
8 Raising concerns and internal audits

8.1 Internal audits and reviews

From time to time AQS will conduct internal audits and reviews on an ad hoc basis. The need for such audits will be identified by the Assurance Committee, this may be via the normal monitoring and oversight processes or by a concern being raised by colleagues. AQS will develop the methodology for each such event, propose the participants and panel, identify the documentation requirements, co-ordinate the event and provide a report to the Assurance Committee. Audit reports will highlight good practice and inform the University of any issues that need urgent attention as a result of the audit. If appropriate, the report will include a judgement based on reference to external methodologies.

8.2 Criteria for approval of External Assessors for internal audits

8.2.1 Introduction

The following criteria apply for consideration of proposals for External Assessors for internal academic audits. Separate guidelines are available for External Assessors (see section 3.3.4.2) involved in a programme validation. Not all audits will require the involvement of External Assessors.

8.2.2 Selection criteria

An External Assessor should have appropriate standing, expertise and experience in the subject being audited and in auditing. This may be established by considering their academic and/or professional qualifications; the present (or last, if retired) post or place of work; the range and scope of work undertaken across Higher Education; and the current involvement in research or scholarly and professional activities in the field of quality assurance and enhancement.

External Assessors, if possible, should be drawn from a variety of institutional or professional contexts. If more than one Assessor is required for the audit, they should not be from the same institution. Reciprocal assessing between External Assessors' institutions and MU should also be avoided.

External Assessors should not have previous close involvement with the University so that they do not compromise their objectivity. Over the last three years the proposed External Assessor should not have been a member of staff or near relative of staff, a governor or student of the University.

External Assessors should not normally be used more than once in an 18 month period. Exceptions may occasionally occur when the availability of possible Assessors is limited.

8.3 Raising a concern regarding quality and standards

The quality and standards of provision at Middlesex University is overseen through the processes outlined elsewhere in the LQEH, such as programme validation (section 3) and Educational Monitoring and Enhancement (section 7). There may be occasions where staff have a specific concern about a programme they are involved in and wish to raise their concerns. Most concerns should be handled within the normal operational structures of the Faculty.

Module Leaders should raise concerns to Programme Leaders who in turn should raise these to Directors of Programmes, then to Heads of Department and finally the relevant Academic Dean.

If when raising a concern an academic member of staff feels they need additional support or their concern is not being dealt with they should speak to the Deputy Dean within their Faculty who has oversight for quality and standards.

If further support is required or there is need to escalate beyond Faculty operations then the matter can be raised with the Director of Academic Quality.

For academic staff on an overseas campus, concerns should be raised with equivalent roles within the campus up to the point it would need to be escalated to the Head of Department in the UK. The campus Director's office should be informed when escalating matters to the Head of Department in the UK.

For staff at partner institutions, quality and standards concerns should be raised and dealt with within your own institution in the first instance. Support can be received from your University Link Tutor. If these remain unresolved your University Link Tutor can raise it with relevant Faculty Deputy Dean. If there is need to escalate beyond the Faculty then this can be done to the Director of Academic Quality. Aspects of the partnership outside of quality and standards (e.g. invoicing, certificates, etc.) should be raised with Academic Partnerships.

This process is set out in Appendix 8a – Raising a concern regarding quality and standards

The process outlined above is to raise a concern about quality and standards of a programme and is the informal route to address any issues. If the issue is specific to an individual member of staff it may be more appropriate to raise concerns via the University's [Grievance Procedures](#). If there is a need to come forward on a confidential basis about suspected or actual wrongdoing the University's [Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure](#) should be used.

(Students should use the [Student Complaint and Grievance Procedure](#) and members of the public should use the [External Complaints Policy](#)).