

Student Protection Plan 2019/2020

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The University of the West of England is committed to the student experience and to supporting students to achieve their academic outcomes. The University is a large, financially stable and sustainable organisation with a strong financial record. Our financial management is astute. We have the capacity, capability and resources to protect our students and minimise disruption to their studies.

To make sure that our students have access to the best programmes of study, the University regularly reviews its curriculum and programme portfolio to ensure that it remains current, up to date and meets the needs of employers and industry. The University also actively monitors the impact of changing recruitment, graduate market and regulatory conditions (e.g. professional or statutory accreditation bodies) on individual programmes and subject areas. This enables the University to identify opportunities for enhancement and development of programmes and of the wider portfolio. In line with our enhancement framework, the University will be responsible for determining when the reviews should take place and when changes will be implemented.

From time to time unforeseen events may result in the need to make changes to programmes of study which could impact the ability of students to enrol on and complete their chosen programme within the expected timeframe or circumstances. Where unforeseen events arise that may impact a programme of study we will be open and transparent about the event, the likely impact and the changes we would need to make to protect students and enable them to continue their studies.

The University is committed to ensuring students are able to complete their studies and will make all reasonable efforts to enable them to do so. This includes:

- In the event of a programme closure the University will take all reasonable steps to 'teach out' the provision and allow students to complete their programme of study;
- Should a decision be made which results in the need to trigger the Student Protection Plan students will be informed in writing within 10 working days of the decision being made;
- Where changes result in prospective students being unable to study their intended programme every effort will be made to secure a suitable alternative at the University or elsewhere;
- We will always take account of the diversity of our individual students and we will consider their individual needs and circumstances when affected by changes outlined in this plan and/or when the plan is triggered;
- We will take account of the different modes of delivery and any differences arising from level of provision when considering the impact of the changes outlined in this plan and/or when the plan is triggered.

This Student Protection Plan sets out the measures that the University has in place to protect students' continuation of studies. The type of event or change which might cause a risk, together with an explanation of the steps the University would take to protect students' continuation of study are set out below. These measures are in addition to the protections that students have under consumer protection law and do not impinge on students' consumer rights.

Risks which may trigger the Student Protection Plan

Closure and suspension of programmes

The University may wish to close and remove a programme of study from its portfolio. This may be as a result of low recruitment numbers which could negatively impact student experience; changes in employment opportunities which could negatively impact graduate destinations; and replacement following curriculum review, to further enhance the offer to students. Closure of a programme means that it will no longer be open for future student registration. Suspension of a programme of study is defined by a fixed timeframe in which the programme will not be delivered and is normally reserved for new programmes of study which have yet to register students. Programmes of study cannot be closed without University approval in order that the contractual implications between current and prospective students and the University can be fully considered.

Closure of subject areas

If the University planned to exit from a subject area we would follow our normal processes, which would include appropriate consultation. In the event of closure, existing students will be taught out where they are able to complete their studies within the agreed timeframe. Prospective students will be contacted by the admissions team and will be provided with advice on suitable alternatives elsewhere. The University will take responsibility for appropriate liaison with UCAS.

Updating programme content, regulations and policies

The University is committed to ongoing enhancement of programmes and student experience and as a result may wish to make changes to programme content, regulations or policies.

Where material changes (such as a number of changes to the structure or content of the programme) are made the University will draw these changes to the attention of students and prospective students as soon as possible. Changes to policies and regulations which impact students will normally come into effect at the start of an academic year and following the conclusion of process. This will include student consultation.

Where material changes are made to programmes of study prior to registration the University will contact prospective students to provide information and guidance to help them to take an informed decision on their course of action. This will include their right to seek entry to another

University programme for which they may be qualified or to withdraw their application and seek entry to another institution

In normal circumstances, material changes will not be made to a programme after registration, but if this is necessary students will be informed at the earliest opportunity on the changes and wherever possible their views will be taken into account.

If a student reasonably believes that a material change to their programme of study adversely affects them, they may cancel their contract with the University as outlined in the student Terms and Conditions. In such circumstances the University will offer information and advice to a student to facilitate transfer to another institution which offers a suitable alternative programme of study.

The University will continue to make changes to programmes during the course of a student's studies in order to improve the quality, enhance the content, and meet the latest requirements of an accrediting body or in response to student feedback. The University will consult with and/or inform students of these changes as appropriate. Where continuation of study is not negatively impacted upon it is unlikely that the updating of programme content, regulations and policies will result in the triggering of the Student Protection Plan.

Loss of UKVI Tier 4 licence

The University takes its Tier 4 sponsorship responsibilities seriously and makes every effort to ensure it is fully compliant with the UKVI requirements. In the unlikely event that the sponsorship is withdrawn the University will:

- Contact all prospective international students to support them in securing a place elsewhere
- Contact all current international students to advise them of their rights, whether they are able to remain at the University to complete their studies or whether they should return home to secure a place elsewhere and to make a new visa application.
- The University will support students in securing a place at another institution with a Tier 4 licence.

Loss of Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation resulting in withdrawal of associated programmes

The University works in partnership with PSRBs and has a long and successful track record of securing and sustaining accreditation for its programmes. In the event that accreditation is withdrawn, the University would work with the PSRB to try wherever possible to secure the option to teach out existing students on the programmes with no impact to their accreditation. If this is not possible the University would provide support to each student to secure suitable alternatives at the University or elsewhere.

Loss of specialist facilities critical to the delivery of curriculum (e.g. through fire)

The University is a large, multi-campus organisation with a variety of specialist facilities which would allow for use of alternative facilities in most circumstances. The University has a well-defined business continuity protocol and a plan which outlines the steps we would take in the event of a loss of specialist facilities or essential buildings such as the Library or student residences. In the event of a loss of these facilities the business continuity protocol would be followed. This may include the need for the University to secure alternative facilities off site. The individual impact on students in accessing and continuing their studies would be considered and prioritised in these circumstances.

Loss of individual staff who are critical to research supervision

The University will make every effort to ensure that the student is able to successfully complete their research studies. This may include a replacement supervisor within the University, supporting a continued relationship with the existing supervisor, or securing supervision from another HEI.

Refund and compensation policy in event of Student Protection Plan being triggered.

The University Student Protection Plan Refund and Compensation Policy sets out the provision for refund of fees and compensation in the event of the Student Protection Plan being triggered. The policy includes information on the provision to recognise and compensate students where other alternative arrangements are inappropriate or not available and/or where refund or compensation is deemed appropriate. The refund and compensation policy is applied in a fair and proportionate way ensuring students are not disadvantaged. The policy covers appropriate provision for:

- Reasonable travel costs as a result of relocation of provision
- Student tuition fee refunds for those students in receipt of tuition fee loans from the Student Loans Company, students paying their own fees and those being paid by a sponsor
- Provisions for ongoing bursary support for those students in receipt of a bursary or similar funding who continue their studies with the University on alternative programmes
- Compensation for additional tuition fees and maintenance costs where students have to transfer programme or provider which resulted in an impact on the time required to complete the qualification

The University complies with OIA and CMA guidance on this matter.

Partner Provision

Through its academic agreement with partner providers the University will seek to ensure that partner student protection plans or equivalent policies provide the same level of support, advice and guidance to students pursuing UWE programmes as set out in the University Student Protection plan. These will be reviewed as part of the University's ongoing quality assurance and review of its partnerships.

General information about the Student Protection Plan

The Student Protection Plan forms an important part of the student contract and as such will be reviewed annually alongside the terms and conditions and other important policies. Through our student representation structure we will consult with students when making changes to the Plan. Any changes will be communicated to our students through our standard official communication channels including the full range of accessible formats. The latest version of the plan will always be available on the website.

The policy will not normally apply to graduates who have already completed their studies at the University.

This Student Protection Plan has been approved by the University's regulator, the Office for Students and is available to all current and potential students. This plan is referred to and accessible from our student terms and conditions which are sent to students with their offer letters and are available again as part of the registration process. It is also published on our [website](#).

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about your experience under this plan you should do so by following the University complaints policy. Details of which can be found [here](#).

If you have any immediate views, concerns or feedback in relation to this Plan, please contact complaints@uwe.ac.uk