

Annex D: Template for a student protection plan

Provider's name: Loughborough College Group

Provider's UKPRN: 10004112

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Student protection plan for the period [2025/26]

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

Loughborough College is a multiple campus Further Education College comprising four individual campuses: Loughborough College, Brooksby College, Stephenson College and Ignite Campus, Melton. The group delivers Higher Education through a number of validating agreements with partner HEIs. The assessment of risks for non-continuation for students are as follows;

The risk that the provider as a whole is unable to operate due to financial performance is very low because we have a strong track record of 'good' rating with the ESFA and although, as part of the merger process, there is a planned and managed expectation that the group will temporarily enter 'requires improvement', we are predicted to remain above minimum thresholds moving forward.

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes in highly specialised areas in the next three years is medium because we have demonstrated that we are able to maintain a stable staffing structure. The risk that we are no longer able to deliver material components of our courses is low because we design our modules to be taught by integrated teams of academic staff. However, unplanned loss of staff is largely out of our control and is a realistic possibility at any given time.

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver a programme due to low recruitment and therefore rendering the programme not viable is low because many of our programmes have elements that infill into other programmes, meaning our cost base remains efficient.

The risk that a validating institution no longer chooses to validate the programmes that we deliver is low because we have a long-standing relationship with no cause for concern. The College enjoys a Silver TEF award (Gold for Student Experience), and has a record of compliance over many years.

The risk that the College loses its Tier 4 licence for international students is low because we have robust systems in place to ensure compliance and have demonstrated this over a number of years without cause for concern.

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

In the unlikely event that the College Group is forced to close, we have agreements in place with our validating institutions that those students studying on such programmes would transfer to the HEI provider. For those students studying HND programmes, the College Group will work with the network of Further Education Colleges in the region to ensure a suitable place is available.'

In the unlikely event that the College Group loses a large number of staff at short notice and in the same subject area, (meaning that the College Group is unable to run a particular programme) the College Group has, in the past, been able to recruit staff readily, often at short notice from a large pool of PhD students at partner universities. This resource has enabled the College Group to recruit in areas requiring high specialism and we see no reason why this route should diminish. The College Group does not offer any post graduate provision where subject specialism would be a higher risk, undergraduate provision is likely to present less of a risk in this area with staffing available in higher volume. The College Group has also, employed staff to deliver on a short-term basis through employment agencies, as a measure of last resort. The loss of support functions would be managed by utilising support from other departments across the group in the short term. Curriculum design will continue to be scrutinised to ensure maximum utilisation and integration of modules and staff across programmes to ensure there is sufficient cover across specialisms. In rare cases more drastic action may need to be taken such as material/ module changes within programmes which will be communicated to students and applicants appropriately.

In the unlikely event that a course is required to be closed due to low student numbers, the College Group is committed to teach out all students already enrolled on the programme. We will review all courses annually to ensure the Group's provision still meets the needs of students and the College community. In the unlikely event that a course is closed following such review, the College Group will commit to teaching out all enrolled students. For applicants to courses that have to be closed, we will make every effort to facilitate and support individual students to find an alternative course within the Group or with another provider.

In the unlikely event that a validating institution withdraws from the partnership, the agreements that we have in place allow a notice period to enable the College Group to teach out all existing students.

In the unlikely event that the College Group has its Tier 4 licence removed, we will take the following actions; For minor/medium breaches we would 'teach out' existing students and offer advice and guidance to applicants and work with partner HEIs and local Colleges to find suitable alternatives for them. This would also be the case for existing students should a major breach occur.

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 group has a refund policy included within its Fees Policy, which is available to students and staff via the website.

<https://files.lboro.dev/policies/MI-P022%20Course%20Fee%20and%20Fee%20Remission%20Policy%202024-25%20Final.pdf>

The College Group does not currently have a formal policy in place for 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 Group considers refunds and compensation to be a remedy of last resort and is committed to working and communicating with students in a timely manner, so that refunds and compensation are unnecessary.

In the unlikely event that compensation is payable to students, the College Group has had reserves / sufficient funds available.. The College Group also invests in initiatives to assist the support and retention of students therefore reducing risk in this area.

Should a course closure result in transfer of a student to a neighbouring institution, the College Group will communicate with both the student and partner College to ensure that this transition is as smooth as possible and that the student is not disadvantaged as a result. Any outstanding student bursaries that are not subject to an annual award would be honoured.

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

We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students by publishing it on our website and including a hard copy to all applicants as part of their information pack.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by including it in our course change documentation and process and for our new programme approval procedures

The student protection plan forms one of a suite of documents that will be highlighted during the student induction process.

We will review our student protection plan annually during our Academic board meeting cycle.

Our students will be involved in our review by consulting with them through programme representative meetings. Students also have a place on the Academic board, which will ratify any proposed changes.

Should any element of the Student protection plan need to be implemented we will follow the following procedures;

We will inform our existing students if there are to be material changes to their course by first holding wide scale consultation prior to the process commencing. Upon approval of changes we will communicate with all students in a timely manner and as early as possible, through email and the tutorial process. We will also provide sufficient advice and support for students as is necessary. For applicants we will communicate with students as soon as possible to inform them of any changes

made since their application was made via email and any other appropriate communication method as identified. We will endeavour not to make changes during an academic year and will make every effort to ensure that students engage with the consultation and amendment process. Additionally we will engage with the Students Union, from whom we will also encourage students to take additional advice and support should the need arise.