



UNIVERSITY_{OF}
WINCHESTER

STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN

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Indicate whether the document is for public access or internal access only Indicate whether the document applies to collaborative provision? <i>(Strikethrough text, as appropriate)</i>	Public Access Internal Access Only Applies to Collaborative Provision where Franchise arrangements in place.
Summary: All universities are required to have an approved Student Protection Plan as a condition of their registration with the Office for Students (OfS – Condition C3). A Student Protection Plan sets out how a university protects its students and learners, and what its students and learners can expect to happen, should a course, campus or university close and it is not possible to continue provision. The purpose of these plans is to ensure that students and learners can continue and complete their studies or can be compensated if this is not possible. Provider's name: University of Winchester Provider's UKPRN: 10003614 Legal address: University of Winchester, Sparkford Road, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 4NR Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan: Academic Registrar Registry.Enquiries@winchester.ac.uk	

Introduction

The University of Winchester's mission is to provide a transformational educational experience for its students and learners, setting them up for success in life. The University is consistently ranked amongst the top universities in the country for graduate success, testament to its strong focus on employability combined with the values of the love of learning, individual and shared endeavour and making a difference. The University's aim, through everything it offers, is to build students' and learners' curiosity, confidence and capabilities to enable them to live successful and meaningful lives.

The University was founded in 1840 and has been operating successfully since. It was rated 'Outstanding' for its primary and secondary teacher training in 2024 and was awarded an overall Silver Rating in the Office for Students Teaching Excellence Framework in 2023.

The University has robust planning and risk management processes in place which, together with strong academic governance procedures, means the University is able to minimise the risk of any disruption to students and learners' studies.

All universities are required to have an approved Student Protection Plan as a condition of their registration with the Office for Students (OfS) as defined in the [C Conditions of Registration](#). The purpose of a Student Protection Plan is to set out how a university will protect its students and learners, and what its students and learners can expect to happen should a course, campus or university close. This Student Protection Plan has been developed following consultation with student representatives and has been reviewed and endorsed by the elected officials from the student body, namely the President and Vice Presidents of the [Winchester Students' Union](#). Additionally, the Students' Union Executive and the University Executive and University Leadership Teams agreed on the Student Protection Plan in line with the [Student Voice and Representation Policy](#).

Scope

The University's Student Protection Plan (the 'Plan') sets out a range of potential risks to the continuation of studies that would impact students and learners. For each of those risks it demonstrates the appropriate arrangements the University would put in place to protect the quality and continuation of students' and learners' studies.

The Plan forms part of a range of policies the University has in place to ensure students and learners are able to fully engage with their studies including the [Terms and Conditions](#) and the [Student Charter](#).

The Plan covers	The Plan does not cover
Enrolled undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students and apprentice learners on a course leading to a recognised qualification from the University of Winchester, delivered under the control and direction of the University.	Students and learners who are no longer enrolled as a at the University for any of the following reasons: • at their request • due to the normal completion of their course • as a result of student discipline, non-payment of tuition-related fees, academic misconduct, academic failure or other similar matters

Applicants who have accepted an offer to study at the University of Winchester, but who have not yet enrolled.	Students and learners who are enrolled at a Collaborative Academic partner provider under a Validated Agreement and are taught by their staff. They will instead be covered by the partner provider's Student Protection Plan.
Students and learners who are enrolled at a Collaborative Academic Partner as part of a Franchised Study Agreement, and taught by their staff, where both the University's Student Protection Plan and the partner provider's Student Protection Plan would be delivered collectively. *	Students and learners who are enrolled at a Collaborative Academic Partner provider as part of a Validated Agreement, and taught by their staff, where the partner provider's Student Protection Plan would be delivered. *

**In both instances the University would advise, guide and collaborate to assist the partner to manage optionality for continuity of study through the partnership arrangement(s).*

Risks which may trigger the Student Protection Plan

The University has considered risks that could result in course, campus or university closure. It has evaluated the likelihood of these risks materialising (low, medium, high) and mitigations it has in place to minimise the potential impact on students and learners in terms of continuation of study.

Examples of risks covered by this plan	Risks not covered by this plan
Closure of the University	Adjustments and improvements to a course determined in students and learners' best interests
The University loses the power to award degrees	Adjustments and improvements to module or programme content.
One or more of the locations at which the University operates becoming unavailable.	Changes to and availability of the optional modules within a programme.
The University no longer being able to deliver courses to students and learners in one or more subject areas or departments.	Changes to the timetable, including rooms, buildings or locations on the University campus or campuses.
The University, subsequent to closing a subject area or individual course is not able to 'teach out' for continuing students ('teach out' refers to the University committing to teach all enrolled students on the course to their expected completion date).	The University, subsequent to closing a subject area or course, has established a 'teach out' provision for all on time continuing and completing students.
The University losing its UKVI Sponsored Student License	Changes to supervisory teams for research students and learners.
The University losing its authority to deliver commissioned and professionally regulated courses.	Changes to University policies, procedures and regulations
The University losing its authority to deliver regulator funded Degree Apprenticeship courses.	Practicable, proportionate and reasonable changes to teaching delivery that ensures continuity of study.

More information on the risks identified, and the measures in place to mitigate those risks, is found

below.

The University has considered approaches that need to be taken to mitigate specific vulnerabilities for certain groups of students and learners where significant disruption to their studies could exacerbate their acknowledged vulnerable status or create instances of situational vulnerability, including, but not limited to:

- Sponsored students and learners
- Students and learners less able to access or engage with a different learning model required by a disruption
- Care leavers and those with care responsibilities
- Students and learners estranged from their families
- Students and learners with disabilities

For these students and learners, the University would evaluate the possible additional impact of disruption and identify and implement additional mechanisms as practicable, proportionate and reasonable.

How are students and learners protected?

The University has a contractual agreement with each student and learner to provide them with a course; therefore, it will make every effort to preserve a student's continuation of study should risks materialise. If the situation cannot be rectified and continuation of study cannot be preserved, it will ensure that:

- students and learners will receive the University award or certificate that recognises the stage they have reached
- students and learners will be provided with a detailed transcript of their attainment to date, an academic reference and copies of their course documentation (programme specification and module descriptors)
- opportunities for students and learners to transfer to an alternative course, either at Winchester or at another university, will be made possible
- bursaries will be protected, in cases of course transfer to another Winchester course
- a refund and compensation plan will be prepared for the students and learners affected as defined within the [Payment of University Fees policy](#).

Degree apprenticeship learners

Each Degree Apprenticeship includes an agreement between the University of Winchester, the learner and their employer. The employer is responsible for work-based learning opportunities and support. The University will proactively engage with employers on their obligations to support Degree Apprentices. However, the University is not responsible if an employer can no longer fulfil their Degree Apprenticeship obligations. Nor is the University responsible if an employer ceases trading, or the Apprentice loses their employment.

Where a learner ceases to be employed as an Apprentice, the University will support the learner to completion of the degree where possible, including transfer to another degree programme, for which the learner will be liable for any resulting tuition fees. However, the learner will not be permitted to continue as a Degree Apprentice unless they secure an alternative sponsoring employer within the

statutory timeframe.

The University's Risk Management and Business Continuity

The University is financially sustainable and not at risk of being unable to operate due to financial instability. The University's financial performance remains strong and can be reviewed [here](#). As a long established and respected University, the University is experienced in preserving continuation and quality of study for students and learners. This has also been the case on those occasions when it has ceased to offer an area of curriculum.

Effective risk management is about ensuring all significant, relevant risks are understood and prioritised as part of the University's standard management practice. To effectively manage our risks, the University maintains a dialogue with internal and external stakeholders. The current risks are reported in the University's Risk Register, which includes the most significant business and sector risks, as well as those that are specific to the University. The Board of Governors has delegated authority to the Risk and Audit Committee to oversee risk management, including monitoring of the University's Risk Register, which is managed by the Risk Management Working Group chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.

This ongoing review enables us to identify material issues that are most likely to affect our students and learners, strategic objectives, service delivery and assets. We undertake a systematic and methodical identification of key risks, and we identify measures to mitigate them.

The University also operates an active Business Continuity Planning group that tests its resilience to business interruption scenarios.

What happens if the University is no longer able to preserve continuation of study?

The University will do all it can to ensure that its students and learners are able to complete their studies with the University. In the event that it is no longer able to preserve continuation of study, the University has established a number of remedies and mitigations that it can activate:

- Where course level closure requiring 'teach out' is not possible student transfer plans will be established which include the following provisions:
 - Curriculum content is compared with the curriculum of an alternative provider to ensure relevant information is available to students and learners wishing to transfer their studies;
 - Practical guidance for students, learners, and staff on intermediary actions that may need to be taken such as implementation of bridging curriculum content;
 - Student Support and Guidance plans with clear signposting, scheduled events and tailored to diverse demographics to reassure and ensure with reduced burden wherever possible and
 - Multi-channel communication plans to ensure regular, transparent and supportive information is targeted to affected students and learners.
- The University's Payment of University Fees Policy sets out details of how refunds and compensation to students and learners are handled in the event of the enforced termination of a course.
- The University's Complaints Policy supports students and learners if they are dissatisfied with

the protections provided relating to their circumstance, should a risk materialise. Policy procedures would be streamlined and collective mechanisms established to reduce administrative burden and afford expediency. Students and learners are able to seek an independent review of their complaint subsequent to the University completing its internal procedures by appealing to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

How would the Student Protection Plan be activated?

Should identified risks materialise as defined in the University Risk Register, the risk owners will notify the senior accountable member of the University Executive Leadership Team who will convene a SPP meeting with relevant stakeholders from the wider University Leadership Team and Winchester Students' Union.

The University will then determine whether activation of elements or the entirety of the Student Protection Plan is required and what steps are to be taken including informing or recommending action plans to the University's Board of Governors, Collaborative Academic Partners, sector regulators (Office for Students, Department for Education, Skills England and relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies [PSRB]).

On activating the Student Protection Plan, the University will carry out an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that the needs of different groups of students and learners are considered.

Section 14 of the University's [Payment of University Fees Policy](#) sets out the principles that the University will follow when considering the refund of tuition fees (or a proportion thereof). Any award for compensation where a programme is to be terminated is defined in Section 17 of the [Payment of University Fees Policy](#) or for where the Student Protection Plan being activated.

If the Student Protection Plan was activated, the University would seek and listen to students and learners' views and, based on their feedback, may decide to amend aspects of the steps set out in this Plan.

How the University informs students and learners about the Student Protection Plan

- The plan will be published on the University's website and students and learners are directed to all Policies, Procedures and Regulations as part of their initial enrolment and in subsequent years when re-enrolling.
- The Student Protection Plan is also identified in the Student Guide to Policies, Procedures and Regulations for students and learners, published on the University Intranet site in a defined Student area.

How the University communicates with staff about the Student Protection Plan

- The Student Protection Plan is published on the staff intranet pages.
- It is incorporated into the University's policy and procedures for course changes.
- It is incorporated into the University's Course Suspension and Withdrawal Processes

Advice and guidance is available to all staff from the office of the Academic Registrar.

Risks identified, and the measures in place to mitigate those risks

Institution-level risks

Risk owner: Executive Leadership Team

1. The risk that the University would be unable to operate.

This risk of this scenario materialising is LOW. The University's financial performance is strong, with a strong record of financial management. The University's Annual Report sets out its financial performance [here](#). The University has strong governance in place to oversee its financial performance.

This risk would affect all students and learners equally.

To manage this risk: The University routinely reviews its risks and business continuity approach and has plans in place to respond to a range of scenarios that would impact on it being able to operate.

2. The risk that the University would lose the power to award degrees.

This risk of this scenario materialising is VERY LOW as the University is an established, HE provider with a successful track record of awarding both teaching and research degrees. It is rated 'Outstanding' by OFSTED and is awarded Silver in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework.

This risk would affect all students and learners equally.

To manage this risk: The University has an established quality assurance framework which is implemented across the University's provision and overseen by Senate and the Board.

3. The risk that one or more of the locations at which the University operates would become unavailable.

This risk of this scenario materialising is LOW. The University owns the majority of the land on which its buildings are situated and has business continuity plans in place in the event of teaching spaces or student accommodation becoming unexpectedly unavailable. There may be an emergency need to suspend or reduce campus activity in the event of a catastrophic event or in order to be compliant with governmental directives until the campus is made safe.

This risk would affect all students and learners and may disproportionately affect:

- students and learners with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities as they generally have less flexibility with regards to location and timing of teaching
- students and learners unable or less able to access and effectively participate in online learning for whatever reason
- students and learners living on campus

To manage this risk: Alternative arrangements would be put in place for students and learners, which may include relocating to online learning delivery. There is a robust IT plan to ensure the reliability of IT service provision to students and learners receiving online delivery, and business

continuity plans to address an issue with on-campus University Managed Housing (the location from which students and learners would need to access their blended or online learning). A Student Support Fund, accessible via Student Support and Success, is in place that could meet additional costs to students and learners incurred in this scenario. Student Support and Success provision would continue to be available, to offer advice and support to students and learners.

4. The risk that the University of Winchester would no longer be able to recruit or teach international students and learners

The risk of this scenario materialising remains LOW, notwithstanding any major changes to Government policy. The University is an established and trusted holder of a licence to recruit and enrol international students and learners and has an excellent track record of successful visa compliance. In the event of a catastrophic event or in order to remain compliant with governmental directives, restrictions on international travel may present barriers to teaching international students and learners.

This risk disproportionately affects international students and learners.

To manage this risk: The University continually reviews its processes to ensure they meet Home Office requirements. It also closely monitors its compliance data against targets set by the Home Office. The University has plans in place to support international students and learners should restrictions on international travel present barriers to students and learners returning to the UK to study.

5. The risk that the University is no longer able to deliver courses to students and learners in one or more subject areas or departments

The risk of this scenario materialising is LOW. The University regularly reviews its portfolio, and changes to course provision may be made to reflect changes in demand for certain subject areas. However, if these changes do lead to the University not taking new students and learners onto certain courses, it is committed to maintaining the course for those students and learners already on it until they have graduated, known as 'Teach Out'.

In the event of a catastrophic event or to remain compliant with governmental directives, there is a **LOW risk** that the availability of staff to support course delivery across one or more subject areas or departments could be impacted, and a risk to courses which include work placements for students and learners may materialise, should a placement site be affected by a catastrophic event or governmental directive.

This risk would affect all students and learners equally.

To manage this risk: Any decision to discontinue a course with students and learners enrolled on it would only be taken in exceptional circumstances and the University would always endeavour to teach out current students and learners or seek appropriate course transfer options. Guidance and support would be offered to all affected students and learners or learners.

If the University could not do this, students and learners would be offered a refund and compensation plan. If a decision was taken to discontinue a course with applicants enrolled on it, applicants should refer to the Student Terms and Conditions to understand how the University would support them. Student Terms and Conditions are accessible on the University's website [here](#).

In the event of a catastrophic event or to remain compliant with governmental directives, the risk to staff availability is managed through the health and safety measures within the Risk Management Plan. For students and learners on courses with placements that may be affected by a catastrophic event or governmental directive, the course would continue to be offered. Students and learners should refer to the Placement Procedures and Faculty and course specific guidance on their subject specific placement procedures to understand how the University supports students and learners whose placements are disrupted.

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

The risk of this scenario materialising is LOW. The University is a relatively small institution and therefore does have some individual resource dependencies for teaching in some areas. As a smaller institution, it is well-practiced at managing these risks. Some changes to a course's material components may be necessary, for example, when there is a catastrophic event or to remain compliant with governmental directives.

This risk would affect all students and learners equally.

To manage this risk: In these instances, students and learners will be consulted via in person briefings and written communications to advise and guide on the necessity of the changes and how this will impact their ongoing studies. Where it is deemed to be in their best interests or where changes will enhance their learning opportunities, explicit consent will not be required for the changes to be implemented (as defined in the Student Terms and Conditions [here](#)).

If required, consent to these contract variations will be sought and the University will take all reasonable steps to mitigate the impact on students and learners. If a student does not agree that the change is fair, they are able to seek redress under the University's Complaints Policy. If a student does not give their consent to these contractual changes, they should refer to the Student Terms and Conditions to understand how the University would support them.

7. The risk that the University is no longer able to deliver one or more modes of study

The risk of this scenario materialising is LOW, with full-time and part-time modes of study planned to continue. The University routinely reviews its business continuity approach and has plans in place to respond to a range of scenarios that would impact on it being able to continue to deliver its courses. A review of the appropriateness and regulatory allowances for a blended learning (a blend of in-person and online delivery) or an online approach would be explored and adopted for both modes of study to preserve continuation of study in the event of a catastrophic event or to ensure compliance with governmental directives.

This risk affects all students and learners, and may disproportionately affect:

- students and learners with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities as they generally have less flexibility with regards to location and timing of teaching
- students and learners unable or less able to access and effectively participate in remote learning for whatever reason

To manage this risk: In the event of a catastrophic event or governmental directive, we recognise

that working conditions for students and learners may be required to change and this may present challenges for successful blended or online learning. A Student Support Fund, accessible via Student Support and Success, is in place that could meet additional costs to students and learners incurred in the transition to blended or online learning. Student Support and Success provision would continue to be available, to offer advice and support to students and learners.

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