

Part of North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

Provider's name: North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

Provider's UKPRN: 100047

Legal address: Hinckley Road, Nuneaton. Warwickshire. CV116BH

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Student Protection Plan For The Period 2018-2021

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 following risks have been identified:

Risk 1 - The risk that the College as a whole will be unable to operate due to financial instability is low. At the end of 2016-17 the College considers itself to be in 'satisfactory' financial health, based on the formulae issued by the ESFA. The College has submitted its three year plan which extends to 2019-20 to the funding body and a surplus is forecast to be generated each year. Accordingly the College has a reasonable expectation that it has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Risk 2 - The risk that we will no longer deliver Higher Education (HE) courses at the College in the next three years is low. The College has over 15 years successful history in delivering higher level qualifications and our HE Strategy (2018-21) projects an annual growth of 10% in our recruitment on to HE programmes. In November 2017 the HEFCE APR panel considered the available evidence for North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College and concluded that we "Meet requirements with an action plan". We continue to make good progress against this action plan.

Risk 3 - The risk that the College will close one or more of its campuses in the foreseeable future is highly unlikely. We are currently reviewing the facilities at our Nuneaton Campus to make sure that we continue to provide a high-quality student experience that is fit for future skills developments. We are committed to retaining a strong presence in Nuneaton and our plans are focused around the redevelopment of high-quality campus facilities at our current location. The planned development includes the relocation of our engineering department which poses some risk to the continuation of study of students on our HNC Engineering Programme.

Risk 4 - The risk that we may suspend or close a programme from our portfolio is moderate as recruitment patterns on individual programmes are variable each year and consideration has to be given to financial viability.

Risk 5 - The risk that we will not be able to deliver specific requirements of our BTEC HND Programmes is low because our programmes are designed to be delivered collaboratively by

teams of staff with relevant qualification, skills and expertise and do not rely on individual members of staff to facilitate. There is also flexibility in the selection of units for programme design to meet the changing demands of students and industry.

Risk 6 - The risk that we will not be able to deliver specific requirements of our franchised and validated provision with partner universities is moderate because we are dependent on a relatively small number of staff who are familiar with the specifics of the programme specification, quality assurance processes and university regulations.

Risk 7 - We value our long-standing relationships with Coventry University, De Montfort University, The University of Warwick and The University of West London however we recognise that there is always a risk of termination of contract for reasons that are beyond our control. Due to contractual agreements and due diligence this risk is low.

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

Appropriate mitigations for the higher level risks are as listed below:

Risk 3 - When planning has been completed the College will notify students of any changes to the location of study at the earliest opportunity and will consult with students in the consideration of relevant compensation for additional costs incurred as a result of travel. During the redevelopment of the Nuneaton Campus, the College will endeavour to take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students, with the implementation of the planned changes over a holiday period and completion of new facilities ahead of the start of a new academic term or year.

Risk 4 - If for reasons of low recruitment, we plan to suspend or close a programme from our portfolio of qualifications, this decision would be made through our curriculum planning process, with the overall consent of the Deputy Principal. In normal circumstances this decision will be made ahead of applications and the programme will be withdrawn from our website and publications. Where this is unavoidable, for example where the projected applications do not convert to enrolments, students and their representatives shall be consulted at the earliest opportunity on the changes and they shall be furnished with all necessary information, advice and guidance by the College to help them make an informed decision on their future course of action. We would also engage with any other external stakeholders who may be impacted by the closure e.g. employer partners.

The College will endeavour to deliver programmes in accordance with the course description on our website and in our prospectus however in the event of unavoidable changes to the course content in-year, the College will ensure that changes are implemented through consultation with students and that changes are restricted to the minimum to maintain quality of delivery and experience.

In the unlikely event that the College makes a strategic decision to close a programme on which students are already enrolled the College would wherever possible 'teach out' allowing affected students to complete their studies before the closure occurs. Where the circumstances are exceptional and 'teach out' is not possible the College will seek to support students in transferring to a similar programme and / or provide information support and guidance to transfer to an alternative provider. This will include providing interim certification of achievement.

Risk 6 - To mitigate the risk of the College not being able to deliver specific requirements of our franchised and validated provision with partner universities the Director for HE has developed appropriate contingency and sustainability strategies which includes the widening of the range and depth of knowledge across delivery teams and the identification and development of individuals in to deputising roles. The College also maintains regular review and monitoring of programmes in line with the quality assurance processes of our partner universities to identify risks and implement specific support to avoid any long term negative impact.

Risk 7 - We have agreements and processes in place with partner universities to mitigate the severity of the risk that the decision to terminate a partnership agreement would have on the

continuation of study for students on franchised or validated programmes. In the unlikely event that a partnership is dissolved we will be compliant with the partner universities exit strategy plans and procedures, for example programme intake suspension and closure procedures, and agree to work in cooperation with the partner institution to ensure all applicants and students are advised of the ending of the partnership and to ensure that all affected students are consulted around the alternative options available including the transfer of students to the partner institution.

The mitigating actions described above will be managed through the College's risk management arrangements which are designed to protect the College's assets and reputation. This process is managed on behalf of the Corporation by the Audit Committee who receive reports in respect of risk management at each meeting.

The College's Risk Management Policy recognises that risk management is an essential element of any large business' corporate management and governance arrangements and sets out the following responsibilities:

- The Corporation of the College has responsibility for the oversight of all activity in each organisation but has identified that its Audit Committee should have specific oversight over the risk management arrangements.
- The Senior Management team (SMT) has responsibility for ensuring that management of risk is properly addressed in all areas within their operational control.
- The Group Director Finance & Risk has the overall responsibility for ensuring that all organisations have a robust and effective risk management framework.
- For practical purposes, each identified Risk Owner shall update their portion of the relevant risk report in time for their contents to be reviewed prior to relevant Corporation / Board or Audit Committee meeting. A separate schedule of times shall be issued, ideally monthly.
- There will be a College level risk report owned and reviewed by the Executive, a Curriculum Risk Report owned and reviewed by the Deputy Principal and his / her Senior Management Team, a Support Risk Report owned and reviewed by the Chief Operating Officer and his / her senior management team and a Governor risk report owned and reviewed by the Corporation/Board and its Committees.
- Internal audit will monitor the risk management arrangements to ensure that they are adequate and effective in practice.

The College has appointed a Director for HE and a dedicated HE Quality Manager who, reporting to the Vice Principal of Quality, is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of progress against our action plan.

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

As per our Tuition Price Policy 2018/2019 - 2019-2020, the College sets out the following Refund and Waiver to Fee Policies:

Refund Policy - Full refunds will only be made if the College cancels the course, it is over-subscribed or the learner withdraws within two weeks of the course starting. This enables the learner to ensure they are happy with the course and also for the College to cancel the course if it becomes unviable. After this two week period the full fee is payable. In these circumstances the College will make a full refund and no administration fee will be charged. Where learners wish to apply for a refund due to exceptional circumstances they must write to the Executive Director Finance and Risk. Any claims accepted will be subject to an administration fee of £10. If the student has attended more than 6 weeks, then the College will retain a proportion of any fees in respect of one term. There will be no refund after the end of term one in respect of exceptional circumstances.

Waiver to Fee Policy - Fees may be waived or reduced on an individual basis by the Executive Director Finance and Risk where they are content that there is a valid commercial reason behind the decision.

Following approval of our Refund and Compensation Policy by the Board of Governors in July 2018 the College will publish this policy to outline the circumstances in which we will refund tuition fees and provide compensation to students in the unlikely event that we are no longer able to protect continuation of study as a result of the risks outlined in this Student Protection Plan. The policy will outline the provision for refunds and compensation for the impact that any risks outlined in this plan has on affected students' tuition fees, bursaries, travel costs, maintenance costs and loss of time.

The College's Annual Report and Financial Statement (July 2017) references our Reserves Policy which recognises the importance of reserves in the financial stability of the organisation. The College ensures that there are adequate reserves to support the College's core activities including sufficient reserves to provide refunds and compensation for those students who are affected as a direct result of the risks identified within this plan.

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

We will publish our Student Protection Plan to current and future students on our website by July 2018 and will reference the plan within HE student handbooks, student induction and board of study meetings.

The College will ensure that all staff are aware of the content and implications of the Student Protection Plan through termly Academic Board Meetings and through HE Staff Forums. The Plan will also be made available to all staff through our College Documents portal on our Extranet.

The College will review and republish the Student Protection Plan on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to be relevant and reflect the College's risk register.

The College is committed to involving students in its strategic decision making and operational management processes and firmly believes that embracing student views and offering an opportunity to have direct involvement in assessing and shaping their own learning experience will have a significant and effective impact on developing the College's quality improvement processes and increasing student success. Our Student Involvement Policy facilitates student input not only as a customer of the College but by ensuring students act as co-producers of their educational experiences and outcomes, both individually and collectively, via the College's decision-making processes. Student participation will be requested in the annual review of the Student Protection Plan through the Students' Union at HE Board of Study Meetings.

The College's Admissions policy sets out the following framework to inform students of any material changes to their course.

- The College endeavours to inform applicants at the earliest opportunity of any significant changes to the content or format of a course that are made between application and enrolment.
- The College aims to provide all the courses that are advertised in the prospectus, on the College website and on the UCAS website when applicable. However, if it becomes necessary to withdraw a course, the College will inform applicants to the course at the earliest opportunity and will give applicants the chance to be considered for an alternative course where possible. Where it is not possible to offer an alternative, or where an applicant does not wish to be considered for an alternative course at the College, applicants are able to request a substitute choice through UCAS or the College. The College will support the applicant in this process and provide the appropriate direction in order to achieve this.
- If any of the risks identified in this plan crystallise we will implement the plan and begin consultation with affected students at the earliest opportunity. We will establish the appropriate advice and support through consultation with the Students Union and will

provide as much information around the circumstances, and what action will be taken and when. We will actively engage in discussion with all affected students, collectively and individually, and will provide regular updates via the most appropriate method of communication.