

# **Student Protection Plan**

Provider's name: **New City College**

Provider's UKPRN: **10006963**

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## **Student protection plan for the period 2021-22\***

\*Approved by NCC Senior Management Team 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021.

### **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.**

New City College (NCC) is committed to ensuring our students achieve the best academic outcomes from their studies.

The College's HE provision consists of provision which is delivered across four campuses (Havering, Rainham, Redbridge and Hackney). The majority of the provision is based at the Havering - Ardleigh Green campus.

#### **Financial viability**

On the basis that the College has "Good" financial health, as assessed by the ESFA, there is no reason to consider the College of being at financial risk. We consider this risk as low.

#### **Closure of College campus**

The College does not plan to close any existing campuses where higher education programmes are delivered. We consider the risk of campus closure as low.

#### **Programme closure**

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 Where a programme is to be withdrawn or closed, we will endeavour to teach out the cohort.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.

#### **Staff shortages**

There is moderate risk that we may experience staff shortages in specialised areas which could impact on the delivery of specialised modules/units.

#### **Industrial action**

There is a risk of disruption and loss of teaching time through industrial action. This has the potential to affect all students.

#### **Loss of validating partner**

Currently the College has validating partnership agreements with the Open University, London Metropolitan University, the University of East London and Bath Spa University. We were successful in our latest institutional review/collaborative reviews with all partners, and received the maximum five years approval. We consider the risk of the loss of a validating partner as low.

## **Unsuccessful re/validation of a programme**

The College has a range of undergraduate degree programmes and one at Masters level which are validated by the Open University Validation Partnership, as well as two programmes validated by the University of East London and one programme validated by London Metropolitan University. We currently also have three validated programmes with Bath Spa University.

Each programme is revalidated every three to five years. Although it is unlikely that a programme is not revalidated, it is possible for any re/validation event to be unsuccessful and impact on the College delivering the programme.

## **Loss of awarding body approval**

The College has Pearson Education Ltd. approval to deliver named Higher National courses. We have been successful in the annual Pearson Centre Risk Assessments. We consider the risk of the loss of Pearson Education approval as low.

## **COVID 19 pandemic plan**

The College will continue to take measures based on UK government guidance throughout the period of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure continuity of studies and will make appropriate adjustments to delivery methods to ensure safety.

In person teaching will be delivered where this is practically possible and within current guidelines. Online resources will continue to support learning. Where a student self-isolating, the student will be able to take part in lectures remotely via Microsoft Teams. In the event for a further lockdown teaching delivery will be online. Lecturers will be in regular contact to support students through any phase of on-line teaching and will be monitoring student progress on-line through the VLE.

Staff training has been provided to support lecturers with on-line /remote teaching. This has included training on developing teaching and learning resources, teaching online and safeguarding protocols while on-line/ remote teaching. Guidance documents have been developed. Guidelines, help guides and resources including access to external resources are available on the staff intranet.

Where any temporary changes to assessment may be required we will discuss this with our university partners and, if appropriate, seek approval for any temporary changes. Students will be consulted prior to potential changes and notified shall any changes be made as per the College's student communication protocols.

In the event that a student cannot attend a placement setting, this will be deferred, until it is safe and possible for the student to attend. We will follow our university partners' current guidance, affected students will be permitted to trail a module.

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

### **Staff Shortages**

In regard to staff shortages in specialised areas, we will seek to fill lecturer gaps as quickly as possible, by moving other current members of staff with appropriate skills and experience into the vacant post(s). This can be identified quickly through our HR department. In the short term, we will continue to use agency staff where appropriate or link with other institutions to address any staff shortages as a result of specialism. If we are unable to provide students with the modules that were agreed, students will be offered alternatives. However, if this is unsatisfactory for them, the students will be referred to the College Complaints Procedure and the Refund and Compensation Policy. The College is looking at several succession planning strategies including the upskilling of existing staff both with higher level technical qualifications and management skills, and encouraging stronger links with local employers to attract industry experts to facilitate practical learning in specialised subjects, particularly STEAM-related disciplines.

### **Industrial action**

Where industrial action does occur, the College will seek to ensure that normal services are maintained as far as possible, and take all reasonable steps to fulfil its responsibilities to students in ensuring that any disruption is minimised and students are not disadvantaged by the action. This may mean workshops being arranged to support students.

### **Failed re/validation of a programme**

Re/validations take place each year between January and April. All programmes which are due to be re/validated in a particular year will be advertised with a statement explaining 'subject to re/validation'. In the event that a programme that students have applied for is not re/validated, the College will endeavour to find the students an alternative choice of study either at the College or externally. Students will be referred to the Refund and Compensation Policy as necessary.

## **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 Closure 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 Closure and Withdrawal of HE Provision Policy.

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 students 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:

- [Higher Education Refund and Compensation Policy](#)
- [New City College Higher Education Terms and Conditions](#)
- [New City College Fees Policy](#)
- [Closure and Withdrawal of HE Provision Policy](#)

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

We will publicise the Student Protection Plan to current and future students on our website with our other higher education policies and procedures.

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, and Programme Discontinuation Form), which are available on the staff intranet. The HE Quality department provides support and guidance, as necessary.

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. We will inform our students, 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. Student services can provide support to students.

We will give students 25 days' notice when we need to make material changes to their programme.