



Review of UK Transnational Education in the United Arab Emirates: Middlesex University Dubai Campus

February 2014

Executive summary

Middlesex University (the University) aims to make it possible for students around the globe to study and gain Middlesex University degrees wherever they live. The campus in Dubai opened in Dubai Knowledge Village in 2005 and now teaches more than 2,653 students drawn mainly from the Middle East and South Asia regions. The University offers 15 postgraduate programmes and 23 undergraduate programmes in Dubai, spanning business-related programmes, media, education and psychology. The campus is a Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA)-registered higher education provider and all programmes have the University Quality Assurance International Board approval.

All Middlesex campuses are integrated into mainstream processes and procedures and as such operate as one organisation. In Dubai, the Pro Vice-Chancellor/Director fulfils a similar role as a Dean of School. Regular communication occurs between academic and administrative staff on the main campus in Hendon and Dubai-based staff. Students are able to move between all Middlesex campuses to undertake their studies and there is growing interaction between students across campuses during their studies.

The pastoral and academic support provided to students was a particular strength noted in the review and this has been further enhanced through the provision of student learning advisers. Students have a range of opportunities for engaging with employers during their studies with employability embedded within the curriculum and extracurricular activities provided. There is a growing research culture which is acknowledged and welcomed by both staff and students. Other positive features include the quality of information provided to students through a range of handbooks.

With the branch being well established and staff at the Dubai campus very familiar with University processes and systems, there is opportunity for greater engagement of staff in Dubai with operational matters, such as assessment, programme validation and review, and decision-making processes through involvement in the University's deliberative structures.

Report

Introduction

1 Middlesex University (the University) is one of the largest universities in the UK, with 43,155 students; 23,959 students are based in Hendon, North London; 3,670 at the University's overseas campuses; and 15,526 students are enrolled on University programmes delivered by partners (based on 2012-13 figures). The University's origin dates back to 1878; Middlesex Polytechnic was established in 1973, and Middlesex University in 1992.

2 The University's strategic plan sets out the University's mission to 'produce a global community of staff, students and partners, who make vital contributions to the economic, cultural and social well-being of the societies in which they live and work'. The international ambition of the University is described in the University's aim to develop 'new overseas campuses that make it possible for students around the globe to study and gain a Middlesex degree wherever they live'.

3 The branch campus in Dubai was opened in 2005. It was the first overseas branch campus to be opened by the University and was followed by campuses in Mauritius in 2010 and Malta in 2013. The University also has an extensive network of collaborative partners in the UK and overseas.

4 The University's Dubai campus is located in the Dubai Knowledge Village Free Zone, which provides numerous shared facilities such as leisure, food and prayer room facilities. With the continued growth of the University's provision in Dubai there is recognition by the University's management that the current accommodation is stretched. Consideration is therefore being given to future accommodation requirements. The Dubai campus teaches more than 2,653 students (based on 2012-13 enrolments), drawn mainly from the Middle East and South Asia regions, and there are ambitions to grow to between 3,500 and 4,000 students.

5 The programmes offered in Dubai are all taught programmes delivered face-to-face. Programmes running in Dubai also run in London. During their studies, students have the opportunity to transfer to any other Middlesex campus. Undergraduate students from the Hendon campus have transferred to Dubai for their final year. Some programmes in the UK that were reviewed by the University in 2012-13 continue to be offered in Dubai, allowing existing students to complete their studies on their original programmes, and also for local permissions to be obtained for the reviewed programmes.

6 The Dubai campus' portfolio broadly includes: an international foundation programme; 15 named postgraduate programmes/routes in education, business-related areas, psychology, media and computing; and 22 named undergraduate programmes/routes in business-related areas, international tourism, media, psychology, social science and information technology. The University intends to develop further its postgraduate provision in current disciplines, introduce programmes in specialist areas, such as education and international politics, and consolidate business school provision in line with comparable changes to the academic portfolio in Hendon. It is also commissioning market research into further subject areas.

7 The Dubai campus is led by the University Pro Vice-Chancellor/Director (PVC/Director). The campus comprises 67 academic staff, 21 managerial staff, and 49 administrative staff. The Centre for Academic Partnerships, based in London, provides support and coordination for global operations, including overseas campuses and collaborative academic partnerships.

Set-up and operation

Establishing the branch

8 The proposal to establish a campus in Dubai was initially presented to the Planning and Resources Committee of the Board of Governors in 2004, following agreement in principle by the Chair of the Board of Governors. The proposal emerged following an approach by Edulink Ltd, a company based in Dubai, about setting up a university in a free zone in Dubai. The University had operated a successful office for recruitment in Dubai since 2003. The proposal was for a joint venture between Middlesex Associates Dubai, owned by Edulink, who would supply all the finance and related administrative functions, and the University, operating through Middlesex University (Dubai Ltd), who would manage all academic and related administrative functions of the University. All set-up costs were also covered by Middlesex Associates.

9 In September 2005, a revised version of the joint venture agreement was signed, confirming the University as the providers of university courses with Middlesex Associates providing the venture capital and bearing the financial risk. The University was charged with establishing a company, Middlesex International FZ-LLC (Middlesex International), with the responsibility for employing staff appointed by the University, including librarians, laboratory assistants and staff whose function is more closely related to the academic programme than finance, administration and provision of academic courses. Since establishing the Dubai campus, Middlesex University (Dubai Ltd) has taken over responsibility for the employment of all staff and in the last three years the PVC/Director has had responsibility for decisions relating to the employment of staff. Middlesex Associates retains an interest in the business and the PVC/Director reports to both the University and Middlesex Associates, but with delegated responsibility.

10 The review team concluded that the proposal presented to the Board of Governors demonstrated the conduct of due diligence including a thorough understanding of the local context in terms of regulations for operation in Dubai, financial management, legal context and risks with mitigation measures.

11 The campus in Dubai was approved through the process of approval as defined in the University's Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook (LQEH), a process that involved approval of the campus by Academic Board, and a subsequent review of provision of the campus.

12 The University's International Education Partnerships unit coordinated the development of the academic provision and support, and a Middlesex University Dubai Project Board was established to oversee the development of an appropriate organisational structure, planning the range of programmes and identifying appropriate academic support and resource requirements. Job descriptions for staff were designed in consultation with relevant colleagues and using local intelligence.

13 The review team was informed by senior managers that since the launch of the Dubai campus and its early review of quality assurance and management arrangements, the University has now established a more systematic and robust procedure for the approval of new campuses.

Making the branch work

14 For management purposes, Middlesex branch campuses are integrated into the University's mainstream management procedures and processes and are viewed as an extension of the School structure. The PVC/Director's role operates in a similar way to that of a dean of an academic school. He is managed by, and in regular contact with, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) in the UK. The Deputy Director at the Dubai campus supports the PVC/Director in managing academic areas of operation and teaching and learning resources, including academic staff and student support services, and has a lead role in liaising with various units at the home campus about academic and quality issues. The Quality Manager is responsible for: developing, implementing and maintaining systems for collecting and generating statistics; analysing and interpreting data; and producing surveys and reports for assessing teaching, student learning outcomes, planning, policy making, quality assurance and market evaluation.

15 Clear guidelines for working with University international campuses have been developed and staff are familiar with the documentation and find it helpful. In Dubai, oversight of the campus is managed through academic management team meetings.

16 The University's overseas campuses also have some additional processes or arrangements in place to reflect the nature of the campus. In Dubai there is an established campus forum, chaired by the PVC/Director and including representation from all the main functional areas to consider specific issues related to the Dubai campus. Student representatives from all courses and levels are invited to attend. The forum is focused on infrastructure and facilities. Academic matters raised by students are referred to module and/or programme coordinators via the Boards of Study meetings. Issues such as printing facilities, access to the postgraduate lounge, induction to the City, transport arrangements and fees/scholarships have been discussed at the forum and there is evidence of action taken and feedback provided to the students.

17 The Centre for Academic Partnerships is the central administrative contact for the day-to-day running of the programmes at branch campuses. The management, delivery and enhancement of programmes is seen as a team effort that involves colleagues working effectively across campus boundaries. Branch campus module coordinators and programme coordinators liaise with London-based module leaders and directors of programme.

18 The Admissions Manager in Dubai leads all aspects of the student recruitment and admissions processes. Admissions decisions are made by a team of admissions counsellors based in the Dubai campus within parameters approved through validation. The admissions department has regular contact with Hendon and any complex cases are referred there. Admissions data is entered onto the University's management information system by the branch campus admissions team and module registration for programmes is dealt with by the branch campus Student Office staff. A Middlesex preparation programme is offered to students who do not fully meet the entry criteria.

19 Students are recruited through a range of marketing events including school fairs, open days, on-campus open access support and through the website. Word of mouth is an increasing vehicle for recruitment through alumni. Postgraduate students are predominantly recruited through this route. Forty per cent of undergraduate students enter through the foundation programme, which is managed by the Academic Enrichment Coordinator. Students who met the review team reported that the International Foundation Programme provided excellent support for developing a range of academic skills including research skills. This demonstrated the depth and breadth of pastoral and academic student support observed by the review team from the outset of the student journey to graduation.

20 A student induction takes place over two days incorporating induction activities and registration for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Student Office coordinates induction which includes topics such as study skills; accessing learning materials and resources and IT facilities; advice on module choices; introduction to the assessment process; personal development planning; and a presentation on careers. All academic staff are involved in induction. Students who met the review team said they felt well prepared for University after induction events. Arrangements have been put in place to support students who arrive after the main induction event. All students receive a 'passport' that sets out induction activities that require signing off at each stage and completion of these is supported by the programme coordinator. Student progress on their academic courses is monitored through a series of reviews.

21 All programmes are taught and assessed in English and all teaching materials are provided in English. There are no formal mandatory English language classes, but English language support is provided to students through an online system (MyLearning). English language support is sought by both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Postgraduate students have found the industry-related vocabulary difficult and undergraduate students have reported difficulties in writing essays as English is not their first language. They were encouraged to attend academic enrichment workshops that had been organised specifically for postgraduate students and undergraduate students to help with academic writing and referencing. Academic staff build informative assessments that help students develop their language skills and some provide one-to-one support. The Academic Enrichment programme provides seminars twice a month to support academic skills; it offers individual support and provides feedback on student work in addition to the scheduled workshops. Postgraduate students are offered a full-day workshop on a Saturday where skills are reviewed.

22 Subject-specific student support is provided by academic staff alongside the additional academic support provided by the Academic Enrichment Service. The Enrichment Service offers workshops tailored to particular subject disciplines and for postgraduate study. Postgraduate students told the review team that they had received a workshop on academic writing, which was particularly helpful to those that have been out of education for some time. Each full-time member of staff is required to provide four hours of consultation time per week and academic staff members' availability is published. Students' first point of contact for programme queries is the Campus Programme Coordinator, and for more general enquiries and pastoral support the Student Office. Other support for students is provided by the Counselling Service, Finance Service and the Careers and Employability Service. Students with more general queries often refer to a system called UniHelp as their first point of contact, or will access myUniHub for information tailored to their programme and campus.

23 Students who met the review team raised an issue with respect to feedback from a tutor who was part-time and only on campus two days each week. However, the team heard that students have been advised that one-to-one consultation is available by email other days of the week and part-time academic staff provide a booking system for meetings with students. Postgraduate students particularly value the input of part-time staff and did not report any differences in the quality of support provided.

24 A Student Learning Assistants scheme providing additional learning support to new students has been introduced whereby second and third-year students assist lecturers in the classroom, working with small groups or individuals and helping them complete specific tasks. The student learning assistants also provide one-to-one support in the library, supporting students in using the library catalogue and databases. The scheme is equally valued both by graduate and postgraduate students. Students apply to become paid student learning assistants via the Careers and Employability Service and the scheme is treated as an internship. Applicants must have excellent academic records and be recommended by

their lecturers and programme coordinator as having a mature attitude to independent learning. Once appointed they are trained and closely monitored by the Teaching and Learning Coordinator. Their activities are recorded in a journal and an annual report is produced. The review team noted the contribution to both student support and employability.

25 A student counsellor offers a confidential service to students through scheduled hours and a system is available to book other sessions. The service is particularly well used during course assignment and examination periods. The varied and rich student support, both pastoral and academic, provided by academic and support staff and the student learning advisers is a **positive feature**.

26 The library at the Dubai campus is managed independently from the University in London, although the procedures are the same. Collections and hours of opening are determined locally. Key resources, such as books and journal articles, are normally selected by the programme team in the UK for use on programmes to run at all campuses. The selection of resources may be modified to provide more locally relevant materials. Dubai library staff have visited the Hendon campus for staff development and support is provided to the Dubai campus library from Hendon as required. The library has recently been extended to include a 'Library Group Study (LGS) area' incorporating 10 study rooms which students can book and use for group work and practising presentations. The review team observed that the rooms are well used and heard from students how they have clearly enhanced their learning opportunities.

27 Specialist software requirements are the responsibility of the module leaders and module coordinators, but licensing is the responsibility of the branch campus. The campus guide document includes factsheets relating to configuring and using IT resources. Specialist software is the same as at Hendon, although some additional provision has been provided, such as an industry-sponsored lab. Some software is trialled in Dubai and then may be adopted in Hendon. The campus is covered by a wireless network and open access computers are available in the library and computer laboratories (244 computers). An IT office provides support and troubleshooting.

28 Boards of studies minutes seen by the review team included frequent references to shortage of library stock. The physical book stock is not as extensive as in the UK and so students have to make greater use of the electronic resources, which are the same for all campuses. Students have access to e-resources including digitised texts and these are the predominant resource for students. Students spoke highly of the online resources for their breadth, ease of access, the ability to access them from anywhere and for the online support provided for referencing. However, access to electronic resources is provided via myUniHub, and some students have reported finding this system confusing and difficult to navigate, and highlighted the need for training for its use at the beginning of the academic year.

29 Learning materials are provided by the Hendon module leader through MyLearning or through other agreed means. The University's Academic Board has raised an issue about the programmes becoming UK-centric and students who met the review team referred to examples of course content and assessments that were not relevant in Dubai and/or presented significant challenges in engaging effectively with the learning activities. The senior management team told the review team that they recognise that there are still some issues with UK-centric materials, but as the campus is maturing there is a movement towards greater autonomy that will help support a more local design of learning materials and assessments.

30 The MyLearning system provides a virtual space where students can interact with peers and staff. Students use discussion boards and believe that their learning experience is enhanced by sharing the virtual space with students and staff in Hendon, because when

discussions take place they receive responses from students and staff on both campuses. A student also described working jointly on a project with a student from Hendon. The review team noted the development of these activities emerging as a possible area of good practice in the future if they are further embedded.

31 Postgraduate students value the input and support of local tutors, but were also attracted to the programme because of the visiting lecturers, both from the UK and from industry. The MBA is regarded as well aligned to the professional needs of students, providing flexibility to match career needs and with a strong academic core applied across a range of industries. Field trips and company visits add significant value as do the networks established with peers from diverse employment. Academic staff have facilitated the connection of students to provide peer support which has added a positive dimension to learning and support. The review team noted the enthusiasm of the students with respect to their learning experience.

32 Full-time academic staff at the Dubai campus are recruited in consultation with, and with the agreement of, senior programme-level staff in Hendon to ensure candidates with comparable academic qualifications and professional experience are appointed. Staff are predominantly qualified at master's level, with a minority only qualified to bachelor's level and some at doctorate level. Data on staff appointments is retained in Dubai.

33 A staff induction programme is provided including a review of academic policies and procedures, and sessions on the University's management and information systems. New staff often visit Hendon for training and to meet counterparts. Staff in Dubai have access to local staff development, and also, where appropriate, to that provided by the London campus.

34 Regular contact is maintained with Hendon colleagues to support staff development and regular training and updates are provided by Hendon staff to staff in Dubai. Training is provided locally for development, such as the introduction to the virtual learning environment. New staff are required to undertake the postgraduate certificate in learning and teaching in higher education (PGCHE) and all staff met by the review team had undertaken this. The programme is delivered locally and is open to academic staff teaching at other universities in Dubai. The Teaching and Learning Coordinator provides support to teaching staff to improve their learning and teaching and works alongside academic staff in supporting students.

35 Staff are eligible to apply for the Teaching Fellowship and Senior Teaching Fellowship scheme which provides access to an individual learning account. Currently four Dubai staff are preparing to submit for a fellowship and are being supported by mentors from Hendon.

36 A peer observation of teaching takes place once a year and may involve visiting UK staff. Completed forms are forwarded to the Dean of School and to HR in Dubai (for staff on probation). However, peer observation has not systematically been completed and has tended to occur on the basis of necessity or informally as a result of the collegiate nature of the campus. An updated peer observation process is being finalised in Hendon and is intended to be introduced in Dubai in due course.

37 Staff appraisal is undertaken annually for administrative and academic staff with a six-month follow-up. Academic staff are assessed for performance standards and set objectives for teaching, research, administration and professional service/industry outreach. The process is conducted by campus programme coordinators.

38 A research culture has not yet been established in higher education provision in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as observed by the review team. However, a deliberate strategy

to develop research activities that underpin curricula and enhance staff performance and the student experience has been put in place. Academic staff are encouraged to undertake research and in recent years have produced significant internationally relevant scholarly work. The campus has a research committee and weekly research seminars are delivered by local staff and visiting staff. These are attended by staff and students. Staff are supported to attend conferences and encouraged to attend at least one a year, and an international conference is hosted by the campus. The developing research culture on campus, including the research seminar programme, is identified as a **positive feature**.

Quality assurance

Academic standards and quality of programmes

39 The University recognises that much of its management is a shared activity, not under the control of one individual and cutting across management hierarchies. It is addressed through groups including the DVC's Academic Group and the LQEH meeting, which consults on the development of academic quality procedures. Academic Board permits delegation of more local responsibilities to school committees, allowing for local variation as long as they are consistent with the Academic Board's expectations. Academic Board receives verbal updates from the Deputy Chief Executive and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic on overseas partnerships, including information about staffing changes, campus visits and broader issues with respect to partnership management, such as profitability and closure of campuses. There is no representation from branch campuses on the University's deliberative structure despite a recommendation in the 2007 review of the Dubai campus that it should be explicitly included in the deliberative and executive decision-making structure at all levels. The University is **recommended** to engage staff from the Dubai campus more effectively in the deliberative structures and decision-making processes of the University.

40 The review of the Dubai campus in 2007 included meetings with staff from Schools and central services in the UK and Dubai, and students at the Dubai campus. The review covered arrangements including: campus approval; programme approval; monitoring and review; admissions, enrolment and induction; student assessment; student support; external examining and assessment boards; student feedback; student complaints; academic appeals and misconduct; learning resources; staff appointments, monitoring and development; quality monitoring; and publicity and promotional material. The Academic Quality and Standards Committee received a report in June 2008 updating responses to the recommendations and confirmed that all the University's actions had been addressed and that two actions were ongoing in Dubai: induction arrangements and the terms of reference and election of the Student Council, both to be completed by October 2008.

41 The University has established academic quality procedures which are included in the LQEH. The University's academic regulations are defined in the University Regulations. These academic quality procedures and regulations apply to all University provision regardless of the campus of delivery, to ensure a coherent approach to the academic quality assurance and regulation of the University's provision.

42 Programmes are approved, validated, reviewed and monitored using the same set of quality processes as for all University provision. Programmes offered at branch campuses are approved by relevant Middlesex committees. Staff in Dubai are consulted about proposed changes during the preparation for review, but currently are not actively engaged in the review process, which the review team believed would enhance staff engagement and further support development of programmes that were less UK-centric. Staff who met the review team reported that they felt part of the validation processes. Staff were notified of cross-University reviews of academic provision through the academic management team

meeting and asked to work closely with their counterparts in London to keep track of changes. The review team was informed that it has been proposed that in the future, parts of the event could occur in Dubai, that the Dubai campus is more effectively integrated into the planning process and that there should be greater staff involvement through the use of video conferencing.

43 Increasingly staff at the Dubai campus feel able to influence developments at programme level where they identified; for example, a desire to introduce new areas such as international politics and film and a module bringing together economics and tourism. Although not directly involved in key committees, Dubai staff receive minutes and discuss issues with their counterparts, and if Dubai staff are in the UK at the time of meetings they may be invited to attend. Some representation would enhance the ability of staff to influence developments. Branch campuses propose a list of optional modules to be offered during the forthcoming academic year for the relevant Deputy Deans to confirm and feed back to the Campus Director. Academic staff in Dubai and students told the review team they were satisfied that option choices were appropriate and not restricted.

44 In 2007, it was recommended that the annual quality monitoring reports for Dubai would be best presented as an overarching Dubai campus report encompassing all provision, and that this report should be shared with all staff. This has been introduced for the first time in the 2013-14 academic year and the overarching report has been compiled, but staff had not at the time of the review visit seen the final report and were not fully familiar with the process. Programme directors in the UK receive the annual monitoring reports from Dubai and are required to include Dubai in their Quality Monitoring Report (QMRs) and send reports to Dubai. Schools are then required to feed back to Dubai on how actions are to be dealt with. Staff in Dubai do not see the final QMR for their area developed in the UK, although they believed it would be available on the staff intranet. There was limited evidence as to how this process would be owned by staff in Dubai and impact on future delivery or how practice across campuses is shared through this process.

45 The University's review of the Dubai campus in 2007 recommended that information on Dubai student admissions, progression and achievement and first destination data be included in its standard reports. This information is now provided to staff through the Quality Office. Programme-level comparisons on progression and achievement across Dubai and Hendon are well received and provide useful information.

46 Programmes in Dubai are overseen by the same external examiners as the Middlesex 'home' programmes. Student achievement is considered at the same assessment boards in the UK. Feedback from external examiners is passed to staff in Dubai and the programme team in the UK respond to issues raised incorporating any comments received from Dubai module tutors. The review in 2007 recommended that staff in Dubai receive, and have an opportunity to comment on, the full reports from external examiners. Staff see the feedback for any issues raised with respect to the Dubai campus, but do not see the full responses and they have no engagement with external examiners, which limits learning from this process and understanding of performance across campuses.

47 Feedback from students is collected through a number of different activities: Boards of Study, campus forum, student representatives, Student Council Members, module feedback surveys, programme feedback surveys and other surveys.

48 Boards of Studies are held twice a year and membership includes: student representatives, programme coordinators, academic staff aligned to delivery of programme and modules and support service representatives. Attendance by student representatives and the extent to which students are familiar with the Boards of Studies and emerging actions are variable. Minutes of Boards of Studies seen by the review team demonstrated

good student representative attendance at some and far fewer at others, which did limit student feedback on some modules. Minutes of the Boards of Studies are sent to the Hendon programme or curriculum leader. Students are informed of actions taken as a result of their feedback at the next meeting of the Board of Studies. Minutes are shared on the noticeboard and actions are publicised through social media announcements. The introduction of the group areas in the library are an example of action taken in response to feedback (paragraph 26).

49 External examiner reports, student feedback reports and the QMRs are reported in minutes of Boards of Studies and general feedback noted. A summary of external examiner reports was shared at one Board of Studies and the associated responses and action plans. It was also noted that the full reports were available online and from the Quality Manager's office. One board reported that the QMR was available on the noticeboard but did not discuss the report. Greater interaction with reports could elicit improved learning and action planning.

50 Students take responsibility for the election of student representatives. The University's Students' Union in the UK, has supported the Dubai campus in implementing training for the student representatives through the provision of training materials. Student representatives that attend training sessions and attend all Boards of Study receive a certificate, adding value to their CV. A Student Council was established early on but was not very effective and had little impact. There was no interest from students in standing for Council last year, but the terms of reference have now been reviewed and there is currently a Student Council in place in Dubai which places a major focus on providing social activities for students.

51 Programme feedback surveys are conducted and module feedback is collected two weeks later. A standard University module feedback form is used and completed forms are processed in Dubai. A statistical analysis by campus is made available but this does not include student comments and receipt of the information was reported as sporadic. It was confirmed that students receive feedback on the action taken but it is not clear how this is managed. Students reported not being informed about the results of programme feedback surveys and areas for improvement and were referred to the Quality Assurance noticeboards. The review team felt that this could be strengthened. Feedback from staff and students through the range of feedback channels is reported in the QMR report.

52 There is evidence that students engage with industry and practice as part of their curricula. Around 85 per cent of graduates are employed after six months. The rapid and proactive development of the Careers Service was commended in the University's review of the campus in 2007. The Careers and Employability Manager has responsibility for the employability strategy and for developing appropriate careers education within and outside the curriculum. The Careers Service provides one-to-one careers guidance, workshops, help with CV writing, support for making presentations, mock interviews and so forth.

53 Employability is embedded within the curriculum and supported through a range of extracurricular activities. Students participate in Personal Development Planning and a range of placement opportunities and internships are offered, developed by the Careers Service through their relationships with local and international employers and recruitment agencies. Employers frequently visit the campus and provide guest lectures, networking opportunities and interviews for students. Programme teams aim to include two visiting speakers each semester.

54 A Middlesex mentoring scheme is offered to final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students, through which they can work with a senior professional on career readiness and personal development. Careers days are provided for students. In 2013,

93 companies were represented at the careers day and students and employers received a handbook setting out corporate profiles. Fieldwork modules and trips and work placement modules are integrated into programmes. Where relevant, students receive advice on gaining professional accreditation. Students that met with the review team were clearly engaged with the world of work and felt well prepared for the future. The support for employability and engagement with employers embedded within the curriculum and provided through a range of extracurricular activities is a **positive feature**.

55 Some international students have reported difficulty in finding companies to work with for their consultancy projects because they do not have networks with the local business sector. They were advised to make use of the networks of the careers and employability service. Staff who met the review team explained that there are rules and regulations that limit the engagement of international students with the workplace in terms of the hours that they can work.

Assessment and certification of awards

56 Assessment processes are fully integrated across all University campuses with the same examinations taken simultaneously on all campuses. Results and degree classifications for a particular programme are considered at the same assessment boards in the UK. Dubai staff have been involved in boards through the use of video or teleconferencing and some have attended boards in person. Staff in Dubai have not met external examiners; however, it is noted that a review of process concluded that for each assessment board, the involvement, or otherwise, of overseas campuses should be noted in the minutes, and the training needs for overseas campuses in understanding the working of assessment boards should be investigated and training provided. Coursework is set and moderated in the UK but marked in Dubai. Localisation of assessment tasks is facilitated and approved at School level, but this could be further extended to provide greater flexibility.

57 Staff from Dubai are not involved in the moderation of assessments and do not formally have an opportunity to review student assessments from other campuses. However, some staff have seen some examples of student work from the UK. There is evidence that some assessments are London-centric. The University is **recommended** to ensure that there is sufficient opportunity for academic staff in Dubai to modify assessments and assessment processes to provide relevant and fit-for-purpose assessments for Dubai-based students.

58 Where students in Dubai have requested review of assessment weightings or timing of assessments, they were informed that Dubai has very little mandate on assessment and strictly follow UK rules and regulations, and therefore change would not be possible. The University is **recommended** to develop a more equal status for Dubai staff in the marking, moderation, review and validation processes.

59 Assessment information including the assessment schedule, related deadlines and hand-in details are provided in module handbooks. Changes to assessment details are provided by email and through the MyLearning system. A range of assessment methods are used, including group work, presentations and projects. Students are involved in self and peer assessment.

60 Staff in Dubai are familiarised with the University's marking conventions at induction and are sent the University's guidance. UK staff may provide support via email in case of any queries. Local staff development has been provided for internal moderation. A request was made for Dubai staff to see samples of work marked in the UK. Students also requested access to samples of coursework to be provided from London. Reference was made to the

use of both points and percentages in marking; the University uses a grading scale of 1 to 20 and details are set out in programme handbooks and in the regulations.

61 A minimum of 10 per cent of all coursework is moderated and all fails are second-marked. Predominantly first and second marking is completed in Dubai, although for some Schools second marking also takes place in Hendon and internal moderation is conducted in Dubai, and then in Hendon. Comparisons are made of performance across campuses and specific issues requiring attention for each campus are discussed; for example, reference was made to students in Dubai being less confident about referencing conventions. Staff work together in workshops to review grading. However, it is not clear whether practice is consistent across all programme assessment boards. External examiners see sample examination scripts and course work. They receive module samples for levels 5 and 6 only.

62 Students value formative feedback and receive this on a regular basis through a variety of means. They can submit their draft summative assessments once for formative feedback as set out in the new learning framework. This is not a rigid policy and, where appropriate, students are provided with further support. Programme leaders also provide guidance. Students feel well supported.

63 Students are advised that normally feedback will be provided within 15 working days of the published submission date. Scheduled 'viewing days' in the Student Office where students can review their examination scripts after receipt back from the UK are offered. Timely, detailed feedback on assessments has been raised as an issue throughout the Boards of Studies and reference to insufficient detail on assessment requirements. Written feedback is provided on all work and a summary of class performance is provided for MBA students as a result of student request through the Board of Studies.

64 Students receive advice on how to avoid plagiarism and staff in Dubai receive staff development related to this topic, including workshops for handling academic misconduct. Cases of plagiarism are dealt with through the Academic Registry in Hendon and processed in line with the University-wide procedure.

65 Information about what plagiarism is and how it will be penalised is provided in the programme handbooks. A request by students for the session on avoiding plagiarism to be repeated was received by a Board of Studies. However, later Boards of Studies refer to workshops for academic referencing no longer operating due to low interest, therefore students were asked to request lecturers to organise in-class workshops.

66 Where there are exceptional circumstances, students can request a deferral of assessment to the next relevant assessment opportunity. Requests are submitted to the Student Office. Where a student believes that their personal performance may be affected they can apply for extenuating circumstances and these are summarised by the School's Assessment Office and brought to the attention of the Assessment Board to inform decisions on progression and classification.

67 Students who met the review team described being able to appeal against a mark, indicating that the mark may be changed before being formally considered at an Assessment Board. This appeared to be in line with the regulations that state 'Students wishing to query a grade which has not yet been approved by an Assessment Board may do so informally through the module tutor or Programme Leader'. However, senior managers confirmed that implementation in this fashion was not as intended and that there was no mechanism for appealing against an academic judgement. The University is **recommended** to review the regulation and practice with respect to appeal against assessment marks.

68 Student complaints and appeals are dealt with by the Dubai campus Deputy Director using the University's standard procedures and recourse to the UK is available. All complaints are documented and advice is sought by the Dubai campus from the UK as appropriate. Reports on complaints and appeals are considered at the University. Student familiarity with the process is less clear, but they should apply in the first instance to the Student Office who then forward this to the module leader.

69 Student certificates and transcripts are prepared in the UK. The certificate is exactly the same as that issued to students studying in the UK. Reference to the campus of study is included on the transcript.

Information on higher education provision

70 The Dubai Marketing Department has responsibility for producing Dubai-specific marketing materials under the guidance of the University's marketing service and with the approval of the local regulator. All branding must match that of the Hendon campus. The PVC/Director approves all publicity material and proofs of all materials are sent to the marketing department and local regulatory approval is sought prior to publication. Material on the website is managed by the Dubai Marketing Manager and based on the UK website. No oversight of the Dubai campus website is retained by the UK, but regular contact is maintained with the Hendon marketing department.

71 Programme and module handbooks are compiled using a standard template by the Quality Manager and Programme coordinators at the London campus and are then updated by the relevant lead at the branch campus with specific details for local delivery. The handbooks are printed and provided online and published in Dubai. The review team noted the quality of the publications, breadth of materials made available and the helpfulness and accessibility of the content.

72 Students who met the review team were aware that their handbooks are provided using a UK template but that the handbooks are localised, and they said the handbooks provide full and helpful information.

73 Students receive a wide range of printed materials to support their learning and their broader experience on campus. The materials are all of a very high quality, well presented and with detailed and rich information. The quality and accessibility of the University and course information provided through a range of handbooks and publications is a **positive feature**.

Conclusion

Positive features

The following positive features are identified:

- the varied and rich student support, both pastoral and academic, provided by academic and support staff and the student learning advisers (paragraph 25)
- the developing research culture on campus including the research seminar programme (paragraph 38)
- support for employability and engagement with employers is embedded within the curriculum and provided through a range of extracurricular activities (paragraph 54)
- the quality and accessibility of the University and course information provided through a range of handbooks and publications (paragraph 73).

Recommendations

Middlesex University is recommended to take the following actions:

- engage staff from the Dubai campus more effectively in the deliberative structures and decision-making processes of the University (paragraph 39)
- develop a more equal status for Dubai staff in assessment design to provide relevant and fit-for-purpose assessments for Dubai-based students; marking and moderation; and review and validation processes (paragraphs 57 and 58)
- review the regulation and practice with respect to appealing against assessment marks (paragraph 67).

Middlesex University's response to the review report

Middlesex University would like to thank the audit team for the courteous and professional way in which the audit was conducted and welcoming manner in which the audit team conducted its meetings. The University welcomes the report, which provides positive feedback on the establishment of the Dubai campus and familiarity of staff with the University's processes and systems. We are pleased with the positive features highlighted in the report and will continue the work to engage staff more effectively in the deliberative structures and decision-making processes of the University and in assessment and validation processes, as well as reviewing the regulation and practice with respect to appeal against assessment marks.

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