



Student Protection Plan for the Period 2018/2019

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

It is our assessment the University's current financial position of performance means the risk the University is unable to operate is **very low**. This is because our financial performance is stable allowing us to call upon contingency and other funds to meet the commitments set out in this Student Protection Plan. We have business continuity plans in place to deal with challenges relating to recruitment. These include strategies for extending the recruitment cycle into the clearing period.

As part of the preparation of the Student Protection Plan for the Period 2018/2019 we undertook a risk assessment. This formed part of the risk management process. The intention was to identify risks likely to crystallise.

The risk we will no longer deliver courses at our Broadstairs campus **crystallised** following the Governing Body decision in June 2017 to close the campus. This posed a risk to students following Business Studies and Health and Social Care courses. The University consulted the students affected by the decision at the earliest opportunity. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor together with the Dean of the Faculty having the most affected students, both members of Senior Management Team, led the process in conjunction with the Campus Director. We undertook the process in line with the [University's Change Policy](#). In addition, the University used the principles set out in the [Student Refund and Compensation Policy](#), although we did not set them out in this document at the time.

The risk we will no longer be able to offer courses to students registered at our partner institutions is **low**. This is because we select good-quality partners following rigorous financial and academic due diligence. Our [due diligence of new partners](#) at the initiation of a relationship *a priori* reduces the risk of a partnership ending due to the viability of the partner to deliver the agreed provision. During the relationship, the University undertakes a periodic review of the financial health of our partners. The education provision by the partner is subject to annual review through our [quality assurance arrangements](#). From time to time, collaborative arrangements end. This is usually through mutual agreement or because of transfer to an alternative awarding body. Should the University consider the collaborative arrangement no longer viable, either for financial or educational reasons, it will take steps to end the agreement. The University has in place a mechanism for ending such partnerships, which the University made use of the past will continue to do so in the future.

Every collaboration agreement we enter contains teach out provisions to protect students following the end of the partnership. These provisions state the University and the partner will teach out the students affected. If our partner institutions are no longer able to offer courses to students registered with them, the University will usually arrange for the teach out. In the unlikely event that a teach-out were not possible the University would offer refunds and compensation to affected students in line with the [Student Refund and Compensation Policy](#).

Some smaller partners may be less financially stable and unable to react to volatility in the market. The University has the financial capacity to maintain the provision of education for students at partners unable to continue to operate. The University is in the process of teaching out a group of students at a partner institution who, in the summer of 2017, became unable to operate. The event **crystallised** following the insolvency of this partner. We did so with the cooperation of, and following consultation with, the students concerned. The Head of School sponsoring the programme led the process, supported by the Dean of Faculty.

The risk we will be unable to offer courses attracting sufficient numbers of students to make them viable is **low**. The University developed quality assurance arrangements to [monitor education provision](#). The purpose is to ensure the continued quality of the courses and identify where it is necessary to make changes. The most likely cause of discontinuation is through a course closure. This is likely to occur when a course reaches the end of its marketability due to a trend of falling recruitment or changes within the field of study. These are likely to be strategic decisions, with an opportunity to give applicants and students notice of the change. Usually, there is a replacement by a new course within the same subject area as the closed course. The University has a commitment to the teach-out of the curriculum to the students registered on the closed course.

Exceptionally, it might be beneficial for students to transfer to a similar programme. The risk to the student is **low**. This is because we offer a range of courses, and there is a high likelihood that a similar programme is available to the student. If there were a need to transfer students to a similar programme, the University would undertake prior consultation with those affected. This is in line with the [University's Change Policy](#). The University would, if the need arose, apply the Student Refund and Compensation Policy.

The risks we are no longer able to deliver material components of our courses is **low**. We have protections in place for the students affected. The University makes any material change in accordance with the [University's Change Policy](#). A key requirement of the Change Policy is a requirement to consult the students affected by the change.

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

Following our decision that no new students would be registered at our Broadstairs campus after September 2017, we enabled new students to study the same or similar courses at the Canterbury campus. We arranged for most students to transfer to the campus in Canterbury. This was with effect from September 2017 or September 2018. The date depended on the choice of the student. For others we agreed, following a consultation with the students affected, to arrange the teach-out in a University-occupied facility on the same site as the Broadstairs campus. This was to enable the students to complete in the same location. This was in line with the University's approach of providing, where possible, a teach-out of course. Our consultation included discussion on a range of options with the affected students.

In the case of the partner institution that went bankrupt, we arranged for the transfer of the students to the University. This enabled us to assume responsibility for their studies and complete the course. We arranged for teaching out of the students on the existing course. We oversaw the arrangements for their education. These arrangements will continue into the 2018/2019 academic year.

3. Information about the policy we have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to our students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that we are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

The University has a [Student Refund and Compensation Policy](#).

The University developed this Policy by combining statements in other documents. We sought to provide a unified statement of the University's approach. Through adopting a transparent approach, it enabled us to set out our principles in a single document for the benefit of students.

The Policy provides for the following:

- refunds for students in receipt of tuition fee loans from the Student Loans Company
- refunds for students paying their own tuition fees
- refunds for students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor
- the payment of additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course
- compensation for maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study
- compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where students transfer courses or provider
- commitments to honour student bursaries

The University will keep the Policy under review. In future reviews, the University will consider advice and guidance issued by official bodies. These bodies include the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) and the Office for Students (OfS). The University will also consider guidance from representative organisations such as UUK. The University will periodically review the Policy

following relevant case outcomes from the OIA. The purpose is to reflect good practice when reviewing the Policy.

The University can call upon contingency and other funds to meet the commitments set out in the Policy. As part of our financial strategy, we retain sufficient cash reserves to meet identified contingencies. If it were impossible to maintain the continuation of study, these reserves would be sufficient to address refund tuition fees and provide compensation.

4. Information about how we will communicate with students about our student protection plan

We will publicise our Student Protection Plan to current and future students. We will do this by including the Plan as part of the [Terms and Conditions documentation](#). We provide this information for applicants and continuing students. At present, we include the [University's Change Policy](#) as part of this documentation. The Student Protection Plan is an extension of this form of notification. We make the information available on our website.

We will ensure staff are aware of the implications of our Student Protection Plan. We will ensure those with course management responsibilities, including those at partner institutions, receive a copy of the Plan, together with the Change Policy. We will provide a copy of the Plan when staff propose course changes in line with the course modification procedures. This forms part of the quality assurance processes of the University.

We will review our Plan annually. This will include consultation with our internal stakeholders. When reviewing the Plan, we will undertake a risk assessment as part of the risk management process. The purpose is to identify those risks likely to crystallise. The Senior Management Team will approve the Plan on an annual basis.

We will review proposed revisions to the Plan with the Students' Union. We will undertake this annually through the Students' Union and University Partnership Forum. We will consult our students in our review as part of other engagement sessions.

We will inform our students of any proposed material changes to their course by consulting with them at the earliest possible opportunity. This is in line with the Change Policy. We will undertake this consultation prior to any material changes.

We will give students notice when we need to make material changes to their course. We will do this before the commencement of the next semester or academic year.

If we need to implement the measures in our Plan, we will consult all affected students as soon as reasonably practicable. We will inform students of services of our [Student Support Health and Wellbeing Department](#) to support students, both collectively and individually.

In addition, we will engage the Students' Union in the consultation process when we need to operate the Plan following a crystallisation event. The Students' Union is independent of the University and can provide independent advice and support to students affected. All students, including those at partner institutions, can call upon the services the Students' Union if they require individual support in relation to any proposals.

Department Owner	Legal and Governance Services
Contact Details	Robert Melville, Assistant University Secretary (robert.melville@canterbury.ac.uk)
Document Category	Policy
Subject	The document sets out the approach to student protection arising from risks to the continuation of study for our students, and the measures we have put in place to mitigate those risks that we consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise.
Related University Policies	Change Policy Student Refund and Compensation Policy Complaints Procedure
Approved by	Senior Management Team
Date Approved	24 April 2018
External Approval	Approved by the Office for Students August 2018
Date of Commencement	1 September 2018
Review Date	July 2019
Version	1.0