

Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: **New City College (NCC)**

Provider's UKPRN: **10006963**

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Student protection plan for the period 2019-20

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, how those risks may differ based on students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise.

The College's HE Provision is split into two distinct groups.

Firstly, there is our own in-house provision, which is delivered across our four main campuses. We have a modest number of students on a mixture of one and two year programmes. On the basis that the College has "Good" financial health as assessed by the ESFA, there is no reason for this provision to be considered at risk. We judge the provision as low risk.

Within our curriculum teams we have a number of appropriately qualified staff who can teach on our higher education programmes. In addition, we have an arrangement with a recruitment agency to source appropriate teaching staff if the need ever arose. Therefore, we consider the risk of being unable to deliver provision due to staffing issues as low.

A potential risk to continuation of study is low recruitment. We are committed to teaching our programmes out to completion. Where a programme is to be withdrawn or closed, we will endeavour to teach out the cohort. If a programme is terminated mid-programme and we cannot ensure continuity, we will make arrangements to ensure that students have an opportunity to complete their programme. Transfer options, if relevant, will be discussed with students. We believe the risk of a mid-programme closure is low.

Havering College of Further and Higher Education will be joining NCC in August 2019. We consider the risk of merger affecting continuation of study as low.

Secondly, there is a much larger provision delivered through a partnership arrangement with UK College of Business and Computing (UKCBC) on two year higher national programmes. This provision is delivered at various UKCBC locations. Our partner organisation has day to day operational responsibility, (with oversight from NCC), thus matters could potentially be outside of our immediate control. A potential risk is if UKCBC fails to meet the regulatory requirements as set out by the Office for Students and the awarding organisation, Pearson, and is no longer able to continue to deliver our programmes. We therefore judge the level of risk of non-continuation as medium.

To mitigate against risk our partner organisation is required to inform us of any pending external regulatory visits, including reviews and audits. This includes preparations, ongoing findings and final outcomes. We will evaluate risk to continuation of study where applicable and, where deemed necessary, mitigate against risk by including actions within our monitoring activities schedule.

Where appropriate, we will also engage with external organisations (Pearson) in order to determine possible solutions if the need arose.

The NCC HE Quality department continuously monitors and checks to ensure that UKCBC is complying with its contractual obligations to avoid any adverse impact on the quality of teaching and learning as well as the student experience whilst on the programme. A bespoke five stage Internal Quality Assurance process (based on our in-house version) is in place to enable us to effectively monitor student life cycle from admission and certification through to further progression. The process enables us to ensure that any improvements are identified at an early stage for immediate corrective action(s) and ensure effective mitigation of potential risks. Monitoring reports are presented at partnership meetings and senior management team meetings. Actions raised are recorded within an ongoing action plan, which is monitored and reviewed at the subsequent meeting.

We believe this monitoring process minimises the risk that the provision will fail without us being able to make alternative arrangements in advance. If our monitoring checks indicate any issues that cannot be rectified we will apply restrictions to UKCBC's ability to recruit students through the partnership and intervene in respect of the provision.

2. The measures put in place to mitigate those risks that may reasonably likely to crystallise

The risk of non-continuation of both students based at College campuses and at our partner organisation will be included within our risk register from the 2019-20 academic year. The Audit Committee, a subcommittee of the Corporation Board, oversees the risk register.

We have in place processes to anticipate potential risks and identify the likelihood of a risk occurring. This allows us to put in place measures to mitigate against the risk occurring. The Audit committee reports annually to the Governing Body on the efficacy of the risk register, which is agreed by the Corporation.

For our in-house provision, we do not believe there is an increased risk.

For the students at UKCBC, we have a robust plan to cover the delivery and support to students in the event that our partner organisation is unable to provide continuation of study. Accommodation will be provided at one of five campuses owned by NCC, and within close proximity of the current delivery by UKCBC. There are well drawn up plans within NCC to cover emergencies and re-timetabling of activities.

We would seek to engage with key UKCBC staff to allow us to complete the delivery of programmes. The teaching staff resource will come from some existing UKCBC staff willing to join NCC, agency cover arrangements already set up at NCC with preferred suppliers who already provide such teaching resources, and existing NCC staff who are able to cover programmes at Levels 4 & 5.

The support to students will be covered within NCC as we have extensive experience of supporting students and are able to reallocate resources where required.

We believe the quality monitoring process and regular meetings provide an effective means of managing in-year changes. In addition, we have a comprehensive contract which allows for an annual review of the partnership including the right for either party to terminate if there are concerns about the effectiveness of the arrangement. The contract also limits the partner's ability to recruit above an agreed level without our express consent, which means we have to be satisfied that they have the resources to support the proposed level of activity.

As part of our annual review, we also obtain their following financial information:

- last audited financial statements;
- most recent management accounts;
- budget for the forthcoming year.

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

Our Higher Education Refund and Compensation Policy sets out circumstances in which we would refund tuition fees (along with other relevant costs) to students and/or provide compensation where necessary if we were unable to provide continuation of study to students who have started their programme. We consider refunds and compensation to be an action of final recourse and are committed to trying to ensure all students are able to continue and complete their studies. However, we recognise the importance of informing students about how we will refund or provide compensation should we be unable to preserve continuity of study.

The HE Closure of and Withdrawal of HE Provision Policy outlines the process by which higher education provision is formally closed and withdrawn. We review our higher education provision through annual programme reviews as well as via our higher education deliberative committee structure. At our partner organisation, we also review the provision through a schedule of monitoring activities.

Requests for programme termination shall be made to and considered for approval by the Higher Education Committee as outlined within the HE Closure of and Withdrawal of HE Provision Policy. Any plans to withdraw provision based at our partner organisation will be presented for discussion, and action planned at Senior Management Meetings with our partner organisation.

The College's financial strategy is to maintain a "Good" financial health and ensure that it has sufficient working capital to meet its obligations as they fall due. Currently, the College has negligible net debt and only a small part of its estate is given as security. Therefore, there is capacity to secure additional working capital by way of loan from the College bankers, should the need arise.

We have significant cash reserves, net current assets and appropriate working capital which would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for those students for whom we have identified as at an increased risk of non-continuation of study.

The website links to our refund and compensation policy, higher education terms and conditions, fees policy and withdrawal of HE provision are:

<https://www.ncclondon.ac.uk/downloads/docs/Higher-Education-Refund-and-Compensation-Policy.pdf>

<https://www.ncclondon.ac.uk/downloads/docs/New-City-Coll-HE-terms-and-conditions.pdf>

<https://www.ncclondon.ac.uk/downloads/NCC-Fees-Policy.pdf>

<https://www.ncclondon.ac.uk/downloads/docs/Pearson-HE-Closure-of-and-Withdrawal-of-HE-Provision-Policy.pdf>

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

We will publicise our policies and procedures covering the student protection plan, as well as the plan itself to current and future students by publishing it on the College website and the VLE. Student induction will also cover the student protection plan.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose programme changes. This includes policies and forms (Closure and Withdrawal of HE Provision, Programme Discontinuation Form), which are available on the staff intranet. There is

information available on programme closure within the higher education staff handbook. The HE Quality department provides support and guidance, as necessary.

NCC policies, procedures and guidance documents are made available to our partner organisation and we have oversight of our partner's policies and procedures.

For students at our partner organisation, there will be a link to the NCC website higher education webpage on the partner's website containing information on the student protection plan. In addition, student induction at our partner organisation will cover the student protection plan.

We will review our student protection plan through our Senior Management Team. Our students will be involved in review(s) through the staff-student liaison forums as well as through programme boards. A student representative is also a member of the College's Higher Education Committee (HEC) where policy decisions are discussed and agreed. Feedback on the student protection plan from students at our partner organisation will be gathered through the partner's student experience meetings and then discussed at the partnership meetings.

We will inform our students, including those at our partner organisation, if there are to be material changes to their programme. This will initially be through a meeting with students and then via a letter to each student. We will give students 25 days' notice when we need to make material changes to their programme.