



Annex D: Student Protection Plan

Provider's name	Plumpton College
Provider's UKPRN	10005124
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Contact point for enquiries about this Student Protection Plan

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Student Protection Plan for the period 2021/22

An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for students at Plumpton College

The risk of a decision needing to be taken to close the College is low due to sound financial management and robust governance and leadership. The College works closely with The Royal Agricultural University (Validating Partner), who provide support and guidance to ensure our students are adequately protected and incorporated into their quality assurance process at Institutional approval and review.

The risk of a strategic decision to close a programme at the College is moderate due to the number of programmes running with fewer than 15 students at intake and the College's responsiveness to Industry demands ensuring all provision is reviewed annually. Annual Curriculum Portfolio Review at the College ensures any decisions to withdraw programmes occur with sufficient time to inform potential applicants. The College's policy is to teach out all withdrawn programmes so students 'on programme' are not affected by strategic portfolio review decisions.

The risk of the College losing student support funding is low. The College Management and Governing Body put significant senior resource in to ensuring the Institution meets the requirements for student support funding, with the requirements reviewed regularly at Senior Management Group and Corporation Meetings.

The risk of removal of Tier 4 status is moderate. The College ensures the organisation remains compliant for Tier 4 sponsorship through robust training for relevant staff, however Tier 4 status is also dependent upon the Ofsted outcome. The annual basic compliance assessment is carried out in time and we maintain a highly trusted status.



Loss of accreditation from Professional Statutory Bodies carries low risk. The College works closely with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and Animal Health Professions Register, the statutory bodies for the College's Veterinary Nursing Provision and Veterinary Physiotherapy Provision respectively. These relationships are maintained by strong professional dialogue with excellent communication processes in place.

There is low risk of industrial action by College staff or third parties. The College is highly committed to maintaining an effective employee relations culture and working with Trade Union colleagues to achieve reasonable solutions to matters that may arise from time to time.

There is a high risk of the unanticipated departure of key members of College staff affecting the delivery of individual modules within a programme of study. A small, specialist Institution is more at risk to impact from staff departure. The College ensures programmes are designed, and staff recruited, in such a way as to not become reliant on any individual staff member for delivery.

The measures that the College has in place to mitigate risks to delivery of provision for students

1. Overarching Measures for Protecting Students

1.1 The College will ensure it takes all reasonable measures to protect students from being adversely affected by any disruption to programme delivery or the wider student experience. A variety of measures will be put in place including, but not limited to:

- providing students with the opportunity to transfer to another programme
- modifying the delivery/content of an existing programme
- providing assistance to affected students to switch to a different provider

1.2 Where a student is required to transfer programme, or move to another institution, there are likely to be implications for student finance arrangements. The College's higher education central support team will be notified of students affected in the event of any the above steps being taken and will contact affected students and provide detailed information, advice and guidance based on their individual circumstances.

The following outlines the different circumstances and may affect a student's study, from the significant changes such as institutional closure through to changes at a modular level,



outlining the ways in which the College will help to ensure students receive the best outcome from their studies.

2. Significant Material Change

Institutional Closure

2.1 Institutional failure will be monitored through risk management, by Corporation and Senior Management, in accordance with Corporation's Instruments and Articles, and FE and HE regulatory bodies and funding agencies.

2.2 Where the College has no option, other than to close, it may consider measures such as those below to protect student experience:

- where possible, closing in a gradual way, over a period that would allow current enrolled students to complete their studies at the Institution
- where the above is not possible, in supporting students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers and (where appropriate financially) by compensating students where because of disruption to their studies they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss
- merging with another institution to maintain all or part of the current provision

Withdrawal of Designation

2.3 In the event of de-designation of its programmes for 'Student Support' purposes (resulting in the withdrawal of statutory student finance for its programmes), the College will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resulting disruption to students by, for example:

- working with the Office for Students to allow enrolled students to complete their year of study/programme
- where the above is not possible, supporting students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers and, where appropriate, financially compensating students where they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss because of disruption to their studies
- providing assistance for affected students by producing evidence in support of continuation of their studies
- merging with another Institution to maintain all or part of the current provision



Suspension of Programme

2.4 The College has procedures in place in the event of suspension/closure of a programme. Where there is material impact on the students, the effect will be mitigated by:

- communication with current students to provide assurance that they will not be adversely affected by the decision, and provide assurance that they are able to complete their studies at the Institution
- where possible, provision will be made to allow for the completion of studies where 'mitigating circumstances' have been presented
- consultation with stakeholders who may be affected to ensure appropriate equality impact assessments will also be undertaken
- where possible, future applicants will be notified in accordance with UCAS deadlines, allowing time for students to source an alternative suitable programme (where relevant) at the College

Major Changes to Programme Content

2.5 The College will use all reasonable endeavours to deliver the programme in accordance with the description applied to it in marketing material for the academic year in which a student began their programme. However, in the event of major in-programme changes to programme content the College will ensure that:

- changes are restricted to the minimum necessary to achieve the required quality of experience, and affected students are notified and consulted with as appropriate
- it works with students to ensure the offer is still acceptable
- where necessary it allows students the opportunity to withdraw from the programme
- where required, students will be offered reasonable support to transfer to another programme at the College, or to another provider



Suspension of Tier 4 Sponsor License

2.6 In the event of suspension of Tier 4 Sponsor status, the College will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resultant disruption to those services and to affected students by, for example:

- working with UKVI to allow enrolled students to complete their year of study/programme
- allow students already in receipt of a VISA based upon an allocated CAS from the College to enrol and commence their studies
- offer students who have not commenced their travel to the College, the opportunity to postpone their application pending the resolution of the suspension

Revocation of Tier 4 Licence

2.7 The College, in the event of revocation of Tier 4 Sponsor Licence will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resultant disruption to affected students by, for example, providing assistance to affected students to switch to an alternative sponsor

3. Changes to Regulatory Framework Affecting Specific Programme

Loss of Accreditation

3.1 In the event that the College could lose PSRB accreditation from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons or Animal Health Professions Register, the College will ensure an appropriate action plan is taken to protect student experience and gaining of accreditation before termination:

- providing assistance to affected students to switch to a different provider who holds the relevant accreditation

4. Disruption to College Activity

4.1 Where events result in term-time programme disruption, the College will normally consider whether it is practicable to make changes to programme delivery, rather than closing or suspending an affected programme.

4.2 Actions to minimise disruption may include:



- temporary short-term suspension of programme delivery (e.g. where there is a change in the programme delivery location or staffing, with appropriate actions to mitigate impact on students)
- changes to the programme delivery location or method, which may include distance learning
- changes to the staffing of a programme, for instance through a review of internal staff resources, including recruitment of area specialists, where appropriate
- offering students the opportunity to transfer to an alternative programme
- provision of reasonable support to students for accessing a programme run by another provider, including making arrangements for the transfer of credits and information about academic progress

Industrial Action

4.3 The College is highly committed to maintaining an effective employee relations culture and working with Trade Union colleagues to achieve reasonable solutions to matters that may arise from time to time.

4.4 Where industrial action does occur, the College will seek to:

- ensure that normal operations are maintained as far as possible
- take all reasonable steps to fulfil its responsibilities to students in ensuring that any disruption is minimised and students are not, as far as is possible to determine, disadvantaged by the action

Loss of Key Staff

4.5 Where possible the College will:

- seek to fill gaps as quickly as possible, by moving other current members of staff with appropriate skills and experience, into the vacant post(s) or recruiting externally, to avoid disruption
- where the College cannot avoid closing a programme, the policy as outlined in relation to programme closure will apply



4.6 The College's Critical Incident Plan covers other actions affecting business continuity, such as acts of terrorism, damage to buildings or equipment.

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

5. Refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to students

- The College's fees and refund policies are available on the website and include provision for refunds and costs associated with the plans laid out in this document
- The College has sufficient reserves to provide refunds to students on individual, or suite of programmes, and assets to cover refunds to all students in the event of Institutional closure

Information about how the College will communicate with students about this Student Protection Plan

6. Communicate with students about this Student Protection Plan

- The College will publish this, and future, student protection plans to students via the virtual learning environment, HE Student Hub
- This student protection plan will be made available on the College's website
- Students, via the student union and student voice mechanisms, will be involved in the annual review of this student protection plan