

Student Protection Plan 19/20

Version	Date	Changes	Reason	Author	Next review
1	05/18		To respond to the requirement to maintain a Student Protection Plan under the Higher Education and Research Act. To protect student experience in the event of programme changes or closure	AM	01/19
2	12/18	Addition of refs to OfS and CMA; addition of info in relation to Refund and Compensation Policy and Student Rights policy; Updating and correction of typographical errors, etc.	Revision as requested by OfS	JY	01/19 – Review with committees

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1.0 College Student Protection Plan

1.1 The development of this Student Protection Plan ('The Plan') is a clear demonstration of the commitment of Brit College to preserving the continuation and quality of study for all its students in the event that a risk to their continued study occurs.

1.2 The Plan is intended to provide assurance to current and future students that Brit College has in place appropriate arrangements to protect the quality and continuation of study for our students.

1.3 The production of this Plan is a requirement as part of our registration with the Office for Students (OfS). The publishing and maintaining of the Plan is a condition of on-going registration.

1.4 The Plan has been developed in accordance with requirements for initial and on-going registration with the Office for Students (OfS); it also takes account of the 2015 HEFCE *Higher education course changes and closures: statement of good practice and the 2015 UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law published by the Competition & Markets Authority (CMA)*.

1.5 The Plan has been agreed and approved at executive level in consultation with staff and students. This Plan is in conjunction with, and supplements, the College's overall Risk Register.

1.6 This Plan is reviewed annually by the Dean and by Students, via their representatives on the Student Council and at the Student Staff Consultative Committee (SSC), by staff, via the Academic Management Team (AMT) and Academic Board (AB) meetings and then approved and ratified by the Board of Directors (BoD) and the College Oversight Board (COB).

1.7 Students and staff are informed about College policies during induction and also receive periodic reminders during the academic year. Training on college policies and procedures is also part of student representative and staff development training.

1.8 This Plan covers all students currently enrolled on a programme of study at Brit College. Students enrolled on our BAM (Top-up) programme are also covered by the University of Northampton's Student Protection Plan, which can be located here:

<http://tundrasearch.northampton.ac.uk/results/searchresult.aspx?Search=&Title=&Description=StProtPlan&submit=Search>

2.0 Risk Assessment

The College, and its Board of Directors, have assessed the likelihood of the following risks occurring, their impact were they to occur, and the mitigation of each risk, as follows:

2.1 Range of Risks

The following are the assessed risks for the continuation of studies for our students whether these are material changes such as, programme changes, suspensions, closures, or institutional closure or other forms of disruptions;

2.1.1 Losing accreditation with awarding bodies

This occurrence would significantly curtail the activities of the College and as a consequence affect the student's ability to earn certification as proof of completion of their studies. The impact of discontinuation of our relationship with either Pearson or our university partner, the University of Northampton, is HIGH but the likelihood of that risk occurring is LOW, since both are stable institutions with all due regulations and processes in place and the College complies with all necessary requirements and processes.

2.1.2 Losing approval for designation from Government bodies

The impact of this loss is judged to be HIGH as the majority of our students rely on student loans, which are only awarded when designation requirements are met. However, the College is confident that the likelihood of this scenario taking place is LOW due to its compliance with all official regulatory processes. This view is supported by its recent successful reviews with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), which reviews quality and standards in higher education. Designation is partly dependent on receiving successful QAA reviews.

2.1.3 Sudden loss of vital academic staff

The abrupt loss of crucial academic staff may jeopardise the quality and sustainability of course delivery, so the impact of this loss is judged to be MODERATE. The likelihood of this risk occurring is also judged to be MODERATE. However, the College mitigates this risk by investing significant resources and time to ensure that staff are well supported and motivated. It also tries to ensure that there are backup staff available to cover temporary staff shortages.

2.1.4 Loss of key staff

As above, the impact and likelihood of this risk is judged to be MODERATE and is mitigated as above. However the impact of any such loss on students is likely to be less noticeable in that these staff are not directly involved in learning and teaching.

2.1.5 Temporary disruption of college activity (Terrorism, Bad weather, Police Cordon, Fire, Flood).

The College has a robust disaster recovery Plan that it can activate, depending on the need. Terrorism is a current threat but the likelihood of a terrorist attack directed at the

College is LOW as it is not a high profile target. However, College operation might be affected temporarily if there were any terrorist attacks in the vicinity so this is judged to be a moderate risk. The risk is mitigated by the fact that we now have two campuses.

The risk of fire is judged to be LOW as the College has robust fire prevention measures in place and fire marshals to monitor this. No fire break out has occurred to date. There have also been no incidences of flooding so the impact and likelihood of this risk are also judged to be LOW.

2.1.6 Permanent closure of the College

Permanent cessation of operation of the College is not envisaged by the Board of Directors. They are passionate about education and have successfully run the College for over a decade. The impact of permanent closure would be HIGH but the likelihood of this happening is judged to be LOW.

2.1.7 Decision to no longer run a particular course

The College develops courses on the basis of consultation and according to need. The courses it currently runs are very popular and fully subscribed. The likelihood of terminating a particular course is therefore very unlikely and the likelihood of occurrence judge to be LOW. In the event that a course was to be discontinued the College would ensure 'teach out' either at the College or elsewhere. So the severity of risk is also judged to be LOW.

2.1.8 Industrial action by staff or third parties

There is cordial relationship between staff and senior managers at the College and hence there is very low risk of industrial action. Third party action, for example by staff at the University of Northampton with whom the College has a franchise arrangement may occur. However any planned industrial action by staff there would be unlikely to have a major impact on students' learning experience at Brit College as we have our own tutors. However there could be an impact in terms of the universities admin arrangements or awards. The severity of risk is therefore MODERATE but the likelihood of the risk is seen as LOW.

3.0 Risk Mitigation

The College is committed to ensuring that any risks are mitigated and that students are reassured that excellent teaching and learning for all can continue, without exception. It is committed to ensuring that the student's studies are not compromised or inconvenienced. The College recognises that risks may occur and has the following mitigation measures;

3.2.1 Losing accreditation of awarding bodies

In the event of losing accreditation with awarding bodies the College will offer students the possibility of changing their course. The College has reciprocal arrangements with other local Alternative Providers to whom students could be transferred without having a major impact on their education.

3.2.2 Losing approval for designation from Government bodies

In the event of withdrawal of designation of its courses for 'Student Support' purposes (resulting in the withdrawal of statutory student finance) the College, will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resulting disruption to students by, for example:

- working with relevant funding bodies to allow enrolled students to complete their year of study/programme;
- where the above is not possible, supporting students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers and, where appropriate, financially compensating students where they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss because of disruption to their studies;
- considering assistance for affected students by providing evidence/letters/statements in support of continuation of their studies;
- merging with another institution to maintain all, or part of, the current provision

The College meanwhile would endeavour to regain designation as soon as possible by working with the relevant bodies.

3.2.3 Sudden loss of vital academic staff

As an educational institute the College recognises that loss of vital academic staff can have a significant impact on the teaching and learning experience for students.

The College is committed to filling any gaps in academic staff that may occur as soon as possible. If there are any internal staff members that are capable of taking on the role, even temporarily, then they will be given first priority. Staff members are also required to serve a notice period to minimise disruption and the College's close link with a recruitment agency offers added protection for rapidly filling any gaps in teaching staff.

3.2.4 Temporary disruption of College activity (due to Terrorism, Bad Weather, Police Cordon, Fire, Flood)

The College understands that some things are beyond our control and, in the event that the following occurs, the College may need to close temporarily (please note that this is not an exhaustive list and is therefore, not limited to the following):

- ❖ Terrorism
- ❖ Bad weather
- ❖ Police Cordon
- ❖ Fire
- ❖ Flood

Students and staff will be informed as soon as possible if any of the above occurs, with regular updates being provided on the situation. The College will do everything to ensure that teaching hours are compensated. In the event that this closure occurs over a significant period of time, the College will look at moving lessons to another local site where classes can temporarily resume. This risk is further mitigated by the fact that the College now has two campuses.

If the closure is likely to be very long lasting, the College will seek out an alternative site for the College to be based at either permanently or until the original site is re-opened. The College also has a reciprocal arrangement with another local provider.

3.2.5 Permanent closure of the College

Permanent closure of the College is seen as a last resort and all avenues to try and keep the College open would have been explored by management, in consultation with students and staff.

If the College has no option but to close, the decision will be communicated to students as soon as possible. Students will also be informed about their options. The College is committed to ensuring that there is no hindrance to any student's studies. Therefore the College would do everything possible to try to get students to a point in their studies where progression can be made. Brit College will liaise with other providers to try and make any transfers as smooth as possible for any student involved.

3.2.6 Decision to no longer run particular course

The College has established and tested procedures for the event of suspension/ closure of a course. Where there is a material impact on the students, the effect will be mitigated by:

- ❖ communication with current students to provide assurance that they will not be adversely affected by the decision and that they will be able to complete their studies at the Institution;
- ❖ making provision for the completion of studies where 'mitigating circumstances' have been presented whenever possible

3.2.7 Industrial action by staff or third parties

Where industrial action does occur, the College will seek to;

- ❖ ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible;
- ❖ take all reasonable steps to fulfil its responsibilities to students in ensuring that any disruption is minimised and that students are, as far as possible, not disadvantaged by the action.

4.0 Policies

4.1 Policies are important in directing and communicating with students. The College has developed the following policies (to which students have also contributed) and which also relate directly to this Protection Plan;

- ❖ Student Fees Refund and Compensation Policy.
- ❖ Consumer Rights Policy.

4.2 These policies cover refund of fees or compensation in the event of cessation programmes, loss of premises, etc. Please see the policies for full details.

4.3 These policies are referred to in the Staff and Student Handbooks and are available on the website and the virtual learning environment. If required, a hard copy or large format edition may be requested from Student Services.

5.0 Communicating to Students

The College has been commended by the QAA in its most recent Monitoring report for its student engagement and views its students as partners. Communication is a vital tool in developing and successfully engaging students. The students at Brit College are consulted about, and make decisions on, all policies, procedures and documents which affect them.

The Student Protection Plan, Student Fees Refund and Compensation Policy and Consumer Rights Policy will be communicated to students as follows;

5.1 Meetings

Student representatives partake in all important meetings, such as the Academic Management Team (AMT), Academic Board, College Oversight Board (COB) and Employability Forum. Students are part of the decision-making process of the College. Through these meetings and discussions the Student Protection Plan has also been agreed, ratified and reviewed.

5.2 Policies

The College has developed policies to guide the implementation of the Student Protection Plan

5.3 VLE

The College uploads to the Virtual Learning Environment all policies and important documents so that they are easily accessible by students and staff.

5.4 Website

The College will put the Student Protection Plan and other relevant documents on its website so that they are easily available to students and staff.

5.5 Induction

During induction the College refers to, and outlines, all relevant and important policies and documents for students and staff. This includes the Student Protection Plan.

5.6 Student

Representatives Student Representatives play an important role in conveying information to the student population. They are periodically reminded to draw fellow student's attention to College policies including the Student Protection Plan.