Academic Success, Careers and Employability Services, Finance Office and the Admissions Office
- Representatives of the Student Council

Your SVLs are responsible for notifying the Forum of issues which have been brought to them by you. Even if you don't personally want to come to a Campus Forum meeting, tell your Rep about any queries and concerns you have about your module(s) or programme and they will raise them for you at one of the twice yearly Campus Forum meetings.

Student Voice Leaders

Every programme has the provision for having a Student Voice Leader. As a SVL you help improve communication between the University and the students on the module and programme you are representing. If you would like to become a Student Voice Leader, speak to your module coordinator and/or programme coordinator or contact the Quality Manager, Mr Mohammad Meraj (QualityOffice@mdx.ac.ae).

At the start of each academic year (by learning week 2), each programme will select a number of SVLs to represent their year of their course. It's important to raise any issues or feedback that you have with your SVLs, so that they can accurately represent your views to academic staff. You can also nominate yourself to become a SVL. Training and support throughout the year is provided for student representatives.

As a SVL your role will be to gather the views and opinions of the students you represent and to outline these opinions at the relevant Programme Voice Group or Campus Forum meetings. You also feedback the decisions made and progress updates to other students following the meeting.

SVLs receive a certificate that recognises their representational achievement. For the certificate you will have to attend the training sessions and be present at any pre-meetings or the formal PVG meeting each term. This is a great opportunity to add value to your CV. If you would like to become a SVL, speak to your Programme Coordinator or contact the Quality Manager, Mr Mohammad Meraj (QualityOffice@mdx.ac.ae)

Module Feedback Surveys

Module feedback is collected towards the end of the teaching term of that module via anonymous surveys. The aim of this process is to elicit your views on the specifics of module taken. You can expect to receive a report on any issues that have been identified. The report would also describe the measures taken to resolve any problems.

All reports will be an item for discussion during Programme Voice Group and will, where necessary, be reported upon during the quality/annual monitoring and enhancement process. The whole feedback process will also be reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure that that it is effective in helping provide a good quality experience for students.

Middlesex Student Survey (MSS)

The annual Middlesex Student Survey seeks your views on your programme experience during the year including comments on the organisation and management of the programme, academic support, learning resources and your personal development. This is your chance to tell us about how you engage with learning on your course, work with others, and take part in the kinds of activities that help you to learn. It is a chance to reflect on how you study and what might help your studies in future. The results also help us make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that are of value. We hope that this will help improve your learning outcomes and those of students like you in the future. This survey is based on the UK's National Student Survey (NSS). You can expect to receive a report on any issues that have been identified. The report would also describe the measures taken to resolve any problems.

All reports will be an item for discussion during Programme Voice Group meetings and will, where necessary, be reported upon during the quality/annual monitoring and enhancement process.

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

This provides an independent anonymised way for postgraduate students to feedback on your experience. This annual survey seeks your views on your programme experience during the year including comments on the organisation and management of the programme, academic support, learning resources and your personal development. The survey will focus on your experience and engagement with your programme of study. You will be asked to complete the survey towards the end of your programme. The results also help us make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that are of value. We hope that this will help improve your learning outcomes and those of students like you in the future.

All reports will be an item for discussion during Programme Voice Group and will, where necessary, be reported upon during the quality/annual monitoring and enhancement process.

Other Surveys

From time to time the University will distribute surveys to elicit your views on the quality of the services offered by the University and your student experience on areas other than your programme of study. Further information will be available from time to time on UniHub and the Dubai campus website at www.mdx.ac.ae. We will try not to send you too many surveys, but if you do receive one then please remember that your responses do count and they do make a difference.

5.5 Code of Conduct - Programme Voice Group

For details, please refer to Section 14.4, Appendix A5.