

PRESS RELEASE

**Middlesex University launches innovative new MA in the fast-growing field of
'Place Branding' for cities, regions and countries**

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The Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries at Middlesex University London is delighted to announce the launch of a new Master's degree in Place Branding. This is the first post-graduate degree globally that incorporates marketing, design, urban planning, governance, climate action, strategic planning, creative conceptualisation and problem-solving for cities, regions and countries.

The one-year full-time (2-3 years part-time) post-graduate degree will commence in September 2023 and will accept up to 15 applicants. The degree will be fully online, using a mix of synchronous and asynchronous approaches that allow for the greatest amount of flexibility for learners and professionals.

Cities, regions, and countries have, in the post-pandemic era, significantly ramped up their capacity in marketing, communications, branding, tourism, economic development and resident engagement. As places cope with increased migration, climate action mitigation and sustainability goals, shifting work patterns, and increased tourism competition, the need for trained personnel who understand the nuances of place branding strategies and implementation is growing exponentially.

This wide-ranging course will be led by a team of academics with industry experience working in cities and countries in North America, Europe, Africa and the UK. Embedded in the degree will be access to world-leading industry experts and firms, agencies, government bodies, DMOs and people working in the field from all over the world. It will encompass four core modules and a major project/dissertation. There will be an opportunity to work towards a real-world client problem or brief for credit.

Students will benefit from the unique industry partnership with Bloom Consulting, offering guest lectures, proprietary models, and unique opportunities for practical, work-based learning, including the chance to work on live briefs and real-world, place-based problems.

With further integrated support from other organisations across the sector, this degree ensures that students gain access to the leading insights, techniques, frameworks and client case studies available internationally. Channels for internships, work placements and working in local communities offer pathways to employability in this expanding field.

Graduates of this course will gain a Masters of Arts in a discipline that offers diverse employability prospects, while professionals seeking further academic training will learn transferable skills ideal for further career development, while also deepening awareness and understanding of the pressing issues facing cities, regions, countries and even neighbourhoods today.

Middlesex University is a global university with a focus on putting theory into practice; learning is about taking action and finding solutions, bringing together disciplines, sectors and cultures.

“The innovative mix of place branding theory, research, and the practices of the profession integrated into this customised curriculum will really prepare students to develop their career in a strategic, creative and fast-changing marketplace for talent.” said Programme Leader Dr. Giannina Warren.

Prior to her academic career, Dr. Warren spent nearly two decades in Toronto, Canada as a specialist in visual identity, branding, advertising and public relations in high impact sectors such as finance, energy, legal, tourism, festivals and economic development. She spent six years at Toronto City Hall, managing city branding strategies, international promotional campaigns for public cultural events, resident-engagement programmes and tourism initiatives. Her research and expertise is in the ‘professionalisation’ of place branding, and the unique knowledge, attributes, networks, creativity and character traits that are the cornerstones of the occupation.

“Places, just like products, require a brand strategy to compete in the globalised environment. Cities, regions and nations worldwide are using promotional strategies to position themselves favourably in the minds of target groups such as tourists, businesses, potential residents and foreign investors. This MA will prepare future professionals for innovative, strategic and creative work in this fast-growing field.’ Said Malcolm Allan, President of Bloom Consulting.

“At Bloom, we’ve always been passionate about advancing the ever-changing and so important world of countries, cities and regions and the perceptions that shape them,” said Jose Torres, CEO of Bloom Consulting. ‘We’re looking forward to working closely with the university to share the knowledge we’ve developed after 20 years in business and working with the future professionals in the field to ensure a high standard across the industry for years to come.”

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Applications will begin in June 2023, subject to course validation. Studies begin in late September.

Middlesex University is diverse and inclusive, where staff, students and partners collaborate to create, share and apply knowledge to change society and business for the better. Helping people access education in a flexible way, Middlesex focuses on exceptional practice-led, hands-on learning, informed by cutting-edge research. Based in London, this collaborative and supportive community has a global network of campuses with over 38,000 students from 144 countries.

Bloom Consulting is a global consulting firm specializing in Nation and City Branding and Placemaking, working for countries, regions, and cities across six continents since 2003. Bloom Consulting works for government leaders, mayors, directors of tourism bureaus, trade and investment agencies. This specialization makes Bloom Consulting one of the most advanced and globally renowned companies in the sector. In addition, Bloom Consulting is an official data partner of the World Economic Forum, and the World Bank and the European Travel Commission use Bloom Consulting data for measurement purposes.

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