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**Person Responsible:** Vice Principal  
Curriculum, Standards and Student Experience

## COURSE CLOSURE POLICY

**Equality Impact Assessment Status:**

**Date of EIA: DRAFT DOCUMENT**

**Approved by: SLT**

**Approval Date: DRAFT**

**Related Documents:**

The College is committed to helping to ensure students achieve the best possible academic outcomes from their studies. The College is also committed to providing the programmes of study as set out in its documentation. However, occasionally events may occur which mean that unforeseen changes effect programmes.

These processes articulate Coventry College's procedures in such circumstances for closing a programme.

### 1. Introduction

This policy sets out the College's procedures for closing, suspending or changing any programme of study. It is designed to reflect the Statement of Good Practice adopted by HEFCE, UUK, Guild HE, NUS in October 2015. It is also designed to meet the requirements for the CMA Student Protection Plan.

### 2. Closure and Suspension

**This policy may be triggered for the following potential reasons:**

- course, department, location or campus closure
- the discontinuation of a subject or discipline
- deregistration or suspension of registration (where suspensions puts continuity of study at risk) or loss of Degree Awarding Powers
- a provider exiting the market completely (intentionally or otherwise)
- a provider exiting a particular section of the market, such as part time or distance learning

2.1. The College, due to circumstances, may have to close and remove a programme of study from its offer. Closure of a programme, at undergraduate level, means that the College will cease to recognise the programme as one for which a student may be registered.

2.2. Suspension of a programme of study is defined by a fixed timeframe in which the programme will not be delivered.

2.3. The Faculty / Curriculum Area may not close or suspend a programme without College approval because of the implications for the contractual relationship between current and prospective students and the College.

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- 2.4. A request to close or suspend a programme must be made by the Head of Faculty in which that programme is located. In the case of joint programmes that span more than one Faculty, the relevant Faculty must consult on the closure or suspension. The Faculty should approve the proposal in line with their curriculum plans. The Head of Faculty is required to make a business case to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who will make the final decision.
- 2.5. A request to suspend or remove a programme should be made by the Head of Faculty and then submitted to the SLT, on the approved proforma and shall be accompanied by the following information;
- Market rationale
  - Strategic and financial implications
  - Impact, if any, on arrangements with partner institutions
  - Impact on current and prospective students
  - Impact on existing or proposed programmes
  - Impact on relationships with sponsors and employers
  - The expected impact on staff and resources
- 2.6. The proforma shall also confirm that consultation will take place with academic staff affected by the request.
- 2.7. Where there are any expected changes to staff/staffing structure consultation with Human Resource department must be sought.
- 2.8. The proforma shall also confirm that consultation will take place with current and prospective students affected by the request
- 2.9. On receipt of a request to close or suspend a programme, SLT may agree one of the following:
- Decline the request
  - Approve the request without condition(s)
  - Approve the request with condition(s)

### **3. Why is this plan necessary?**

As part of the requirements both for initial and ongoing registration, the College is required to have in place plans both for the protection of students and formal processes to demonstrate how decisions to close or suspend a programme are made.

#### **Programme Closure Prior to Registration**

- 3.1. The College must draw the closure of a programme to the attention of applicants as soon as possible and advise them of their right to seek entry to another providers' programme for which they may be qualified or to withdraw their application and seek entry to another institution.
- 3.2. Where the applicant has already accepted an offer, they shall be furnished with all necessary information, advice and guidance by the College to help them make an informed decision on their future course of action.
- 3.3. In the event of a programme closure or suspension all communications with applicants will be undertaken via the Head of Higher Education
- 3.4. Applicants who have accepted offers should not be contacted until the closure or suspension process has been fully completed.
- 3.5. Applicants thus affected should then be informed of their options to transfer their applications to another programme within the College or to another institution.

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3.6. UCAS should be notified when the closure or suspension request has been finalised by SLT.

#### **4. Programme closure whilst students are enrolled (Student Protection)**

The potential actions that the College may undertake, take into account the diversity of students and their needs, parity of course content or any unintended financial consequences.

4. Where a programme is being closed to new entrants only, the College's proposed arrangements for students currently registered on the programme (including those whose registration is suspended but have not yet completed the programme) must comply with the following:
  - 4.2 The College will endeavour, where possible to ensure that all current students are enabled to complete a programme to be closed (taught out). If it is not possible for a programme to be taught out, the College will:
    - offer appropriate alternative courses within the College.
    - confirm when and how the alternative courses will be offered
    - assist the students to transfer to other providers where appropriate, including transfer of credit and academic progress
  - 4.3 Current students should be informed of their options. The College will provide all necessary information, advice, guidance and support to facilitate students in deciding which option to follow.
  - 4.4 The standard of academic provision and the student experience must, as far as is reasonably practicable, be maintained throughout their period of registration. In particular, the conditions must be maintained to enable the stated learning outcomes in the relevant Programme Specification to be achievable by students who are being 'taught out'.
  - 4.5 To ensure the student experience and to support the students, support staff, together with the Quality Department will monitor their experience.

#### **5. Timing**

- 5.1. Wherever possible, requests to close or suspend programmes should be made in a timely manner.
- 5.2. Since preparation for the production of a printed prospectus takes place sometime ahead of publication, the process of curriculum planning should identify those programmes which are likely to be closed prior to the commencement of any prospectus production process and the annual College website information updates.
- 5.3. As a result of unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. loss of specialist staff) it may be necessary to close or suspend a programme within a foreshortened timescale. In such circumstances, the student interest is paramount and full consultation should be undertaken with all affected students and their nominated representatives.
- 5.4. In order to ensure full compliance with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and related regulations, students should be given the most complete information, advice and guidance to enable them to make well-informed decisions in the event of programme closure or suspension.

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## 6. When to inform students and applicants of other changes

Coventry College will ensure students receive information, both on the website, VLE and in the College's Higher Education Terms and Conditions. This confirms how the college may make changes to their programmes and modules and that any major changes deemed to affect the students' studies will be subject to notification to or consultation with the students.

To assist colleagues as to when and how students and/or applicants should be notified on changes, details are given in the different cases below.

### 6.1 Revalidation/Review of a programme

Current students, together, where possible, with recent graduates, should form part of the consultation and planning before the revalidation/review takes place.

Evidence of consultation/discussion with students/graduates is required (in the form of correspondence/notes or minutes from meetings) as part of the appendices to accompany the revalidation documents.

Should the curriculum area wish to bring in the new version of the programme, once revalidated, for existing students, a draft letter must also be included for approval by the revalidation panel, to be sent to current students, seeking their agreement to the transfer to the new version of the programme.

NB: As the student contract is deemed to be with the individual student, if a student does not wish to transfer, then the original programme and cohort must continue to function.

### 6.2 Removal of Core or optional modules

Current students should be consulted about a proposed change to core or optional modules occur. Meetings may, if the timing fits, be used to discuss a proposed change with current students.

- i. Where an optional module is no longer to be offered to students, they should be informed in writing with a rationale for the removal and details of any alternative modules. If, in exceptional circumstances only, the module is to be removed during the academic year (that is a term 2 module removed during term 1 or term 3 module changed in terms 1 or 2) students should be informed as soon as possible. The draft letter must be presented as part of the process.

As enrolment for each year of a student's programme is deemed to be a 'new contract', the students will need to be informed that the change will take place for the coming academic year.

- ii. Where a core module is no longer to be offered to students, they must be informed in writing with both a rationale for the removal, what will replace the module and confirmation that the change will not alter the overall content and subject path of their programme. If, in exceptional circumstances, the module is to be removed during the academic year (that is a term 2 module removed during term 1 or term 3 module changed in terms 1 or 2) students must be informed as soon as possible. The draft letter must be presented as part of the process.

As enrolment for each year of a student's programme is deemed to be a 'new' contract, students will need to be informed that the change will take place for the coming academic year, (so level 4 students will need to be informed of any changes to levels 5 or 6, level 5 students to any changes to level 6 and applicants of changes to any/all levels).

It will only be in exceptional circumstances that an in year changes will be permitted and will be subject to the agreement of the Head of Higher Education.

### 6.3 Changes to Assessment

Current students should be consulted about a proposed change before the curriculum planning process if possible. Meeting may, if the timing is appropriate, be used to discuss a proposed change with current students.

Any changes to assessment, to type of assessment, length or weighting must be notified to students in writing, with a rationale for the change. As enrolment for each year of a student's programme is deemed to be a new contract, students will need to be informed that the change will take place for the coming academic year (so all applicants will need to be informed, all level 4 students informed of changes to levels 5 and 6, and level 5 students informed of changes to level 6).

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#### 6.4 Additional modules to be added to a programme

Where new, additional modules are to be added to the programme, a letter informing students of the additions should be provided with the MAP documentation.

Students do not need to be formally consulted, but should be informed as soon as possible, as the change is in the students' favour.

#### 6.5 New Core module/optional module made Core

Current students should be consulted about a proposed change as soon as possible. A meeting may, if the timing is appropriate, be used to discuss a proposed change with current students.

Should a new core module be added, or an existing optional module be made core, students must be consulted and provided with a rationale for the change. The change cannot be implemented until the next academic year of the programme. As enrolment for each year of a student's programme is deemed to be a new contract, students will need to be informed that the change will take place for the coming academic year (so all applicants will need to be informed, all level 4 students informed of changes to levels 5 and 6, and level 5 students informed of changes to level 6).

#### 6.6 Minor change to content

If there is a minor change to the content of a module (such as further resources or potential topics being added, or a slight shift in focus to keep the module up to date), it is not necessary to inform the students in writing.

However, a clear rationale should be provided to the Head of Higher Education who, if they believe the change to be major rather than minor, will require that students are consulted, as for changes to assessments.

Where the changes are confirmed as minor, it is good practice to have discussed the proposed change with students and to inform them via VLE of the change.

#### 6.7 Change in the title of a module

If there is a change to the title of a module, with a clear rationale for the change, this must be notified to the students to prevent possible confusion, but students do not need to be consulted. It is good practice however, to discuss the proposed change with students at a suitable meeting.

Current students should be consulted about a proposed change as soon as possible at a suitable meeting.

### 7. Partner Provision

7.1 Where the College is not the owning party (i.e. the students are registered with validating partner University's), but the delivery is undertaken by the college. The College should still apply the points as detailed above in sections 3, 4 and 5 in partnership with the validating University.:

7.2 To ensure the student experience and to support the students, the designated curriculum staff, together with the validating university will monitor their experience.

7.3 Where the College delivers the programme only, the validating partner is expected to hold their own Student Protection Plan, although the College will seek, where possible, to assist any students affected in seeking a suitable new programme or transfer.

### 8. Closure of Programmes at other Providers

Coventry College will also seek to assist any students seeking a transfer into the College's programmes from another provider where a programme is being closed or suspended and will consider the academic progress and credit gained by any students seeking to transfer to the College for this reason.

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