

# University of Roehampton: Student Protection Plan

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The measures set out below are in addition to the protections that students have under consumer protection law and do not impinge on students' consumer rights.

## Student protection plan 2021/22 and 2022/23

***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***

### 1. Introduction

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to maintain a Student Protection Plan to protect the interests of students in the case of material change, e.g. programme changes, suspensions, closures or institutional closure.

The purpose of this Student Protection plan is to preserve the continuation and quality of study for all of the University's students whenever a risk to the continued study of students materialises.

Events which may trigger the activation of the student protection plan include (but are not limited to):

- The University is no longer able to operate or no longer intends to operate
- Loss or suspension of the University's degree awarding powers
- The loss, suspension or limitation of the University's UKVI licence
- The University loses accreditation from a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB)
- One or more of the locations at which the University delivers courses to students is no longer available or a decision is made to cease delivery at one or more locations
- The University is no longer able to deliver courses in a department or subject area
- The University is no longer able to deliver one or more programme of study
- The University is no longer able to deliver one or more modes of study
- The University is unable to deliver material components of one or more programme, particularly if there are areas of vulnerability, such as single person dependencies for teaching or supervision of research students.

### 2. Assessment of Risk

2.1 The University has undertaken an assessment of the range and level of risks to the continuation of study for our students. With reference to the University's strategic risk register, we have assessed the likelihood and impact of risks crystallising. The final risk level set out in this plan accounts for the effectiveness of control measures the University has in place to manage the risk. The risk levels

set out in this section are reflective of the University's corporate risk management framework, which is overseen by the Audit Committee on behalf of the University Council. In practice, some risk scores may vary depending on the specific circumstances, including the programme and mode of study and the specific needs of different groups of students, including international students studying with a Tier 4 visa and students with protected characteristics. The University will ensure that any mitigations are tailored and adjusted to the specific needs of any students or groups of students affected by an issue that requires activation of the Student Protection Plan.

- 2.2 Based on the financial performance of the University, the likelihood that the University will cease to operate is **low**. The evidence used to assess this risk is the financial performance of the University as per the financial statements, the University risk register, business continuity plan, and the key performance indicators that are reported to the University Council on an annual basis. The University has taken robust and proactive measures to mitigate the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and in February 2022 approved a new Financial Sustainability Strategy to support its long-term financial sustainability. The level of risk of the University closing and thus to the continuation of study due of students is accordingly **low**.
- 2.3 The risk to the continuation of study due to the University losing its degree awarding powers is **low**. The University has in place quality assurance processes and procedures which ensure adherence to the B Conditions of Registration with the Office for Students. The governance arrangements ensure oversight of quality assurance through the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee which is a sub-committee of Senate.
- 2.4 The risk to the continuation of study due to the University losing or having limits placed on its UKVI license is **moderate**. The University's license is renewed annually every November. The University has in place policies and procedures to ensure compliance with its sponsorship duties, these procedures are reviewed and updated annually by the Academic Registrar. The University Executive Board regularly monitors its key compliance statistics to ensure it will meet the threshold levels required for renewal of its license. Data relating to compliance statistics for the past 3 years confirms that the University has met the thresholds for UKVI compliance.
- 2.5 The University has a main campus in Roehampton comprised of a site on Roehampton Lane and a site on Danebury Avenue. The University also delivers a small number of programmes at a campus in Croydon. The likelihood of the University closing any of its campuses is **low**. The main campus is currently fully occupied and enrolment and recruitment data suggests this will continue to be the case. A majority of the University estate is leasehold, granted on terms of between 999 years and 125 years. The University has measures in place to ensure the loan covenants are monitored on a quarterly basis. The site in Croydon is underpinned by a five-year partnership agreement with Croydon College, which includes a subsequent teach out period should the partnership, and therefore our use of the site, come to an end. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the University also demonstrated that it could continue to teach in the event that a force majeure event made the campus suddenly inaccessible. Taking the above into account, the risk to the continuation of study due to campus closure is **low**.

- 2.6 The University has number of collaborative arrangements where franchise or validated programmes are delivered by partner organisations at sites in the UK and abroad. These agreements typically have a five-year initial duration with options to extend or renew. As part of its regular review processes, the University or the partner may decide not to renew or extend a partnership at the end of the initial term. The risk to the continuation of study is **moderate** because all partnership contracts include provision to support the teach out of programmes over a reasonable period of time should the partnership end. For the partnerships that are currently closing the partner institutions and the University have committed to teaching out current students and teaching out arrangements are in place or are in the process of being confirmed.
- 2.7 If the University takes the strategic decision to close a subject area, it is normal practice and the preferred option to teach out continuing students on the programme for which they have enrolled. Therefore, the risk to the continuation of study of closing a subject area is **moderate**.
- 2.8 The University continually reviews and updates its academic offer, this can involve the suspension, closure and replacement of courses. Hence the likelihood of planned programme closures is high and the potential impact on students is high. However, when the University takes the strategic decision to close a programme, it is normal practice and the preferred option to teach out continuing students on the programme for which they have enrolled, therefore the risk to the continuation of study is **low**.
- 2.9 It is unlikely that the University will close one or more modes of study, including part-time, blended learning or online learning. Although the potential impact on students would be high, there are sufficient control measures in place to ensure that the risk to the continuation of study is **low**. The majority of the University provision is delivered full-time. Programmes which are delivered part-time often share delivery with the full-time course which ensures viability.
- 2.10 There is risk that the University is unable to deliver material components of one or more programmes. There are certain instances this may occur, i.e. departure of key staff, damage to buildings or equipment. The risk to the continuation of study in these cases is **moderate**.

***The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise***

**3. Measures to mitigate Risk**

- 3.1 For areas the University has identified as moderate or high-risk the following measures have been put in place to preserve the quality and continuation of study. In each case the University will provide students with full details of the changes and advice, guidance and information to enable students to make well-informed decisions about the choices available to them.
- 3.2 **Closure of programmes** - the University is committed to ensuring students are able to complete the programmes of study for which they have enrolled. The teaching out of programmes will be the preferred option should the University decide or have to suspend or close a programme. The University will endeavour to put in place appropriate teach out arrangements, but in appropriate circumstances may consider alternative options. These options will include:

- The University will offer students the option to transfer to an alternative programme offered by the University provided that the student meets the relevant entry criteria and any other programme requirements, including those imposed by any professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB).
- The University will support students to transfer to other providers. This support will include:
  - the identification of providers who offer a similar or equivalent course and meet the particular needs of the student cohort (e.g. mode of study, travelling distance etc.)
  - direct liaison with other providers to support the smooth transition of students to the new provider
  - provision of course information and certification to support credit transfer arrangements
  - Consideration of reasonable compensation under the [Student Fee Payment and Enrolment Regulations](#).
- If a suitable alternative course either at the University or other suitable provider cannot be found, the University will consider a refund of fees and reasonable compensation as outlined in [Student Fee Payment and Enrolment Regulations](#)

**3.3 The loss, suspension or limitation of the University's UKVI licence - the University will offer the following options to students:**

- The University will support students to transfer to other providers. This support will include
  - the identification of providers who offer a similar or equivalent course and meet the particular needs of the student cohort (e.g. mode of study, travelling distance etc.)
  - direct liaison with other providers to support the smooth transition of students to the new provider
  - provision of course information and certification to support credit transfer arrangements
  - Consideration of reasonable compensation under the refund and compensation policy
- If a suitable alternative programme at a suitable provider cannot be found, the University will consider a refund of fees and reasonable compensation as outlined in the [Student Fee Payment and Enrolment Regulations](#)

**3.4 Closure of collaborative partnerships - the University is committed to ensuring that students studying through partnership arrangements are able to complete their programme of study. Contracts with partner institutions include provision for the teaching out of existing students. In instances where it is decided to close a partnership the following arrangements will be put in place:**

- The University and partner organisation will agree the date of the final intake of students.
- The University and partner organisation will agree a teach out plan, which will include a schedule of the delivery of modules on the programme, this will ensure that all exiting students have the appropriate opportunity to complete their programmes including resit opportunities. In instances where the delivery partner is moving to a new validating body, the University will provide course information and certification to support students who wish to transfer.
- Students are informed in a timely manner of the closure of the partnership and provided with details of the teach out arrangements. Students are

also provided with details of how to access advice and guidance. Refunds and reasonable compensation will be considered where appropriate.

- Arrangements are put in place to monitor student progression through the programme to ensure that students receive the appropriate advice and information during the remainder of their studies.

### 3.5 **The University is unable to deliver material components of one or more programme**

- The University will take all reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of being unable to deliver a material component of a taught course. These may include arranging additional staffing, the hire or purchase of equipment, relocation and/or rescheduling of teaching. Should the University not be able to deliver a material component of a programme, affected students may be offered a modified version of the course or the opportunity to move to another course.
- If a suitable alternative taught course at the University is not available, the University will support students to transfer to other providers as outlined in 3.1 above. If a suitable alternative course either at the University or other suitable provider cannot be found, the University will consider a refund of fees and reasonable compensation as outlined in [Student Fee Payment and Enrolment Regulations](#)
- In cases where the University is no longer able to provide supervision to Research Degree students due to the departure of key staff, the University will if appropriate make alternative arrangements for supervision. In instances where this is not appropriate or possible due to the nature of the research the University may appoint an external supervisor or support the student to transfer to another University to complete their programme.
- In those cases where a research student is unable to complete their programme at the University, the University will consider a refund of fees and reasonable compensation as outlined in [Student Fee Payment and Enrolment Regulations](#)

#### ***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***

The University supplies the students with a copy of its [Student Fee Payment and Enrolment Regulations](#) each year.

Refunds are awarded when a student withdraws from a programme depending on the liability dates. The dates are published in the regulations above. The regulations also include a section entitled 'Refunds and Compensation'. If in the event that continuation of study cannot be preserved or if otherwise reasonable in the circumstances, the University will consider an appropriate refund (which may include the refund of deposits paid where applicable) and reasonable compensation may be awarded. Any such compensation may take account of the following factors as appropriate and relevant in the circumstances:

- Refund of tuition fees
- Refund of accommodation costs (for the remainder of the contract if accommodation is no longer required)
- Loss of maintenance costs

- Travel costs
- Reimbursement of tuition fees to sponsors/Student Finance England
- Other reasonable associated costs.

Any claims made for compensation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will also take into consideration the mitigations the University has put in place.

With regards to how compensations and refunds will be funded, the University has sufficient reserves in place as well as the appropriate Professional Indemnity, Public Liability and Business Interruption cover in place depending on the nature of the compensation claim.

### ***Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan***

We will publish our student protection plan when it is approved by the OfS. The University Executive Board will review the Student Protection Plan annually, or more frequently if necessary, and will ensure that an appropriate student representative is consulted on any proposed amendments.

Should the student protection plan need to be activated, the University will take all reasonable steps to contact affected students and provide them with appropriate information, support and guidance in a timely manner.

The University will write to all affected students with the following information:

- Why the Student Protection Plan is being implemented
- Implications for the students' programme of study
- The options available to the student
- Arrangements for accessing support and guidance
- Where to get more information
- Details of meetings with staff to discuss issues
- Who to contact to get independent advice (the University will liaise with the Student Union)

The University will also take appropriate steps to ensure that the information available to prospective students is updated to reflect the closure of courses. The University will write to applicants and offer holders with the following information:

- Why the Student Protection Plan is being implemented
- Implications for the applicant's planned programme of study
- The options available to the applicant
- Arrangements for accessing support and guidance
- Where to get more information

Complaints about how the University has implemented its Student Protection Plan will be considered under the University Student Complaints Policy and Procedure, details of which are available [here](#).