



**Middlesex
University
London**



KNOWLEDGE

INTO

ACTION

Middlesex University Strategy 2031

Middlesex University Strategy 2031



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VICE-CHANCELLOR FOREWORD

Knowledge into action



I feel privileged to be leading our global university into the next decade as we begin our new chapter with a renewed sense of confidence, ambition and community.

We are united by a shared purpose: creating knowledge and putting it into action. Our three strategic priorities are: to provide transformative education; to create knowledge that impacts on global challenges; and to develop an action-oriented, high-performing learning culture. As staff and students we aspire to be a diverse, inclusive and equitable community with a strong sense of belonging and mutual pride in our achievements.

We are distinctive in the practice-oriented way we educate, research and engage with society. We are an inclusive community and co-lead the shaping of our University community with our students and Students' Union.

We are radically creative, excelling in how we collaborate to find solutions to complex problems, taking risks with our thinking, actively learning and looking beyond the way things have always been to see how they can be better. We value simplicity in our systems and processes and we are clear about our priorities, empowering staff to take decisions and reducing unhelpful complexity.

We are passionate about making high-quality education accessible to all through flexible modes of learning. Our teaching changes lives locally, nationally and globally, enabling our students to shape their own lives and the world around them. Our practice-centred approach means that our students can flourish in society and the world of work because they have developed the skills and mind-set of entrepreneurialism, social justice and sustainable change.

Our research and engagement create impact in the public realm, improving equality, diversity and inclusion. We contribute to improvements in vital issues concerning social justice, culture, health, sustainability and prosperity, where it is imperative to undertake excellent research, using cutting-edge methods and working across boundaries to achieve outcomes which are genuinely inclusive in their impact.

Middlesex is a distinctive type of university — one focused on dynamism, relevance and having low and porous boundaries so that we can operate flexibly in a network of partners. Formed from a unique combination of practitioners, academics, professional services, organisations, students and alumni we develop collaborative advantage and achieve sector-leading quality in what we choose to do.

During our strategy formation our community made over 4,000 contributions to its development – just one measure of everyone's passion and commitment to the change we can make in the world and the power of belonging to the Middlesex community. We are proud of our global Middlesex family and our role in supporting each other's learning and shaping a better world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Nic Beech'.

Professor Nic Beech
Vice-Chancellor



OUR PURPOSE AND VISION

INTRODUCTION

Middlesex’s future is built upon a foundation of excellence in practice-oriented education and impactful research and engagement. Home to the radically creative and curious, our global community is passionate about shaping a brighter, more inclusive and equitable world.

A LIVING STRATEGY

We have adopted a living strategy, tailored for a world that is constantly changing. This strategy sets out our purpose, vision, principles and priorities. Working from the principles, strategic priorities and approach set out below, we will work together as a global community to shape our strategic action and future.

PURPOSE: KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

Our purpose is to create knowledge and put it into action to develop fairer, healthier, more prosperous and sustainable societies.

VISION

Our vision is to transform outcomes for individuals, communities and organisations and to empower people to change their lives.

We work in partnership to bring disciplines, professions, sectors and cultures together to create solutions to complex problems. We work collaboratively at the leading edge of practice-oriented education and impactful research across our integrating themes:

- Equity and improvements in health and wellbeing
- Inclusive socio-economic development and enriching lives through culture
- Sustainability of communities and the environment.



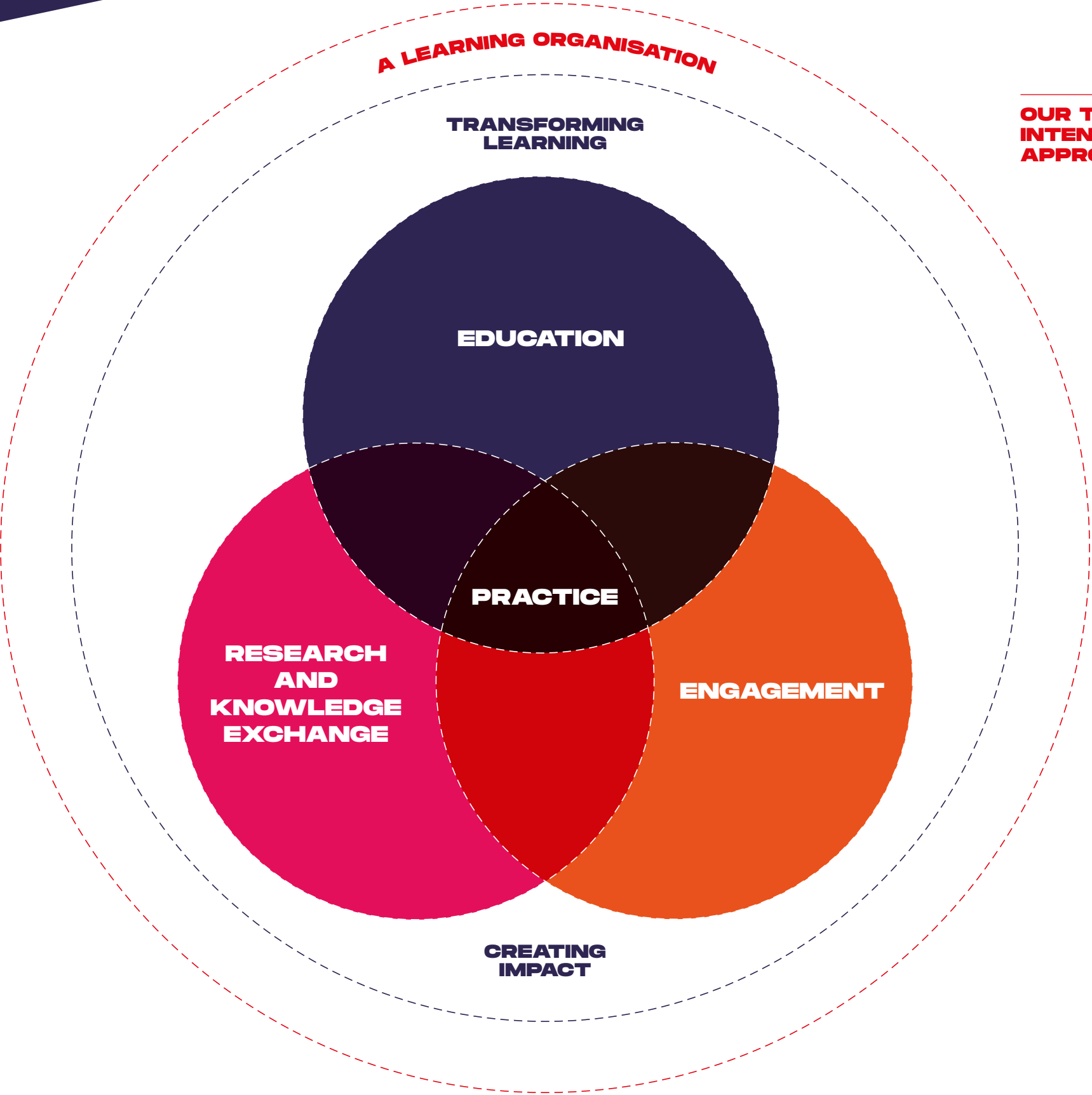
PRACTICE AT OUR HEART

Creating knowledge and putting it into action means having practice at the heart of what we do. Our triple intensity approach enables our learning community to embrace a culture of discovery and enquiry across our three interconnected activities of practice-oriented education, impactful research and knowledge exchange, and engagement.

Our students learn through activities and through experience, by doing, making and analysing. We foster innovation, encouraging our students to be creative and curious. They apply their advanced knowledge and skills to real-world and work-based projects that benefit society, the professions and business. Learning this way, our students develop the skills, behaviours and attitudes that they will use as change-makers and which employers want and need.

We create new knowledge which we and others put into action to further our University's purpose, benefiting society and the economy, the environment, enhancing health and wellbeing and enriching culture and communities. In research and knowledge exchange we foster interdisciplinary work, designing for impact.

We are committed to engaging with society and excelling in collaboration. We bring together practitioners, academics and professional services with students and alumni to engage with individuals and organisations. We work with communities, businesses, policymakers and the public to tackle complex problems and create solutions. We create collaborative advantage aligned with our integrating themes, in support of education, research and knowledge exchange, and our civic role, whether on a local or global scale.



**OUR TRIPLE
INTENSITY
APPROACH**

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To achieve our purpose by 2031 we will focus on:

TRANSFORMING LEARNING

Through providing innovative, flexible and highly accessible practice-led education, with excellent outcomes for students

CREATING IMPACT

Through practice-oriented and collaborative research, knowledge exchange and education

CONSTRUCTING A LEARNING ORGANISATION

Through a culture that is creative, inclusive, nurturing, agile and outcome-focused

OUR COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES

What we value and how we work, learn and behave

Our Community Principles guide how we work, learn and behave as a community. They are for everyone that makes up our global Middlesex family – staff, students and partners.



ACTION-ORIENTED

We focus on excellence to create solutions, outcomes and impact



RADICALLY CREATIVE

In what we produce, and inclusive and innovative in how we work and learn. We value calculated risk-taking and believe in learning from projects that go as planned as well as those that don't



RADICALLY SIMPLE

We deal with great complexity in education and research and so we emphasise streamlined systems and simple solutions in our ways of working. We are agile and reduce silos and hierarchy. We prioritise action that contributes to our purpose and are bold about stopping things that don't



LEADING IN EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We strive to create a fairer world and embed diversity, inclusion and equality in all we do



COLLABORATIVE

We operate as a collaborative community, co-leading with students and the Students' Union and co-creating across disciplines, professional services, sectors and cultures to create solutions to complex problems



ACTING WITH CARE AND INTEGRITY

We respect, learn from, and support each other, being transparent and open and behaving responsibly towards people, cultures and the environment

OUR MIDDLESEX APPROACH

Creative, collaborative
and agile culture

Local and global
Communities of Practice

Focusing through our
Integrating themes

Our Culture and People – who we are

We are a global Middlesex family that is caring, action-oriented, purposeful and inclusive. We collaborate to create knowledge and put it into action.

Middlesex University is home to people who change lives. We make a difference to the lives of our students and to the lives of people both locally and globally through our education, research and knowledge exchange and engagement.

Everything we do and achieve comes back to our people and our culture, principles and shared purpose.



WE DO THIS BY:

- High-performing Communities of Practice being our core way of innovating and working
- Co-leading with students and the Students' Union and co-creating across academia and professional services, disciplines, professions, sectors and cultures
- Being radically creative in our approach, open to trying things, and learning from our experiences and each other
- Designing simplicity into our ways of working and organisational structures to be agile, less hierarchical and more sustainable
- Being a learning organisation, passionate about self-development and the development of others, enacted through a coaching approach
- Embedding diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in everything we do
- Building a healthy institution where people thrive mentally and physically and where we behave responsibly towards people, cultures and the environment
- Creating innovative approaches to organisational design.



WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN

- The strengths of our culture – action-oriented, radically creative, innovative and delivering solutions, agility, inclusion and collaboration – are exemplified in how everyone works, learns and behaves across our global Middlesex family
- We have developed a global orientation within an open, flexible and connected organisation
- We are inclusive and fair in how we operate as a University.



Communities of Practice – how we work

Communities of Practice are central to our collaborative working culture. They connect our community so that we can create knowledge and put it into action

WHAT ARE THEY?

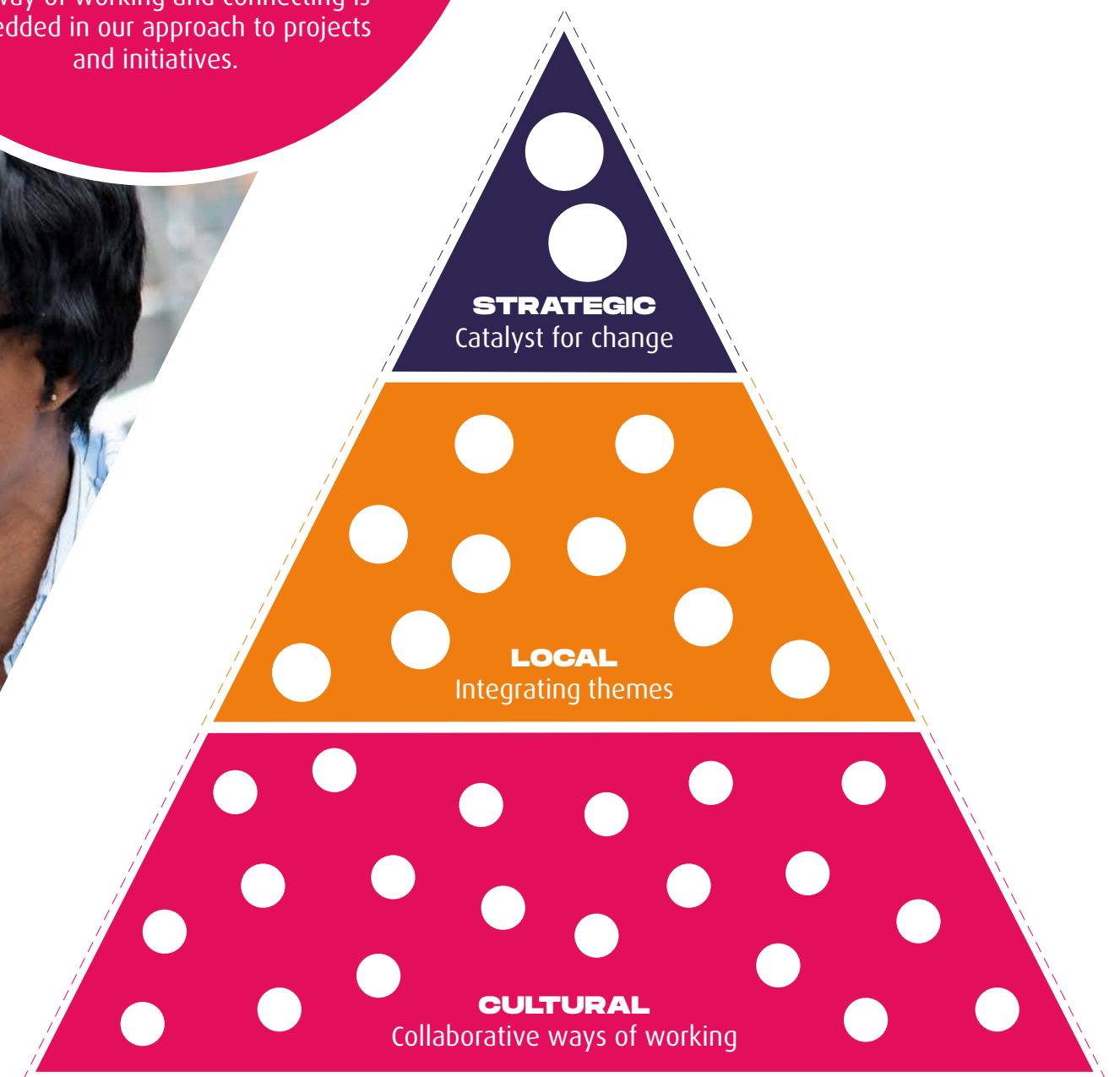
Communities of Practice are learning-oriented groups that focus on our priorities and take action to achieve our purpose. They bring together staff, students and partners to collaborate, drawing on different perspectives, skills and expertise to innovate and create solutions.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

They enable us to enquire, learn, innovate and deliver. Working in Communities of Practice, we develop new creative ideas, learn from each other and put our strategic thinking into action. Importantly, we find innovative and sometimes radical and simpler ways of doing things.

HOW ARE THEY COORDINATED?

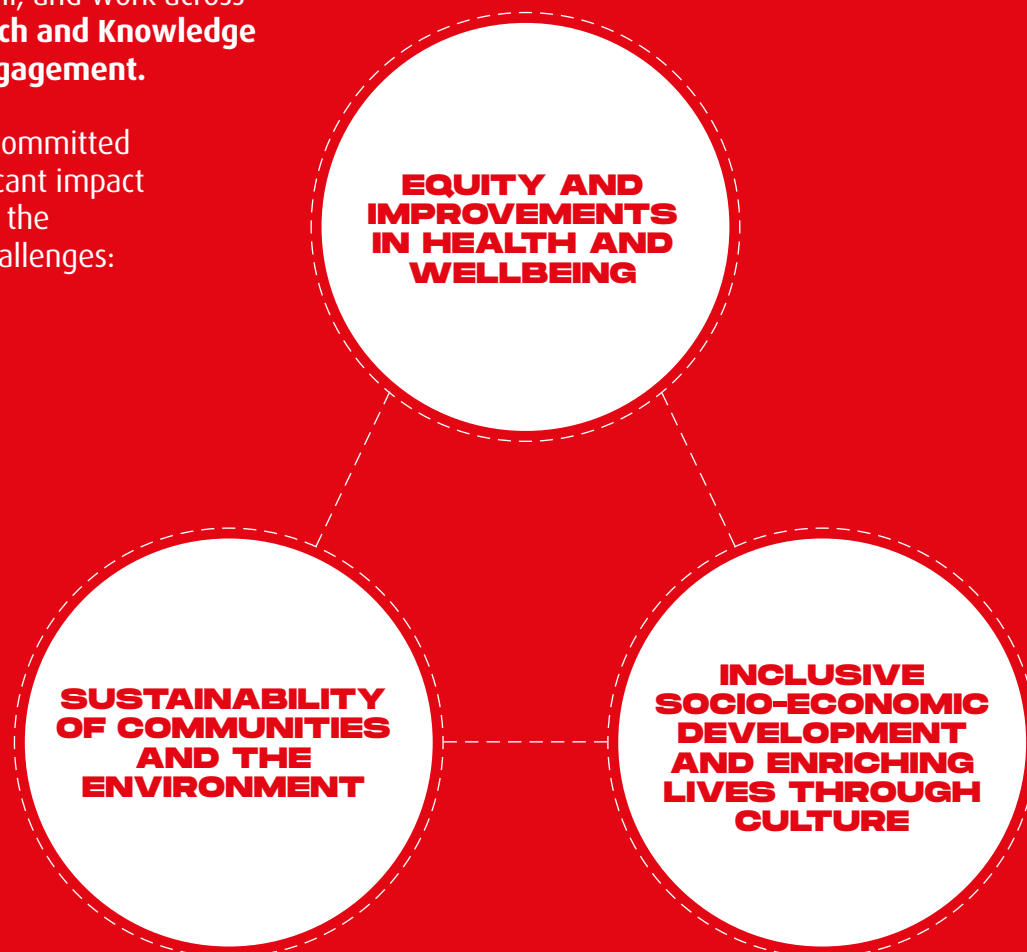
- Strategic Communities of Practice are established through a main committee, aligned to key priorities and are sponsored through the University Executive Team
- Local Communities of Practice support our integrating themes and connect them to deliver priorities
- As part of our collaborative culture, this way of working and connecting is embedded in our approach to projects and initiatives.



Our Integrating Themes – where we focus

The integrating themes give us focus. They operate across our global network of campuses, include academics, professional services, students and alumni, and work across **Education, Research and Knowledge Exchange, and Engagement.**

Our community is committed to making a significant impact and contribution to the following global challenges:



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Our three integrating themes have clear links to these important goals, and each theme is relevant to 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. It also carries a commitment to do more to deliver the SDGs, to report annually on progress and to share learning with other educational institutions, both nationally and internationally.

Equity and improvements 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 are improving physical, mental and social health and wellbeing in all parts of society.

Links to SDGs:



Inclusive socio-economic development and enriching lives through culture

With a belief that entrepreneurship can be key for 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:



Sustainability of communities and the environment

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

Links to SDGs:



Visit [MDXstrategy2031.co.uk](https://mdxstrategy2031.co.uk) to see our themes come to life through video and examples of our work. Keep checking back for updates as our living strategy continues to evolve.

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

I Education

Our purpose in Education is to implement a creative model of high-quality global education that makes a transformative difference to learners, inspiring and equipping them to shape a better world.

We provide highly accessible life-long and life-wide learning to inspire and enable learners from all backgrounds to be part of our global community. We connect learning, discovery and innovation and collaborate across the whole Middlesex family.

Our approach is to focus on learning and assessment through practice, for example working on projects and portfolios, ensuring our graduates have the knowledge, skills and attitudes sought by employers. We implement a flexible, blended approach, mixing digital content and high value, impactful, experiential learning and assessment, using technology to connect our global community of learners.

WE DO THIS BY:

- Delivering practice-led high-quality global education, informed by our integrating themes. We teach, learn and assess through practice, for example by working on projects and portfolios
- Taking a relational approach that has the learner at its heart, ensuring the right levels of advice and guidance, with a coaching model and a supportive learning environment
- Co-leading, co-designing and co-creating our educational approach with our students and the Students' Union
- Providing a high-quality flexible modular approach, with outstanding support processes
- Communities of Practice connecting learners in different places and educational modes, across different disciplines, with researchers and into businesses, community and professional organisations
- Professional services and academics working together and led by expertise.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- Students, alumni and employers know and value the Middlesex approach
- Students from any background thrive and achieve in Middlesex.



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

I Student Experience

Our purpose in Student Experience is to facilitate an excellent experience for all our students by transforming the way that we provide support – working with students and our Students' Union as partners and co-leaders to develop a vibrant, global student community.

WE DO THIS BY:

- Adopting a whole community approach to inspire and co-create our student experience that generates pride and belonging, recognising and supporting all staff to play an active role
- Co-leading with our students every aspect of our student experience: prioritising, designing solutions and implementing change together
- Facilitating, encouraging and empowering students to seek out new experiences, explore new perspectives and achieve their goals
- Embedding inclusivity, embracing diversity and treating every student as an individual
- Providing seamless services and personalised support which anticipate student needs, remove barriers to access and encourage engagement with learning
- Focusing on student wellbeing as core to all that we do
- Ensuring our physical and digital spaces are vibrant and stimulating destinations where students want to be, to learn, to connect and to experience university life
- Harnessing technology to support students in a tailored and meaningful way
- Ensuring that we enable students to succeed at each stage of their studies and provide embedded and additional opportunities to enrich skills and attitudes sought by employers, through sport, arts, volunteering, representation and co-leadership, exchanges and employment.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- Our co-leadership model with our students and Students' Union is embedded in our culture and inclusive decision-making and makes a real difference to student experiences at Middlesex
- Our learning environment supports successful student outcomes and promotes health, wellbeing and inclusivity
- The skills and experiences gained by our students support their aspirations and translate into wider choices on employment, future careers and shaping their impact on the world
- Our students feel a sense of pride, belonging and ownership of *their* University.

OUR COMMUNITY IS OUR STRENGTH INCLUSIVE AND FOR ALL OUR STUDENTS

Integrated and embedded support and services

Adding value – the Middlesex Experience

Desirable physical and digital spaces



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

Research and Knowledge Exchange

Our purpose in Research and Knowledge Exchange is to create new knowledge which we and others put into action to create an impact on global challenges.

WE DO THIS BY:

- Prioritising practice in how we generate and apply new knowledge, using the whole spectrum of experimental and established methods and designing for maximum impact
- Being outstandingly inclusive and non-hierarchical in working with researchers, practitioners, 'end users' and research participants
- Working to the highest standards of academic rigour and integrity, to ensure trust in our research and knowledge exchange
- Pursuing excellence by being part of impactful coalitions with practice and academia to help shape the direction of knowledge-producing communities
- Prioritising the global challenges encompassed in our integrating themes
- Working with an inter-disciplinary and collaborative approach locally, nationally and internationally, and partnering with individuals, organisations, businesses and community groups
- Developing a distinctive, inclusive and sustainable research culture which fosters the skills, methods and ethos of practice-oriented, inter-disciplinary research and knowledge exchange
- Connecting learning, discovery and innovation to ensure pedagogy and research are mutually reinforcing and bind our learning community together.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- Inclusion and diversity in our distinctive research and knowledge exchange culture has grown and we are a destination of choice for ambitious academics and postgraduate researchers
- The impact and significance of our work is nationally and internationally recognised as transforming practice beyond the University
- Our work is influential in knowledge-producing communities.



The Active Energy streamwheel being launched into the River Lea for installation in Olympic Park. Photo © Loraine Leeson, 2019.



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

I Engagement

Our purpose in Engagement is to work with others to create collaborative advantage aligned with our integrating themes, in support of education, research and knowledge exchange, and our civic agenda, whether on a local or global scale.

WE DO THIS BY:

- Developing a distinctive, global reputation and positioning aligned to our integrating themes
- Forging strategic alliances or partnering with leading individuals or organisations, including national and international research relationships, to increase impact in our integrating themes
- Adopting a creative and flexible approach to partnering, working in Communities of Practice to achieve collaborative advantage with business, industry, the professions and the public
- Growing our influence across the Higher Education sector, and in local, national and global markets
- Developing our Further Education partnerships in London and the UK to enhance reputation and extend our community
- Delivering high-quality transnational education through academic partnerships and overseas provision, extending our academic reach and ensuring sustainability
- Developing our strategic relationships with employers to benefit our current students and support graduate outcomes
- Harnessing the knowledge and skills of our global alumni network to benefit our current students and in support of our strategic priorities and integrating themes
- Developing our civic agenda to increase our contribution and impact at a regional level across our network of campuses.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- Our reputation is sector-leading in our integrating themes and we are recognised as having significant contributions to make in these fields
- We are seen as sector-leading for our collaborative and creative approach and are recognised locally, nationally and internationally as a partner of choice.



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

I Infrastructure that Enables Flexibility

Our purpose in developing our infrastructure is to increase our global connectivity, flexibility and sustainability. This will enable us to create knowledge and put it into action through education, research and knowledge exchange and engagement, irrespective of time differences, geographical locations, and cultural backgrounds.

WE DO THIS BY:

- Using key design principles including best practice systems and a 'buy not build' methodology, with a focus on space to work creatively together and developing our global estate with blended learning and working as core drivers
- Linking Communities of Practice across the world and enabling diverse teams to work together from different locations
- Using the appropriate blend of digital and physical resources to ensure learners have access to learning materials and processes at times and places that suit them
- Focusing processes and systems on the individual applicant, student and graduate
- Enabling research to operate at an international level through a blended infrastructure to support more effective collaborations
- Increasing our environmental sustainability in resource use, including reducing the amount of physical travel
- Reviewing our infrastructure to enhance health, wellbeing and performance
- Delivering a robust underpinning digital and system architecture through enhancements to our network and security and simplification of our system integrations
- Focusing on cutting-edge data management and business intelligence, balancing security with openness, to support our decision-making and to meet reporting requirements.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- Access to education and connectivity between students, academics and professional services is flexible and effective
- Our research and educational work is well-connected locally, nationally and internationally and our environmental sustainability is improving
- Our work environment is flexible, enhancing health, wellbeing and performance.



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

I Growth and Diversification

Our purpose in Growth and Diversification is to ensure our long-term sustainability, by developing a diverse and sustainable student and market base and by building partnerships to enable us to create knowledge and put it into action through education research and knowledge exchange and engagement. Growth and diversification will enhance our global reputation and secure our long-term financial sustainability.

WE DO THIS BY:

- Using the opportunities presented by the digitisation and globalisation of education to extend international collaboration, transnational education, online learning and modular learning
- Developing a distinctive global reputation and positioning to become a university of choice in our markets and with partners
- Maintaining our role as an anchor institution making a strategic contribution to the local economy, developing high-quality and highly accessible undergraduate and work-based education and a distinctive approach to supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Collaborating effectively with Further Education partners to develop innovative partnerships, including re-imagining ways of learning and assessment, new approaches to health and wellbeing and developing strong pipelines into Higher Education
- Building on our existing international presence and reputation to help us to expand internationally
- Collaborating with selected partners to attract international students to our UK campus and to expand our offer to international students
- Extending our portfolio of knowledge exchange, including continuing professional development, to meet the changing needs of businesses and communities.

WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

- We have a sustainable position in our chosen UK and international markets, with a strong and distinctive reputation
- We have a global pipeline of financial income from a balanced, sustainable range of international markets and partners
- We have multi-faceted partnerships which help us deliver on our three main priorities.



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

Value, Evaluation and Measurement

Our purpose in Value, Evaluation and Measurement is to 'place value on what we value'. We clearly express the collaborative outcomes we aim for to provide transparency in the contributions each member of our community can make towards achieving these outcomes.

As a learning organisation, we seek to understand what is working and where we need to improve, refine or stop, to ensure we are making progress towards our goals.

The Board of Governors and Academic Board receive structured evaluations of the key elements of the strategy, including quantitative and qualitative indicators and accreditations, which shape our learning and action.

The evaluations cover:

- What has been achieved and what has not
- Input metrics to measure the delivery of actions
- Output metrics to show whether the action has had the desired effect
- The overall impact, as measured by a small number of strategic indicators or by accreditations
- Input to support a dialogue on priorities and whether actions should be continued, amended or stopped

We optimise transparency with the community so that through this process we can all understand performance in context, learn and prioritise effectively.

VALUE

EVALUATION

MEASUREMENT

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