

Annex D: Student protection plan

Provider's name: University of Brighton

Provider's UKPRN: 10000886

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Student protection plan for the period 2018-19

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students, how those risks may differ based on your students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

We have assessed a range of risks to current and potential students and these are outlined below

Institutional failure

The risk that the University of Brighton will be unable to operate is very low because our financial performance is robust with appropriate reserves and we have business continuity plans to deal with major incidents that may lead to the temporary closure of buildings or infrastructure (eg fire, technology failure).

Major incidents

The risks of major incidents disrupting services and access to sites is low. We have a range of established business continuity plans enabling it to continue to operate in the event of a major incident causing a significant but temporary disruption to its business. These include arrangements to manage individual building closure (severe weather, fire, safety) and operational risks (IT failure). The multi-site nature of the University reduces overall risk in this regard. In addition our estates and IT departments maintain a continuing audit of safety and maintenance to minimize risk and limit the extent of any potential impact.

Campus closure

The planned closure of our Hastings campus in Autumn 2019 is already subject to a range of actions to secure student continuation. We have no plans to reduce our presence on our other sites Eastbourne, Falmer (Brighton), Moulsecoomb (Brighton), City (Brighton).

There are a number of scenarios that might be likely in relation to delivering academic provision, these are outlined below

Course delivery

Individual courses within a wider subject area may close as part of normal portfolio management, reflecting changing student and subject focus and aims to ensure that all closures, along with the approval of new and replacement courses, is managed through a detailed planning and approval process which requires us to ensure that current students are able to complete their studies.

We offer courses in specialised areas, in particular at postgraduate level. The risk that we are no longer able to deliver these programmes (undergraduate, postgraduate) in the next three years is low and is subject to well-established portfolio management principles that ensure consideration of existing cohorts and the need to ensure continuity of study.

Withdrawal of an advertised course prior to admission

University courses are promoted and advertised with the expectation of minimum cohort sizes being admitted as part of ensuring a strong and relevant student experience. Where recruitment to a particular course is low the course may be withdrawn temporarily or permanently prior to the admission of a new cohort.

Course components (modules) not available:

Our courses comprise modules which are revised and updated regularly to ensure that our courses remain current and appropriate. Specialist optional modules reflect the professional expertise of staff and it is possible that staff will leave and we may need to withdraw a module. This would only affect optional modules.

Accredited courses

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes subject to external accreditation are low, but is necessarily linked to our ability to continue to meet the requirements of the external accrediting bodies. Our accredited courses are subject to periodic revalidation and review, with annual monitoring to ensure they continue to meet requirements of accreditation. The risk principally affects areas where courses deliver professional registration status (or equivalent) (e.g. teacher training, occupations allied to medicine, social work, pharmacy, medicine). The University maintains close oversight of all accreditation activity and has a substantial record of success in each of the risk areas. In an increased level of risk is identified, specific resource and action is applied to ensure that we continue to meet the external requirements. There is a strong expectation that we will continue to be able to meet the requirements of our external accrediting bodies.

Placements and work-based provision including apprenticeships

All undergraduate and many postgraduate students have the opportunity for placements or other forms of work-based learning. The University also offer apprenticeship provision. Where placements form a core part of a course (e.g. teacher training; nursing/midwifery, social work), the University has robust contractual arrangements in place to ensure that placements are available to support all registered students.

Research supervision

Our policy on postgraduate research supervision ensures that all doctoral students are allocated two supervisors to ensure that there is appropriate expertise and continuity of supervision throughout the student's period of research study

Partnership provision

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes offered by our partner college network is low-medium due to factors not wholly within the University's control, including: the financial circumstances of the academic partner, the strategic focus of the academic partner, contractual renewal of the partner arrangements. The University maintains close oversight of its partnership arrangements, both within the UK for validated and franchised provision and overseas, with rigorous approval and monitoring processes, including periodic re-approval of the partner organization, overseen by senior committees and managed by a specialist team. The University thus has good processes in place for identifying and managing risk.

2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise**Course closure:**

Where a course is recommended for closure authority to close is through the University's Portfolio Planning Committee and includes a requirement that "existing students will remain on the course they are registered on until they complete regardless of withdrawal status." (PPC03 form).

Course closure during the admissions cycle:

The University closely manages recruitment to its courses, with all admissions teams having access to live recruitment data via secure systems, ensuring that information on applications, offers and acceptances are monitored accurately and frequently. This close monitoring allows adjustments to be made to recruitment strategy to any courses where there is a risk of failing to recruit appropriate numbers. In the event that recruitment data leads to the early closure of a course approval must be gained from our Portfolio Planning Committee. All students will be notified and advised of appropriate alternative provision.

Course components (modules) not available:

Our courses comprise modules which are revised and updated regularly to ensure that our courses remain current and appropriate. Where for enhancement or other operational reason a particular module is withdrawn students are offered alternative modules appropriate to their course of study. Where it is preferable for a student to study a withdrawn module our examination boards are empowered to approve bespoke study arrangements to enable students to complete the agreed programme of study (GEAR D8).

Notifying students of changes to provision

We consult with students about potential and material changes to their course via email, Studentcentral and meetings. Changes for provision are normally required to be confirmed the academic year prior to delivery.

In rare instances where external or operational requirements lead to proposals for changes outside our established timelines, the proposal can only be approved at Pro-Vice Chancellor level and is dependent on evidence of full consultation with affected students.

Placements and work-based provision including apprenticeships

All undergraduate and many postgraduate students have the opportunity for placements or other forms of work-based learning. The University also offer apprenticeship provision. Where placements form a core part of a course (e.g. teacher training; nursing/midwifery, social work), the University has robust contractual arrangements in place to ensure that placements are available to support all registered students.

Research supervision

Our policy on postgraduate research supervision ensures that all doctoral students are allocated two supervisors to ensure that there is appropriate expertise and continuity of supervision throughout the student's period of research study. If a supervisor leaves the University mid-PhD it is possible for them to continue as an external supervisor to ensure continuity for the student. Where they cannot or not seen as suitable, a replacement will be found with the University

Partnerships:

The University is contractually committed, along with its partners, to ensure that obligations or commitments to students are fulfilled in the event of the termination of a partnership agreement.

We mitigate against the failure of partnership provision through close operational links and robust approval processes which include forward planning and financial review. Our contractual arrangements require a period of transition to enable students to complete their study. In the event that a partner advises that it is withdrawing a course they are required to:

- Cease new recruitment from a specified date
- Ensure that continuing students are able to complete their study
- Manage intermitting and repeating students within the overall timeline for teaching-out, providing bespoke tutorial support for non-available elements of provision.
- Students may also be offered the opportunity to transfer to another provider (where provision is within a consortium of colleges); to transfer their award to a new validating authority (where there is continuity of teaching but a change in validating institution); transfer to equivalent courses within the University subject to a mapping exercise of course learning outcomes, content delivered to date and student achievement profile, and appropriate operational considerations in terms of the impact on resources and cohort size.

The University runs a joint medical **Brighton and Sussex Medical School** with the University of Sussex and both Universities would work together to manage continuity of services and provision for students in the event of their being disrupted or discontinued.

3. Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

Refund Policy

The university would normally expect to teach out courses or facilitate transfer to another institution. If in the view of the university this cannot be achieved, or if other circumstances exist where a refund of academic fees is appropriate, a refund will be made in accordance with the university's Tuition Fee Policy. For students on taught courses, this will be calculated with reference to the number of academic terms that have been paid for, but unable to be provided. For students on research programmes, this will relate to the number of months of registration that have been paid for, but unable to be completed. Any refund will be paid to the primary funder, whether this is the student themselves, their sponsor or the Student Loan Company. Further details regarding the calculation of academic fees and refunds can be obtained from the university's [Tuition Fee Policy](#).

All claims for additional costs incurred from a change in the university course provision will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account the circumstances of individual students and the degree of change to which they are subject. It is the university's policy to ensure that no student is disadvantaged from a change to their location of study or course provider, where it is determined that the university is unable to fulfil its obligations under its Student Contract.

Reserves and Insurance

The university maintains an uncommitted cash-backed institutional reserve of £5 million. In addition, the university holds a number of insurances policies including Business Interruption (cover £42 million) and Profession Indemnity (£10 million). Depending on the circumstances, these would be used to fund any significant need to refund fees and additional costs.

4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan

Informing students about the Student Protection Plan:

We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students as part of our [Student Contract](#)

Reviewing the Student Protection Plan:

We will review our student protection plan in consultation with our Students' Union.

Implementation:

If we need to implement the measures in our student protection plan we will inform affected students in writing and offer meetings for discussion. We undertake also to ensure that every student has the opportunity for an individual discussion about the potential impact of any proposed course closure so that they are supported in making decisions about their study. Wherever possible our planning will ensure that students are able to complete their study with the University of Brighton.

Guidance to Students' Union

We will also work closely with our Students' Union to ensure the SU has sufficient information to provide independent support to our students.

Guidance to staff:

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by emphasising requirements that where course closures are proposed that consideration is given to the procedures for supporting current cohorts. Detailed guidance is in our published document "[Course changes - guidance on consulting and notifying current students](#)"

