



# HE Student Protection Plan 2019/20 UKPRN: 10001476

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## Introduction

The UCG HE Student Protection Plan outlines the procedures for closing, rescheduling, suspending or changing any HE programme of HE study. The plan is produced in alignment with the sector advisory guidance associated with the CMA UK HE Providers Advice on Consumer Protection Law (March, 2015), the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Part C) and the Equality Act 2010.

- 1.1 United Colleges Group is dedicated to supporting students achieve their potential. The organisation aims to ensure students achieve the best possible outcomes. The organisation will take every effort to ensure continuity for students in the event of unplanned changes.
- 1.2 The College may have to implement changes if the following were to occur: loss of validation for a HE programme or programmes, organisational decision to close a programme, changes to any programme content, disruption to programme delivery, industrial action from trade unions or organisational insolvency.
- 1.3 United Colleges Group currently offer a range of HE programmes with a diversity of validating partners. The risk of losing validation for any programme is currently low due to historic trends of quality assurance processes supporting the continuation of HE programmes.
- 1.4 The College Group has strong relationships with validating partners and in all cases, there are direct and dedicated links between the College Group and validating partners.
- 1.5 For all partnerships, the College Group is compliment and responsive to all due diligence protocols carried out by any validating partner.
- 1.6 In the event that a validating partner decide to withdrawn validation, the College Group will ensure protection measures by a) negotiating gradual withdrawal of validation to ensure student finish programmes that have started and b) negotiation of transferring students to another organisation who demonstrates the ability to deliver high quality HE programmes.
- 1.7 The United College Group curriculum planning process is designed to demonstrate and justify all new and existing provision being offered to learners of all ages funding types. This process the assessment of learner demand, employer needs and labour market intelligence.
- 1.8 Any programmes that are to cease will be assessed during the curriculum planning process and led by a senior team member.
- 1.9 The curriculum plan is moderated and approved by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.
- 1.10 A curriculum area cannot close or suspend a HE programme without the approval of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 1.11 In the event that that College Group cannot offer a specific course, the following will take place: where possible a gradual close with take place allowing students to complete their awards before closure, the transfer of students to another provider who can deliver high quality HE, immediate changes to marketing information, a continued approach to offer IAG to the appropriate people.

- 1.12 The organisation will plan to deliver all programmes as initially stated. In the event of any required changes, the organisation will aim to reduce any disruption to students or their learning. Students will also be notified and consulted of any required changes. Any changes that require partner consultation will have the appropriate procedures applied. If students are particularly unhappy with any required changes, they will be supported to transfer to an alternative provider if that is the required action.
- 1.13 United Colleges Group face circumstantial and or environmental risks such as disease, fire, and flood. Mitigation includes the ongoing risk assessment of such risks, Health and Safety inspections and the appropriate maintenance teams employed to support the organistaion. The College Group have the necessary insurance policies in place and a financial rating of 'Outstanding'.
- 1.14 The United College Group has a business continuity plan which provides assurance for the sustainability of the organisation.
- 1.15 The organisation supports a range of trade unions and assist members in this support function. There are frameworks in place for negotiations. United Colleges Group are dedicated to maintain good working relationships with all staff members and supporting a positive culture.
- 1.16 If there were periods of industrial action, the organisation would take the necessary steps to minimise any disruption to students and their learning.
- 1.17 The College Group has 'Outstanding' financial health as determined by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). There are a range of robust controls in place to ensure effective budget monitoring.
- 1.18 The United College Group may apply refunds in certain circumstances. This will be in line with the Fees Policy.
- 1.19 Any claims for compensation will be dealt with on an individual basis due to the complexity and support needed for individual learners.
- 1.20 The student protection plan will be shared with all students through course materials and in the online environment. The student protection plan will also be located on the College Group websites.
- 1.21 The College Group are committed to ensure students are protected and supported with accurate information when making enrolment or career decisions. The College Group have therefore committed to an independent and impartial consumer protection review which is to be completed before 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019.
- 1.22 The Student Protection Plan will be shared with UCG staff members.
- 1.23 The Student Protection Plan will be reviewed through formal governance arrangements.