Guidance 7i   Writing Educational Monitoring and Enhancement Reports – Support for Authors

From 2022-2023, Middlesex University rebranded the annual monitoring processes to **Educational Monitoring and Enhancement**. The new name reflects that the internal processes are changing in their operation and focus, to have ongoing attention on student data and appropriate action planning and a highlight on continuing monitoring and enhancement. This is mirrored for partners within the Educational Monitoring and Enhancement Reports.

1. Purpose of Educational Monitoring and Enhancement Reports

All Middlesex University Collaborative Partners are required to complete an **Educational Monitoring and Enhancement Report (EMER)** as a quality assurance process, this is one of the conditions of the Partnership Contract and the Memorandum of Cooperation. **Figure 1** outlines the process for submission of the EMER.

The EMER is a crucial document demonstrating a record of the programme, its continuing currency and development, and the effectiveness of the partnership relationship with Middlesex University.

Figure 1: Educational Monitoring and Enhancement Report process
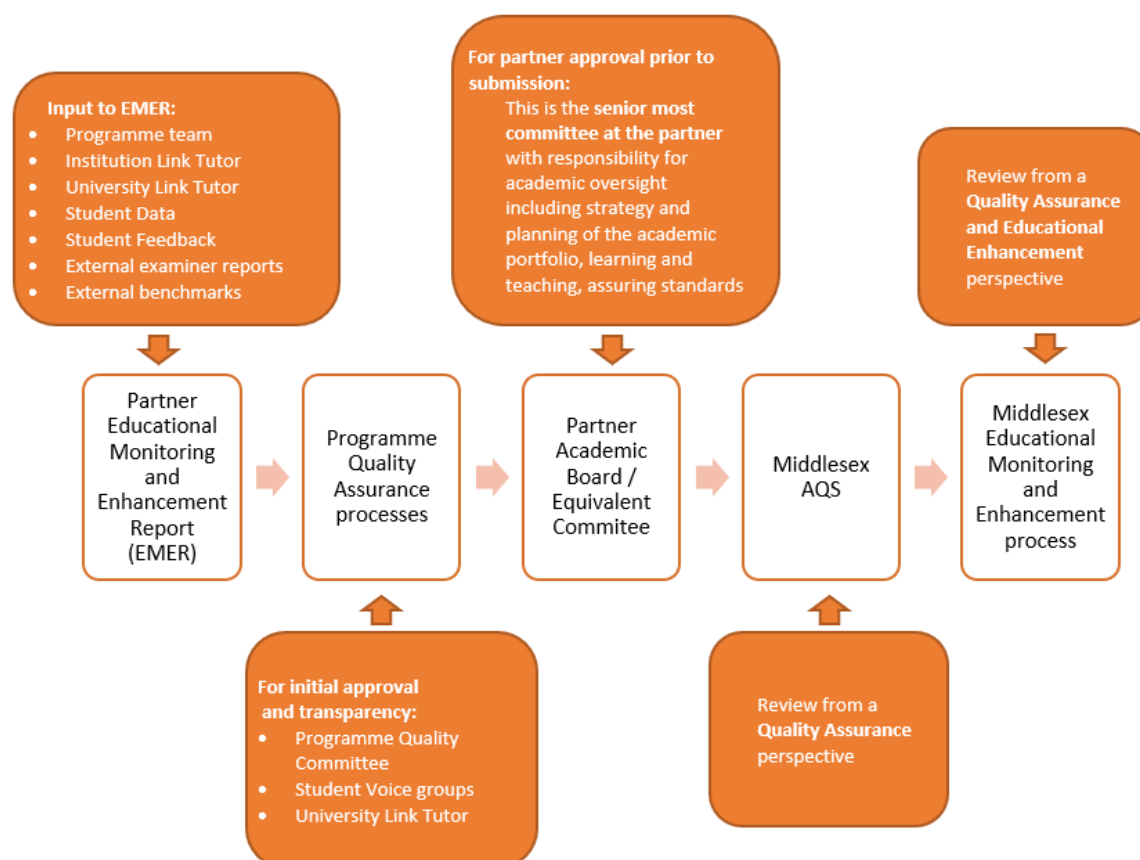
Educational monitoring and enhancement uses qualitative and quantitative data from the student cohort as reflective channels for the link tutors and programme teams to consider key actions to take forward to enhance and develop the provision.

The EMER should be considered and agreed through the relevant programme level quality processes or committee mechanisms to ensure they have been thoroughly discussed and all actions agreed.

We recommend that partners review and update their EMER actions regularly through the year as part of these quality assurance processes following consideration of any evidence sources used (such as student feedback or external examiner reports) as they are received. In this way EMERs will act as a 'live' and current document. We recommend that the report – or a summary of the report, is also made available to students.

The EMER should be formally approved via the partner's internal quality assurance mechanisms culminating with their Academic Board or the senior most committee which has oversight of academic activity (strategy and planning of the academic portfolio, learning and teaching, assuring standards and quality).

The date of the appropriate meeting that the EMER is considered at is required for the report and we recommend that partners internal Board dates be aligned with the deadline for submission of the EMER.

AQS maintain the records for all partner EMER activity and will follow up on any quality assurance issues noted through the reports. AQS submit regular reports on the EMER activity to the internal Middlesex University Faculty Quality Committees, the Collaborations-Subcommittee and Assurance Committee.

Collaborative Partner EMERs are included as part of the evidence base for the University Educational Monitoring and Enhancement (EME) process at the department/faculty level whereby the university link tutors will be expected to support the consideration of partner activity.

EMERs are also used in regular partner monitoring activity and at the point of programme Review.

Non-submission of an EMER could indicate a lack of partner engagement with quality assurance processes and suggests the partner may not be discharging its responsibilities appropriately. Non-submission may lead to Institutional Review (See LQEH Section 5) and ultimately may result in Middlesex University suspending student registrations or withdrawing from the partnership. Section 4 below outlines the non-submission process.

The Partnerships and Quality Monitoring Team in the Academic Quality Service (AQS) are responsible for overseeing the EMER process: AQSPartners@mdx.ac.uk

2. Writing reports

Middlesex University requires EMERs for all validated provision delivered at the partner. This may be sent to AQS as one report, or in multiple reports, with subject/programmes grouped as appropriate. If partners have any queries, or concerns around this, then please contact AQS to discuss.

It is important that EMERs do not focus only on problems and issues to be addressed, the EMERs should also indicate areas of success to present a balanced view. EMERs are used for internal, and external, reviews and audits, and therefore are an important determinant of external perceptions of provision.

EMERs should address issues that are local to the programme(s) considered within the report, or concerns that are symptomatic of wider problems which need to be addressed by the collaborative partner or the University.

In view of the wide circulation of reports, EMERs should be anonymised, i.e. students and staff should be referred to by their position and not by name within the reports and any appendices.

2.1 Writing responsibilities

Institution Link tutors (ILTs) from collaborative partners are responsible for authoring the EMER in collaboration with the University Link tutors (ULTs). For Franchised and Joint provision, the ULT and the ILT are expected to jointly author the EMER.

Where programmes are being run at more than one site it is important to have input from each location, so that an overview of issues or difficulties that arise from multi-site operation can be identified. For complex multi-site operations, an additional brief overview report may be required in identifying cross-cutting issues and themes. AQS will identify when an overview report is required.

3. The EMER Template

All partners are sent the relevant EMER template, guidance and the deadline date, at the end of each academic year for use the following year. Partners are encouraged to contact AQS if there are any concerns with meeting the deadline and/or there are any queries about this.

All reports should follow the EMER template. The EMER consists of discrete sections for information regarding the partner; any external accrediting, professional, and statutory/regulatory body engagement; staffing changes; details of student complaints/academic appeals; reflections, data and analysis; action tables; a declaration of compliance; and, University Link Tutor feedback.

Guidance 7iii is an example of a completed EMER.

Some partnerships may be in the process of ending their collaboration with Middlesex, where students are no longer being recruited, and teaching/assessment continues only for the remaining students. Although the programmes are no longer recruiting students onto a Middlesex university award, the collaborative partner must maintain quality assurance responsibilities for the students completing their award. A different EMER template is appropriate, addressing in particular the closing arrangements, student continuation, achievement and support of remaining students.

For partnerships at the end of the collaboration, where all remaining students have completed, partners are required to complete a final EMER as confirmation that all students have completed and the partnership is terminated.

Completion of the sections of the report are discussed below.

3.1 Partner Information

The first section in the EMER is to help us identify that all required programmes have been included within the report. This information is also used to verify our records.

3.2 Interactions with accrediting, professional or statutory bodies

All UK and overseas collaborative partners should inform Middlesex University of their activity and involvement with any external accrediting, professional, and government statutory/ regulatory bodies. This should include details of seeking any accreditations / registration, any review/visit events held (or upcoming events), the outcomes of any reports/events, and any monitoring activity carried out.

For institutions registered with OfS, please provide an updated registration status including any additional requirements, for example enhanced monitoring. For UK partners, please provide information on the most recent Ofsted review, or upcoming review, if applicable.

3.3 Staffing Changes

Partner teaching staff are reviewed at the point of initial programme Validation and then at the six-year programme Review points. Collaborative partners are expected to inform us of changes to teaching staff as, and when, they occur. The EMER confirms that ULTs have been informed of any staff changes and reminds partners to send new staff CVs to the ULT.

ULTs must be notified of any changes to teaching staff and they must review the staff CVs, as they will be required to confirm the continuing ability to deliver the programme. The ULT must confirm this in their Link Tutor feedback comments.

The ULT may make recommendations as to appropriate training or support to be provided for new staff. Link tutors are expected to discuss any training or development needs that new staff (or existing staff) may need.

If there are any concerns relating to staff resource the ULT is expected to discuss this with Academic Partnerships team and faculty Deputy Dean (or nominated persons responsible for oversight of partner activity).

3.4 Complaints, Appeals and Academic Misconduct

Collaborative Partners are required to ensure the processes/procedures they have in place for managing student complaints are aligned with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's (OIAs) "Good practice framework for handling complaints and academic appeals".

Collaborative Partners are required to provide numbers of student complaints and academic appeals that have been formally processed and indicate what category of complaint they were (Academic status; Academic/ grade appeals; Service issues;

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Disciplinary matters – Non-Academic; Academic misconduct; Equality law and Human rights; Financial; Welfare and accommodation; or other). A complaint/appeal can only be referred to Middlesex University once the internal processes have been exhausted.

Cases that have been dealt with locally, through informal measures (early resolution), do not need to be included. Include 1) the number of alleged cases that have been formally processed (not upheld) and 2) the number of upheld cases that have been formally processed. The 3) number of cases that were then referred upwards to the Middlesex University level complaints procedures should also be included.

Partners are expected to comment on their handling of appeals, complaints and disciplinary matters, including plagiarism processes, and consider whether any particular group of students are making a disproportionately high number of complaints or appeals. The EMER should note any actions that have been formulated as a result of this reflection.

3.5 Reflections, Data and Analysis

This section of the EMER comprises the bulk of the report. The section has been split into seven discrete areas, as listed below, for specific data and reflective commentary demonstrating consideration of evidence which supports later actions identified. The terminology used for each section reflects the Middlesex University terminology and mirrors the language of the Office for Students (OfS) data metrics as they are our regulatory body.

Reflections, Data and Analysis

> A. Student Recruitment
> B. Student Continuation – Undergraduate only
> C. Student Completion/Awards
> D. Student Progression
> E. Programme operation and delivery
> F. Feedback from External Examiner activity and reports
> G. Student feedback

The list of discrete areas within the template covers all aspects of areas where data analysis is required, along with programme operation and delivery, and other monitoring activity (external examiners and student feedback). Partners should consider the effectiveness of programmes in achieving their stated aims and intended learning outcomes/objectives; and identify, to appropriately resolve, any issues associated with the achievement of programme standards and the quality of the student experience.

It is not expected that all sections of the EMER will necessarily have associated actions, however **reflective commentary is expected for each area**.

Validated partners will be required to provide data within the report using the data definitions provided in the EMER for:

- Student Recruitment
- Student Continuation – Undergraduate only
- Student Completion/Awards
- Student Progression
- Student feedback – Surveys

Franchised/Joint partners will be provided with some of the appropriate datasets where Middlesex University holds this information.

Data definitions in the EMER are based on the OfS UK Office for Students (OfS) Guidance on constructing student outcome and experience indicators.

Partners should include previous data from the past four academic years in order to be able to consider and reflect on trends and reasons for any identified differences in data from previous years.

A full list of evidence/data sources, and guidance on considering data and evidence to help reflections and creating actions, is available in Guidance 7ii.

Reflections should include a summary of your analysis of the data, identify highlights, trends, developments, themes and issues arising. Evidence may be triangulated with a number of different sources. Consider your data alongside your internal performance indicators. EMERs should be evaluative and descriptive in character.

3.6   Action Tables

Actions detailed should be the key actions and priorities identified from the reflections and analysis undertaken. An update on the previous years' actions should be provided to indicate whether these were completed, or are still requiring action. Actions that have not been completed within the academic year should be carried forward.

Actions should be precise in nature, addressing the particular issue(s) by giving specific tasks to be completed in realistic timescales. Actions should be recorded with appropriate context, citing the point of origin and giving a measurable outcome.

All evidence should be discussed with relevant colleagues, to determine agreed actions, success criteria, evidence for measuring success, agreed timescales, responsibility and mechanism(s) to report back.

Actions are not necessarily the sole responsibility of the partner/programme. Actions may reside at Department, Faculty, Professional Service, or University/collaborative partner levels. ILTs and ULTs should highlight the actions that need to be addressed at higher levels.

3.7   Statement of Compliance

Collaborative partners are required to sign a declaration to confirm their compliance with Middlesex University procedures, and the contracts that have been signed with Middlesex University (Partnership Contract and any Memorandums of Cooperation). The declaration confirms the educational monitoring and enhancement process has been comprehensively and satisfactorily carried out at the partner institution.

The completed EMER and associated actions should be agreed with all relevant parties at the partner institution prior to submission to AQS.

All partners are expected to confirm their understanding that failure to inform Middlesex University of any significant changes, or with compliance requirements, may result in

Middlesex University suspending student registrations or withdrawing from the partnership.

Please ensure you include a signature and date of the Academic Board that the EMER was considered and approved at in the report.

3.8   University Link Tutor Feedback

The last section of the EMER is for the ULT's feedback; this is the formal University's response to the report. The ULT feedback is considered alongside the EMER during the university EME process by the faculty the partner is aligned with.

Once the Collaborative partner has written their EMER they should submit it to the ULT, who will add their feedback to the document. The completed EMER should then be submitted to AQS; this concludes the EMER cycle for that partner.

The EMER requires collaborative partners to confirm they have informed the ULT of any changes to staffing. In the ULT feedback, the ULT is required to confirm they have received CVs as appropriate and note any discussions that have been held. This reinforces assurance as to the partners continuing suitability to deliver the programme(s). If a partner notes they have had staffing changes but have not informed the ULT, the ULT is expected to follow this up with the partner to request CVs and ensure they are reviewed and if necessary discussed. This may be completed outside of the EMER process.

The ULT should ensure that they consider the numbers of complaints/academic appeals that partners have reported within the report within their feedback. Middlesex university will look at anomalous incidents of complaints/appeals and offer support where necessary.

The ULT should consider all data provided by the partner and, where necessary, ensure the partner has appropriately reflected on areas that require attention and has created necessary actions.

For franchise partners, the ULT should consider how the datasets compare against the Hendon programme and any other partners/campuses data.

ULTs should highlight any actions from the EMERs that need to be addressed within the University – these should also be picked up through the Department level Educational Monitoring and Enhancement Action Plan process as necessary.

ULT Feedback should be used to comment on the key developments, key themes, and any concerns that have been raised through the EMER. The feedback provides an opportunity for the ULT to celebrate success and draw attention to progress, commendable practice and other achievements.

4. Submission and Non-Submission Process

EMERs are to be submitted to the Academic Quality Service once they are complete. The report is first reviewed by AQS and then distributed to the relevant faculty/ department to be considered as part of the University Educational Monitoring and Enhancement process.

All partner ILTs and ULTs are sent the relevant EMER templates, guidance and the deadline date, at the end of each academic year. Partners are encouraged to contact AQS if there are any concerns with meeting the deadline and/or have any queries about this.

Cases of non-submission are escalated through internal university quality structures with AQS, Academic Partnerships Team and the relevant Faculty to which the partner is aligned. Partners will receive formal notifications at each stage of the process.

Stage 1	First non-submission: Partners will be sent a reminder by AQS within two weeks of the deadline giving an appropriate deadline by which to submit. This communication will start the non-submission process.
Stage 2	Second non-submission: Partners will be reported internally to senior members of the Faculty and the Academic Partnerships Manager. A third deadline will be given by which to submit.
Stage 3	Third non-submission: Partners will be escalated through internal channels and will receive formal written letter from the Director of AQS notifying partners that an Institutional Review will be required if partners do not submit and giving a final deadline.
Stage 4	Fourth non-submission: Partners will be reported to the University Collaborations Sub-Committee and a decision on instigating the Institutional Review process will be taken.

The deadline for submission of EMERs is 13 October 2023

To contact AQS Partnership and Monitoring Team: AQSPartners@mdx.ac.uk