Student Voice Leader

Handbook 2023/24

Equity Citizenship **Justice**

MDX SU

MIDDLESEX STUDENTS' UNION

HELLO!

Welcome

Welcome and congratulations for becoming a Student Voice Leader! It's an incredibly important and exciting role that allows you to truly **make a difference to other students' lives**.

You'll be part of a community of hundreds of SVLs – all students like yourself who will lead and make Middlesex University the best it can be for your fellow students.

I'm Sagar Joshi and I'm your President at MDXSU. I'm responsible for **representing your views on learning, teaching and your wider experience** via a variety of committees as well as leading on a variety of campaigns throughout the year. I'm here to ensure you have the **right support and guidance** from both MDXSU and the University to reach out to and engage students to provide feedback and to get involved with wider campaigns.

If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch with the Student Voice Team or drop me an email!

Sagar Joshi, **President MDXSU**

Your Role
as a Student Voice Leader

Opportunity

Your role is a fantastic opportunity to represent your cohort and act as a crucial link between them and the University and the Students' Union in order to **make changes students want to see**. As a Student Voice Leader, you will **gather feedback from and represent students** on your programme and work with academic staff to shape your student experience. You will be invited to provide feedback to the University and MDXSU through various meetings and events that will be held throughout the year.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Make yourself known and accessible to your cohort
- Gather feedback from your course about their student experience
- Present collective and representative feedback at termly Programme Voice Groups (PVGs) and their relevant Pre-Meetings
- Share feedback and collaborate with MDXSU representatives (Student Officers) to make changes you want to see at Middlesex
- Complete the required training sessions

- Attend any other relevant events organised by MDXSU or faculty
- Follow the SVL Code of Conduct

Benefits

- Positively shaping your course and University experience
- Gain CV enhancing skills
- Be a vital part of the student community by representing your cohort's views
- Get to know and be a part of a community of student leaders
- Public speaking abilities, learning compromise and negotiation

Training and Support

As a Student Voice Leader, you will be given continuous support throughout the year. There will be online training at the beginning of the year which will explain the duties and responsibilities and provide you with the necessary skills required to undertake the role, as well as ongoing training and support. All material will also be available on the MDXSU website.

Fixed

You will be required to complete a training session before you begin your role. You will also be required to attend 1 pre-meet and 1 Programme Voice Group per term.

Qualifications

No prior experience is necessary; you just have to be a student studying at Middlesex University with a passion for improving students' academic experiences!

Venue

Meetings will be held via a blended method (in-person & online).

Accountable to

The students you represent on your course.

Method of Appointment

Any student can nominate themselves for the position of Student Voice Leader.

WOW

What's in it for you?

Student Voice Leaders are an important part of the work MDXSU does on behalf of all students at Middlesex. Because of this, there are lots of opportunities for you to get involved in that will **develop you personally and professionally!**

There is also the chance to **win Student Voice Leader of the Year at the MDXSU Awards.** This year, we're also going to have lots of new ways of recognising the work of Student Voice Leaders – think freebies, vouchers and Student Voice Leader of the Month awards!

MDX Graduate Competencies and Micro-Credential Awards

Your role as a Student Voice Leader enables you to gain vital new skills and competencies which are highly-valued in the workplace.

In recognition of this, **MDX offers micro-credential awards (digital badges)** to those SVL's who can demonstrate and evidence their understanding, engagement and experience and reflection of key skills and competencies aligned to this role.

Formal Competency Awards

Communication:
(Micro-Credential Award: Level x)

You will develop confidence in public speaking and communication skills – whether that is speaking to a lecture full of students and asking for feedback or talking to academics and senior members of university staff at a PVG.

Problem Solving and Delivery:
(Micro-Credential Award: Level x)

As a Student Voice Leader, you will work with other SVLs from across your programme years and your department to develop long-term solutions to recurring issues.

Leadership and Influence:
(Micro-Credential Award: Level x)

As you will play an active role in the democratic structures of MDXSU, you will have the chance to influence major policy changes that will impact on students' experiences on campus, and beyond!

Through the SVL role – you will gain invaluable leadership skills as your take on the responsibility of representing the views of your programme peers in key programme meetings and reviews. You will also develop the skills necessary to stand for one of our other leadership positions in the Spring Elections!

Empathy and Inclusion:
(Micro-Credential Award: Level x)

The nature of our diverse student community means that you will engage with students from a wide variety of ethnic; social and religious backgrounds. You will work with students from a variety of ethnic; social and cultural backgrounds and the ability to accept and acknowledge views and opinions from all those you engage with as part of the role.

On completion of your contract as an SVL – you will be asked to complete a short assessment exercise to verify your experience and understanding of the above Competencies.

On approval by your MDXSU line manager – you will be issued Digital Badges (Micro-Credential Awards) for each of the Competencies that you have been confirmed as having achieved the required attainment level.

The Digital Badges will be available for you to view and share from, in your personal MDX-VerifyED digital portfolio, enabling you to directly showcase your abilities to the world.

Additional skills you will gain as a result of the SVL role:

Teamwork
As a Student Voice Leader, you will work with other SVLs from across your programme years and your department to develop long-term solutions to recurring issues.

Formal meeting experience
As you will be attending your PVGs, you will gain experience in participating in a formal meeting, and you even have the opportunity to chair, which is an even better experience!

Developing and acting on feedback
A major part of your role will include you developing solutions to feedback with University staff, which is an important skill required by any future career!

Programme Voice Groups ✳

Programme Voice Groups Programme Voice Groups (PVGs) are the meetings that Student Voice Leaders **attend twice a year**, with their programme leader, key academics, and relevant university services staff, to **give the feedback they have gathered and develop solutions** to improve the academic experience of the students they represent.

This process has been developed by the University and MDXSU in partnership. The University and MDXSU want to provide students with the opportunity to provide **collective feedback** in a way that suits you. So, if you have ideas for improving this process, do not hesitate to let us know.

STEP 1: Gather feedback from your peers

You can do this however you feel most comfortable! Ask your lecturer for 5 minutes at the start of a session, set up a Facebook or WhatsApp chat, or send round a survey!

STEP 2: Set the agenda

Two weeks before your PVG, you might be invited to a pre-meet or emailed by either your Programme Leader or Director of Programmes to let them know about the feedback you have collected. This might just be an email, but the **purpose is to set the agenda for the PVG** and make sure the correct members of staff are there. If you want to take on more responsibility, you can also say here if you'd like to chair the meeting.

STEP 3: Attend or Chair your Programme Voice Group

Then you will attend your PVG to provide your cohort's feedback to your Programme Leader, and other University staff. Remember, you can volunteer to Chair your PVG, just make sure you do this at your **pre-meet** and then let us know so we can support you! This might take place virtually, on Zoom, for example and you should make every effort to attend as it's the core component of your role.

STEP 4: Close the feedback loop and repeat!

The PVG cycle happens twice in each academic year, once in the first term, and once in the second. This means you can gather feedback all year round, not just in the first few weeks! **Remember to close the feedback loop and feedback the outcomes of your PVG to your peers.** This will help you collect feedback for your next meeting.
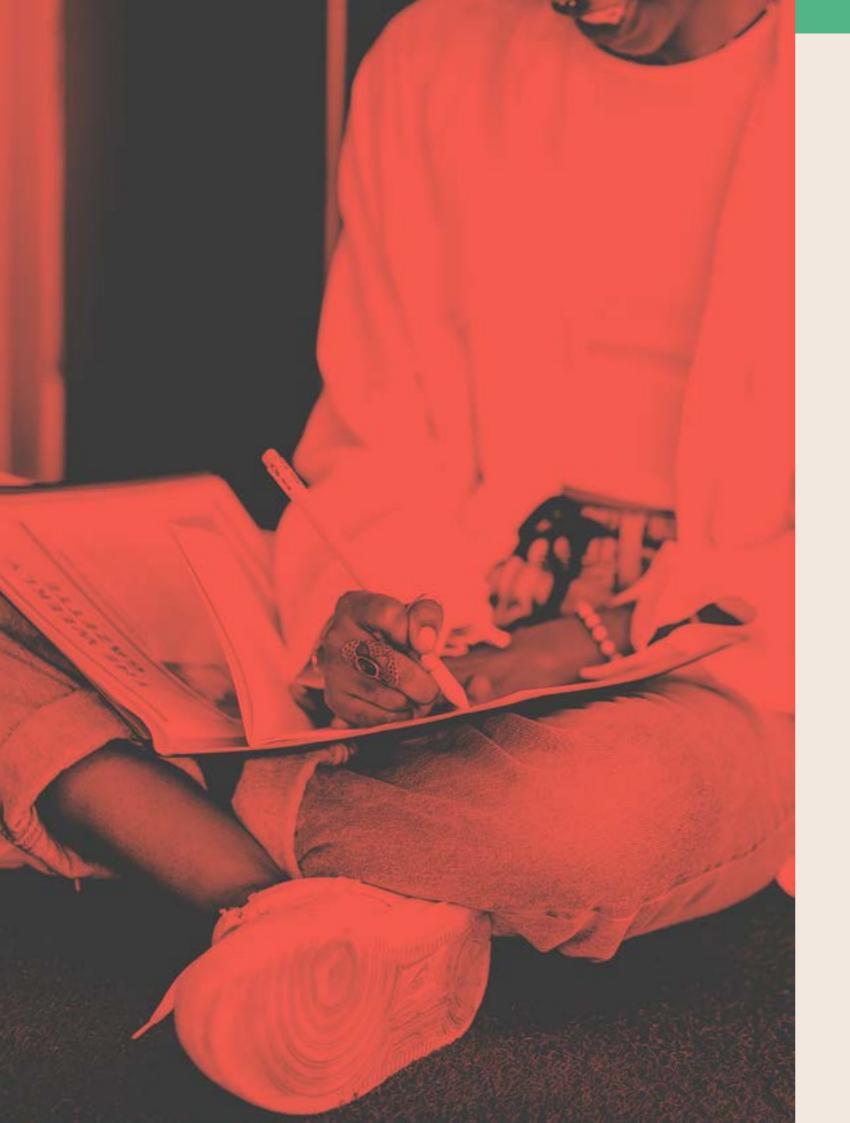
More than your course!

PVGs are your opportunity to give feedback on your programme and your wider student experience at Middlesex. You should always make sure you feedback is r**epresentative of your cohort**, but MDXSU and the university will be able to monitor and evaluate recurring issues from across the university. You can also raise any items you missed in the Any Other Business part of the meeting.

What happens to your feedback?

Your feedback is not only considered at programme level but **also reported at Faculty level** and to central University committees. MDXSU and **'Centre for Academic Practice Enhancement (CAPE)** analyse al PVG minutes to identify common themes and areas for action at Faculty and institutional level.

For example, recurring student feedback on assessment and feedback resulted in a University-wide Assessment & Feedback Review in 2019/20 where anonymous marking was introduced as well as clearer feedback. You can find out more about what the University has done in response to student feedback in different areas by **visiting the Your Impact page on Unihub**.

LET'S DO IT

Good Meeting
Etiquette

1. What to do if you cannot attend the meeting

You are expected to attend both your pre-meeting and main PVG meeting. Make sure you always **respond to meeting invites** when you receive them so your Programme Administrator knows that you can attend.

If you know in advance that you cannot attend on the scheduled date, you **must let your Programme Administrator know** so they can reschedule the meeting for a time when all SVLs can attend. If there are exceptional circumstances that prevent you from attending on the day of the meeting, you must email your Programme Administrator to send apologies as soon as possible.

2. Be prepared

It's very important to **prepare yourself for your pre-meeting** and PVG. For the pre-meeting, make sure you have collected student feedback that is representative of your cohort. For the PVG, **make sure you have read through the agenda** beforehand and provide constructive comments when discussing your feedback.

3. Be on time (or a little early)

There is usually quite a bit to cover at PVGs, so in order for it to start promptly, it is important that you arrive at the room in good time!

4. Respect everyone at the meeting

You should respect every attendee at the meeting, listen to their comments and provide constructive feedback.

SIMPLE

MDXSU
and You ✳

Student Voice Leaders and Student Group Leaders

Student Voice Leaders (you) and Student Group Leaders exist to represent students, either academically or their common interests. You play an important role in setting MDXSU policy.

Academic Community Leaders

Academic Community Leaders exist to support the building of academic communities in faculties via meetings with faculty leaders, leading on events, and encouraging engagement in academic societies and student voice.

MDXSU Staff Members

You are supported by members of MDXSU staff. Their role is to support you in your development as a Student Voice Leader, as well as being able to answer any questions you have about the role!

Sabbatical Officers

MDXSU Sabbatical Officers are full-time elected students representing students to the university, including at Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees.

Sagar Joshi - President
Sukritha Pothaganti
– Academic Experience Officer

Jay Suryavanshi
– Equity and Inclusion Officer
Omar Numaan Khan
– Community and Citizenship Officer
Sahil Patel - Social Justice Officer

Student Leadership Team

The Student Leadership Team run the delivery and development of MDXSU's representation and democratic functions, including the Student Voice Leader system and all SU elections.

George Walker – Student Leadership Manager
Daniela Humajova – Student Leadership and Development Coordinator
Arthur Kaddu – Student Leadership and Development Coordinator (Democracy and Insights)

Advice and Wellbeing

The Advice and Wellbeing team run a free and impartial Advice Service for students experiencing challenges with their academic experience.

Jonathan Segal
– Advice & Wellbeing Manager
Billie Wells – Advisor
Job Kefas – Advisor

Issues
and Signposting

An important part of your role as a Student Voice Leader is to know when to signpost students to services run by the University or by MDXSU.

You do not need to know the answer to every issue or concern a student has, therefore knowing where to signpost students is important! It is not your role to provide support for personal issues, the University and MDXSU have resources in place to support these students.

MDXSU Advice Service

studentadvice@mdx.ac.uk

Use this service when seeking academic advice, making a complaint to the university or issues regarding academic misconduct.

MDXSU Student Leadership Team

studentvoice@mdx.ac.uk

Contact this team when you have questions about the role of a Student Voice Leader, need help with Programme Voice Groups, have any issues, or want to know something about Union democracy.

UniHelp

UniHelp@mdx.ac.uk

Your first port of call for general student enquiries.

MDX Counselling Service

cmh@mdx.ac.uk

MDX Disability and Dyslexia Support Service

disability@mdx.ac.uk

Student Care and Concern Procedure

If you are concerned about a students' health, wellbeing, conduct, safety or vulnerability, you should follow the care and concern procedure. You can contact the team here: https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/care-and-concern

Student Complaints and Grievance Procedure

This procedure exists to enable students to make complaints against the university regarding a service, member of staff or fellow student. If you need any further support with this, you should contact the MDXSU Advice Service.

Jargon
Buster

DoP	Director of Programmes	The academic member of staff responsible for a group of similar programmes in your department.
PA	Programme Administrator	Members of university staff who will contact you about PVGs.
PAM	Programme Administration Manager	Members of university staff who manage the PAs in your Faculty.
EE	External Examiner	Independent moderators who will ensure student attainment is considered impartially and comparable with national standards.
HoD	Head of Department	The academic member of staff who leads a department in your Faculty.
NSS	National Student Survey	The National Student Survey is a survey of all final year undergraduate degree students at institutions in the UK.
NUS	National Union of Students	A membership organisation of Students' Unions in the UK which aims to improve the quality of the experience of students on apprenticeships, Further Education and Higher Education in the UK.

OfS	Office for Students	The regulatory body for Higher Education providers in England.
PL	Programme Lead	The academic member of staff responsible for your programme.
Pre-meet		The conversation you will have with your PL/ DoP/ HoD to set the agenda for your PVG.
President/Vice President		Full time student officers who represent MDX students, part of the MDXSU Executive Committee.
Protected Characteristics		The Equality Act (2010) gives protected equality legislation to specific groups that may be disadvantages because of their identity. There are nine groups, which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. These are referred to as protected characteristics.
PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey	An annual survey of all postgraduate taught students at institutions in the UK.
PVG	Programme Voice Group	The meetings you will attend as an SVL. They happen twice a year, one in each term.

QAA	Quality Assurance Agency	The independent body that safeguards standards and quality of UK Higher Education wherever it is delivered across the world.
SVL	Student Voice Leader	You!
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework	A government assessment of the quality of undergraduate teaching in universities and other higher education providers in the UK. Participation is mandatory for English institutions.
ToR	Terms of Reference	The structure and purpose of a meeting. The ToR of your PVG will be discussed and confirmed in the first meeting.