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is ESG-compliant

# Annual Monitoring for Educational Oversight

The Centre for Medieval and  
Renaissance Studies

May 2025

# Annual Monitoring: desk-based analysis of The Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, May 2025

## Outcome of the desk-based analysis

1 From the annual return and documentary evidence, the monitoring team concludes that The Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (M-CMRS) is making **acceptable** progress on the implementation of their action plan. There have been no material changes in the provision since the last QAA review.

## Monitoring summary

2 The action plan recommended a review of the decision-making role of the M-CMRS Academic Board and how it relates to that of Middlebury's Dean of International Programmes. This was addressed in the summer of 2024 through an update to the Board's terms of reference, which now clarify that, while the Board's recommendations are followed, the Dean retains the right to veto. This revision, now formally embedded in the updated terms, improves clarity and accountability within the governance structure. Further discussions about the Board's scope, such as whether standing items should consistently reflect all its responsibilities, are scheduled for the summer of 2025, demonstrating a considered approach to implementing this recommendation.

3 M-CMRS has also made progress on several key priorities and areas of recognised good practice from its action plan, focusing on strengthening academic support, improving its facilities, and enhancing student engagement. One example is the introduction of required mid-term meetings in November 2024 and February 2025, which have helped to reinforce both academic and pastoral support provision. These meetings allow staff to address student concerns early, and positive feedback has led to their continuation. While optional study skills sessions saw lower attendance, they were also well-received and will remain part of the Centre's support provision.

4 Work to upgrade the Centre's audio-visual system, a long-standing issue raised by both students and the Faculty Advisory Board, was completed by December 2024, following successful funding secured earlier that year. A review in January 2025 found that no further changes were needed, representing a clear step forward in the learning environment. The Conflict Transformation Symposium was replaced by a lecture-based format, following feedback from students. Lectures held in October 2024 and March 2025 were well-received, and another one is planned for autumn 2025.

5 In addition, M-CMRS has acted on suggestions from Middlebury's Faculty Advisory Board. This includes phased repairs to St Michael's Hall, following concerns raised by the Board about the condition of the building, and particularly the condition of the Junior Common Room windows. In addition, there have been updates to policies that directly affect students, the introduction of protected research time and research funding for all academic staff. These steps reflect an ongoing commitment to enhancing both the physical and academic environment at the Centre. The agreement of a new lease for the Queen Street site in March 2025 also provides long-term security and stability for its operations.

6 Student engagement remains central to the Centre's approach. M-CMRS supports an inclusive atmosphere through informal conversations with students, regular mid-term meetings, and end-of-semester evaluations. The Junior Common Room serves as a formal mechanism for collective student representation, while the continued responsiveness of staff helps foster a culture of ongoing feedback and improvement.

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