

Provider's name: Wiltshire College and University Centre

Provider's UKPRN: 10007527

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Student protection plan for the period 2023/2024

The Student Protection Plan (SPP) outlines Wiltshire College and University Centre's commitment to ensuring the protection and support of its students, particularly in unforeseen circumstances that might impact their studies. This plan is designed to guarantee that students receive quality education, adequate support services, and clear communication during any disruptions.

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

We have assessed that the following risks to continuity of study could occur in the event that unforeseen circumstances arise causing the University Centre to make unexpected changes:

- we decide or are forced to discontinue a specific course;
- we decide or are forced to close the location (building or campus) in which the course is taught;
- we can no longer provide the course for any other reason, for example:
 - we cease operating through no choice of our own;
 - we lose the right to provide the course or qualification.

We believe that the overall likelihood that the above risks to the continuation of a course are low. The University Centre currently has no plans, for example, to cease teaching a particular subject altogether.

The risk that the University Centre as a whole is unable to operate is considered extremely unlikely, this is demonstrated by our strong relationships with local employers and community, long standing history meeting the needs of the local economy, and our involvement in substantial county-wide development projects.

Unforeseen alterations to courses, concerns related to buildings (whether they are of a permanent or temporary nature), or the potential lack of suitable supervision are potential challenges that might emerge. The University Centre's student protection strategy involves implementing measures to address these issues and guarantee students' continuous academic engagement and achievement.

Our approach is guided by the following principles:

- Following our HE Course Closure, Suspension and Substantial Change Policy
- Ensuring transparency and open communication with students in the event of any potential disruptions to the continuity of their studies, promptly consulting with them.

- Taking reasonable measures to uphold the seamless progression of students' education if a course or subject area needs to be discontinued, or if there's a necessity to close a facility such as a departmental building or campus where courses are conducted.
- Considering students' perspectives, when appropriate, before making decisions about significant alterations to a course, its discontinuation, or closure of a location.
- Factoring in the needs of all our students and assessing the potential repercussions of proposed changes on them, while also considering appropriate protective measures.
- Notifying the Office for Students (OfS) of any changes that could warrant a review of the plan or its contained measures.

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

In the face of potential closures of courses, departments, or campuses, the University Centre will adopt strategies which mitigate the impact on students, ensuring their uninterrupted continuation for their chosen course of study. The University Centre's HE Course Closure, Suspension and Substantial Change Policy requires the involvement of students in the decision-making process for all types of course changes through established channels like the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) and HE representation at the Student Alliance.

The University Centre's HE Student Agreement describes how the institution addresses situations where changes to course offerings are necessary, either before or after enrolment. The University Centre has the prerogative to implement specific alterations to course content, delivery methods, and teaching approaches. Such modifications could be driven by developments in the field, improvements in pedagogy or assessment practices, external moderation, staffing changes, resource limitations.

It is recognised that certain changes, especially minor ones, may not require student protection measures. Nonetheless, where suitable, the guiding principles outlined in this plan will be taken into account. The University Centre also retains the authority to make other changes within the scope of its HE Student Agreement.

The University Centre also maintains the authority to implement additional changes in alignment with our HE Student Agreement, which encompasses substantial modifications to courses more than three months prior to enrolment. In such instances, individuals holding offers will receive notification of the alteration and will be given the option to withdraw from the course. This is in accordance with our HE Course Closure, Suspension, and Substantial Change policy. In any event, the University Centre will consult with applicants and existing students.

Should any of the identified risks materialise, the University Centre will take one or more of the following actions to ensure the continuity of students' studies:

Whenever feasible, arrangements will be made to ensure the completion of studies for current students when a voluntary decision has been made to close or suspend a course. The University Centre will ensure that the ongoing course of study can be successfully concluded by all students currently enrolled, even though the course itself will be closed and recruitment will cease. This process is sometimes defined as 'teaching out' a course.

When appropriate, efforts will be made to secure an alternative location where studies can continue. When no other viable course alternatives exist, the University Centre will assist students in transferring to another provider, enabling them to pursue their studies or research at a new institution, in accordance with our HE Student Transfer Policy.

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 University Centre will explore all mitigating actions which can support students to successfully complete their courses. Usually, the University Centre would opt for a 'teach out' approach as in the HE Course Closure, Suspension and Substantial Change policy. In the exceptional event of a course or campus closure, the University Centre would facilitate the transfer of impacted students to another course or campus.

The University Centre anticipates the risk of course closure to be low. With the exception of specific cases in which refunds might be granted to suspended or withdrawn students, the University Centre does not have a dedicated policy for refunds and compensation. Instead, this is explained in our HE Fees Policy with clear guidance as to how refunds are managed.

When there is a recognised legal obligation to do so, such as instances where the University Centre determines it has violated its contractual liabilities, compensation will be considered and approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

In the event of a course being cancelled prior to commencement by the College a full refund will be given. Full details of course closure processes can be found in the HE Course Closure, Suspension and Substantial Change Policy. All students will be given a 14 day 'cooling off' period following their enrolment taking place and fees being paid unless the course commences within those 14 days. Refunds for franchised HE provision will be in accordance the refund policies of the franchising university.

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

Our Student Protection Plan is a summary of rules and processes we already share with students and staff. We will continuously review our student communication processes as part of our HE quality assurance activity:

- We will publish the approved plan on our website.
- We will continue to provide the main plan points to applicants when we offer them a place to study as part of our HE Student Agreement.
- We will discuss aspects of the plan in staff training sessions and in HE Quality and Performance, and HE Strategy Meetings.
- The plan will be part of the yearly review of policy documents for applicants and students. This ensures accuracy, currency, and clarity.
- Our existing student engagement and representation activity ensures we include student voice when we design our processes which inform the plan.
- Our HE Student Governor will review the plan along with our Senior Leadership Team prior to publishing.
- Our University Centre supports students to succeed academically and develop key employability skills for their chosen career path. There is a range of support on offer which is detailed clearly throughout the admissions, enrolment and induction process.
- Should students need further advice and guidance or to give comments or suggestions, or make a complaint, this information can be found on our website information pages.

For more information regarding Student Protection Plans, please visit: [Student protection plans - Office for Students](#)