



Externality Position Statement

The Metanoia Institute

1. Introduction and Context

Metanoia recognises the value of the Institute engaging meaningfully and productively with external bodies and with our peers, not only through our statutory, regulatory and professional bodies (PSRBs) but the range of institutions and their experts across the education, charity and business sectors locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The Institute knows that, employed and deployed judiciously; the benefits of the experience and expertise of independent and impartial externals can be felt throughout a higher education institution's operations and activity in relation to its collective academic endeavours. These include the setting and maintenance of academic standards and, where relevant, professional standards at validation / accreditation, assuring quality that is supported by sound academic and institutional governance, enhancing the student and trainee experience and in the development and delivery of specialist learning opportunities such as those offered by Metanoia.

Metanoia's approach to externality is multifaceted and deliberately Institute-appropriate in terms of the scale and scope of its employment and deployment. It is an approach that simultaneously reflects the principles of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC's) Higher Education Code of Governance¹ for the operation of sound governance and the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education's sector-agreed principles and key practices² while being implemented in a way that supports the institution in the innovative and effective delivery of its specialist curricula, its partners and the student body, which is atypical within the HE sector.

While alignment with these Codes is not mandatory for providers based in England (institutions are measured against the UK Quality Code in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), Metanoia agrees with the CUC when it advises:

'[The Code's] adoption is a valuable source of assurance to stakeholders who need to have confidence in the governance arrangements of HEIs... The Code does not address methods for its own implementation. This is intentional, and aims to reflect the diversity of the sector and support its flexibility and autonomy.'

In practice, this means that governing bodies 'understand the various stakeholders of the institution (globally, nationally and locally) and are assured that appropriate and meaningful engagement takes place to allow stakeholder views to be considered and reflected in relevant decision-making processes.' At the Institute, academic and corporate governance mechanisms operate both appropriately independently to ensure the proper separation of academic and business decision-making and synergistically for the benefit of its students, staff and other stakeholders.

¹ Committee of University Chairs (CUC's) Higher Education Code of Governance (reviewed and republished Sept 2020): <https://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CUC-HE-Code-of-Governance-publication-final.pdf>

² Quality Assurance Agency: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/redeveloping-the-quality-code-23-24/consultation> (draft for consultation, published April 2024)

In the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024), 12 Sector-Agreed Principles are set out, supported by a series of Key Practices. Principles 1, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12 signal the importance of externality and strategic external engagement to the UK's HE sector.

These principles cover the following areas of governance and quality assurance and enhancement and guide the Institute in its approach to externality in practice:

- Principle 1 – Adopting an explicitly **strategic approach to managing quality and standards**, one that includes the effective use of external expertise, embedding this across the organisation's operations and activity;
- Principle 5 - **Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision effectively**, employing external expertise and criticality to deliver on the institute's enhancement-led and outcomes-driven approach;
- Principle 6 - Engaging in **external review and accreditation**, specifically those of the Institute's PSRB bodies, taking deliberate steps to engage and involve students, staff and external expertise in these processes;
- Principle 7 - **Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes** that are consistent with the relevant Qualifications Framework(s) and utilise external expertise;
- Principle 10 - Supporting students to achieve their potential through an **effective support structure** that scaffolds the academic, personal and professional learning journey, including through supportive professional practice outside the institution;
- Principle 11 - **Teaching, learning and assessment practice** that embeds external expertise appropriately for the Institute in its processes to ensure learners can demonstrate meeting the module- and programme-level learning outcomes and achieve the best possible academic outcomes; and
- Principle 12 - Operating **concerns, complaints and appeals processes** that meet the applicable regulatory requirements, including access the redress through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

Metanoia subscribes to and applies these principles within the contexts of a. its role and responsibilities as a collaborative partner of Middlesex University, set out in both parties' published strategies, policies, and so on, for the validated and joint provision, and b. as an institution seeking degree-awarding powers (DAPs); that is, embedding the principles and practical benefits of externality across the policies, procedures and regulations that underpin, inform and guide the Institute in the proper discharge of its responsibilities as an Approved (fee cap) provider on the Register of the Office for Students (OfS) and one seeking Full Taught DAPs.

2. Externality in Practice

The commitment to Metanoia's employment of external knowledge and expertise is signalled and applied at various points in the Institute's due diligence activity. This is to assure

stakeholders internally and externally of the value placed on externality and to indicate that the Institute meets (and can evidence meeting) the regulatory requirements of the framework that governs the HE sector in England³.

The Institute draws on and engages with external experts in the following areas of its activity:

- The **setting and maintenance of academic standards** and clinical and professional standards within the psychotherapy, counselling and counselling psychology context;
- The Institute's academic and wider **institutional governance arrangements**;
- **Curriculum development and review** processes;
- Reflective **evaluation of programmes** and of learning and teaching, including the quality of professional placements undertaken by learners / trainees;
- **Professional body engagement** and oversight;
- **Research and scholarship** activity;
- **Enterprise, innovation and knowledge transfer** activity;
- HE sector and specialist **sub-sector engagement** and the sharing / **dissemination of good and effective practice**.

Specifically, Metanoia employs and engages with externality within the following processes (and will continue to do so as an institution with degree-awarding powers):

- External appointments to (membership of) key committees within the Institute's governance structure, i.e., to the Board of Trustees, Academic Board and Education Committee;
- Each programme of study leading to a Middlesex University, Metanoia Institute or joint University-Institute award has one or more external examiners tasked with assessing whether academic standards are being maintained and the constructive alignment of the programme(s) is coherent and remains secure;
- In addition, a Central External Examiner (CEE) is charged with oversight of the Institute's assessment arrangements and processes, reporting in to Education Committee and Academic Board;
- Both external examiners and University link tutors that act as critical friends for validated provision) are appointed as members of Programme Assessment Boards (PABs);
- Appointment of subject-expert individuals to programme approval panels and reapproval panels at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including those with professional practice experience and expertise, and on (re)validation panels where academic provision is validated;
- External experts are appointed to shared validation and revalidation panels through which the dual processes of internal and external (PSRB) due diligence are conducted to scrutinise standards and quality;

³ The Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England:
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/the-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/>

- External examiners may contribute to the annual and/or periodic development of programmes, for example through the critical assessment of matters pertaining to the curriculum and assessment practice and the Institute’s arrangements for professional practice during the processes of monitoring and assessing programmes and their delivery;
- Academic staff members’ engagement with the higher education sector in a range of contexts such as professional conferences, their employment as external experts in another institution and engagement with sector- or sub-representative bodies at local, regional, national and international levels;
- As applicable, through professional body oversight of and engagement with the recruitment to, and delivery of, programmes designed to prepare students / trainees for working in the relevant professional field; and
- Advising on and participating in institutional activity relating to Metanoia continuing to meet the requirements of the OfS’s Regulatory Framework and applicable statutory requirements.

The employment and deployment of external expertise at a range of points of academic-related activity and processes at Metanoia is shown in Figure 1, below.



Figure 1: The contribution of external experts and expertise at Metanoia Institute

3. The Institutional Policy Context

Each policy document that supports the Institute's due diligence endeavours to set and secure academic standards and to maintain and enhance quality sets out how and when external expertise is drawn upon and its purpose within that specific context.

In addition, the roles of external experts and / or the drawing on of expertise in each policy and procedure document is presented to make clear the purpose and value of the arrangements; for example, the Institute's New Development, Validation and Review Process Framework document requires the identification of external reference points (Qualifications Framework level descriptors, professional standards, and so on) within the New Programme Development Proposal Form. A second example is the Review Framework for Annual and Periodic Monitoring, which highlights the role of external examiners in the range of critically evaluative review mechanisms established at the Institute as a small, specialist provider of higher education and training opportunities.

The full set of public-facing policies is made available online at:

<https://www.metanoia.ac.uk/about/policies-and-procedures/>

POLICY BACK SHEET

Section 1 - to be completed by policy proposer and forwarded to relevant Committee Secretary

Policy Title:	Externality Position Statement
Author:	Head of Regulation
Rationale: <i>Outline the purpose of the policy, and its scope e.g. credit-bearing provision</i>	The Position Statement sets out in summary form the Institute's commitment to externality, recognises the value of drawing on external expertise and critical advice and guidance and positions externality within the Metanoia context; that is, as a small, specialist provider of education and professional training for counsellors, psychotherapists, counselling psychologists, coaches, and organisational development consultants.
Consultation undertaken: <i>List all groups and/or committees where consultation was undertaken e.g. students, administration, external advisor, QSC, etc.</i>	To be confirmed
Resource implication: <i>Outline the potential financial, human and technological resource implication of the policy</i>	None in addition to the resources already required to operate the Institute's governance and QA&E arrangements referenced in this position statement effectively.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Related policies and other documents

- Institutional Strategy 2023-28
- Enterprise and Innovation Strategy
- Governance Handbook
- Review Framework for Annual and Periodic Monitoring
- Programme Approval Policy and Procedures
- Student Representation Scheme
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy
- Access and Participation Statement
- Student Support Strategy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Charter

External Reference Points

- AdvanceHE's 'Student Engagement Through Partnership' Framework (2024)⁴
- Professional Standards Framework Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education (2023)⁵
- QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Student Engagement

⁴ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/framework-student-engagement-through-partnership-0>

⁵ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/psf>