

Institute for Work Based Learning: A partnership approach to work-based learning

London, UK





General Information

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| Title | Institute for work-based learning | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pitch | A partnership approach to work-based learning | | | | | | | | | | |
| Organisation | Middlesex University | | | | | | | | | | |
| Country | United Kingdom | | | | | | | | | | |
| Author | Dr. Victoria Galan-Muros (Technopolis Group UK) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nature of interaction | <table><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration in R&D</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lifelong learning</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Commercialisation of R&D results</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joint curriculum design and delivery</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Mobility of staff</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Mobility of students</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Academic entrepreneurship</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Student entrepreneurship</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Governance</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Shared resources</td></tr></table> | <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration in R&D | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lifelong learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercialisation of R&D results | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joint curriculum design and delivery | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility of staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility of students | <input type="checkbox"/> Academic entrepreneurship | <input type="checkbox"/> Student entrepreneurship | <input type="checkbox"/> Governance | <input type="checkbox"/> Shared resources |
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| Supporting mechanism | <table><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Strategic</td></tr><tr><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structural</td></tr><tr><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational</td></tr><tr><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy</td></tr></table> | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structural | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy | | | | | | |
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| Summary | <p>For over 20 years, the Institute for Work Based Learning (IWBL) at Middlesex University has joined forces with professionals and industry leaders internationally to explore new ways by which they can use work-based learning processes to improve their skills and knowledge, resulting in tangible personal and organisational benefits. IWBL negotiate individual programmes to recognise the learning taking place in the workplace and provides official university recognition ranging from credits to level 8 awards. IWBL has a strategic and flexible approach flexible to engage employer-employee-university in a 3-way learning agreement. Their transparent process and the quality of their courses has made them leader in professional education in the UK.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |



Introduction & Overview

1. BACKGROUND

Middlesex University was originally a polytechnic and constituted as a University in 1992. The University is located in London, with campuses in Malta, Dubai and Mauritius and has nearly 38,000 students internationally. Middlesex has six Schools, Health and Education, Law, the Business School, Science and Technology, Art and Design, Performing Arts and the Institute for Work Based Learning. Its mission is that 'Everyone at Middlesex will have the opportunities and tools to chart their path to success in a community where the experiences we create together are life-changing and our diversity is a strength and inspiration'.

Since 1992 Middlesex University has developed an expertise and reputation in accreditation, design and delivery of professional work-based programmes and established Work Based Learning (WBL) and Professional Practice as a transdisciplinary field of study within which higher education awards can be conferred. WBL is defined by Middlesex as "university level critical thinking upon work (paid or unpaid) in order to facilitate the recognition, acquisition and application of individual and collective knowledge, skills and abilities, to achieve outcomes of significance to the learner, their work and the University." (Garnett 2009, p4) ¹. WBL programmes provide opportunities to gain higher education degree qualifications that include 'formal recognition and academic credits for learning that occurs in the workplace'.

In 2005, the UK Higher Education Academy recognised Middlesex as a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in WBL and building on this experience and expertise, the Institute for Work Based Learning (IWBL) was subsequently established in 2007. IWBL is responsible for managing the university's validated WBL Framework, developing and delivering WBL programmes in diverse professional sectors and supporting the development of WBL programmes across the University.

IWBL offers a wide range of individually negotiated or cohort designed programmes for a specific employee, company or sector, which can range in scope from short courses to doctoral degrees. Additionally, Middlesex University accredits the 'in-house' training of external organisations, which is often combined with WBL Framework modules delivered by University staff to construct work-integrated degrees.

IWBL is recognised for its flexibility, focus on specific organisational and individual contexts and innovative curricula, which allows them to adapt to the fast-moving needs of industry. Expertise in research, evaluation and critical thinking enables employees to create knowledge and contribute to the enhancement of their area of professional practice. With a partnership approach, IWBL works with organisations of all sizes across the public, private and voluntary sectors internationally.

At the heart of the IWBL is the Work and Learning Research Centre, which investigates the development and application of professional work-based learning from a transdisciplinary perspective. The learning and teaching of the IWBL is underpinned by the Work and Learning Research Centre, which allows them, for example, to evaluate their courses with scientific rigour. There are four areas of research; Research in Pedagogies and Curriculum Innovation in work and learning

Theoretical and ethical aspects of practice-based studies, Approaches to change and development in work and Higher Education Policy. The Centre organises national and international conferences and publishes its research.

2. OBJECTIVES AND MOTIVATIONS

IWBL aims to develop and provide opportunities for professional learning to diverse and under-represented groups to enhance the personal and professional development of employees and organisations internationally through WBL. IWBL enables “practitioners to use the workplace and its resources for development and innovation” using their expertise as university researchers and tutors in practitioner inquiry, evaluation, synthesis, critical thinking, creative problem solving etc.

The main motivation for companies to invest in any WBL programme is to yield tangible business benefits. These companies endorse the development of their staff’s capability for reflective thinking, innovation and development to enhance practice and improve productivity. Thus, they aim to provide an incentive for crucial staff to develop themselves, achieve university recognition and contribute to the success of the company.

The organisations that work with IWBL to co-design programmes commonly see value in professionalising their workforce or industry sector, raising their profile and credibility through university recognition. This is often an opportunity in sectors or occupations that are new or those that have no professional bodies that recognise or certify their abilities and skills.

Individual employees undertaking the programmes aim to develop themselves personally and professionally, improving their expertise and gaining recognition. Where both individual and organisation or sector needs are aligned, Middlesex WBL programmes can result in a significant change in working culture, for example towards explicitly valuing reflective practice as an integral aspect of good working practice.

3. STAKEHOLDERS

IWBL has a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. Internally, the main ones are:

- ▶ Academics across Middlesex university: IWBL has a core group of 16.2 academic who deliver WBL programmes of study that lead to awards including Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate degrees. They are experts in Work-based and Professional Studies, delivering programmes that recognise work as the primary site of learning. Additionally, IWBL works collaboratively with academics across the University who are developing and delivering practice-based and WBL programmes in their subject areas, especially in Health;
- ▶ Other offices inside Middlesex University - that relates with business or that support the operations of IWBL (see supporting mechanisms section).

Externally, the main stakeholders of IWBL are:

- ▶ Companies: Organisations of all sizes, from a variety of sectors and locations, that want to develop their employees’ abilities in different ways. The companies support their employees offering the use of company resources, sometimes some mentoring and staff development and potentially the payment of tuition fees. Partner companies for IWBL have included, Asda, Halifax, Rank Group, Royal Mail, SAP, Toshiba Tech, Sony Mobile, Wipro, EasyJet, Wembley Stadium;

- ▶ Programme participants: are professionals in sectors such as Aviation, Professional Services, Construction, Healthcare and Education who aim to critically examine and enhance practice in their field through engaging with work-based higher education;
- ▶ Training organisations: partner with IWBL and can have their training programmes accredited and at times may deliver work-based degrees jointly with the University;
- ▶ Academics from outside Middlesex University: engage with staff as work-based learning practitioners, on joint research, as external examiners or sometimes for their expertise in a particular field of work;
- ▶ Consultants: brought in as members of the advising team for doctoral programmes to contribute specialist practice expertise;
- ▶ Workplace mentors: provide support for work-based learners to identify work activities that can contribute to the development of professional knowledge, understanding and skills, as well as providing formative feedback;
- ▶ Networks: IWBL is actively involved in several networks and associations, such as Universities Vocational Awards Council (UVAC); the UK Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL); SEEC Credit Consortium; the International Association of Practice Doctorates (IAPD); International Conference on Professional Doctorates (ICPD).





Implementation

4. INPUTS

The 16.2 full time equivalent staff, who are experts in WBL contribute to the design and delivery of the programmes. As Tutors and Advisers they support the learning process that includes reflection on practice, planning professional development, practitioner inquiry and critical thinking and negotiated work-based project activity that is targeted at enhancement of practice.

Organisations are always involved in the process of developing and delivering WBL programmes at Middlesex. This can be in terms of formalising three-way (student, university, employer) learning agreements; negotiating and agreeing to work-based project or inquiry activity; co-designing WBL programmes to meet specific workforce development needs; providing workplace mentors to support WBL; delivering University accredited in-company training.

WBL higher education and degree programmes are eligible for the same public funding support in the UK as any other university programme, in the form of tuition fee loans and maintenance grants. Programmes that are specifically designed to meet corporate workforce development needs are commonly funded directly by the company in accordance with terms set out in formal service contracts. Employers can also agree to sponsor individual work-based learners. Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programmes are either funded through the UK Apprenticeship Levy (for large organisations) or through public and employer co-funding. In some cases individuals may fund their own learning programme or charities or other organisations may cover tuition fees through bursaries and scholarships.

For IWBL, their involvement in funded projects has been an opportunity to develop much of their current work, such as the Grundtvig EU project 'Developing European Work Based Learning Approaches and Methodologies' that created a European network that formed a framework and guidelines for Work Based Learning in nine European languages. The current Erasmus Superprofdoc project addresses the complex capabilities needed for supervision of work-based doctoral research (see <http://superprofdoc.eu/>). The UK HEFCE funded project in 2008-12, where employers were encouraged to engage with universities and co-fund a higher education that delivered workforce development also enhanced development in IWBL.

5. ACTIVITIES

IWBL offers the most comprehensive range of professional practice qualifications in England with the three primary activities being as follows:

a) Accreditation activities

There is a large amount of professionals that in spite of their knowledge, skills and practical experience do not have a higher education qualification. If their knowledge and skills is comparable to higher education level, then Middlesex University can recognise their experiential learning towards the award of academic credit that can contribute to the achievement of a degree. They are likely to be required to do additional work, such as a reflective piece of work and to demonstrate evidence of

learning. In this circumstance, Middlesex University evaluate the evidence of their prior learning following a clear and official process to determine the academic level and volume of credit to be awarded.

Another type of accreditation recognises the university level learning achieved through in-company training. In this case, IWBL advises and supports the company to develop an accreditation proposal, which describes the main characteristics of the programme (i.e. study hours, learning outcomes, trainers' profile and experience), a rationale for its accreditation and propose the number and level of credits to award.

The University Accreditation Board (including an appointed External Examiner) evaluates the appropriateness and the merit of each proposal individually. The Board either approve (with or without conditions and/or recommendations), refer or reject proposals. Those programmes approved are reviewed annually and need to be re-accredited after six years.

The next step for the University is to create a Memorandum of Cooperation for both parties to sign their agreement with the accreditation terms. An Accreditation Link Tutor is then allocated to support the implementation of the programme and, together with the organisation, monitor the quality and report to the Accreditation Board annually. External Assessors are also used to scrutinise samples of work and report to the Board. The Accreditation Link Tutors and the External Assessors ensure high academic standards are maintained.

Certificates of Credit are awarded to those that successfully complete the accredited programme. The academic credit awarded can be used towards higher education awards at Middlesex or at other universities.

b) Delivery of accredited courses to companies

IWBL offers intensive short courses and workshops to external organisations in personal and professional development; for example: change management, marketing, customer service, sales, project management, finance, team building, presentation skills, decision making, negotiation skills. They are designed to stimulate staff morale and improve the organisational performance.

In some cases, these courses are delivered by Middlesex University academics and their external consultants alone; however, they can also include their own organisational trainers to deliver different relevant content. If joint delivery with a partner organisation takes place, their part of the course needs to be accredited following the university official processes described above.

For accredited short courses university credits are awarded that could be used towards higher education awards in combination with other courses, reflective pieces of work and/or whatever that award may require.

c) Delivery and award of university-level programmes

In collaboration with employers and other organisations, Middlesex University designs higher-level programmes that satisfy academic criteria and meet professional and organisational goals. These programmes can lead to several awards: University Certificate and Certificate of Higher Education (level 4), University Diploma, Higher Diploma and Diploma of Higher Education (level 5), Graduate Certificate/Diploma and Bachelor with Honours (level 6), Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma and full Masters programme (level 7) or Professional Master/Doctorate (level 8). The award depends on the learning level, the credit volume, prior experience and learning and the outcomes of project work undertaken.

All awards are rooted in the professional practice or workplace activity of the candidate and their practice is placed at the centre of inquiry. IWBL has a flexible and student-centred approach to learning. Individuals start at the level of their current learning and can progress to a higher level of expertise. This is possible with modules designed as building blocks that can be added to the previous ones; stepping stones to get a higher certificate. The programmes are individually or cohort negotiated and are based on the Middlesex University WBL Framework, which mix experiential learning and an inquiry project activity. The learning outcomes required are closely benchmarked against the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualification expectations to ensure the equivalency of academic standards with any UK qualification.

The programmes include taught elements and recognition of prior learning. WBL modules are “specifically designed to enable learners to reflect on prior learning, plan programmes of learning and develop and deploy appropriate methods of professional inquiry”. Programmes include WBL project modules, which work as ‘shell’ modules designed to include entirely negotiated content. The project can be a written dissertation or an intervention or artefact or other relevant product or service outcome but all must demonstrate how they are designed to change and enhance professional practice.

These programmes are mostly undertaken part-time within the working environment. In the cohort-negotiated situation, employee groups from the same company can work together towards a common goal but from different perspectives, benefitting from peer learning and support while promoting a culture of sharing practice. Individually negotiated programmes are also required to involve the development and engagement with their own professional networks. All candidates have a tutor/adviser at Middlesex University. Many WBL programme also require support from workplace mentors and these arrangements are agreed in advance with the employer.

The programmes are flexible, enabling the practice-based syllabus to be negotiated in the process of development. Similarly, the blend of face-to-face, work-based and online learning is also negotiated with organisations to enable employees to align WBL with their work schedules. They are transdisciplinary in nature, which means that the starting point for programme design is reflecting professional practice rather than traditional academic disciplines. Areas of relevant professional practice knowledge (including academic disciplines) are drawn upon where needed to ensure that theoretical and practical issues are integrated. This enables WBL programmes to ensure that the outcomes are directly relevant to practice while promoting a critical stance designed to enhance such practice.

At Bachelor level, individuals can be awarded a Bachelor Degree in Professional Practice in with a personal specialisation depending on their own work, which is negotiated individually. Other WBL Bachelors programmes are designed and developed to meet either organisational or sector needs and lead to award titles relevant to specific professional practice contexts. For example, Middlesex University has partnered with Aviation Training Organisations (CTC Aviation, Tayside Aviation and Helicenter Aviation Academy) and aviation employers such as EasyJet and Loganair, to design the BSc (Hons) Professional Aviation Pilot Practice degree. This innovative programme fully integrates the Civil Aviation Authority professional pilot theoretical and practical training, into the degree modules. These programmes which is currently its third year and has resulted in a 98-100% employment record for students.

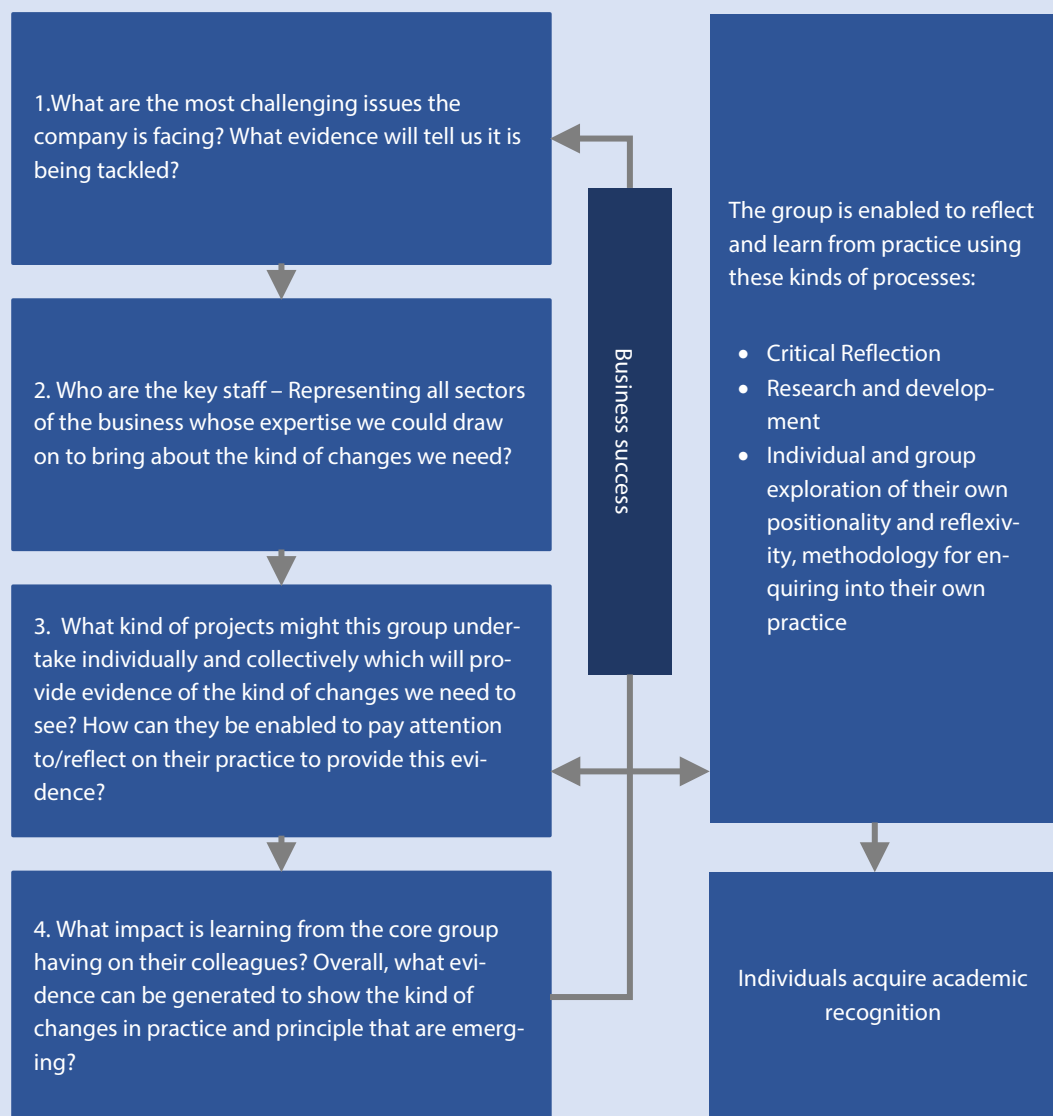
The doctoral programmes are a good example of how IWBL works. The doctorate level is aimed at mid-senior professionals that can bring strategic institutional change as practitioner researchers and their own reflective and critical engagement. Professionals create knowledge that is grounded in practice to establish themselves as scholar practitioners in their area of expertise in their work. In most cases are not intending to join the academic community.

The Doctorate in Professional Studies has over 300 candidates currently. Another route is the Doctorate in Professional Studies by Public Works which is for candidates who are very high level innovators and opinion leaders that “already counts with numerous outputs in the public domain that influence practice and contribute to knowledge” and is akin to a PhD by Published Works but focussed upon Professionals outside the academic sphere.

The partnering process

Staff in IWBL are usually approached by employers and in a conversation with the CEO, they identify (i) the key challenges faced by the business and (ii) the key stakeholders in the company who are best able to tackle them.

Then IWBL and the CEO agree on the kind of work that those stakeholders could do to tackle the challenges and how the learning gained would benefit the company. This could be helping to inform greater decision making, which might lead to business improvement.



Source: <https://issuu.com/efmd/docs/gf-special-vol-06-issue-01>

6. OUTPUTS AND IMPACTS

The diversity and complexity of the programmes, which are highly dependent on the context, complicates the identification and measurement of the impacts for employers and employees. However, IWBL has evaluated most of its higher education programmes and identified ((see publications below) some common positive outputs and impacts:

WBL generally benefit **employees** offering both personal and professional development. The WBL experience change the way they undertake their work, improving their efficiency, and increase their understanding of their work but also of management, leadership and generally how things and people work. Candidates improve their writing, analytical and research skills, their understanding of methodology and the ability to publish. Candidates develop professional and personal confidence and credibility. Their expertise is established in a particular area, and they are recognised by their peers as experts. As a consequence, they improve their careers aspirations and ability to take on more demanding roles. Many of the graduates of WBL programmes secure more financially rewarding roles, raising personal status and professional credentials.

Employers also gain value from the WBL programmes in different ways. They gain “valuable tools to train new managers, ensure skills consistency across their organisation, adapt to changes within their industry or fast track high-performing staff”. Additionally, they benefit from the increased credibility and prestige of their employees; an added value that raises the prestige and credentials of the organisation. The outputs of the many work-based projects are a direct contribution to the company processes and products able to provoke significant change and/ or enhancement of work practices. The programmes also result in a more motivated human capital, who feel rewarded, and a clear career structure. There is a risk that the results of WBL challenge organisational practices, creating a conflict of interest between the employer and the employee (Seibert and Costley, 2013). However, this has not been identified for IWBL programmes as the risk is mitigated by pre-delivery negotiation at the contracting stage to ensure that both senior leaders and candidate line managers within organisations are aligned with the aims of the workforce development activity provided.

For IWBL, the programmes are a way to get access to new markets that allow them to be ahead in their thinking and a source of income. It is also a way to contribute to the skills agenda through higher employability of employees, which enhance their probability to progress in their careers. This is especially important at a time in which the teaching excellence framework measure student satisfaction, employability and employer engagement. For the county or region this translates into an improvement of human capital that is expected to have a positive social and economic impact. In the UK, this is also particularly relevant to the Government initiative to promote higher and degree apprenticeships in partnership with universities. IWBL and Middlesex are thought leaders in this policy area.





Support & Influencing factors

7. SUPPORTING MECHANISMS

In the 90s, when IWBL started, it benefited from a top-down support by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Since the subsequent managers have continued with this support until today, WBL has become part of the Middlesex University culture.

Within Middlesex University, the current work of IWBL is supported by some centralised units that provide different them with different supporting services. The IWBL has developed working practices with each of them and has a contact point inside them. They main units are:

- ▶ Centre for Academic Partnerships –monitor and oversee the University’s collaborative provision, including technical and operational aspects. For example, they oversee the memorandum of cooperation, legal and financial issues, review processes, etc;
- ▶ Academic Quality Services – are in charge of the validation events, they prepare the paperwork, coordinate gathering the validation panel together and the administrative process of quality monitoring, etc;
- ▶ Registry – manage admission processes, registration and certification, management information, returns to funding bodies, etc;
- ▶ Research and Knowledge Transfer Office – manage the contracts with companies;
- ▶ Corporate Engagement –are responsible for event organisation with corporate organisations, networking and employer engagement to develop business leads;
- ▶ Marketing Department –develop the University website and other external communications; and
- ▶ Finance office – manage invoicing to organisations, for example in relation to workforce development contracts.

These structures, together with the availability of both the WBL Framework and Accreditation Services allows greater flexibility to respond to the needs of employers.

8. BARRIERS AND DRIVERS

Even when IWBL operates successfully it still faces some barriers. Despite the efforts of Middlesex University to establish a system that meets the needs of WBL effectively, both employees and employers often mention difficulty in navigating the bureaucracy of the university. Additionally, since the government does not currently fund staff development, employers or individual employees might lack the financial resources to invest on their education and training. However, the advent of the Apprenticeship Levy in the UK is likely to bring significant change in this regard.

Employees on a WBL programme need to be self-motivated and can face challenges in clearly embedding their project activity into their work routine. However, when it works well, projects can reveal the ability of employees to innovate, change or improve a working situation. Additionally, while there is evidence of impact where clear return on investment measures are set at the contracting stage it

can be difficult to provide compelling evidence in all cases that WBL programmes have a greater impact than other programmes.

Within the University context, some academics might perceive that WBL activity is not mainstream and some do not understand how the delivery of professional contracts works within a university. The old conception of a vocational-academic divide remains to some extent and it can be the case that some academics might not recognise professional doctorates and/or are not interested in getting involved in any WBL programmes. However, conversely this has not proved to be a barrier for IWBL as they have found that a majority of academic staff understand and value the WBL approach.

IWBL has a considerable track record of working collaboratively with employers but UK Government policy regarding higher-level skills has fluctuated and at times presented mixed messages to universities and employers. The recent higher and degree apprenticeship initiative has the potential to resolve this positively.

9. FUTURE CHALLENGES

The organisational and individual learning could be linked more effectively to increase the impact of the WBL programmes. Also, WBL programmes require a system that makes the knowledge created easier to codify against higher education structures, since the complexity of WBL is still not totally understood or agreed in higher education. The connection between academic and practitioner research methodologies is an area for innovation and development.

Middlesex University is giving close consideration to systematising more effectively joint R&D activities with the partner organisations of IWBL. It requires a research-driven approach, discussion and confidentiality. The work with SMEs is more challenging, although IWBL has successfully worked with some of them. It is important to support the evidence that measure their return of investment.

IWBL should keep their innovative method based on critical engagement and critical reflection that provides employees a unique expertise and approach that they cannot get online or through other education and training providers. At the same time, Middlesex University need to ensure that its structures and processes accommodate WBL effectively, which often requires to work in cross-functional teams. Infrastructures, from physical ones (library services) to online ones (e.g. virtual learning environment) should also keep updated and adapted to serve the employees.

Employers could better support the university to understand the needs of work-based projects and could build into their structures appraisal and promotion mechanisms for their learners, which could be built into their learning strategies.

10. CONTEXT

The policy approach to the relationships between universities and employers in the UK has undergone continuous change. There has been the matter of co-funding and more recently a required levy for staff development in the form of apprenticeships that larger employers will be required to pay. Although professional doctorates are becoming more popular, there is some confusion about how they can be funded and recognised. Although the level of any doctorate awarded by a UK university is held to be the same across the sector, the value and purpose of this innovative way of developing senior staff is not well understood at policy or any other level. The higher and degree apprenticeships at undergraduate, masters and potentially at doctoral level, which will need to be work-based require UK universities to coordinate their support services, systems and procedures for contracts and to

manage these partnerships. The expertise already developed in the IWBL places it in a good position to attract a large number of candidates.

The IWBL location in London does not have a significant impact on their work at this stage, since they operate internationally and their unique competences are currently sought by companies of all locations.

Finally, the current uncertainty around the effects that the Brexit will have in the UK relations with Europe will undoubtedly affect IWBL, which works internationally and often benefits from European projects.

11. KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

The success of IWBL is based on a large amount of factors, including the following:

- ▶ Flexibility: one module can be taken as a stand-alone short course, wrapped into an in-house programme or taken as part of a Bachelors, Masters or Doctoral degree
- ▶ Transparency: clear processes for accreditation and the award of credit
- ▶ Personalisation: ability to meet the need of employers and organisations
- ▶ Efficiency: various flexible mechanisms are efficiently coordinated, to allow responsiveness in a short time
- ▶ Quality and credibility: IWBL offers critical thinking, based on practitioner inquiry, reflective and reflexive learning approaches to its programmes, which increase their credibility and quality
- ▶ Partnering: IWBL has partnered with some of the biggest and best-known organisations in the UK.
- ▶ Strong research profile in WBL: the IWBL staff in their double role of practitioners and researchers have a unique and solid approach over the curriculum design and programme evaluation
- ▶ Stakeholder management: the large amount of stakeholders of IWBL are efficiently managed through a partnership approach. This is helped by the IWBL ability to speak the industrial and academic 'languages' and their negotiation skills.
- ▶ International offices: The five international offices that IWBL support them in the international recruiting of companies that are interested in working with them.
- ▶ Recognition and reputation. Middlesex is a market leader in organisational development, and the word of mouth works well for them.



Further Information

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

For IWBL, the monitoring and evaluation of its programmes is done in accordance with the UK quality assurance code of practice, as has been recently confirmed by the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2016). Systematic review and evaluation has also been conducted through research. Several publications have been made analysing these results.

13. SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

IWBL operates in a flexible way that allows them to scale up and scale down the team, based on the contracts that provide the funding for human resources. They often draw on external experts, hourly-paid human resources that contributes to this flexibility.

They are currently operating at full capacity since their reputation makes ‘word of mouth’ the most effective method in attracting both companies and individuals.

Although IWBL does not have business developers or specific marketing staff, they benefit from the marketing of the university and the one that their partner training organisations do about their programmes accredited by IWBL.



14. TRANSFERABILITY

The model of comprehensively integrating professional learning and work-based practice into higher education programmes is highly transferable. Middlesex University has opened a series of offices in Cyprus (1996), Greece (1997), Hong Kong (2000), Malaysia (2003) and Ireland (2004) that operates like IWBL.

Middlesex advises other universities in the UK and overseas on accreditation practice and procedures. Resultantly, other Universities that have taken up the Middlesex WBL curriculum design, for example The University of Hong Kong² or the University of Central Queensland in Australia³.

15. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

IWBL has been at the core of Middlesex University for 25 years and it has been widely recognised.

In 1996, IWBL (NCWBLP at the time) was awarded a Queens Anniversary Prize for "Excellence and Innovation" for pioneering WBL carried out with vigour and clarity", integrating formal education and employment⁴."

In 2005, The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) awarded a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for WBL (£3.3 m/ €3.9m)⁵.

In 2008 HEFCE awarded Middlesex £8m (€9.5m) to establish the Middlesex Organisational Development Network, which offered learning and development programmes co-designed with employers, in order to spread best practice in engaging with employers through developing WBL in innovative ways with external partners.

In 2011, the Queen Anniversary Prize for Enterprise was awarded to Middlesex University.

In 2012, HEFCE awarded £1.5 m (€1.8m) for the Higher Level Apprenticeships scheme

Additionally, in 2003, 2009 and 2010⁶ the Quality Assurance Agency for England reports commended Middlesex for "the innovative and robust procedures in place for ensuring the quality of WBL" and identified that "the distinctive contribution of the IWBL to the University's portfolio of educational provision" as being an area of good practice.

16. PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

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17. LINKS

Middlesex University <http://www.mdx.ac.uk>

IWBL <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/our-schools/institute-for-work-based-learning>

Work and Learning Research Centre: <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/our-research/centres/institute-of-work-based-learning-research-centre>

Repository with all the IWBL staff publications and Doctoral theses <http://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/view/divisions/institwbl.html>

Middlesex University policy and procedures regarding 'Accreditation for awarding of academic credit': www.mdx.ac.uk/aboutus/Strategy/quality-standards/handbook/section14.aspx



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19. REFERENCES

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