

Student Protection Plan 2023-2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As a registered provider of higher education it is a requirement under the Higher Education and Research Act that the University College maintains a Student Protection Plan, to set out how we will protect students' interests, in the event of a risk arising to the continuation of their studies.
- 1.2 This plan applies to all students studying for a qualification with AECC University College. It has been developed in consultation with the Student Union President and the Student Union Manager
- 1.3 When you accept an offer and enrol on an AECC University College course we fully expect to be able to deliver that course to the completion of your studies. However, in rare circumstances, events may occur that mean this delivery will no longer be possible. Such events include:
- The closure of the University College.
 - Loss of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory accreditation for a particular course, which means that students completing them would no longer meet the requirements to practice
 - Loss of University College title or Degree-awarding powers.
 - Suspension of Tier 4 licence by the UK Home Office, which means that we are not able to recruit and register students from outside the European Union.
 - A decision by us to close a course – for example because there are insufficient student enrolments.
 - A significant change in location which makes it impractical for students to attend the course.
- 1.4 The Student Protection Plan explains what the institution commits to do in the event that a particular risk arises:
- 1.5 In determining support for affected students, the University College will consider the needs of different students as defined by the Equality Act 2010, recognising that needs may vary. We also recognise that any student may need tailored support.

2. If we close a course of study

- 2.1 There may be occasions when the University College decides to close a programme (in line with our Programme Closure Policy and Procedure) because student enrolments render it non-viable from a resourcing or student experience perspective, or it has been superseded by a new programme. Students will be notified within 5 working days of the institution making this decision. Wherever possible, we will continue to deliver the programme in a 'teach-out' period so that existing students can complete their studies as planned to the original timescale. Where this is not possible, in line with our Student Transfer Policy, we will offer to transfer students to a similar or replacement programme at AECC University College, or where this is not available, we will assist students to transfer to a similar programme at another institution. To assist students in any transfer, we will provide students with a transcript detailing the credits awarded to date on the course being closed. Future applicants for a course that we have decided to close to new entrants will be notified within 5 working days of the institution making this decision and in accordance with UCAS deadlines (if appropriate).

3. If we make changes to a course including teaching staff and resources, course content, regulations and policies.

3.1 We will endeavour to avoid implementing change wherever possible during an academic year. However, staff changes can occur at any time during the year, and in these cases we will seek to move other members of staff with the appropriate skills and qualifications to fill gaps as quickly as possible or recruit externally so as to avoid unnecessary disruption. Changes in resources such as teaching rooms, facilities and equipment can also occur at any time in the year and in these cases we will act as quickly as possible to implement alternative arrangements so as to avoid any unnecessary disruption. Changes in course content, academic policies and student regulations will occur from time to time as an ongoing commitment to quality assurance and enhancement. These changes will be conducted in line with our Student Agreement and Framework/Course and Unit Modifications Policy and Procedure as appropriate, and approved through the institution's academic regulatory framework including Academic Board and Academic Audit and Policy and Academic Development and Quality Committees, all of which have student representation.

4. If we are unable to deliver a course in a specific location.

4.1 All our courses are delivered on site at our campus in Bournemouth. There may be very rare occasions where we have no alternative but to relocate delivery of a course of study or part of a course of study to a different location. In these cases we will give students as much notice as is possible, and assist students to attend their course of study at the new location. From time to time, we may also deliver particular programmes off-site under contractual agreements between AECC University College and potential students. If we are unable to continue to deliver a programme off-site, we will offer students the opportunity to complete their course of study as planned to the original timescale at our campus in Bournemouth. Under the contractual agreement, students are liable for all costs incurred (e.g. travel, accommodation and subsistence) if they choose to transfer to our campus in Bournemouth. Students not choosing to transfer to complete their course of study will be assisted in transferring to other courses in line with our Student Transfer Policy.

5. If we close the University College.

5.1 Where the entire institution has no other option than to close, students will be notified within 5 working days of the institution making this decision. We will endeavour to close the institution in such a way as to enable current students to complete their course of study within normal registration periods. Where this is not possible, we will assist students to transfer, in line with our Student Transfer Policy, to other providers including provision of academic transcripts detailing the credits awarded to date on the student's course of study.

6. If we lose the power to award degrees.

6.1 Students will be notified within 5 working days of the institution being informed of this decision. We will endeavour to ensure that current students can complete their course of study within normal registration periods. If this is not possible, the University College will explore the option of operating as a franchisee of a validating partner. Where this is not possible, we will assist students to transfer in line with our Student Transfer Policy to other providers including provision of academic transcripts detailing the credits awarded to date on the student's course of study.

7. If we are de-designated for student support purposes

- 7.1 Designation allows eligible UK/EU students to apply for tuition fee and maintenance loans. Affected students will be notified within 5 working days of the institution being informed of this decision. We will endeavour to ensure that all current students can complete their course of study within normal registration periods and continue to access their tuition and maintenance loans during this 'teach-out' period. If this is not possible, the University College will explore the option of operating as a franchisee of a validating partner. Where this is not possible, we will assist students to transfer in line with our Student Transfer Policy to other providers including provision of academic transcripts detailing the credits awarded to date on the student's course of study.

8. If we lose our Tier 4 licence

- 8.1 Our Tier 4 licence allows us to admit international students (i.e. students outside UK/EU and EEA regions). We will contact current and prospective international students within 5 working days of the notification of UKVI's decision to advise them of their options. We will provide assistance to affected current students where Tier 4 regulations permit transfer to another provider. We will assist students to transfer in line with our Student Transfer Policy to other providers including provision of academic transcripts detailing the credits awarded to date on the student's course of study.

9. If we lose PSRB accreditation for a course

- 9.1 We will contact affected current and prospective students within 5 working days to notify them of the PSRB decision. We will assist current students to transfer in line with our Student Transfer Policy to other providers that hold the relevant PSRB accreditation including provision of academic transcripts detailing the credits awarded to date on the student's course of study.

10. Implementation of the Student Protection Plan

- 10.1 In the event that we are requested to implement the terms of this Student Protection Plan affected students will be informed within 5 working days, collectively through the student VLE (Moodle) and individually via email.
- 10.2 Prospective applicants will be informed collectively via the AECC University College website, and individually as appropriate.

11. Refund and compensation policy

- 11.1 Should it become necessary to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to students and/or to provide compensation where necessary in the event that the institution is no longer able to preserve continuation of study, students should refer to the Refund and Compensation Policy available from the latest policies web page, and from the VLE (Moodle).

12. Review of the Student Protection Plan

- 12.1 The Student Protection Plan will be reviewed annually at SMG.

13. Publicising the Student Protection Plan

- 13.1 The Student Protection Plan is publicised to current and future students through the institutional website and Moodle (student Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)), alongside our Student Agreement (terms and conditions). It is publicised to staff through the staff portal. Staff are also made aware of the impact of the Student Protection Plan through published policies about course approval, review, modification and closure.

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Owner	Vice-Chancellor
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