Academic Policy Statement APS 4:

Research

Middlesex University believes that Institutions of Higher Education should be significant initiators of the advancement of knowledge and understanding, based upon a dynamic programme of research, as well as disseminating knowledge and understanding through taught programmes and other activities.

The University believes that research is vital to the provision of a stimulating learning environment in which staff and students flourish and fulfil their potential.

As a research-informed institution, the University views the research-teaching link as vital to the design and delivery of the University's curriculum, ensuring that it is both up-to-date and relevant. Peer-reviewed research ensures that teaching staff are fully informed of the recent developments in their subject, and peer-reviewed publication signifies that teaching staff can satisfy their peers that they themselves can contribute to the further development of the field. The University's view is that research encourages the development of open and critical minds – a vital part of the University's education philosophy through students interacting with staff who are working at the forefront of subject knowledge and professional practice and through the provision of student projects and case studies.

The University believes that interdisciplinary research is particularly important in support of its mission and its desire to provide broad and flexible educational opportunities for its students.

The University recognises the importance and benefits of research in: attracting and retaining high quality staff; developing and sustaining stronger relationships with the Research Councils, government bodies, industry, commerce, the public sector, voluntary organisations and the professions; and developing and sustaining strong links with partner institutions locally, regionally and internationally.

The University expects that all academic staff will be active in research (including professional practice and scholarship for teaching), and this will be monitored as part of the annual staff development appraisal system. Accordingly the University is committed to providing academic staff with the support necessary to foster their research, scholarship and professional practice activity.

The University accepts that the nature of research differs from discipline to discipline and covers a wide range of scholarly and intellectual activities. The University differentiates between (1) research and scholarship, which leads to the advancement of knowledge, and (2) other scholarly activity, which involves keeping abreast of subject developments,

curriculum development, and the writing of most kinds of textbooks. In this policy statement the term research is used in the sense of (1) above.

The University recognises, as the basis for its policy on research, the following definitions:

Basic Research: experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge without any specific application initially in mind;

Strategic Research: work intended to generate new knowledge in an area which has not yet advanced sufficiently to enable specific applications to be identified but for which applications are likely;

Applied Research: work which seeks to develop existing knowledge and is directed towards specific practical objectives and research users or towards the evaluation of policies or practices;

Creative Work: the invention and generation of ideas, hypotheses, images, performances or artefacts, including design in any field of knowledge which leads to the development of new knowledge, understanding or expertise;

Experimental Research: Systematic work, drawing on existing knowledge that is directed to producing new materials, products or devices, to installing new processes, systems and services, or to improving substantially those already produced or installed.

Scholarship: work intended to expand the boundaries of knowledge and understanding within and across disciplines by the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of ideas and information, making use of a rigorous and documented methodology and which results in outputs of various kinds.

The University, therefore, values and supports research as a vital element of its mission. Accordingly it will:

- encourage all kinds of research as defined above;
- continue to define research in accordance with national benchmarks (The University Definition of Research is attached to this Policy Statement)
- encourage and actively support staff to seek funding from a range of sources, including government, commercial and industrial sources.
- target its own research funding strategically and selectively, in accordance with the University's mission, Research Plan, and School Research Plans through inter alia: the support of University-designated Research Centres, research groups – in particular, multidisciplinary research groups; collaborative research with research groups in other institutions (in accordance with the University's policy in this respect); and individual research projects of proven or potential quality;
- invest in suitable infrastructure (e.g. estates, IT, learning resources, etc.) in order to maintain an environment that is conducive to and supportive of high quality research
- use sabbatical leave as an important element of research development, in accordance with the sabbatical leave Policy Statement;
- expect research and scholarship undertaken by its staff to enhance the University's reputation and to contribute to taught programmes and agreed staff development priorities;

- maintain effective and efficient procedures for the promotion, planning, management and monitoring of research projects, and for monitoring the progress of research students;
- develop systems for the support of new researchers, and for other staff who have research as their primary role, providing thereby opportunities for their career enhancement within the University;
- ensure that research students receive appropriate supervision in a stimulating environment and benefit from a suitable programme of research training in addition to the pursuit of their individual research projects;
- pursue the practice of peer group assessment in the evaluation of internally-funded research project proposals and in the evaluation of final project reports arising from internally-funded research programmes;
- encourage staff to publish their research results in peer reviewed outlets such as journals, books, electronic media, and conferences, and where appropriate, exhibitions, performances and artefacts;
- develop and publish a three-year rolling action plan for the implementation of this policy. This plan should include a review of past University investment in research, and annual targets for research income and research outputs for each School of the University and, where appropriate, for Services, and should be regularly monitored and updated following consultation; and
- develop and use performance indicators related to research in evaluating the implementation of this research policy and its associated plans.

MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

THE DEFINITION OF 'RESEARCH ACTIVE' STAFF

1. Those who meet REF 'research active' criteria in publishing at least one high quality research output per year (the term 'output' here used to denote a research paper (journal or conference), book, book chapter, performance, item of fine art, etc.).

2. Members of staff who are actively and successfully supervising research students but who are either not engaged in funded research or publishing at REF rates.

3. Those who are actively involved in high quality contract research but who are not necessarily publishing at the above rates but who are producing research reports, or equivalent.

4. Those who are actively involved in the management and delivery of funded research projects but who are not necessarily publishing at REF rates.

5. Someone who is involved in the development of knowledge or technique in a professional capacity (e.g. in Art, Design and the Performing Arts, or other areas such as Business Studies) but who is not producing the type of research output indicated above.