

## Annex D: Template for a student protection plan

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### Student protection plan for the period [2020/21]

**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**

Recent financial risk assessments by the previous Funding Body, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, do not identify a higher financial risk category. As such, the University is reassured that it would be able to deliver any of its current and planned programmes within its current financial commitments. Since this assessment, the University has had annual external audit which includes a review of going concern, and an internal audit programme which also provides assurance.

The University's own internal audit and review processes do not identify a high risk to being able to deliver specific programmes across the University. The risk assessment process would show appropriate mitigation actions if needed and Business Continuity Plans are in place for recognised major incidents.

Risk to teaching on specialist programmes is managed by a planned process, both within programme approval and the cyclical Planning and Performance Cycle. Significant changes to teaching provision are approved through the Planning and Performance Cycle sufficiently in advance for changes to be advertised to potential students.

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver material components of our programmes

is low because we are a relatively large institution with critical mass in our academic units. Recruitment processes ensure that we have staff expertise to cover for staff departures or absences. We already utilise this flexibility where for example we cover parental leave or research leave.

The programme currently running at the Singapore Campus has recently been reviewed and it has been decided that the programme will cease to recruit after fulfilling the terms of the institutional partnership agreement. All students will have full opportunities to complete the programme they are registered on and a staffing plan is in place to support this. Institutional monitoring activity continues, assuring the University that the students are continuing to receive appropriate learning and teaching opportunities.

The partnership with Laureate Online Education, is currently in the teach out phase and the University continues to undertake monitoring activity to assure itself that the students are continuing to receive appropriate learning and teaching opportunities. The University will continue to provide opportunities for all students to complete their programmes online.

Carmel College is an associate college of the University and runs Foundation Certificates validated by the University. Students register as University students from the start of the Foundation Certificate and as such would have the same expectations of all University students if their programme was at risk, in that the programme would continue and students given appropriate offers to complete, or that opportunities may be offered elsewhere, which the University would negotiate on behalf of students.

The University has recently entered into a new partnership with Kaplan Online Liverpool. Detailed consideration of any teach out activity is contained within the Institutional Agreement and subject to oversight of the Online Education Partnership Joint Strategic Board.

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

All students and programmes are covered within the requirements of the University's [Policies on Withdrawal and Suspension of programmes](#).

All withdrawals and suspensions are approved in line with the University Policy as a means of managing the size and quality of the portfolio and taking due consideration of the student experience. All approved withdrawals or suspensions allow students to complete their studies.

The student experience is always fully protected and teach out provisions have to be made and approved as part of the withdrawal or suspension of programmes. Fundamental to the process is that all stakeholders are consulted: students and staff involved in the delivery of the programme. This is to ensure there is effective and appropriate communication of the rationale for a programme withdrawal or suspension and to understand the teach out requirements.

Endorsement is then sought from the appropriate Curriculum Board and supported by the Dean of the relevant School. In addition, Faculty Management Teams then need to endorse before consideration and approval by a School Scrutiny Panel. This level of activity is deemed appropriate due to the considerations that need to take place for such a decision to be approved. Applicants are then contacted by the Recruitment team, deadlines are in place to ensure that the University can provide timely communications to students and applicants.

Additional information regarding closure of collaborative programmes run with other institutions or bodies are covered explicitly in institutional agreements between all partners.

From 2014-15 to the present academic year, the University has withdrawn 65 programmes, of which 53 had students continuing on, these were all considered and approved using the appropriate Policies noted above. In the same period, 35 programmes were suspended, of which 17 had students on. As above, these were approved using the appropriate Policies and students were offered opportunities to complete their programmes.

### **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 processes the University has in place are there to ensure that the student experience is protected and that there would not be instances where students would be left without the opportunities to complete a programme. Due to the stringent demands of the process of Withdrawing or Suspending a programme, the University has a planned set of procedures so that students are not left without a programme of study.

If students are not happy with the planned activity, there are complaint policies in place for them to use to address any concerns.

The University's Refund Policy is included in its [Terms and Conditions](#).

Further information is contained within the [Payment Policy 2020-21, Student Fees, Fines and Charges](#). This Policy is referenced and linked to within the Terms and Conditions.

The University does not have a specific Compensation Policy, each request for compensation from a student is considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the outcomes of a robust Student Complaints Policy or Student Appeals Process, the outcome of which may be a consideration of appropriate compensation to a student.

If students feel that they wish to leave the University and transfer elsewhere, the University would fully support providing all appropriate information to support their transfer.

The University's Policy is to retain cash reserves of at least 45 days operating expenditure (approximately £60million) in order to ensure that we can meet our financial obligations, including any necessary refunds to students. The University's cash reserves as at 31 July 2019 were £120.4million.

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

The University will make the student protection plan available to current and future students by publishing appropriate information on the University's web site and adding a reference to the Plan to the student Terms and Conditions information.

The University will continue to ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose programme changes, and we will add reference to the Plan to the Policies for Suspension and Withdrawal of Programmes.

The University will review our student protection plan by considering the content annually at the Education Committee. The Guild of Students has representation on the Committee and will ensure that student views are fully considered and two lay members of Council for a wider oversight.

Arrangements to inform students of any changes in their programmes, particularly suspension or withdrawal of programmes, are covered in the Policy listed above. All arrangements have to be approved at University level.