

Annex D: Template for a student protection plan

Provider's name: Coventry College

Provider's UKPRN:10003010

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Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan:

Student protection plan for the period 2019-20

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

Coventry College (to be referred to as the College throughout) has merged in the previous 15 months and as a result has brought together considerable successful experience in delivering higher education that has been strengthened by the newly shared physical and human resource.

This plan has been created to confirm that there are appropriate measures in place to support students at Coventry College should circumstances occur to ensure there is continuation of their studies by taking measures to mitigate risk.

All of Coventry Colleges' students on validated courses with Pearson or courses through Warwick University are covered by this student protection plan (SPP published on approval by the OfS). Where there may be procedural differences for Warwick University course students' these are highlighted in the following plan and are discussed at induction. Academic staff or the Head of Higher Education (HE) can also advise and support students.

The plan consists of four main areas:

1. Risks that the College has identified for your courses/studies
2. Risks considered to be more likely and measures taken to mitigate against those risks
3. Refunds and compensation policies if your course is discontinued
4. How we make you aware of this plan.

1: Loss of validation and/or sub contractual delivery partners due to non-degree awarding powers:

The majority of the courses delivered at the College are through Pearson, Edexcel, with one course sub contracted through Warwick University. The College works with Pearson, Edexcel for both Further and Higher Education (HE) courses and have a good track record of recruitment and success. The College has annual visits by Excel to support HE with the Quality lead and nominee ensuring that quality procedures are consistently followed. Edexcel consistently report positively on the Colleges courses, and staff complete both programme and College analytical reviews, with Quality improvement plans completed for all courses and monitored by course teams, managers and Quality.

Warwick University courses are validated for six years until 2021. The University work closely with the College as a collaborative partner with the ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards and quality lying with the Senate of Warwick University. As a result, there are stringent reviews of academic standards and the quality of the student experience through annual reviews and visits from the University as stipulated in the contract and their own SPP which rates its partnerships as low risk.

If concerns about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment were raised, the internal quality assurance processes would continue to work closely with our partner Higher

Education Institute (HEI) and awarding bodies to address quality enhancement, in-year, before students' complete courses to ensure achievement of their qualifications.

We commit to a 'teach out' policy if courses are withdrawn or closed and work with our partners contractually to ensure this. The College has developed a formal closure process to give more support and guidance for staff and clarity to students, this is to be introduced for the 2019-2020 academic year <https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/student-guidance/advice-and-guidance/>.

If a termination of contract by Warwick University was invoked by either the College or the University, the contract between them agrees that 'All parties shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that all students registered on the course are able to complete it'. This also applies to courses validated through Pearson Edexcel.

The newly merged College is also further building relationships with other Colleges and HEIs in the West Midlands to work in collaboration on a range of key issues and discussions on alternative provision.

As a result, there is a low risk that any of the HE qualifications could not be delivered successfully.

Loss of accreditation from regulatory bodies:

The College is supported by external partners and bodies to assure the efficacy of the HE provisions and through engagement with updates through their dedicated centre websites. Where regulatory body accreditation or reaccreditation is required, timely internal quality processes are used to review and achieve this. The risk of loss of accreditation is low.

Financial viability of courses:

The risk to course closure or continuation exists in situations where it is not deemed financially viable due to recruitment of very small cohorts and due to consideration of the student experience. This is more pertinent to the provision, and in the context of our students, as our offer is based on smaller numbers to help and support our cohorts who are often from non-traditional HE backgrounds. This is mitigated through substantial early planning of courses which ensures their continuation for both full and part-time. Non-completion of delivery at module level is unlikely. The risk is mitigated by flexibility in staffing and in our ability to deliver from wider teams to ensure student completion. We can draw upon a pool of staff in the College and create further e-learning resources to ensure that delivery is always completed. As a result, this is considered to be a medium level of risk.

Teaching staff:

Staff changes are inevitable and accepted as staff progress in their profession. This can particularly affect students from lower attainment backgrounds more profusely as they feel the impact of structural changes and instability more than their peers from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Due to the small provision and as a result lower levels of staffing this is considered to be a high level of risk.

Permanent Campus closure/ site closure:

The College has two campuses and are extensively utilised. If one of the campuses were deemed redundant through rationalisation of provision, stringent planning and impact assessment would ensure the relocation of courses were achieved before new students enrol. For continuing students, an impact assessment would be undertaken, and compensation applied if necessary. The consequences of a move of campuses is minimal due to proximity of both, within 2 miles of each other. If a campus closure were to occur and courses were relocated, we would ensure that HE provision was unaffected through the transfer of resources. In these cases, students would be notified in writing as early as possible to inform them of the impact on their personal arrangements for study and be referred to the College's fees policy that will include the refund and compensation information. <https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/student-guidance/he-course-funding/> .

As a result, this is considered highly unlikely in terms of risk rating.

Building closure or unavailability:

Adverse weather or unexpected infrastructural issues could prevent opening of teaching rooms to students. The impact is mitigated by ensuring students are notified in advance of any disruption (text and on the website) and have access to e-learning resources where possible or secure an alternative venue if deemed imperative to their learning. The risk rating of this occurring is extremely low.

Interruption to IT infrastructure:

This is considered to be a medium level of risk for brief periods due to the variability of local and national networks in the College. Where possible, action will ensure students are not adversely impacted if producing assessed work or they are allowed mitigation to ensure this is considered if producing or submitting assessment.

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

The following four risks have been identified to mitigate or minimise if they occur:

Loss of validation and/or sub contractual delivery partners due to non-degree awarding powers:

The College is committed to ensuring the quality of their provision and continues to work closely with Pearson Edexcel and actively engage with Pearson regarding staff updates, new policies and procedures, and appropriate staff training to ensure implementation of any changes. External verification visits consistently feedback the success of courses, where actions are needed these are implemented promptly by the course teams with the Head of HE and Quality monitoring these.

The College also actively engages with Warwick University implementing any changes and recommendations as identified from visits from the University and from course teams review of their provision incorporating student feedback.

The commitment to teach out courses in all contracts ensures continuation of study. Warwick University also has a SPP on their website <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/spp/>.

In the unlikely event that validation was withdrawn the College would work with the awarding body and other providers to ensure continuation of studies for students.

Financial viability of courses:

The College continually monitors and reviews the number of potential applicants at regular points and as a result can monitor the financial viability of its HE courses. Those courses that are anticipated to be at risk are identified to mitigate the effects on potential new students. If a course cannot run due to low numbers applicants are offered alternative courses or support to research alternative providers within the United Kingdom. The quality process in place will minimise the disruption to our students who have already applied and give them advice as early on as possible. Where students are mid-way through a course that is then closed or has low continuers, this process also ensures they complete as part of our commitment to 'teach out' <https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/student-guidance/advice-and-guidance/>

Teaching staff:

If a key member(s) of teaching staff leaves the College, other suitably qualified and experienced staff will be utilised to provide temporary cover, until a new individual is appointed, or we can utilise the bank of flexible part time staff. Teaching cover and recruitment agencies can also provide teaching staff cover where it is not possible to source internally specifically in specialist subject areas. In the most severe circumstances, course content can be accessed through the student intranet to ensure a course continues and students' learning is not adversely affected. Due to the small cohorts on programmes and the strong relationships and trust in teaching staff there is flexibility to support students, particularly those from lesser academic entry points to ensure that changes to staff does not adversely affect their potential to succeed.

Interruption to IT infrastructure:

Students will not be adversely affected if the IT has failed to allow them to complete assessments or to submit work electronically. This will be included in the in the HE handbook for students about submitting assessed work through Turnitin for updates in 2019-20 in the event of the failure of the IT system to allow timely submissions of assessments.

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

The College does not currently have a formal policy in place for HE refunds and compensation. In respect of successful student complaints, compensation is considered and awarded on a case-by-case basis, without prejudice and in accordance with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's remedies and redress leaflet (November 2016). The College will ensure that a formal policy is in place by 1st September 2019 as part of the updated Fees Policy.

If the College is unable to preserve continuation of study, then refunds will be made available when all other options have been exhausted to the satisfaction of individual students.

Reasonable compensation will be clarified and available in circumstances where the student experience is severely affected if the College were unable to offer continuation of study. This would include consideration of additional travel, bursaries entitled to, maintenance and other relevant costs associated with starting a HE course. This also applies in the unfortunate circumstance that students need to transfer to another provider due to course closure.

Cash reserves to cover fee refunds (and subsequently compensation) are sufficient as all courses operate with small numbers of students. As a result, students can be assured that refunds are guaranteed should continuation of study be impossible.

<https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/student-guidance/he-course-funding/>

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

The College will publish the Student Protection Plan to current and future students incorporating this into the Student handbook and publishing the plan on the College website. This will take place following approval by the OfS.

For staff, awareness of the implications of the Student Protection Plan will be discussed at team briefings before the academic year 2019-20 and published on the staff intranet. All course leaders will ensure their teaching staff are aware of this and that new staff are inducted in this process. Additionally, all staff who are involved in the application and

admissions process will be made aware of this through their line managers briefings. The Terms and Conditions signed by students at enrolment will also provide details of this.

<https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/student-guidance/he-course-funding/>

The Student Protection Plan will be reviewed annually by managers, staff and Student Ambassadors of HE with relevant changes being adopted where needed from this feedback.

If a course needs to be discontinued, we will consult with students collectively or individually to ensure they can be placed on a suitably alternative, 'replacement' course as soon as possible and have consulted with them to create a fair and balanced course closure policy

<https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/student-guidance/advice-and-guidance/>.

Students will be informed in writing of all options available to them in a timely manner and any refunds will be considered for those not satisfied by alternative arrangements, who may choose not to continue study with the College.

Independent advice for students can be found at our Students' Union, through curriculum teaching and support teams and with Careers Advice members. Students will be informed of these matters when they enrol as part of their induction

<https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/student-guidance/he-course-funding/>

Students can also access the complaints policy and procedure

<https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/student-guidance/advice-and-guidance/> if they are dissatisfied in terms of the SPP not being fully implemented. Students are encouraged in the first instance to try to resolve issues informally with the Head of HE. For Warwick University course students the informal process should initially be followed as per the College complaints procedure, if unresolved the Warwick University procedure will then apply <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/complaintsandfeedback/>