

Basingstoke College of Technology

Student protection plan

Student protection plan for the period [2019-20]

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

The risk that the college and its subsidiaries is unable to operate is low.

- This is because we have strong and sustained financial health as demonstrated in the ESFAs assessment of our financial health over the past 12 years which has been categorised as outstanding.
- The ESFA assess our ability to forecast as effective given that our forecasted financial plans are closely aligned to our financial records.
- The college's governing body approve the college's budget on an annual basis and review its financial performance through the Finance and General Purposes committee on a termly basis.
- The college has no borrowing.
- The college has cash reserves in excess of £4.25 million.
- The college currently has only one subsidiary which trades only with the college and so is not at any risk.
- The College is intending to acquire a private training provider – the financial terms in the contract will safeguard the college's existing reserves.

The risk that the college will lose validation for one or more of its courses is low.

- This is because the college does not have any courses that are validated by Higher Education Institutions.
- Pearson have approved the delivery of HNC and HND courses by the college and through annual quality assurance assessments by external examiners, through the annual programme monitoring report and quality management review meeting, they confirm that the college continues to meet the expectation of Pearson as awarding body.
- Pearson have confirmed that the college is validated for the delivery of the new Regulated Qualification Frameworks (RQF) for higher education courses from September 2018.
- The college does not have degree awarding powers

The risk to continuation of study for students as a result of probationary degree awarding powers is low as the college is not operating with these powers and has no plans to do so.

The risk that one or more of the locations at which the college delivers courses to students is no longer available is low.

- The college operates all of its higher education provision at its main Basingstoke campus.
- The college does not plan to deliver any higher education courses to students at its Future Skills Centre in Bordon.
- The college is not considering closing its Basingstoke campus

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The risk that the college is no longer able to deliver courses to its students in one or more subject areas and/or departments is low to moderate.

- Higher education courses on which students are currently studying will continue to be delivered for all cohorts as these are within fixed college budgets.
- Existing courses for new cohorts of students will be delivered where they continue to be financially viable and within fixed college budgets.
- New higher education courses will be delivered where they are financially viable and within fixed college budgets.
- The college will only consider course closures in the next three years where these are not financially viable.

The risk that the college is no longer able to deliver material components of one or more courses is moderate.

- In Engineering, due to its specialisation, there is single person dependency for some of the teaching.
- For any new courses the college intends to run in the next three years, recruitment to teaching posts has not taken place and when it does, there is likely to be single person dependency for some of the teaching.
- Where there are changes to awarding body specifications (particularly by Pearson) or changes to government legislation the college may not have the required equipment to deliver material components of one or more of the engineering courses.

The risk that the college will no longer be able to deliver one or modes of study to its students is low.

- The modes of study for students on higher education courses is classroom / workshop based teaching and online learning. The college is not considering withdrawal of either of these modes of study.
- Some engineering courses are delivered at the college on a Saturday, however, due to student and employer demand, the college is not considering withdrawal of its Saturday teaching provision.

The risk that the college is no longer able to recruit or teach a particular type of student is low to moderate.

- In Engineering, some students studying higher education courses do so as part of a higher level apprenticeship programme. Apprenticeship programs are subject to change from apprenticeship frameworks to apprenticeship standards as the standards are released by the Institute for Apprenticeships.
- Where employers use their apprenticeship levy to fund the training of higher level apprentices, changes in government policy in relation to apprenticeships may change the way in which employers use their levy to fund training.
- The college holds a Tier 4 Sponsor Licence issued by the Home Office and valid until 2020 which allows the recruitment of international students based on Tier 4 licence conditions.

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

The risk that the college is no longer able to deliver courses to its students in one or more subject areas and/or departments is low to moderate.

- Students currently studying on higher education courses do so over a period of one or two years. Were any of these courses to become financially unviable to continue running, the college will divert budget resources to “teach out” these courses for existing students so that all students are able to achieve the qualification they are originally enrolled on.

- In cases where existing or new courses for new entrants prove to be financially unviable based on likely student recruitment, the college will make the decision to either withdraw this provision or adapt the delivery model to make the course financially viable. This decision will be made by the end of April in each year as part of the college's business planning process. The college will communicate any closure of courses or likely changes in delivery model in May of each year to all applicants to these courses. This is the college's current practise for any its provision. For applicants to any such course, the college will provide face to face, telephone or online advice and guidance from one of its three level 6 qualified careers and education advisors to support applicants to find an alternative course at the college for which the college will guarantee a place or find an alternative provider.
- For any courses that we deliver in partnership with a higher education institution, the terms of agreements that we have or may have include the contingency that should courses not be able to be delivered at the college based on likely student recruitment and hence financial viability, applicants to these courses will be offered a place on the same or closely related course delivered either by the HEI or by another HEI franchised partner.
- The college does not and has no intention of subcontracting higher education provision to another provider.
- In circumstances where the college ceases to deliver an academic programme of study, and students have already commenced study on that programme, the College will consider financial compensation through its Higher Education Refund and Compensation policy , for affected students where they are forced to withdraw from the College. Students in these circumstances may also transfer to another programme of study at this or another college. If this results in additional costs for those students, the College will also consider supporting students with these additional costs as defined in its Higher Education Refund and Compensation policy.

The risk that the college is no longer able to deliver material components of one or more courses is moderate.

- In the cases of single person dependency for some of the teaching, particularly in Engineering, the college, through its strong employer networks, its partnerships with local universities and colleges and through its recruitment processes will seek to recruit 'Bank staff' with the required skills and knowledge to be able to teach content at higher level.
- All teaching materials for all higher education courses are hosted by and are the intellectual property of the college (with the exception of materials delivered as part of franchising agreements). Students on higher education courses have full access to all materials through the Google virtual learning environment at any time and are therefore able to continue to study as any recruitment activity takes place.
- Teaching contracts for those teaching higher education courses have a notice of termination of contract of three months as standard which typically provides the college with sufficient time to recruit replacements.
- Through its course validation, budget and recruitment processes, any new courses expected to run are subject to scrutiny to ensure there is sufficient time to recruit specialist teachers ready for the start of teaching.
- Typically, changes in awarding body specifications or government legislation provide sufficient time for the college to assess its resource needs in terms of equipment so that through its budgeting processes, funds are able to be allocated accordingly. In the particular case of Engineering, the equipment currently used is industry standard and regularly maintained as part of the college's maintenance schedule. Through its multiple and varied industry partners, the college also has access to further specialist equipment should the need arise based on qualification or legislative changes.

The risk that the college is no longer able to recruit or teach a particular type of student is low to moderate.

- Should the college no longer be able to recruit or teach apprentices as a result of changes from apprenticeship frameworks to standards or changes in government policy surrounding the apprenticeship levy, students would continue to be able to study for and achieve the higher level qualifications that form part of any apprenticeship as these are also part of the college's

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curriculum offer, are stand-alone qualifications and independent of any apprenticeship framework or standard.

- Should the college fail to retain its Tier 4 licence, any future students will be informed within 30 days of Home Office confirmation of the decision to remove the licence. The college will provide advice and guidance to support students to secure a place at another provider. Where agreements exist with partner HEIs for students to enrol on the same or similar courses at these HEIs, the college will enact this facility.
- Should the college fail to retain its Tier 4 licence, any current students will be able to complete their course under the student visa rules of the Tier 4 Sponsor licence.

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

A copy of the college's Higher Education Refund and Compensation policy is provided with the submission of documents required for registration with the OfS.

The college has cash reserves of £4.25 million which would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation to any student studying a higher education course that does not provide continuation of study as expected when the student enrolled on the course

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

How the college will communicate the provisions of its student protection plan to current and future students:

- The college will publish its Student Protection Plan on its website on the landing page relating to Higher Education. It will be publicly available to existing and new students.
- At the point of offer to study on any higher education course at the college, the college will provide a copy of its Student Protection Plan either digitally or on paper to all students.
- At the point of enrolment on any higher education course at the college, the college will provide a copy of its Student Protection Plan either digitally or on paper to all students.
- During the induction period for new students, course tutors will draw attention to the college's Student Protection Plan and provide opportunity for students to ask any questions they have related to the plan.
- For students progressing to their next year of study, at the start of the new academic year, courses tutors will draw attention to the college's Student Protection Plan and provide opportunity for students to ask any questions they have related to the plan
- The college's Student Protection Plan will be available for all staff of the college to access via its intranet, in line with all other college policies.
- As part of its course validation process, the college's Student Protection Plan will be considered to ensure any course proposed for development and introduction are consistent with the plan and identify any areas of risk along with actions to mitigate against these.
- As part of its annual professional development programme, the college will include training for staff delivering higher education courses to ensure they understand the expectations of the college, the awarding bodies, the Office for Students and the obligations they have towards their students, including communication of the Student Protection Plan. Training will be a mixture of face to face and online learning and staff will be required to confirm that they have completed all of the training in order to be able to teach.
- For staff new to the college, the college will include in its induction for new staff programme the necessary training for those delivering higher level qualifications.

How the college will work with students in the development of its student protection plan:

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- The college will review its Student Protection Plan on an annual basis and the plan will be approved by the college's governing body through its Quality Committee. The review will be the responsibility of a senior manager supported by the appropriate middle management directors.
- Students will be involved in the review of the Student Protection Plan through a course level review meeting conducted by the course tutor that will identify recommendations for change and improvement. Through its virtual learning environment, the college will propose the recommendations made from these course level review meetings to all HE students and canvas opinion relating to the recommendations. Where the majority of students are in agreement with proposed recommendations, the college will act to change its Student Protection Plan accordingly, providing any changes are within existing policies and are in the best interests of students' learning and experience.

How the college will communicate its student protection plan to those affected should it need to be implemented:

- In the event of course closure, future students will be given a minimum of 90 days notice by the college. This will be through direct and individual contact by telephone or email using the contact details these students have provided the college as part of their application process.
- In the event of changes to the delivery model of courses that current students are studying, the college will provide a minimum of 30 days notice to students and communicate this through the college email system and its virtual learning environment.
- Should the college be required to implement any of the provisions in the Student Protection Plan, it will communicate its decisions and actions to current students through its email system and virtual learning environment and provide access to the appropriate college specialist or person with appropriate responsibility. Where changes affect individual students, these will be communicated by their course tutor through an individual meeting and appropriate support from college specialists arranged accordingly. In the case of future students, the college will contact each of the students affected by any changes through either telephone or email using the details they have provided as part of the application processes.
- Independent advice will be provided to students through the college's level 6 qualified advice and guidance team, UCAS advisors, The Office for Students, the National Union of Students, The Office of the Independent Adjudicator, the through the college's HEI partners and awarding bodies
- Students will have the opportunity to make a complaint about the way in which the college is implementing its plan through the use of the college's complaints procedure.