



Ruskin College Oxford

STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN

Created: October 2020

Approved: December 2020

Last Reviewed: February 2021

Responsibility for Review: Assistant Principal

Date of Next Review: February 2022

Related Documents: Student Transfer Plan

Student Protection Plan

Introduction: What is the aim of the Student Protection Plan?

This Student Protection Plan sets out the measures we have in place to protect you as our student in the event that a risk to the continuation of your studies should arise. The type of events or changes that might cause such a risk are detailed below.

This plan was submitted to our regulator, the Office for Students (OfS), and approved in April 2018. It is available to all current and potential students.

The measures contained in this plan apply to all students studying for a qualification with Ruskin College. They are in addition to the protections you have under consumer protection law, and do not impinge on your consumer rights.

Our commitments to you:

1. Being open and transparent with you should any risk to the continuity of your programme of studies arise, and inform you in a timely manner.
2. Taking reasonable steps to protect your studies should we discontinue a programme, close a department or discipline, close a location (building) where a programme is taught or should the College close altogether.
3. Consulting with students and considering students' views in a timely manner before deciding to implement any substantial changes to their programme or discontinuing it, or closing a department or closing a location.
4. Taking into consideration the needs of all of our students and the impact on them of any proposed changes and protective measures.
5. Informing the OfS of any changes that may necessitate a review of this Student Protection Plan or any of the measures contained within it.

If you have any immediate views, concerns or feedback in relation to this plan, please contact the Student Services Manager.

Notification, advice and support

Should the student protection plan need to be triggered, you will be notified by the Assistant Principal via email.

Advice and support will be offered in the first instance by the Assistant Principal. Additional non-academic advice and support is available from the Student Services Manager.

What can I do if I have a complaint?

If you are not content with the proposed outcomes, you can raise the issue under our Complaints Procedure, which can be found at: Provider's name: Ruskin College, Provider's

UKPRN: 1005583. Legal address: Ruskin College, Dunstan Road, Old Headington, Oxford OX3 9BZ.

Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan: Assistant Principal.

Student protection plan for the period 2020/21

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, how those risks may differ based on our students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

The risks to the continuation of study for our students arise from both internal events and/or external events outside of our control.

Internal events:

The risk that the College as a whole is unable to operate is very low. We have mature business continuity arrangements in place, including plans to deal with a range of incidents. We regularly run test exercises to ensure our arrangements are fit for purpose, which include post-hoc evaluation and identification of learning.

The risk that we decide to close the location (building) in which the programme is taught and cannot find suitable premises at a nearby location is low. Our estate is of a suitable size and quality, we have an Estates Strategy in place to guide future plans and good governance of our decisions.

The risk that we decide to discontinue your specific programme on timescales that directly affect you is low, because we plan any course discontinuations to allow current students to complete their studies. Where a course is discontinued we would close the programme to new recruitment and 'teach-out' current student cohorts. We have experience of managing this process successfully.

The risk that we discontinue or do not offer programmes due to insufficient enrolment and programme take-up or continuation is low. We regularly review the suite of programmes we offer to ensure that we keep pace with student demand and may choose to close a programme to future cohorts where demand is low, or as part of a refresh of our wider portfolio.

The risk that the qualification you obtain is significantly different from that for which you enrolled is low, because of our approach to programme development and our approach to managing course discontinuation, as outlined above. We retain the right to make minor adjustments and improvements to programmes and module content year on year, as part of quality enhancement and in response to student feedback. Our review and quality enhancement processes are informed by student consultation and we endeavour to communicate planned changes in a timely and helpful manner. These minor amendments in themselves do not warrant the triggering of student protection measures. The risk that we stop teaching a discipline is low for the majority of the College's provision.

External events:

The risk that we lose the right to provide the programme or qualification for which you are registered is low. We have a long-established track record of offering high quality provision and maintaining established relationships with relevant professional accrediting bodies across our provision.

The risk that we cease operating through no choice of our own is very low. The College has strong management and governance arrangements in place for managing our business. We have business continuity plans in place, which are regularly reviewed and tested through practice exercises. We have independent scrutiny of our activities through our independent external auditors.

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

2.1. Whenever possible, we will make arrangements to ‘teach out’ our current students where we have voluntarily decided to close a programme. This means that we commit to ensuring programmes of study can be completed by all currently enrolled students within existing timeframes determined by programme and awarding body regulations, even though the programme is being discontinued and we will not be taking on new student cohorts.

In the unlikely event that validation or regulation by the OfS is withdrawn or there is a market, a range of options will be provided to students wherever practicable. This includes resources such as:

- a) Information, advice and guidance to help students make an informed decision about their studies, e.g. to move to a similar qualification under a new structure, to a related qualification.
- b) Details about refunds and compensation that may be available to affected students is included in the Student Fees Policy 2020/21. In the unlikely event of in year closure or in year market exit that results in the non-completion of the registered year of study, a full refund of that year’s fees will be offered to affected students.
- c) Support for students who choose to transfer to another provider where a suitable qualification can be identified and the students’ needs can be met. This will include different needs of students sharing particular protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. The College will enter into open dialogue with other providers to assist in the process of any transfer requests emanating from enrolled students.

2.2 Where students are studying on specialist programmes, which are not readily available locally or nationally, then we will investigate alternative options that may include an internal or external programme transfer.

These measures may be brought into play at any time, if, for example, doing so would reduce the impact or likelihood of any interruption to your studies. Reference student transfer plan:

<https://www.ruskin.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Student-Transfer-Plan.pdf>

3. Information about how we will communicate with you about your student protection plan

We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students by making the plan available on our website and referencing it appropriately in our communications with students during the recruitment and admissions process.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose programme changes by including a reference to the Student Protection Plan in our programme approval and amendment documentation.

We will review the Plan annually and will regularly seek views on this plan. Any immediate views, concerns or feedback in relation to this plan, should be referred to the Student Services Manager. The Student Protection Plan will form part of our core quality assurance processes. As such, we will ensure that staff are asked to demonstrably measure any changes to modules, programmes or their departments with reference to the document. This will be monitored through our governance structure at the Academic Board and our Quality and Standards Committee.

We will inform students of any material changes that may affect their studies in a timely manner. Should the Student Protection Plan need to be triggered, you will be notified by the Assistant Principal. If we need to implement the measures in our Student Protection Plan, we will use established mechanisms operated through Student Support Services to support students collectively and individually.

Advice and support will be offered in the first instance by the Assistant Principal and the Student Services Manager.

4. The Steps the College will take in the event of market exit or course closure

1. **Consultation:** the College SLT will contact and engage with all the key stakeholders at the first signs of course closure/market exit. These will include the following: OFS/Open University/Board of Trustees and Directors/all relevant professional bodies.
2. **Consultation:** the College will inform students directly of the possibility of market exit and course closure once any issues or concerns are reported.
3. **Consultation:** the College will work proactively with students to provide advice and guidance on their next steps and will provide key contacts at the appropriate HEI's to facilitate a transfer.
4. **Communication:** there will be consistent and timely communication throughout the process.
5. **Transfer Strategy:** the College will take the step of aligning opportunities at local HEI providers offering the similar/same programme -- this process will be led by the Student Services Manager. This process will require a number of stages:

(i) Agreement at the Senior Leadership Level with a potential partnership College that a transfer is feasible and practical.



(ii) Agreement at the curriculum level that all APEL stipulations can be satisfied and that any additional module mapping of provision may need to be put in place.

(iii) 1-1 support and review meeting for all affected students. This will entail the assessment of student needs both academic/pastoral and will need to consider the range of choices affecting a student.

(iv) Clear contact opportunities to be provided by the receiving organisation and these are to be facilitated by Ruskin College.

(v) Certification and completion of the academic year will be ensured -- the students will be awarded an exit award at their level of study. The transcript and references will be supplied in a timely fashion.

(vi) A bridging programme will be arranged as needed to enable students to address the demands of their new programme of study (if appropriate).