Middlesex University Strategy 2031

Knowledge into action

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Middlesex University Strategy 2031

Refreshed December 2024

Vice-Chancellor's
foreword

This strategy is a refresh of the Middlesex University 2031 Strategy, to honour our history, recognise our strengths and our ambitions, and chart a way towards to 2031 and beyond, that will allow our students and communities, and the University itself, to achieve our potential and thrive in a changing world.

Professor Shân Wareing, Vice-Chancellor

Middlesex University has served society by providing higher education since 1878, when St Katharine's College, one of our founding institutions, was established as a teacher training college for women in Tottenham, north London. We have always served central north London and we will continue to do so, and now we are proud to be a global University, delivering outstanding education underpinned by research and knowledge exchange in three continents.

In a world where conflict and poverty disrupt many lives, and in which all our futures are interconnected and interdependent, we unite our students and staff through our global outlook and opportunities. Our shared focus on building a better and more sustainable future for all is articulated in the integrating themes which connect all our campuses, and underpin all our work.

We are proud of our heritage as an educational institution and of the contributions made by our alumni around the world. People who are drawn to work and study at Middlesex value our culture and the approach that guides our University community. This approach informs all our activities and decisions and is restated in this Strategy.

We offer our students a full range of disciplines because we want all our students to be able to select pathways aligned to where their passion for learning is, and we believe all disciplines can make a valuable contribution to society and the economy. Our course portfolio is underpinned by research, and supported by our partnerships and relationships with professions and employers, which make our courses up to date and highly relevant to the world our graduates enter and will shape. We prepare our students to succeed in their chosen careers, and to shape the futures of their professions and areas of work through the skills, knowledge and attitudes they develop and enhance during their time with us. In this way, we transform individual lives and enable communities to thrive and succeed.

We bring international communities together in all our campuses, to study and work together and learn from each other. We are also proud to be an anchor institution, and in London in particular, we:

— Educate local people so they can access graduate level work and careers, contributing to their prosperity, wellbeing, lifelong range of work choices, and their life satisfaction

— Support local employers to recruit, retain and develop graduates with the knowledge and skills they need

— Work with London Borough of Barnet and with other boroughs and local government, with local charities and employers, to help make our region inclusive, safe, and a welcoming and inspiring place to live, work, study and visit.

Our international campuses also act as anchor institutions, although their locations mean their way of being anchor institutions is different from Middlesex in London.

We are an autonomous institution with charitable status, and this autonomy is essential to our ability to pursue, create and share knowledge, and to deliver our mission. With autonomy comes the responsibility to reinvent ourselves for the changing needs of society in the locations where we have campuses, and to ensure we can thrive and be financially sustainable in different economic environments.

In the UK, this refreshed version of our Strategy coincides with the election of a new government which has clearly set out its expectations of universities. This includes that they will play a greater civic role in their communities and regions, expand access and improve outcomes for disadvantaged students, ensure excellent teaching standards, undertake fundamental reform to ensure efficiency and value for money for students and taxpayers, and contribute to economic growth. For Middlesex, these government priorities present an opportunity as much as a challenge. Much of this agenda is already embedded in everything we do, and we will use the government's call to action to sharpen our focus on how effectively we meet these goals and how efficiently we use our resources to do so. We will develop supporting strategies, business plans and operating plans to deliver this Strategy, and we will chart, evaluate, adjust and communicate our actions accordingly.

Education is the essential cornerstone for a fairer, more sustainable, more productive and prosperous society. At Middlesex we are proud of our important contribution to this in all our communities and locations, and excited by the opportunities to increase our contribution over coming years.

Professor Shân Wareing
Vice-Chancellor

Introduction

Our purpose

Knowledge into action

Our purpose is to educate, to create and share knowledge, for a fairer, more sustainable, productive and prosperous society.

Our vision

Our vision is to transform outcomes and futures for individual students, and for the communities and regions in which we are embedded.

We will achieve this through the provision of excellent, supportive, multi-disciplinary higher education with a global outlook, working with our partners, preparing our students for career success, lifelong learning, and leadership.

Our strategic priorities

Our strategic priorities are:

— To be the higher education provider of choice for students and employers in the communities and regions where we operate

— For our campuses to be anchor institutions, enduring and financially resilient, serving, supporting and sustaining their local regions.

Middlesex University's future will be built upon the strong foundation of our past, of excellence in education, supported by our research and engagement, which is how we translate knowledge into action. Our global community is passionate about shaping a fairer, more sustainable, productive and prosperous society, and our alumni and our international reach are part of our distinctiveness and success. The purpose of this Strategy is to enable Middlesex to continue to deliver our purpose, to thrive, and to serve a complex world.

To fulfil our purpose, the UK government's aspirations for universities, and to be financially sustainable, we strive to be the provider of choice for students, enabling them achieve their ambitions, and supporting them to thrive through their time at university. By being provider of choice for employers, we help our students gain graduate employment and ensure our portfolio and curriculum are relevant to employers because of their direct input. We provide the skilled and motivated graduate employees and entrepreneurs, that enable businesses, professions and communities to flourish. This is how we serve, support and sustain our local regions.

Our Middlesex **approach**

Our Middlesex approach is for everyone in our global community: faculty, professional staff, students, alumni and partners. It describes our culture and the four principles that guide how we work, learn and behave as a community to deliver our purpose.

— Our students at the heart of our actions

— Creative, collaborative, responsible and agile

— Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do

— Working in partnership.

Principle 1:
Students at the heart of our actions

We are committed to being the higher education provider of choice for students, and to supporting their lifelong learning and social mobility. Therefore our students are at the heart of our actions and decisions. Empowered by Middlesex, we know they go further than they would have thought possible, and we are inspired by their journeys.

Our educational offer is responsive to the diversity of our students' backgrounds, the diverse pathways through which they come to us, and the range of awards they study, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, Foundation Degrees, apprenticeships, and micro credentials. Our students develop the skills, behaviours and attitudes, as well as the capability and confidence to lead, that they will use as change-makers and which employers want and need. We foster interdisciplinary work and innovation, encouraging our students to be creative and curious. We are committed to engaging with society and excelling in collaboration. We bring together practitioners, academics and professional services with students, alumni, employers and other stakeholders to tackle complex problems and create solutions.

Our students learn through activities and through experience, by doing, making and analysing. They apply their advanced knowledge and skills to real-world and work-bas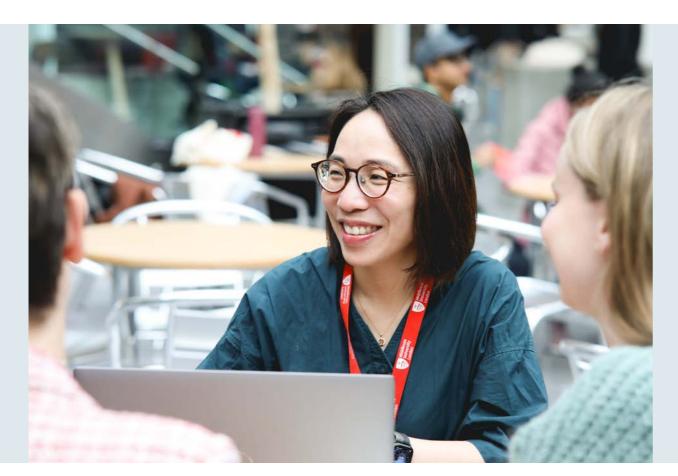ed projects that benefit society, the professions and employers, and through a focus on environmental sustainability, to support our collective future.

We ensure that our teaching and learning are current and orient our students towards the future. This includes helping our students to navigate the critical and fast-developing digital space, commit to sustainability, and develop empathy, connectedness and a holistic approach to problems. Our approach is evidenced in our eight graduate attributes, developed with input from employers, students and staff.

Above all, the goal of our practice is to provide a transformative educational experience for our students both inside and outside of the classroom.

Our graduate attributes
— Communication, empathy and inclusion
— Leadership and influence
— Entrepreneurship
— Curiosity and learning
— Collaborative innovation
— Resilience and adaptability
— Technological agility
— Problem solving and delivery.

Our graduates develop more, and go further, than they would have thought possible. This is what will we use to judge our success.

Principle 2:
Creative, collaborative, responsible and agile

Everything we do and achieve is made possible through our people, culture and sense of shared purpose. We want all our staff to know that they contribute to the purpose of the University, to feel valued for it, and believe that Middlesex is a place where they can develop and grow.

We aim to promote creative problem-solving and collaboration, with a sense of personal commitment and responsibility. We seek to remain agile and to be able to deliver solutions quickly and effectively, to have a positive impact in a complex world and to support our students in achieving their aspirations.

We are committed to:

— Developing and supporting staff so they know how to actively contribute to our shared success and champion our principles, and have the skills and knowledge to do so

— Collaborating across our campuses to maximise the collective benefit from our relationships between communities in three global regions

— D eveloping and maintaining robust, effective, efficient and sustainable systems, to support collaboration, agility and financial sustainability

— Learning from our experiences to ensure we always continue to improve.

Principle 3:
Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do

We prioritise equity, inclusivity and fairness in all our activities and we expect that our people demonstrate this through our everyday actions and behaviours.

We are committed to being a respectful, diverse and supportive community, where all our staff and all our students feel they belong and are valued.

We are committed to:

— Building a healthy institution where we all behave responsibly towards people, cultures and the environment and where people can thrive mentally and physically

— Ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are central to our education and all student support activity so that all our students can achieve their potential

— Recognising diversity of thought and talent amongst our students, staff and alumni, and the value this brings to our University.
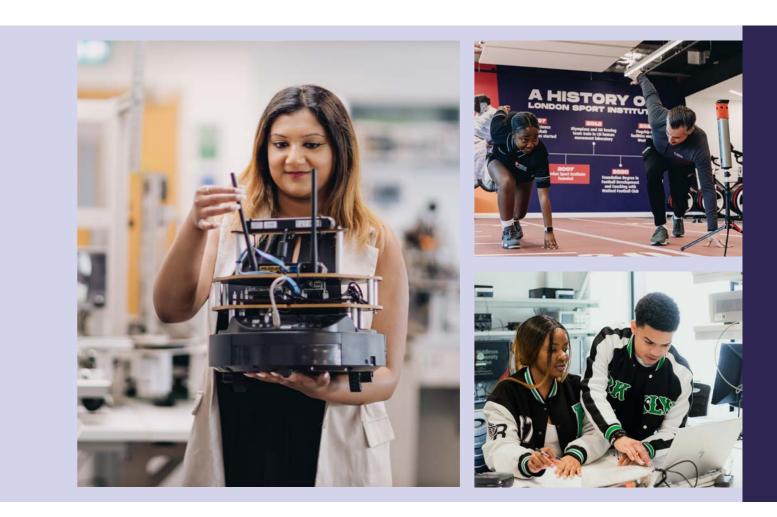
Principle 4:
Working in partnership

Middlesex University is integral to the communities around us. We seek ways to work effectively with stakeholders outside the University, to shape our actions and benefit from other perspectives and from collaboration. Strong relationships with our students, staff, alumni, employers, partners and community stakeholders are essential to delivering our shared goals. Our partners come from across disciplines, professional services, sectors and cultures.

We are committed to:
— Working in partnership with students and the Students' Union to enhance students' experience and outcomes
— Working closely with our local communities so that we can best serve, support and sustain them
— Working effectively with our external partners and stakeholders, to advance our purpose and our integrating themes
— Collaborating to increase our impact and reduce our costs.

To deliver these commitments, we will develop our People Strategy, supporting this Strategy, which will lay out a plan for our staff experience, including recognition, wellbeing and professional development.

When our Middlesex approach and the strengths of our culture are consistently exemplified in how we all work, learn and behave across our global community, and when staff identify the University as their employer of choice. This is what we will use to judge our success.

Our
integrating themes

Our integrating themes articulate global challenges and reflect the UN Sustainable Development Goals. They bring together our global network of campuses and connect our work in education, research and knowledge exchange, and our civic engagement activity. Our whole community contributes to them, and they give focus for our work, driven by our purpose.

Equity in health and wellbeing

Taking action to make healthcare better for those who need it, we aim to reduce inequalities in people's care. Beyond healthcare, we aim to improve physical, mental and social health and wellbeing in all parts of society.

Links to SDGs:

Inclusive enterprise and creativity

With a belief that entrepreneurship can have a powerful role in a fair and inclusive future, we foster skills for economic participation and success to build a more equal, caring and prosperous society. We use culture and creativity to enrich the lives of individuals and communities and we contribute to organisations of all types through impactful research and knowledge exchange.

Links to SDGs:

Sustainable development

Locally, nationally, and around the world, we support people to make their communities more sustainable and fairer and to protect the environment. Our expertise influences economic, social and environmental policy and practice, enabling us to create change within communities.

Links to SDGs:

Sustainable development goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the global blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the challenges the world faces, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Our three integrating themes have clear links to these goals, and each theme touches a selection of the SDGs

Middlesex is part of the SDG Accord which aims to inspire, celebrate and advance the critical role that higher education has in delivering the SDGs and the value it brings to governments, business and wider society. The Accord also carries a commitment to do more to deliver the SDGs, to report annually on progress and to share learning with other educational institutions.

Strategic
implementation

To deliver the Middlesex University Strategy, and ensure we fulfil the UK government's ambitions for universities, the University Executive Team will work with their teams and stakeholders to produce a set of more specific supporting plans in the first quarter of 2025.

The purpose of these documents will be to enable the delivery of the Strategy, as well as enabling transparency, accountability, collaboration, efficiency, and risk control. The additional clarity these plans will provide will support job descriptions and staff recruitment, line management, and individual objectives.

There will be three kinds of supporting plans:
— Thematic supporting strategies, for example our People Strategy
— Business plans for each of the four Faculties
— Operating plans for Professional Services areas.

They will primarily be in relation to Middlesex in London. They will be shared on the University Intranet, and updated annually.

Developing a shared understanding and focus for our work during the process of creating these supporting plans is as important as the output. Led by senior members of the University Executive Team, and involving and engaging staff, we will work together on how we deliver our strategic priorities, and understand perspectives, common goals and barriers.

There will be a focused set of essential metrics to measure, evaluate and communicate our progress and success.

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