

Provider's name: Provider's name: **New College, Swindon**

Provider's UKPRN: **10004579**

Legal address: **New College Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 1AH**

Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan:

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Student Protection Plan for the period 2018/19

- 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**

As an Institution that has a substantial 15 year record of delivering Higher Education, this Student Protection Plan supports the statement that the overall range of risk of discontinuation with its Higher Education Provision is low. Many areas support this statement such as our strong financial performance (year end 2017 shows a surplus of £132,000), which is classed as in outstanding financial health by the EFSA. Robust governance, strong partnerships as well as [business continuity plans](#) which are in place to minimise the impact of any on campus incident.

Additional Information

- . The institution also has good governance which is paramount to mitigating risk in relation to our provision. The college supports this through:
- . A robust and effective Corporate Governance Framework that ensures regulatory compliance
- . An Academic Board committee that governs policies and structure ensuring good Academic Governance and practice
- . Risk management processes including: Risk register; Business continuity plan and Risk committee, monitored by Governors and a robust internal and external audit function
- . Financial planning and forecasting with institutional growth across both FE and HE which spreads risk of under-performance in one particular area
- . Effective management at Programme level with Policy and Procedures to ensure programmes are delivered as described

This plan covers all students that are taught on and off campus through franchised and non-franchised routes as well as subcontracted provision.

Types of Risk covered by this Student Protection Plan.

Discontinuation and course closure:

Because of:

Lose of Franchise

Cease to operate through no choice of our own

Low numbers make a course financially unviable

Campus Closure:

Long term disruption to study due to fire, civil unrest or the like.

Off Site Campus Closure:

Long term disruption to study due to fire, civil unrest or the like.

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

If for any reason this student protection plan is triggered, there are measures, listed below that would take place in order for you to continue your study.

1. Teaching Out:

In the first instance the college would teach out your award. This means that the course you have enrolled and started upon will be taught until the end. Where arrangements are in place to teach out Awards, the college has a commitment to ensure that study can be completed by students that are registered and enrolled with us at that time. This applies to students taught on site, franchised and off main campus.

2. Facilitate transfer to another provider:

If this plan was triggered, we would work with our other providers, using our reciprocal arrangements to transfer study to an alternative suitable location regional arrangements are in place with local FE Colleges; Swindon College and Wiltshire College, to help with teaching space and supporting students if required.

3. Support in providing information for alternative provider:

The college will ensure that affected students are also either provided with, or signposted to, independent advice as appropriate. Such advice could be from a collaborative partner institution, a Students Union, the Pearson awarding body or a legal representative.

The college assesses that the above risks contained within the Student Protection Plan are low and the chances of these risks actually crystallising is low.

However below are procedures that have been put in place in order to mitigate against such risk.

Mitigation:

The risk that components of a course and or course closure would happen or not be delivered is low because;

- The HE provision at New College has been designed to be taught by integrated and flexible teams of academic staff and there is additional support from the HEI Partners.
- Arrangements are in place to cover emergency delivery with the academic partners (University of Gloucester, Bath Spa University).
- Reciprocal regional arrangements are in place with local FE Colleges; Swindon College and Wiltshire College, to help with teaching space and supporting students if required.

- All HE students have mobile learning technology provided as part of their programme and teaching resources are cloud based so can be accessed in a “virtual classroom environment” should the need arise.
- The [Study Agreement and Refund Policy](#) (section 4) clearly states In the event of any programme being discontinued or suspended for any reason, the College will undertake all reasonable actions to provide a suitable alternative.

Risk is assessed by the New College internal audit process as well as being part of the Academic Board. The College HE provision was inspected in May 2015 and the outcome was detailed in the [report](#). In summary the auditors reported;

In our opinion the control framework for the area under review, as currently laid down and operated, provides **substantial assurance** that risks material to the achievement of the organisation’s objectives for this area are adequately managed and controlled

Lose of Franchise

The partnerships within our franchised provision are robust and very strong. Work towards strategic alliance with our partners is being sought, which demonstrates this strength of collaboration as well as the joint HE provision that has been in place for approx. 15 years with Bath Spa University. New course developments are also underway with BSU and University of Gloucestershire, which supports and underlines the strength of partnership.

We therefore consider that the risk of loss of Franchise is Low.

Cease to operate through no choice of our own

In the unusual event of ceasing to operate through no fault of our own, the provision would be transferred to our partner institutions where reciprocal arrangements are in place. Certain course elements can also be delivered remotely, all HE students are given a personal device around enrolment to support this.

Ceasing to operate through no choice of our own: the risk is Low.

Low numbers make the course financially unviable

If a course was to become financially unviable, the college has a commitment to run out the course with the existing student group. Contained within this document is an exemplar table of courses that have completed and run out with small cohorts.

The risk of course closure due to low numbers is Low.

Campus Closure:

Long term disruption to study due to fire, civil unrest or the like.

Reciprocal arrangements are in place to deliver courses at other premises. Additional premises would be hired in cases where this was needed. This scenario is included within the college's business continuity plan.

Campus Closure: the risk is Low.

Off Site Campus Closure:

Long term disruption to study due to fire, civil unrest or the like.

If for any reason a situation arises due to the above at our sub-contracted provision, which is based at another site, then additional premises would be hired to run out the courses. Additional support would be offered to students in the form of support with online teaching materials, and resources.

Off Site Campus Closure: the risk is Low.

Additional Supporting Information:

New College Swindon has an established history spanning 15 years of providing robust Higher Education with quality student experience and a high achievement rate. This history coupled with significant financial backup, established resources and dedicated teaching staff provides New College with a strong view of being able to continue in its HE provision and avoiding a situation of Non-continuation within its HE provision.

Therefore this scenario is considered to be very low risk at New College Swindon.

The table below contains historical data, which illustrates that the risk of course closure is very low. This evidence demonstrates that the current provision evidenced since 2013 continues to run despite some courses having small cohorts.

Number of Active Learners by Calendar Year	Year						Grand Total
	1315	1416	1517	1618	1719	1820	
Foundation Degree Cyber Security and Computing						10	10
Foundation Degree in Person Centred Healthcare Practice (UOG)				13			13
Foundation Degree in Person Centred Healthcare Practice (UOG) Higher App					11		11

HNC Art & Design (Textiles) PT						1	1
HNC Textiles PT	10	1					11
HND Art & Design (Textiles) FT		4		8		5	17
HND Art & Design (Textiles) PT			6	2			8
HND Business - (Year 1)						17	17
HND Business (Year 2)					10		10
HND Computing Full Time	18						18
HND Creative Media (Film & TV Production) FT		10	10	8			28
HND Early Years FT	22						22
HND Early Years FT					12		12
HND Early Years FT (Yr 2 of 2)		30	14				44
HND Health and Social Care FT	24	20					44
HND Health and Social Care FT				9	4		13
HND Media Make-Up (Production Arts) (FT)					18	12	30
HND Pearson BTEC Level 5 in Creative Media Production FT						9	9
HND Uniformed Public Services FT	46	52	28	12		5	143
L4 Found. Degree Full time Early Years			8	18	8		34
Grand Total	24	116	97	88	103	67	495

The newly commissioned (March 2019) Academic Board ensures that there is good Governance of mitigating risk. The Board designates a key framework which ensures regulatory compliance whilst having overall responsibility for the strategy for the Higher Education provision and its future growth whilst handling academic governance and business continuity.

Additionally financial risk prevention is minimised through Annual Budget Forecasting cycle at SMT level and at College wide level which is subject to corporation scrutiny and approval. This Board addresses and predicts budgets, forecasts and student numbers college wide. Responsibilities of the group extend to the financial planning and forecasting with institutional growth across both FE and HE which spreads risk of under-performance in any one particular area.

There is a commitment that supports students if for any reason courses close that their course would run out. Our financial standing supports this. The College runs a suite of Higher National Diplomas, as well as franchised Foundation Degree provision. If the unlikely position of course closure came into risk, alternative arrangements for courses that run within and outside of

franchise areas will be offered as alternatives. For example students studying on the HND Health and Social Care could transfer to the Foundation Degree Health and Social Care and vice versa. Students will be supported with the options using our student support services, subject area academics and managers.

In the unlikely event of course closure a meeting would be convened at CEO and Principalship level, with the affected students. This meeting would notify the students of the situation, and the options for continuing study. This information would also be made available to them, in numerous forms which include, in writing, the college VLE and corporation website.

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

College Compensation Procedures in specific areas covered by the Student Protection Plan

A specific course closes but the college is able teach out the provision

Normally the College will not refund or any part of the tuition fees if arrangements are made to run out the course that has been started

Students needing to be transferred to another location due to campus closure outside of usual college control

The College would not normally refund in full or in part if for any reason students need to be transferred to another provider. If the new provider fee's are higher than the current fees paid, the difference would be refunded back to the affected students.

The College would provide compensation costs in relation to additional travel if the above scenario crystallises. The College would also support and assist in public transport arrangements for the affected cohort. Where appropriate the student group may be compensated where additional accommodation may need to be provided.

The students will always be treated fairly and in the unlikely event of any course closure, the reassurance of teaching the course out until the end is in place. If however for any reason this cannot happen the students would be compensated. Where appropriate this could include course refund and compensation for out of pocket expenses.

The college will always aim to provide a similar level of refund and or compensation to affected students. The college will take into account individual students specific situations, depending on personal circumstances. Documented evidence from the student maybe asked to be provided in order for the appropriate level of refund and or compensation to be administered.

Student Finance

If for any reason awards cease to be delivered, the tuition fee loan would be paid back to the student, except where there has been a sponsor or the fees have been paid for by the student loan company. In this instance, the appropriate fees would be returned to these organisations.

Additionally the college has a commitment to honour student bursaries.

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

This Student Protection Plan aims to be fair, transparent, and accessible to all students. To support this the Plan will be published on the Corporation's website, its HE VLE area and linked from the student learning agreement. Each student has a copy of this learning agreement at enrolment and will be made aware of the policies. We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications and importance of this SSP via monthly Award Leader Forums.

In the unlikely event of any of the above risks coming to fruition and this Student Protection Plan being implemented these steps would be taken:

A meeting would be convened at CEO and Principalship level, with the affected students. This meeting would notify the students of the situation, and the options for continuing study. The corporation aims to notify students no later than 1 month before any relevant changes are to be made. Typically, we would aim to give a full term's notice. If students do not agree with a major change we make to the course, they will be entitled to terminate the course in accordance with the *Terms and Conditions of Enrolment*, and may be entitled to an appropriate refund of the fees paid to us plus compensation.

The information to students would be made available in numerous forms, these forms are:

1. At the above mentioned meeting (Minutes)
2. Confirmation of changes in writing
3. Confirmation of changes via email
4. The HE VLE
5. The corporation website

In the unlikely event the college were to lose a franchise partner we would make immediate announcements as above, and convene consultation meetings with students through our student support services and award leaders. As mentioned, the college would first always seek to 'teach-out' programmes. However, other arrangements to ensure the continuation of studies for all students through transfers to the collaborative partner institution or other alternate providers would be offered. Where appropriate financial arrangements would be made according to the [College's Refunds & Compensation Policy](#).

If measures within our student protection plan need to be implemented we will offer advice, guidance and support to students via the College's Student Welfare Office on an individual basis, and collectively as appropriate by convening an emergency meeting of the *Student/Staff Liaison Committee*.

The college will ensure that affected students are also either provided with, or signposted to, independent advice as appropriate. Such advice could be from a collaborative partner institution, a Students Union, the Pearson awarding body or a legal representative.

Complaints about the implementation of any of the changes through this plan should be made via the *College's Student Complaints Procedure*.

The college will ensure that affected students are also either provided with, or signposted to, independent advice as appropriate. Such advice could be from a collaborative partner institution, a Students Union, the Pearson awarding body or a legal representative.