

## Annex D: Template for a student protection plan

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### Student protection plan for the period 2017/18

***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 universities' 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 or suspension of the university's Tier 4 licence
- The university loses professional accreditation from a regulatory body
- One or more of the locations at which the University delivers courses to students is no longer available
- 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

The university has undertaken an assessment of the range and level of risks to the continuation of study for our students. Using the university risk assessment template we have assessed the likelihood and impact of risks materialising. The final risk level is based on a score which takes into account the effectiveness of control measures in place to manage the risk.

- 2.1 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 reported to the University Council on an annual basis. HEFCE annual providers review for 2016-17 showed the university was deemed to be “not at financial risk”. The risk to the continuation of study due to the university closing is **low**.
- 2.2
- 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 UK Quality Code. The governance arrangements ensure oversight of quality assurance through the Learning Teaching and Quality Committee which is a subcommittee of Senate. Over the last 2 years the university has successfully completed its annual provider review.
- 2.4 The risk to the continuation of study due to the university losing its Tier 4 licence is **moderate**. The university's licence 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 compliance officer. The university regularly monitors its key compliance statistics to ensure it will meet the threshold levels required for renewal of its licence. Data relating to compliance statistics for the past 3 years confirms that the University has met the thresholds for Tier 4 compliance.
- 2.5 The University has a main campus in Roehampton. The likelihood of the university closing any part of the campus site is low. The main campus 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 recently undertaken a large capital development programme and as a result of the program has borrowing of £89 million. The University has measures in place to ensure the loan covenants are monitored on a quarterly basis. 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. The University has made the strategic decision to close some of these partnerships. The risk to the continuation of study is **moderate** because all partnership contracts include provision to support the teach out of programmes should the partnership end. For the partnerships that are currently closing both 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 The risk of closing a subject area is **low**. There are currently no plans to close subject areas, the university remains committed to offering a breadth of subject disciplines across the university. Annual business planning and budget setting processes review student numbers, programmes on offer in each department (where subject areas are located) and the financial position of each department. These processes identify any actions which may be required to maintain the sustainability of each subject area.
- 2.8 The university continually reviews and updates its academic offer, this does 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, 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. Other than its partnership with Laureate Online the university has very limited online or distance learning provision.

- 2.10 There is risk that the university is unable to deliver material components of one or more programme. There are certain instances this may occur, i.e. unforeseen 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**

For areas the University has identified as moderate or high risk the following measures have been put in place to preserve the continuation of study.

- 3.1 **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 for any unforeseen reason (strategic, financial, regulatory) have to suspend or close a programme. Only in circumstances in which the university is unable to teach out will alternative options be considered. These options will include:

- The university will offer students the option to transfer to an alternative programme offered by the University.
- 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 compensation under the refund and compensation policy
- 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 compensation as outlined in Student Fee Payment and Enrolment Regulations

- 3.2 **The loss or suspension of the university's Tier 4 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 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 compensation as outlined in Student Fee Payment and Enrolment Regulations

**3.3 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 all 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 of the closure of the partnership and provided with details of the teaching out arrangements. Students are also provided with details of how to access advice and guidance
- 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.

**3.4 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 the hiring of additional staff, 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 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 allocate a new supervisor. 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 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, <http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/globalassets/documents/finance/student-fee-regulations-2017-18.pdf>

Refunds are awarded when a student withdraws from a programme depending on the liability dates. The dates are published in the regulations. The regulations also include a section titled refunds and compensation. If in the event that continuation of study cannot be preserved compensation may be awarded. Any such compensation may take account of the following factors:-

1. Refund of tuition fees
2. Refund of accommodation costs (for the remainder of the contract if accommodation is no longer required)
3. Loss of maintenance costs
4. travel costs
5. Reimbursement of tuition fees to sponsors/Student Finance England
6. 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 the 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. A working group, including student representatives, will be created to review the student protection plan annually. Any proposed changes to the plan will be approved by Senate.

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 individually, with the following information:

- Reason why the student protection plan is being implemented
- Implications for the students' planned 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, on a one to one basis and collectively
- 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 all applicants, with the following information:

- Reason why the student protection plan is being implemented
- Implications for the applicants' planned programme of study
- The options available to the applicant
- Arrangements for accessing support and guidance
- Where to get more information