

Kirklees College
Student Protection Plan 2018-19
UKPRN 10003189
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1. Introduction

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires higher education providers to maintain and publish a Student Protection Plan. This plan aims to protect students' interests in the event of material changes such as programme closures or changes. The plan sets out how the College will mitigate against potential risks to the quality and continuation of programmes.

The College has successfully delivered higher education programmes over a number of years and our Student Protection Plan builds on this experience and is intended to assure current and future students of the quality and continuation of their programme.

The College will have in place arrangements to protect the student interest when material changes occur. Depending on the circumstances this may include:

- The commitment to "Teach Out" programme(s) for existing students
- Offering students an alternative programme / facility / venue
- Making arrangements for affected students to change to an alternative provider at the same point in their studies
- Making full or partial refunds only where the College is unable to support continuation of studies

The College was advised in November 2017 that it was being placed under FE Commissioner intervention as a result of 'Inadequate' financial health. Since then, the College has been working proactively with the FE Commissioner team to design and implement a comprehensive recovery plan aimed at returning the College to 'Satisfactory' financial health by the end of the 2018/19 academic year. The plan has the protection of the student experience at its heart. Progress in delivering the plan has been rapid and rigorous, and the College has every confidence that 'Satisfactory' financial health will be restored by the target date.

2. Structure of the Student Protection Plan

The Student Protection Plan outlines the types of risks and explains the measures in place to mitigate their impact. The plan acknowledges that there is not one single measure that will be suitable for all students and will take into account the individual needs of all students.

Potential risks and actions to mitigate/minimise are detailed in Appendix 1.

To minimise potential risks to continuity the College operates a robust Curriculum Planning and Performance Management Process. Together these ensure that appropriate resources (including staffing) are in place to deliver the programmes, potential risks are identified and actions taken to mitigate them through the risk register.

3. Closure of programmes

Closure of programmes are rare but in such an event, the College is committed to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to complete their studies. This is facilitated through a commitment to 'Teach Out'. Teach Out refers to the phased closure of a programme to ensure that the impact upon students is minimal and that students are able to complete their studies. Should any programme enter into Teach Out, we will publish a formal agreement with our validating partner setting out our commitment to ensuring the quality of the student academic experience. There may be certain circumstances where teach out is not possible but this will only be in exceptional circumstances. In the event of this the College will support students by offering transfers to alternative programmes within the College or to alternative programmes with other providers. This is the last resort, which will be avoided if at all possible and has not previously happened at the College.

4. Maintenance of the Student Protection Plan

The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure currency and appropriateness. This will involve both staff and student consultation.

5. Communication with Students

The Student Protection Plan will be available on the website for both current and future students. It will be drawn to the attention of future students in our offer letter correspondence. Any changes to the plan will be notified via the [Kirklees College website](#) and student Virtual Learning Environment (HE general area).

Programme handbooks will refer all students to the Student Protection Plan.

In the event of any of the risks identified materialising the College will communicate with the students at the earliest opportunity. This will be no later than 5 working days of a decision being reached by the College. This will be via both verbal and written communication. Students will be signposted to our Complaints Policy and Procedure should they wish to make a complaint regarding the way the College is implementing the Student Protection Plan.

The College will liaise with affected student groups regarding mitigation measures, together with the Students' Union. Students will be able to discuss the matter on a group and/or individual basis with a named contact. Independent advice and support will be available to all students.

6. Communication with Staff

The plan will be available for staff on both the [Kirklees College website](#) and the staff intranet. Staff will be briefed about the Student Protection Plan and any subsequent changes annually.

The Student Protection Plan is referenced on both our [Course Changes and Programme Closure](#) and [Refund and Compensation policies](#).

7. Refund and Compensation Policy

The College has a [Higher Education Fees, Refund and Compensation Policy](#) which details the circumstances in which refunds and compensation will be given in the event of a programme being discontinued. Refunds and compensation are considered as a last resort and the College will do everything possible to ensure that these are not necessary.

The Kirklees College Refund and Compensation policy has made provision for:

- Refunds for students in receipt of a tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company
- Refunds for students who pay their own tuition fees
- Refunds for students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor
- Additional travel costs (for students affected by a change in the location of programme)
- A commitment to honour student bursaries

The Kirklees College Refund and Compensation policy also includes the provision of payment of compensation to cover instances such as:

- Maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study
- Tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer programme or provider

In order to meet any financial implications of our Student Protection Plan, Kirklees College intends to adopt a Student Refund and Compensation Fund in the unlikely event of this plan being invoked. This fund will be established from tuition fee income.

8. External References

This policy has been designed with consideration of the following guidance:

[Office for Students Regulatory Advice 2: Registration of current providers for 2019-2020 Higher Education course changes and closures: statement of good practice](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority- [Higher Education Consumer Law Advice for Providers and Students](#)

9. Related Policies and Documents

[Kirklees College Higher Education Terms and Conditions](#)

[Kirklees College Higher Education Course Changes and Closure Policy](#)

[Kirklees College Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)

Appendix 1 RISK LOG AFFECTING PROGRAMME CONTINUATION

Appendix 1 lists a number of risks which may affect the continuation of programmes. This list is not exhaustive but details the more probable risks and the measures taken by the College to mitigate their impact.

RISK	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigating Actions
<p>Programme Suspension/Closure High</p> <p>Enrolment to a programme is suspended, most likely due to insufficient applications</p>	Likely	Harmful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robust Curriculum Planning process 2. Robust Performance Monitoring process (PIMs) 3. Monitoring of applications during application cycle 4. Programme Viability panel and guiding principles 5. Early notification to potential applicants 6. Identification of alternative courses for applicants 7. Teach out of current students 8. Communication with current students to minimise concern 9. Course Changes and Programme Closure policy outlines consistent procedures to follow 10. Refund and Compensation policy in place <p>The College would work collaboratively with other Higher Education Institutes, Further Education Colleges and the Association of Colleges (AoC) to find a suitable alternative that allows existing students to complete their chosen programme. The College has a memorandum of understanding with nearby Calderdale and Wakefield Colleges, both of which offer similar provision.</p>
RISK	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigating Actions
<p>Major Material Changes to Programmes Medium</p> <p>Combining delivery routes / pathways within programmes</p>	Likely	Minor Harm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robust internal and external approval processes to ensure currency of programme 2. Annual Planning cycle to ensure quality and approval minor modifications (avoiding curriculum drift) 3. Changes usually implemented for future cohorts not current students. In extreme circumstances if to affect current students – would only take effect following consultation and approval by student body 4. Consultation with students

			<p>5. Early communication of planned changes to both prospective and current students (if applicable).</p> <p>6. Course Changes and Programme Closure policy outlines consistent procedures to follow</p> <p>This College has a commitment to 'teach-out'. The College would publish a formal agreement with our validating partner setting out our commitment to ensuring the quality of the student academic experience.</p> <p>Students would be allowed the opportunity to withdraw from the programme and would receive reasonable support to transfer to another programme either within the College, to a partner university or other provider. If within the College, this could take the form of additional academic support to enable successful transition to a new programme. If the transfer to another programme was at another Provider, support would include certification of credit achieved and the facilitation of admission to another Provider, including any associated travel costs associated with the admissions process.</p> <p>Although our curriculum offer may change, these occur over a long cycle and will have minimal impact on the current students concerned, or information provided to prospective students.</p>
RISK	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigating Actions
<p>Loss of key staff (temporary or permanent) High</p> <p>Loss of staff may impact on specialist delivery. Planned losses include workforce reduction or restructuring activities.</p>	Likely	Harmful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robust Curriculum Planning process ensures sufficiency of staffing 2. Seek temporary or permanent staffing replacements internally or externally 3. Provide cover from existing staffing 4. Make temporary adjustments to delivery or content (such as the College VLE)

Unplanned loss includes staff sickness and resignations			The College would be responsive to seek temporary or permanent replacements internally or externally. In all circumstances the quality of higher education provision would be achieved via internal processes (e.g. College Staff Induction) and external approval of new staff from the validating body.
RISK	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigating Actions
Withdrawal of awarding arrangements from validating organisation (Pearson) High	Possible	Extreme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kirklees College has established track record in delivering Pearson Higher Nationals 2. Kirklees College would look to establish new partnerships to establish a replacement programme(s) 3. Work with validating organisation on exit arrangements to ensure that students are not affected and are able to complete their programme. <p>The College would work to find alternative partners, we would also collaboratively with other Higher Education Institutes, Further Education Colleges and the Association of Colleges (AoC) to find a suitable alternatives that allows existing students to complete their chosen programme.</p> <p>The College has a memorandum of understanding with nearby Calderdale and Wakefield Colleges, both of which offer similar provision.</p>
RISK	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigating Actions
Unexpected Campus Closure – full or part Loss of specialist teaching facilities Medium	Unlikely	Extreme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a planned move of the HE provision to the new Higher Skills Centre, this will only impact on 4 programmes (BA final year); students have been fully informed 2. Property strategy in place to ensure that any move is well planned and involves student consultation 3. Seek alternate premises (within College or externally) 4. Make temporary adjustments to delivery or content (such as the College VLE) 5. Specific consideration of impact for the different needs, characteristics and circumstances of students.

			<p>Most equipment and facilities are generally not unique so alternatives could be found. The College has a number of campuses providing emergency alternative options if required for students. The College would also liaise with other local colleges regarding any specialist provision that would take time to replicate (e.g land based, engineering resources).</p>
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