

Quality Assurance & Enhancement Policy

For all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes

Groups Responsible for Policy Review:	Executive Team, Academic Board
Executive Team Member Responsible:	Academic Secretary and Director of Academic Services
Date Last Approved:	January 2025
To be Reviewed:	Every 36 months
Review consultation:	Executive Team, Academic Board
Date of Next Review period:	January 2028

Overview

LST's quality assurance and enhancement framework is comprised of a range of policies and procedures that allow the routine monitoring and regular review of all its programmes to assure and enhance the quality of the student experience and to set, maintain and manage academic standards. This document provides the overarching principles and summarises the key features which define the quality assurance and enhancement framework operated within the School.

1. Responsibilities

- 1.1. Responsibility for the approval of this policy lies with the LST Academic Board and the Executive Team.
- 1.2. Responsibility for the regular review of this policy lies with the Academic Secretary, in consultation with the Academic Board.
- 1.3. Responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Academic Board.

2. Relevant Contextual Documents

- a. LST Learning, Teaching, Supervision and Assessment Policy
- b. LST Faculty Development Policy
- c. LST Organisational Board and Committee Structure
- d. QAA Quality Code of Higher Education

This policy also acknowledges the partial relevance of:

- e. The [Middlesex University Academic Policy Statement APS11: 'Academic Quality and Standards Policy'](#) (with acknowledgements for use of some wording).
- f. The Middlesex University [Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook](#), especially sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 7.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. The word 'programme' in this policy refers to any of LST's taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that are validated by Middlesex University, and LST's research degree provision, offered jointly with Middlesex University.

4. Rationale

- 4.1. As an institution that prepares students for the award of university degrees, LST fosters an environment in which academic quality is rigorously assured and regularly enhanced. It does this in order to maintain standards, enhance the learning opportunities available to all students and support the identity and vision of LST as an institution at the forefront of academically robust theological education both nationally and internationally, aiming to be the leading theological college in Europe.
- 4.2. Furthermore, it is LST policy that the quality of the student experience will meet the requirements of relevant governmental, professional and statutory bodies. In particular, LST recognises its responsibility to maintain academic standards set by Middlesex University.
- 4.3. **Academic Standards** describe the level of achievement that a student has to reach in order to gain an academic award. For equivalent awards, the threshold level of achievement should be the same across the UK. To ensure the University awards are at a similar level to those across the UK, LST draws on key reference points provided by the QAA, including [subject benchmark statements](#), [qualification and credit frameworks](#) and [characteristics statements](#).
- 4.4. **Academic Quality** is a way of describing 'how well the learning opportunities available to students enable them to achieve their award'. It is about ensuring that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment, learning opportunities and resources are provided for students.

- 4.5. LST has developed robust quality assurance policies and procedures to evidence how academic standards are set, maintained and reviewed and how academic quality is monitored and reviewed within a culture of continuous quality enhancement. Enhancement of quality requires the systematic consideration of key data at programme and institutional level (Programme and Academic Board respectively) to identify areas for improvement and to capitalise on good practice.

5. Key Features and Characteristics

- 5.1. LST's quality assurance and enhancement framework features the following:
- a. Initial programme approval;
 - b. Continuous monitoring and annual reporting at programme level;
 - c. External examining of programmes;
 - d. Internal student surveys and other feedback mechanisms;
 - e. Periodic programme review;
 - f. Formal approval of programme modifications;
 - g. Annual and periodic institution-led monitoring, review and audit;
 - h. Involvement of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB) where appropriate.
- 5.2 The quality assurance and enhancement framework is characterised by:
- a. External and internal independent scrutiny;
 - b. Equality of opportunity and fairness to students;
 - c. Involvement of key stakeholders, notably students, employers and the academic community;
 - d. Responsiveness to feedback and a commitment to continuous improvement and enhancement;
 - e. Regular reflective practice by academic teams;
 - f. Clear deliberative channels of responsibility for the oversight of quality and standards;
 - g. Internal and external accountability;
 - h. Transparent and accessible information to stakeholders;
 - i. Alignment with the LST's strategic direction;
 - j. Openness to challenge and scrutiny by stakeholders;
 - k. Regular review of all components of the quality assurance and enhancement framework.

6. Stakeholders

- 6.1. Successful implementation of the framework relies upon the effective and critical engagement of the key stakeholders, namely:
- a. current students;
 - b. graduates of the University;
 - c. employers;
 - d. professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
 - e. the staff of the School;
 - f. the wider academic community;
 - g. funding bodies and other external agencies
- 6.2 Students are the key stakeholders for programmes and accordingly student involvement and contribution are encouraged through the quality assurance and enhancement framework at all levels, including committee representation, module/programme modifications, internal review and audit mechanisms.

7. Programme Design, Development and Approval

- 7.1. Programme design takes account of the educational priorities of LST, as set out from time to time by the Board of Trustees, the Academic Board, the Executive Team and any Educational Review Group currently active. It also takes into account the professional and vocational needs of likely students, provision elsewhere in the theological education sector, and market research.
- 7.2. Design of a new programme takes account of existing programmes and the potential impact of a new programme on those existing programmes. In particular, where elements of programmes are shared, special care is taken to ensure that the consequence of a new programme is positive for an existing programme. Where appropriate and feasible, students in existing similar programmes are consulted concerning the potential design of a new programme.
- 7.3. Programme development is conducted by a team, consisting of the Programme Leader, Module leaders, Academic Dean and the ASDAS, and incorporates as early as possible the potential programme leader. It occurs in close consultation with Middlesex University, primarily through the University Link Tutor. Stages are formally overseen and authorised by the Executive Team and the Academic Board. In this way, academic, organisational, financial, and promotional aspects are brought together in creative synthesis.
- 7.4. Programme approval is gained by following Middlesex University's policy and processes. LST recognises and

adheres to its responsibilities towards the University in this process. Programme approval is documented by way of a Memorandum of Cooperation between LST and Middlesex University. All programme details are contained in a programme handbook.

8. Programme Monitoring and Review

- 8.1. Programmes are reviewed annually and amended where necessary, in order to assure and enhance their quality and to ensure that they take account of staff and student feedback.
- 8.2. The on-going monitoring of programmes occurs by way of 2-3 programme board meetings/year for postgraduate and undergraduate programmes respectively. These have student representation, as well as the involvement of the programme leader, relevant tutors, the programme administrator, and representatives from learning resources and IT support.
- 8.3. External Examiners appointed by Middlesex University have an important role in programme review, by way of regular reports, and these reports form standing items on programme board meeting agendas.
- 8.4. All programme boards and equivalent committees such as the Research Committee are sub-committees of the Academic Board and report to it. Thus, each programme board's quality assurance processes are overseen by the Academic Board.
- 8.5. With the exception of urgent or small administrative matters, changes to programmes are made only once a year as required. Authorisation for such changes, either to individual modules or to overall programme design, is sought from Middlesex University through the university's structures and processes.
- 8.6. Changes made to programmes are discussed at Programme Boards and communicated through the programme handbook, which is reviewed and if necessary, altered annually. Some changes are also communicated by other means, such as the LST Intranet, the VLE, and classroom announcements.
- 8.7. Every six years, or as required by Middlesex University, a full review of each programme occurs and is a prerequisite of on-going validation of that programme by the University. This review occurs in accordance with University structures and procedures.

9. Student Engagement

- 9.1. Student engagement is direct creative involvement by students in the assurance and enhancement of academic quality. In order for this to happen, an environment is fostered in which student opinions are respected, valued and acted upon where feasible and appropriate.
- 9.2. Faculty operate an 'open door' policy whereby students know that they can approach faculty members without an appointment to discuss any matters that concern them.
- 9.3. Any changes to current programmes undergo student consultation prior to implementation.

10. Representational Structures

- 10.1. Each programme has either one or a small number of student representatives (depending on the size of the programme and the accessibility of students) chosen by their peers.
- 10.2. These representatives attend programme boards, contribute to discussions and decisions, and have access at other times to the programme leader.
- 10.3. As well as these programme representatives, there is an overall undergraduate on-campus representative, an overall undergraduate online representative, an overall postgraduate taught representative, and an overall postgraduate research representative, all of whom are included in the membership for the Academic Board.

11. Training and Monitoring

- 11.1. The Academic Secretary coordinates the initial training and on-going support of student representatives.
- 11.2. In addition, further training is also conducted by outgoing representatives for incoming ones who, together with the ASDAS, also monitors and report on student perceptions of staff responses to student contributions.

12. Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Supervision

- 12.1. LST is committed to offering high quality teaching that facilitates high quality learning. All teaching staff are encouraged to be self-reflective practitioners who use evidence to assess, and where necessary improve, the quality of educational provision. Following each module lecturers and tutors complete a Module Review form, which asks them to engage with student module feedback and review their own teaching, identifying areas for development.
- 12.2. To further enhance and support self-reflection, these Module Reviews, alongside other evidence such as student feedback, assessment results, and peer observation, are reviewed as part of a faculty member's annual appraisal by a senior member of staff.
- 12.3. The quality of online teaching material is monitored by the Academic Dean together with the Teaching and

- Learning Manager. In addition, they assess the quality of LST's online educational provision by training faculty in online design approaches and practical know how, in overseeing and monitoring the delivery of online learning, in providing training and mentoring in online tutoring practice and in liaising with the IT department in the creation, implementation and monitoring of the virtual learning environment.
- 12.4. Quality of assessment processes and outcomes is monitored, among other means, by External Examiners appointed and regulated by Middlesex University. LST acknowledges its responsibilities to the University to comply with external examining systems published in the Middlesex University Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook, section 4.