

## Annex D: Template for a student protection plan

Provider's name: Askham Bryan College

Provider's UKPRN: 1000415

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**Student protection plan for the period 2020-21**

**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 risk that the provider would be unable to continue to operate and provide services to our students is very low due to the following:

The College estate extends through Yorkshire, Cumbria and the North East of England, with the York campus hosting the majority of HE provision. In addition to our main campuses at York and Newton Rigg, the College operates out of a further three campuses across the North of England.

Currently, the vast majority of Higher Education (HE) provision is delivered from our main York campus, with two of our smaller campuses currently delivering one programme each (at Newton Rigg campus and Stewart Park campus), however recruitment onto HE programmes at these campuses ceased from 2017/18 academic year, and as a result, both of these programmes are in the process of teach-out. From September 2019, it is not anticipated that any HE delivery will take place at campuses other than the York campus. The vast majority of our students are on full-time programmes, with a standard semesterised delivery of lectures, seminars and practicals, therefore no additional arrangements need to be considered for different modes of delivery.

The College has a Crisis Management Plan for immediate/unexpected threats to normal College operations, and there is an established Risk Management Group that meets regularly to review and update the College's risk register. The College has appropriate insurance in place to protect against a range of threats. The College intends to include the student protection plan within the wider risk register to ensure full consideration and review, as appropriate, takes place.

**1. Site closure (York campus) leading to non-continuation of course(s)**

The College considers itself to be **low-risk** in this area as the York campus is the biggest campus, serving both further education (FE) and HE students. Our financial performance is satisfactory and we have business continuity plans to deal with unexpected loss of resources or closure of the main site. These include the following:

- Utilisation of specialist resources at one of the College's other campuses
- In the event of part of the York campus closing (e.g. due to unexpected damage), we will arrange relocation of courses and students to another of the Colleges campuses
- Engaging with local Colleges, including a specialist land-based provider, regarding sharing of resources, in particular in relation to access to specialist land-based resources

**2. Material loss of specialist resources leading to non-continuation of course(s)**

The College considers itself to be **low-risk** in this area, as we operate out of multiple sites, the College will take immediate steps to ensure continuity of access to specialist resources by engaging with one of the satellite campuses as described above.

**3. Course closure leading to non-continuation of course(s)**

The College considers itself to be **low-risk** in this area. In the event of making a decision to cease recruitment onto a particular course, the College will ensure that currently enrolled students on such a programme remain on their enrolled programme of study until the time of award. This is a commitment bound by our terms of agreement with our partner universities.

**4. Inability to deliver material components of a course, including loss of specialist staff**

The College considers itself to be **low-risk** in this area. A significant number of core modules (credits) on each programme are designed to be delivered by an integrated team of staff within the Higher Education department. There is reliance on specialist HE staff to deliver components of programmes, however as we deliver FE at all campuses, there is a core specialist staff in all curriculum areas which could be deployed to deliver specialist elements of higher education courses should the need arise. If required, interim arrangements would be made to ensure continuation of staffing on specialist modules.

**5. Termination of validation arrangements with validating partners**

Although the College currently judges itself as **low-risk** in this respect, termination of validation arrangements is an inherent risk when relying on validating universities. We currently work with three validating universities, therefore we are not reliant on one validating university for all of our programmes, which spreads the risk. This situation also provides some options if one partner was to terminate validation arrangements, in that the College would consider extending validation arrangements with one of the other partners to ensure programmes could be revalidated to ensure continuation of recruitment. The College is also in the process of applying for degree awarding powers, which will give us more control over validation of programmes.

**6. Risks to relationships with local employers**

The College considers itself to be **low-risk** in this respect. For courses that require placements, the College works with a wide network of placement providers and there is no over-reliance on one particular placement provider. The College would strive to ensure all students requiring placements were suitably placed in the event of a non-continuation of a relationship with an employer. The College considers itself to have sufficient links with a wide-range of employers to ensure that alternative arrangements could be made in the event of losing employer support.

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

As described in Section 1, we have not identified any risks to continuation of delivery that are reasonably likely to crystallise. However, we will continue to monitor courses and update the risk register accordingly.

If we are unable to deliver courses at the York Campus, or parts of the York campus, we will put into place one of the plans outlined in Section 1.

### **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**

The College is currently updating the following policies to ensure it is fully compliant with the student protection plan for the 2018-19 academic year:

- FINCPO7 Fees Policy
- SCA23 Refund of Academic Fees
- QA8 Risk Management Policy

These policies will be ready in place early in the academic year once approved.

The College currently operates in accordance with Student Finance England guidelines, which considers the time of year of withdrawal from a programme of study, and SCA23 includes guidance on the following:

- Refunds for students in receipt of tuitions fee loan from the Student Loans Company.
- Refunds for students who pay their own tuition fees and whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor.
- Compensation/payment for additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course.
- Plans to honour student bursaries
- Compensation/payment for costs where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study

If the instance arises whereby we identify a group or groups of students at significantly increased risk of non-continuation, we will put in place insurance arrangements to provide refunds and compensation for those students for whom we have identified an increased risk of non-continuation of study. We will ensure that this is in place by 1<sup>st</sup> of August immediately prior to the start of each academic year whereby we have identified this increased risk.

The College currently has adequate insurance to mitigate against risks of non-continuation. As we have not identified any courses at significant risk of non-continuation at this point in time, it will be necessary to review the student protection plan annually to ensure appropriate consideration is given to the risks, existing and new, identified by the College's senior management team. As a College, we have significant land assets, which could become disposed of, if the risks were significantly increased. This would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for those groups of students who in future may be identified as at an increased risk of non-continuation of study.

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

We will use the website and intranet pages as the main communication method to students and staff regarding the provisions made in the student protection plan. We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students via the website and on the Key Information Page (website). In addition, current students may also access the student protection plan via the intranet.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by:

- Updating our course proposal paperwork (e.g. Application for Development Approval) to ensure consideration is given to the student protection plan when proposing new courses

- Ensuring Chairs of relevant committees where new courses proposals are considered/approved have given due regard to the student protection plan. Relevant committees include, but are not limited to: the Periodic and Critical Review Panel, Academic Development Committee, Academic Board and Senior Management Team Curriculum, Quality and Standards, Corporation (Quality and Standards)
- Delivering wider staff development sessions on the student protection plan to key central teams at the College, e.g. Student Services, Finance, Student Records teams.

The student protection plan will be reviewed annually through the Risk Management Group and presented to the Academic Standards Committee (a sub-committee of the Academic Board) for further review. We will work with students on the development of our student protection plan mainly via their participation as members in our key committees (Academic Development Committee, academic Standards Committee and Academic Board).

Periodic review of the plan will include;

- Review of the risks and threat status of current risks at the Risk Management Group meetings
- Identification of new risks to non-continuation as determined by external factors such as changes to government policy, demographics, funding etc.
- Identification of new risks to non-continuation as determined by internal factors such as changes to the College's financial health status, enrolment trends, staffing and other resource changes, etc.
- Student-led input via discussion forums and targeted focus groups with a sample of the student population.

If the student protection plan needs to be implemented, we will make immediate (3-5 working days) arrangements to inform the students if and when we need to make material arrangements to their course of study. Communication with students will normally be face-to-face in the first instance as the vast majority of our programmes are full-time, face-to-face delivery. We will further communicate via email and/or letter to inform all students of material changes to their course. Support will be offered to the students by our Student Services, Higher Education and Finance teams, in addition to advice and guidance provided by the course manager and academic leaders for the curriculum area in question. Collective support will be provided via a bespoke focus group to the groups of students affected, and will be delivered by the Higher Education management, supported by the Finance and Student Services teams.

Independent advice will be provided by the Student Services team and students may be supported by the College counselling service. Further advice may be sought from the Citizens Advice Bureau. We will ensure students are aware of these support services by signposting on our intranet and via curriculum staff.