

Student Protection Plan For the period 2018-19

The City of Liverpool College

The City of Liverpool College is committed to delivering a high quality learning experience to all our students. As part of this, we proactively consider and mitigate against risks to the quality and continuation of study for our students, from strategic to operational risks.

This student protection plan provides potential and current HE students at the College with an overview of potential risks and the safeguards in place to protect the quality and continuation of study for our HE students.

Within this document, you will find:

- An **assessment** of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, how those risks may differ based on the students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will occur;
- The measures that the College has put in place to **mitigate** those risks that we consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise ('medium' or 'high' likelihood);
- Information about the policy the College has in place to **refund** tuition fees and other relevant costs to our HE students and to **provide compensation** where necessary in the unlikely event that the College is no longer able to preserve continuation of study;
- Information about how the College will **communicate** with students about this student protection plan.

Assessment & Mitigation of Risk

The risks identified to the quality and continuation of study for our students are outlined at Appendix 1, together with an assessment of the likelihood that these risks will crystallise; the impact on different groups of learners; and, where the likelihood of the risk crystallising has been assessed as 'medium' or higher, additional information on the measures put in place to manage this risk.

Tuition Fees, Course Cancellation & Refunds for HE Students

The College will maintain adequate cash reserves and supporting finance facilities to provide refunds and compensation for those students for whom we have identified an increased risk of non-continuation of study.

In the unlikely event that the College is no longer able to preserve continuation of study, the College's commitment to students as they relate to tuition fees, other relevant costs and compensation, are outlined within the Tuition Fees, Course Cancellation & Refund Policy for HE Programmes. This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's HE Terms & Conditions. Both documents are reviewed annually and published on the College's website in line with the College's commitment to supporting our potential and continuing students to make informed decisions.

How will this plan be shared?

The College will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students by publishing this plan on the college web site, and include links to this as part of our communication with applicants and continuing students ahead of enrolment on their future course/next level of study.

All staff with responsibility for and services to our HE students will be made aware of our student protection plan and where it can be found on the College website. Staff will be aware of the implications and undertakings within this plan and the need to have due regard to the student protection plan when engaging in relevant activities e.g. proposing changes to course content and delivery. We will ensure that all College policies, processes and documents relating to course changes and/or closure make clear reference to this plan and our commitments to our HE students.

How will this plan be reviewed and updated?

The HE Strategy Group will review this student protection plan at a minimum annually taking into account lessons learned, emerging risks and best practice across the sector, as well as feedback and guidance from the Office for Students. Our current students will be involved through the capture of feedback from student representatives at Board of Study meetings in order to ensure that their experience and needs are reflected.

How will students be communicated with if affected by these risks?

If the College needs to implement the measures in our student protection plan, we will write to all affected applicants and/or enrolled students to inform them that we are invoking our student protection plan and what this means for them as an individual. Depending on the nature of the risk, we may also:

- contact affected students by telephone;
- publish a statement on our website and other online channels;
- consult with the Students' Union as to the most appropriate way forward.

Should the student protection plan be invoked for any reason, all affected applicants and/or enrolled students will be given a named contact and regular updates will be provided via the most appropriate communication channel in the event of an ongoing situation.

Where can I find advice and support?

If any of the risks identified in this plan take place, we undertake to offer applicants and/or enrolled students suitable and appropriate advice and support. The College's Careers, Advice and Guidance team is available to provide impartial advice relating to future options for study, or for advice in relation to a specific HE programme you may prefer to contact the HE office at HEoffice@liv-coll.ac.uk. The Students' Union is a valuable source of advice and support to the College's student body.

Who can I contact for more information?

All general queries regarding this document should be directed to The City of Liverpool College's HE office at HEoffice@liv-coll.ac.uk. For specific enquiries relating to the implementation of this plan, please use the named contact assigned to you as part of that process.

Our Compliments, Comments or Complaints Policy can be found on our website should you wish to submit a comment or complaint on the way in which you have been affected under this plan or any specific decisions made.

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

Risk to the continuation of study	Risk assessment	How those risks may differ based on the HE students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances	Likelihood that those risks will occur
<p>The City of Liverpool College as a whole is unable to operate.</p>	<p>This risk is very low as the College’s financial health is satisfactory as defined and validated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency and the College is supported by a number of different income streams, largely government funded. Current forward planning indicates that financial health will improve to good. The Technical and Further Education Act (2017) also introduced a special administration regime which would protect the interests of learners at an insolvent college in the extremely unlikely event that the College became unable to operate as a whole due to insolvency.</p> <p>In addition, the College operates a Business Continuity Plan which covers contingency arrangements for disasters such as fire, flood, pandemic etc.</p>	<p>This risk would affect all HE students regardless of individual students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances.</p>	<p><i>Very low</i></p>

Risk to the continuation of study	Risk assessment	How those risks may differ based on the HE students' needs, characteristics and circumstances	Likelihood that those risks will occur
<p>The College suffers a significant interruption or damage to IT infrastructure and services.</p>	<p>This risk is low as the College's IT systems are deemed robust and secure with appropriate training given to staff around maintaining the security of our IT systems and appropriate firewalls, antivirus and other safeguards in place. Any significant changes to the IT estate are planned significantly in advance and scheduled to take place during 'off-peak' periods e.g. during the holiday period / avoiding the peaks in the College's student recruitment cycle.</p> <p>In the event of a significant unplanned adverse event, the College's Business Continuity Plan would be initiated which covers disaster recovery of this kind.</p>	<p>This risk would affect all HE students regardless of individual students' needs, characteristics and circumstances.</p> <p>Additional consideration would need to be given where student support needs are dependent on technology (e.g. specialist software) and also in instances where the College identifies those students in need of additional learning support via its management information systems.</p>	<p><i>Low</i></p>

Risk to the continuation of study	Risk assessment	How those risks may differ based on the HE students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances	Likelihood that those risks will occur
<p>The College is no longer able to deliver courses from any one of our campus sites.</p>	<p>This risk is low as the College has no significant building works planned over the next 18 months, and the condition of our estate is good (95% Category A-C as per the Education & Skills Funding Agency building conditions categorisation).</p> <p>The College recognises the risk relating to circumstances beyond its control such as damage caused by fire or flood and would address these under its Business Continuity Plan.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that the College is forced to close any one of our campus sites due to circumstances beyond our control, the College will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students by, for example, delivering affected programmes at another College site within the city centre, or seeking alternative accommodation with local partners. The College will seek to advise students on affected programmes with a minimum of seven days’ notice where the closure or relocation is planned.</p>	<p>This risk would affect all HE students whose programme is delivered from the affected site.</p> <p>Specific consideration would be needed for students with support needs. The College’s estate is wholly DDA compliant and the College would need to ensure any alternative facilities from which provision was delivered were also DDA compliant and that all reasonable adjustments were made for students with specific support needs.</p>	<p><i>Low</i></p>

Risk to the continuation of study	Risk assessment	How those risks may differ based on the HE students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances	Likelihood that those risks will occur
<p>The College’s validating partners remove or withhold accreditation in the next three years.</p>	<p>This risk is low as validating partners have a long-term commitment to supporting collaboration with the College. In the event of this happening with one or two partners, the College would seek alternative collaborative arrangements. The College has successfully found alternative collaborative partners in recent years when existing partnerships came to an end. There is also a long-term strategic plan for the College to apply for degree awarding powers.</p>	<p>The College’s HE provision is all currently validated by partners. Should the College be successful in achieving degree awarding powers, this risk will be limited to those students on programmes validated by partners.</p> <p>Subject to the above, this risk would affect all HE students regardless of individual students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances.</p>	<p><i>Low</i></p>
<p>The College is no longer able to deliver programmes in highly specialised areas due to College losing or failing to attract specialised staff to deliver the courses.</p>	<p>This risk is low as the College is a good employer and has a good track record in securing specialist staff to deliver HE courses. The College’s HE offer is agreed a minimum of twelve months in advance of delivery, which enables robust planning around staff and other resources. In addition, the College works closely with a number of recruitment agencies which mitigates against the likelihood that this risk will crystallise in year.</p>	<p>This risk would affect all HE students whose course of study falls under the affected specialised areas, regardless of individual students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances.</p>	<p><i>Low</i></p>

Risk to the continuation of study	Risk assessment	How those risks may differ based on the HE students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances	Likelihood that those risks will occur
<p>The College may not be able to provide adequate support to students with identified characteristics: learning difficulties and disabilities; in care/care leavers; and, with mental health support needs.</p>	<p>This risk is low as the College has dedicated and specialist support in place for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, and works closely with various local support agencies and assessment centres to coordinate support for students in receipt of Disability Student Allowance (DSA). The HEFCE grant is used to source appropriate support for these students.</p>	<p>This risk would specifically affect students with disabilities or learning difficulties.</p>	<p><i>Low</i></p>
	<p>This risk is low. Students in care or who are care leavers have priority access to the HE hardship fund and weekly pastoral support, funded through the HEFCE / OfS grant.</p>	<p>This risk would specifically affect students who are in care or care leavers.</p>	<p><i>Low</i></p>
	<p>This risk is low. The College has its own dedicated, in-house team of counsellors and works well with local partners to secure additional specialist support for its students. Despite a significant increase in the number of students with mental health issues, the College expects to offer timely support to its students; this risk largely relates to the potential impact of delays in referral and waiting periods and treatment outside of the College.</p>	<p>This risk would specifically affect students with mental health support needs.</p>	<p><i>Low</i></p>

Risk to the continuation of study	Risk assessment	How those risks may differ based on the HE students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances	Likelihood that those risks will occur
<p>The College is not in a position to offer advertised HE programmes if there are only a small (insufficient) number of applicants or insufficient number of students progressing onto the next level of study.</p>	<p>This risk is considered medium. The College’s offer is distinct from its nearest competitors and our direct student recruitment has grown in recent years; however, we are conscious of changes in the way other HE providers are recruiting students in the wake of uncertainty over international markets, which may affect our own student intake. The financial viability of courses is dependent on student recruitment.</p> <p>The College works closely with its partners and as a member of the North West Regional Forum (NWRf) of HE in FE and has in the past, under the same circumstances, identified solutions and offered alternative provision with university partners and other local HE providers to accommodate College students.</p>	<p>This risk would affect all potential and current HE students applying to the affected course of study, regardless of individual students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances.</p>	<p><i>Medium</i></p>

Risk to the continuation of study	Risk assessment	How those risks may differ based on the HE students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances	Likelihood that those risks will occur
	<p><i>Mitigation:</i></p> <p>If the College is not in a position to offer advertised HE programmes due to only a small (insufficient) number of applicants or insufficient number of students progressing onto the next level of study, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give all due consideration as to running the course with smaller numbers via alternative delivery models e.g. via a stronger emphasis on blended learning, prior to the decision to withdraw the course being made; • ensure that the course is removed from the UCAS database and College website; • contact all applicants and/or continuing students directly to advise them of the decision taken not to run the affected course, giving a clear explanation of the reasons for course closure and outlining next steps available to those affected; • offer all applicants and/or continuing students access to information, advice and guidance by the College’s dedicated Careers, Advice & Guidance team in order to support informed decision-making on the part of the student; • where an applicant has accepted an offer with the College or is a continuing student, facilitate their transfer to another suitable programme of study within the College or another HE provider where practicably possible in order to preserve continuation of study; • take any further appropriate steps in line with the College’s HE Terms and Conditions and Tuition Fee, Course Cancellation & Refund Policy for HE Programmes dependent on individual circumstance. <p>The College undertakes to review the viability of HE courses on an annual basis and subject to circumstances outside its control will not discontinue any HE course of study during the academic year, preserving the student’s ability to seek alternative provision as appropriate. Students on affected courses will be given a minimum of seven days’ notice of course cancellation (relative to the published start date of the course).</p>		