Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: King's College London

Provider's UKPRN: 10003645

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Student protection plan for the period 2025/26

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 Student Sponsor 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 institution 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 and the Office for students on an annual basis. Our financial position is published annually: Our finances | About | King's College

London (kcl.ac.uk)

2.2 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 OfS standards. The governance arrangements ensure oversight of quality assurance thorough a range of department, faculty and University level committees CEC- College Education Committee (and its imminent successor) which reports directly to the Academic Board.

2.3 The risk to the continuation of study due to the University losing its student sponsor 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 (BCA- Basic Compliance Assessment scores) for the past 3 years confirms that the University performs well within the thresholds set by the UKVI for student sponsor compliance.

2.4 The University has multiple campus sites across London. The likelihood of the University closing any of these campus sites is low. The campuses are currently fully occupied and enrolment and recruitment data suggests this will continue to be the case.

2.5 The University has a number of collaborative arrangements where programmes are delivered with partner organisations at sites in the UK and abroad. The University also has a number of contracts for the delivery of public sector training. 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 final intake dates have been agreed**.**

2.6 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 or faculty (where subject areas are located) and the financial position of each department, school or faculty. These processes identify any actions which may be required to maintain the sustainability of each subject area.

2.7 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 would be the result of low applicant demand for the programme and 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. The University also operates a programme post-launch review policy, every 3 years for standard undergraduate degrees, which ensures a full degree teaching cycle has occurred prior to suspension or closure decisions being taken.

2.8 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. The University has some online and/or distance learning provision delivered internally with third party contracts in place for marketing and recruitment and access to some e-learning platforms.

2.9 There is low risk that the University is unable to deliver material components[1] of one or more programme of study. 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 and the university has continuity plans to ensure alternative arrangements are made to ensure continuity of student study.

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 the Terms and Conditions**.**

3.2 The loss or suspension of the University's student sponsor 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 polic

[1] Please refer to the Government CMA guidance clause 4.11 on 'Material Course Information' for further information Consumer law advice for higher education providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)

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 Terms and Conditions.

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 our Terms and Conditions
- 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. All Research students have at least two supervisors allocated from the outset. 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 our Terms and Conditions

3.5 Information on refund policies if continuation of study is not possible

The University supplies the students with a copy of its Terms and Conditions each year – https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policyhub/terms-conditions-students

Refunds are awarded when a student withdraws from a programme depending on the liability dates. The dates are published in the terms and conditions. The terms and conditions 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.

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

We will publish our student protection plan on the University website. A link to the student protection plan is also given in our terms and conditions supplied to offer holders. A board is in place to review the student protection plan as necessary. Any proposed changes to the plan will be approved by Academic Board and Council.

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