

ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

 (for external organisations)

 **2024-25**

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The Accreditation of External Organisations ‘in house’ staff development courses

Introduction

Accreditation is the formal mechanism for the recognition of learning that is achieved outside the University’s validated programmes of study. It uses the Middlesex University academic credit framework to evaluate and quantify such learning in terms of credit points at a particular level. This provides opportunities for individuals to progress to Middlesex University higher education programmes and for the academic credit they have achieved to then count towards University qualifications.

This handbook outlines the processes for the accreditation of external learning activity or courses, provided by organisations for the professional development of their own staff/workforce. [[1]](#endnote-1)[[2]](#footnote-1) (Individual practitioners seeking accreditation of their prior learning should follow our Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes)

University Faculties make the decision about the extent to which they engage with accreditation activity; in particular, decisions will relate to the cost effectiveness of the proposed activity, the rationale in the context of Faculty strategy and the proposed progression to University academic awards.

The University policy and procedures regarding ‘Accreditation of academic credit’ can be found online at: [Section 14 - Accreditation of academic credit](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/academic-quality/handbook)

Main principles of Middlesex University accreditation

There are a number of main principles by which the accreditation process is managed at Middlesex University.

* Middlesex University is responsible for the academic standards of all academic credit recognised in its name.
* Middlesex University will implement appropriate and proportionate due diligence procedures to assess academic, financial, legal and reputational risks associated with proposed accreditation of external courses or other activity.
* All applications for credit will be assessed rigorously, with credit only recognised for demonstrable learning achievement (i.e. not for time taken).
* Accreditation assessment shall be subject to internal moderation and external scrutiny and approved by a University faculty committee
* The recognition of academic credit does not in itself constitute the award of a University qualification but rather credit that can count towards such a qualification.
* Accreditation can lead to the recognition of general or specific credit.
* Specific credit is that which relates to and can count *towards* the achievement of specific modules of an identified Middlesex University qualification.
* General credit can be recognised *towards* the achievement of agreed qualifications within the Middlesex University.
* All credit gained through accreditation is ungraded.
* Successful participants will be provided with a Middlesex University Certificate of Credit (or in the case of specific credit this will be listed on their diploma supplement)
* The University will provide advice to support the development of a proposal/claim for accreditation. Appropriate staff development for those involved in accreditation assessment can be provided but may carry an additional cost.
* The accreditation proposal/claim remains the responsibility of the claimant/proposer.
* Accredited courses will be monitored as part of the University’s annual monitoring process.

Overview of the accreditation process for external organisations ‘in house staff development’ courses.

## Decisions about whether accreditation is appropriate are made at the appropriate University Faculty level. The proposed accreditation must be of mutual benefit and decisions will relate to the rationale in the context of Faculty strategy (for example opportunities for further collaboration), the cost effectiveness of the proposed activity, and in particular the opportunities for successful participants to progress to Middlesex University academic awards.

See [Accreditation Initial Approval Information Form](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0030/580818/appendix-14b-Accreditation-Initial-Approval-Information-Form.docx) and [Accreditation Proposal Form](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0031/580819/appendix-14c-Accreditation-Proposal-Form-update-June-2022.docx)

Following the completion of the [Accreditation Initial Approval Information Form](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0030/580818/appendix-14b-Accreditation-Initial-Approval-Information-Form.docx), the University will evaluate the information provided and make a decision regarding approval to proceed to the Accreditation Proposal Stage. Once this is confirmed, the University will support the development of the proposal so that it can be formally submitted to the Faculty Quality committee (or relevant sub-committee) for consideration. The proposal will specifically identify the academic level and number of credits being sought in recognition of the achievement of external learning or training activity.

Your finalised and complete accreditation paperwork should reach your appointed Link Tutor or nominee at least 6 weeks before the submission deadline to enable the team to support you in the process and to advise you on any changes to be made before submitting the final version of the proposal.

Once formally submitted, the proposal will be assessed by an appropriate academic member of the University and this will result in the production of an [Accreditation Proposal Assessment Form](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0023/580820/appendix-14d-Proposal-Assessment-Form.docx)**.** The proposal assessor (or other nominated University academic) will assess the proposal in terms of the number of credits, the level of credits and the appropriateness of the learning outcomes and assessment requirements and present the proposal to the Faculty committee with a formal recommendation for the committee’s consideration. The outcomes of this consideration can include:

* Approval without conditions and/or recommendations
* Approval with conditions and/or recommendations
* Not approved/Referred for further work

You will be informed of the outcomes of the committee in writing. Where any conditions of approval are set, these must be met within four weeks of the date of the committee. Similarly, where recommendations are made, you will be expected to respond to these recommendations within the same period.

This MoAc shall be for six years in the first instance. Both parties will have the opportunity to review its continued viability after two and four years of operation. These reviews will provide the opportunity to continue the accreditation by mutual agreement or to move to termination if one or both parties considers it is no longer viable. A period of three months’ notice will be served at the end of the review if the decision to move to termination has been made, at the end of which notice period the accreditation agreement shall end.

Once the Memorandum of Accreditation is signed by both parties the course will be formally recognised for the recognition of academic credit. At this point the University will appoint an Accreditation Link Tutor who will become the main contact with the University, act as assessment moderator (by sampling assessed work from individuals who have completed the learning activity) and support the required process of annual monitoring. If the learning activity is at academic level 5 or above, the University will also identify an appropriate External Examiner, whose role will focus on ensuring that academic standards are maintained.

Where individuals successfully complete the external learning activity they will be eligible for the recognition of Middlesex University academic credit. In order for this to take place you will need to provide the following at least 3 weeks before the Faculty committee date

* A formal [Pass List](#pass_list_template) that includes the details of all individuals being proposed for the recognition of academic credit
* A minimum 10% sample of assessed work that demonstrates a full range of achievement of the accredited learning outcomes for the external learning activity or training course.

Sent electronically to your accreditation link tutor and copy in accreditation@mdx.ac.uk

The assessment sample will be moderated by your Accreditation Link Tutor and (where at academic level 5 and above) also be scrutinised by a University appointed External Examiner. The Accreditation Link Tutor and External Examiner will consider if the academic standards demonstrated by the assessment sample are consistent with those required by both the University’s validated programmes and standards in other higher education institutions. If both the Accreditation Link Tutor and External Examiner confirm this then the Pass List will be submitted to the Faculty committee for formal approval.

Once the committee has approved a Pass List, the individuals will be eligible to receive a Middlesex University Certificate of Credit (subject to charges as specified in the Memorandum of Accreditation and the annual fees as outlined in the Accreditation Handbook) that details the level and number of credits achieved. Please note that a Certificate of Credit is **not** a University qualification, rather it is a formal recognition from the University that those who have successfully achieved the learning outcomes from the accredited external learning activity or training course have had this achievement recognised as corresponding to Middlesex University academic credit.

All accredited courses require the production of an [Annual Monitoring Report](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0026/580814/appendix-14i-Accreditation-AMR-2023-24-template-May2023.docx) by September each year. You will be contacted annually in June/July by the Academic Quality Service with the relevant details. This report is an evaluative review of the quality of learning opportunities provided by the accredited external learning activity or training course. It will be developed in liaison with the appointed Accredited Link Tutor and will draw on a range of sources of information including:

* Feedback from individuals who are undertaking or have undertaken the learning activity
* The reflections of the team delivering and assessing the learning activity
* External Examiner Reports (where applicable)
* Assessment results/ numbers successfully completing
* Progression to Middlesex University programmes.

Accreditation process stages

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage 1** | **Stage 2** | **Stage 3** |
| **Initial Information and Approval** | **Accreditation Proposal development** | **Assessment of the proposal and consideration by the Faculty committee** |
| Following an initial discussion the [Accreditation Initial Approval Information Form](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0030/580818/appendix-14b-Accreditation-Initial-Approval-Information-Form.docx)is completed and considered for approval to proceed to the next stage. | The [Accreditation Proposal form](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0031/580819/appendix-14c-Accreditation-Proposal-Form-update-June-2022.docx) is developed with a report from a University academic. | The [Proposal Assessment Form](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0023/580820/appendix-14d-Proposal-Assessment-Form.docx) is completed and the assessor’s recommendation is considered by theFaculty Quality committee (or relevant sub-committee)The Client is notified of the outcome. |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage 4** | **Stage 5** | **Stage 6** |
| **Memorandum of Accreditation** | **Implementation of the accreditation** | **The recongnition of credit and quality assurance monitoring**  |
| Middlesex University produce a [Memorandum of Accreditation](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0025/580813/appendix-14h-Memorandum-of-Accreditation-MoAc-template.docx) (MoAc) which governs the terms of the accreditation. Once this is signed by both parties the accreditation is operable. | An Accreditation Link Tutor is appointed.Where learning activity is at level 5 or above, the University will also appoint an External Examiner.The Client organisation delivers the accredited learning activity as specified in the MOACAnnual plan for course delivery is submitted each September (appendix 2)[Pass Lists](#pass_list_template) and Assessment Samples are submitted (appendix 3) | The Accreditation Link Tutor and External Examiner (where learning activity is at level 5 and above) confirm the academic standards of the samle of assessed work.[Pass Lists](#pass_list_template) are approved by the Faculty Learning Education and Quality committee ( or relevant sub-committee).Middlesex University Certificates of Credit can be issued.An [Annual Monitoring Report](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0026/580814/appendix-14i-Accreditation-AMR-2023-24-template-May2023.docx) is completed in liasion with the Accreditation Link Tutor. |

Overview of the re-accreditation process for external organisations ‘in house staff development’ courses.

Re-accreditation is the process whereby a Client can re-accredit a course that is nearing expiry of its agreed term for further 6 years. The first step is for the Client to contact the University Link tutor to enquire about the possibility of re-accrediting an existing external accredited activity/course. The link tutor will have been alerted to the requirement for re-accreditation. It is essential that re-accreditation is approved prior to the expiry of the existing agreement – the process should commence a year in advance.

You will agree with your Link Tutor the arrangements for the re-accreditation. This will include a discussion relating to the continuing mutual benefit and organisational ‘fit’ in relation to the accreditation proposal, the likely associated charges and appropriate due diligence matters. In addition to this you will be asked to evaluate the previous six years of running the course/activity and in particular feedback on participants’ progression to Middlesex University qualifications. You will need to identify if there are any changes you would like to make to the course/activity.

**Please note**, having been accredited previously doesn’t automatically mean that the relevant Faculty still wishes to continue with the course.

In order to complete re-accreditation, you will need to submit a [Re-accreditation Initial Approval Form](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0024/580821/appendix-14e-Re-Accreditation-Initial-Approval-Form.docx) and a [Re-accreditation Proposal Form.](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0023/580811/appendix-14f-Re-Accreditation-Proposal-Form.docx) You will be required to evaluate the success of the provision, including participant feedback, the learning activity, the appropriateness of assessment, number of participants and the key changes being made in the re-accreditation submission as part of the re-accreditation application. In addition to information about the course/activity to be re-accredited, you will need to ensure that you provide all annual monitoring reports and have considered the key outcomes of the annual monitoring activity in your analysis. The University will support the development of the proposal so that it can be formally submitted to the Faculty committee for consideration.

Your finalised and complete re-accreditation paperwork should reach your appointed Link Tutor or nominee at least 6 weeks before the submission deadline to enable the team to support you in the process and to advise you on any changes to be made before submitting the final version of the proposal.

Once formally submitted, the proposal will be assessed by an appropriate academic member of the University and this will result in the production of a [Re-accreditation Proposal Assessment Form.](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0024/580812/appendix-14g-Re-Accreditation-Proposal-Assessment-Form.docx) The proposal assessor (or other nominated University

academic) will present the proposal to the Faculty committee with a formal recommendation for the committee ‘s consideration. The outcomes of this consideration can include:

* Approval without conditions and/or recommendations
* Approval with conditions and/or recommendations
* Not approved/Referred for further work

You will be informed of the outcomes of the committee in writing. Where any conditions of approval are set, these must be met within four weeks of the date of the committee. Similarly, where recommendations are made, you will be expected to respond to these recommendations within the same period.

This MoAc shall be for six years in the first instance. Both parties will have the opportunity to review its continued viability after two and four years of operation. These reviews will provide the opportunity to continue the accreditation by mutual agreement or to move to termination if one or both parties considers it is no longer viable. A period of three months’ notice will be served at the end of the review if the decision to move to termination has been made, at the end of which notice period the accreditation agreement shall end.

Once the Memorandum of Accreditation is signed by both parties the course or will be formally recognised for the recognition of academic credit. At this point the University will appoint an Accreditation Link Tutor who will become the main contact with the University, act as assessment moderator (by sampling assessed work from individuals who have completed the learning activity) and support the required process of annual monitoring. If the learning activity is at academic level 5 or above, the University will also identify an appropriate External Examiner, whose role will focus on ensuring that academic standards are maintained. Requirements for registration of participants, assessment of work and recognition of credit and annual monitoring remain the same.

Further information

For further information please contact:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Accreditation Administrator onaccreditation@mdx.ac.uk | First point of contact for Certificate request  |
| Your designated Accreditation Link Tutor | First point of contact for submission of Accreditation Proposals, Pass Lists, Sample of assessed participants’ work recommended for the recognition of credit; academic programme related matters, e.g. curriculum development, authoring monitoring reports, handbooks, publicity and other documentation, teaching, learning and assessment academic support. |

The Middlesex academic credit scheme

The Middlesex University’s academic provision is organised as a credit accumulation and transfer scheme. All learning which can be assessed can be quantified in terms of academic credit. Academic credit is recognition of learning, expressed in terms of a number of credit points, at a particular level of achievement.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education’s Framework for Higher Education Qualifications or FHEQ (the framework normally used for University qualifications) is the metric for measuring the volume or number of credit. Middlesex University uses the following academic levels for the purposes of accrediting learning activity:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***FHEQ Level*** | ***Credit framework levels*** |
| **3** | Foundation level (e.g. A Levels, National Diplomas) |
| **4** | Certificate level (e.g. Cert HE) |
| **5** | Intermediate level (e.g. Dip HE / Foundation degree)  |
| **6** | Bachelor degree level (e.g. BA/BSc Grad Dip)  |
| **7** | Masters level (e.g. MA/MSc/ Postgrad Dip) |
| **8** | Doctoral Level (e.g. PHD) |

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

Middlesex University will recognise accredited learning from academic level 3 to level 8. The metric for measuring the volume or number of academic credit points is also common across the FHEQ. This is based on 1 academic credit per 10 hours of learning, which can include self-directed learning hours as well as taught learning hours.

Using academic credit towards Middlesex University qualifications

All Middlesex University qualifications have standard values expressed in terms of credit points and levels. For example, a Certificate of Higher Education requires 120 credits, a Foundation degree requires 240 credits, an Honours degree requires 360 credits and a Master’s degree requires 180 credits.

Middlesex University can recognise up to two thirds of the total credit required to gain a University qualification through accredited learning. This means, for example, that up to 240 credits of accredited learning can be recognised towards the achievement of an Honours degree or 120 credits can be used towards a Master’s degree.

Designing and presenting your courses for accreditation at the appropriate level.

When designing courses, the learning outcomes need to be described at the appropriate level and the assessment activities need to provide clear opportunities for the these to be demonstrated. You will also find the SEEC level descriptors extremely useful for describing the course learning outcomes at the appropriate level for the particular staff development required <https://seec.org.uk/resources/>

At Middlesex we divide the module learning outcomes into ‘knowledge outcomes’ and ‘skill outcomes’. Suggested templates can be provided if helpful.

Assessment activities need to be linked clearly to the achievement of specific learning outcomes. They need to be appropriate for the particular staff development involved AND enable to participants to achieve the required academic level. The use of real work artefacts (such as projects, case studies, portfolios, presentations, skill assessments) should be encouraged and can be incorporated in the assessment alongside reflective or more theoretical assignments. Assessment activities need to be sufficiently rigorous for the amount, as well as the level of credit. For example, we would expect a 30 credit module to have assessment activities equivalent to around 5000 words in total.

Some helpful definitions:

* **Level descriptors** are generic statements describing the characteristics and context of learning expected at each level.
* Levels are an indicator of relative demand, complexity, depth of study and learner

autonomy. The level identifies the relative demands of learning which will be required of a learner undertaking the module/unit of learning.

* **Learning outcomes** are statements of what the learner should be able to do (for instance, demonstrate through assessment), as a result of undertaking the module/unit of learning.
* **Assessment criteria** provide clear statements of how the successful achievements of the learning outcomes can be demonstrated.

Appendix 1 - Accreditation Fees

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| --- | --- |
| **Initial scoping discussion** | Free of charge |
| **Consideration of Initial Approval Information** | £1,125 flat fee  |
| **Development of Accreditation Proposal** | £1,125 per day for development work (as required)  |
| **Assessment of Proposals** | £5,400 flat fee £1,125 per day for any additional assessment (as required)  |
| **Student certification and processing** | There will be a charge of £115 per participant registered on the accredited course who are eligible for certification. Please note: The organisation will be charged for a min of 25 participants for a level 6 course and 15 for a level 7 course per annum, irrespective of how many are submitted on the pass list to the University. Participants above these numbers will charged for at £115 per participant.  |
| **Annual Monitoring and moderation** | £2,250 per accredited course per annum *Annual Monitoring, Assessment Moderation, External Assessment and consideration of Pass Lists by the University Accreditation Board* |
| **Re-accreditation**(for existing partners only) | £2,250 flat fee £1,125 per day for any additional development work or assessment (as required) |
| **Optional Tutor Assessment support workshop (2hrs)**  | £500 |
| Optional Student Academic support workshop (1.5 hrs)  |  £400 |

Note: The Annual monitoring and certification fees will be invoiced at the start of each year of the programme.

Prices exclusive of VAT

Appendix 2 – Annual planning and recognition of Academic Credits

Below is the procedure for informing Middlesex University annually of the planned cohorts/numbers undertaking Middlesex University accredited courses and when the pass lists will be submitted for the recognition of academic credit.

1. By September 30th each year please email your link tutor and copy in accreditation@mdx.ac.uk providing details of your planned courses and cohorts for the following year. Include planned numbers, start and end dates. Note individual student details are not required at this stage.
2. Please send updates as required if your plans change markedly or certain courses don’t run.
3. Please provide a schedule of when the Recommendation list for academic credit (pass list) and sample will be provided. (you are advised to consider the dates of the Faculty committee in your planning and allow plenty of time for our moderation. Minimum 3 weeks)

Below is the procedure for the recognition of academic credit for accredited external course and training activity

1. All participants who have been assessed successfully and for which the recognition of academic credit is sought must be identified on a pass list. (appendix 3)
2. A representative assessment sample must be prepared (at least 10% of the total cohort assessed including all fails)
3. This assessment sample will be moderated by the appointed Accreditation Link Tutor to assure the University that the academic standard of the assessed student work is equivalent to that within the University's validated provision.
4. Once this has been confirmed, the pass list is signed by the Accreditation Link Tutor.
5. Where the academic level of accredited external courses is at level 5 or above, a University appointed External Examiner will also need to review the assessment sample to ensure that the academic standard of the assessed student work is equivalent to that of other UK higher education institutions. The External Examiner also produces a brief report on the standards of the work reviewed.
6. Once the equivalence of the academic standards of the student work has been confirmed, the pass list is signed by the External Examiner.
7. Once all the required signatures are in place, the pass list can then be considered by the next Faculty committee considering recognition of credit.
8. The Faculty committee considers each pass list and where all is in order, confirms the recognition of academic credit.
9. Once the recognition of academic credit is confirmed, the organisation will be invoiced and Certificates of Credit for individuals will be produced.

Progression to Middlesex University qualifications

Once academic credit has been recognised it can be used to count towards Middlesex University qualifications in the form of Advanced Standing. This can mean that those progressing to Middlesex University qualifications may be able to enter a programme of study at a later stage. For example, where the recognition of academic credit is represented as equivalent to identified programme modules an applicant may be exempted from taking these modules. It is important that participants retain their credit certificate as this could be used towards a Middlesex qualification in the future. If more than 5 years has elapsed since certification, evidence of currency will be required.

**Appendix 3 – Recommendation List for Recognition of Academic Credit**

**Organisation:**

**Title of accredited course:** (*Please present each course/level on a separate pass list and use the exact wording as accredited*)

**Number of credit points: Level of credit points:**

**Cohort identifier** (e.g start date) if applicable:

**Total number of participants in the course:**

**Number of participants successfully completing the course:**

The following participants have successfully completed the assessment requirements in order to demonstrate achievement of accredited learning outcomes and are therefore recommended to receive recognition of academic credit from the University:

You will be charged £115 per student for the processing and issuing of their credit certificates.

(unless specific arrangements have been agreed in the contract MOAC).

**Please state names as they should appear on the certificates:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Forename** | **Surname** | **MDX Student Number****(if applicable)** |
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**I confirm on behalf of [Organisation] that the above recommendation is correct.**

Signed:

Name:

Organisation representative

Date:

**I confirm that I have moderated the assessed work submitted for the above and support the recommendation for the recognition of academic credit.**

Signed:

Name:

Middlesex University Accreditation Link Tutor

Date:

**I confirm that I have reviewed the assessed work submitted for the above and support the recommendation for the recognition of academic credit (where at level 5 and above).**

Signed:

Name:

Middlesex University External Assessor

Date:

|  |
| --- |
| ***External Assessor comments***  |
| Academic standards of the work reviewed in relation to the academic level of the credit sought |
|  |
| Currency and relevance of the learning materials and assessment activities to the area of practice, as evidenced by the sample |
|  |
| Other comments for development |
|  |

**I agree the above recommendations on behalf of Middlesex University:**

Signed:

Name:

Chair of University Accreditation Board

Date:

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Exceptionally, courses that involve practitioners outisde the host organisaiton may be considered for accreditation, if the courses are for non commerial, professional development purposes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)