

City of Wolverhampton College

Student Protection Plan for the period 2019/20

City of Wolverhampton College (CoWC) contributes to the prosperity of the city and the wider region as a key provider of high quality education, training and skills development and has many features in place to ensure our higher education is successful.

City of Wolverhampton College is committed to ensuring that you achieve the best academic outcome for your studies. However, there may be unforeseen circumstances, often outside the College's control, which result in changes having to be made to your studies. Whilst risks are rare, this plan discusses them and how we may mitigate them.

City of Wolverhampton College has many systems in place to ensure Higher Education success. The likelihood of the risks outlined of occurring are considered to be low. However, we have considered a wide range of potential scenarios and set out what we could do in each eventuality to ensure you understand our commitment to the successful completion of your studies.

What does this plan cover?

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires the College to have a Student Protection Plan, like this Plan, to protect your interests and detail the steps we would take where significant changes had to take place affecting the quality and/or continuation of your study, such as (but not limited to):

- The college not being able to operate
- Partial or full closure of a site
- Change to programmes
- Loss of accreditation
- Ceasing to deliver programmes or changes to delivery mode
- Staffing issues
- Industrial action

Which students does this plan apply to?

This plan covers City of Wolverhampton College Higher Education Students. If you are studying with us through a partner institution, because of the nature of our agreement with the relevant University's Student Protection Plan will apply.

How we communicate this plan

We publicise our Student Protection Plan to current and future students by including it as part of the essential information provided to you at enrolment and during your induction period to the College. It is also published on our website and the College our Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle).

How we review this plan

We review our Student Protection Plan during the academic year by ensuring it is included within the existing annual reviews of documents related to students. There is also an extensive programme of focus groups carried out with a range of groups throughout the year. We ensure the wider student population can become involved with the review process by publicising and promoting these.

Staff are made aware of the implications of our Student Protection Plan when they propose course changes by an impact assessment as part of the process of curriculum planning and programme validation.

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The Student Protection Plan is approved by the College's Higher Education Management Board, the Executive Management Team (EMT) and the Governing Body. Higher education risks form part of the College's Risk Register which is regularly reviewed by the EMT and our Governing Body.

The Student Protection Plan is in place to address circumstances which may arise and result in the College making changes which may affect current students.

We reserve the right to amend the Student Protection Plan from time to time based on legal or regulatory change affecting you, us or best practice in the higher education sector. The College does not accept any liability for any consequential or other economic loss (including loss of profits, loss of goodwill or loss of opportunity) resulting from any of the matters covered by this Plan. Only foreseeable loss will be covered by the College.

Possible risks to your study and how we would manage these:

The risks to the continuation of study for our students arise from both internal events and/or external events outside our control.

What happens if the College is unable to operate?

Institutional failure is monitored in accordance with all higher education regulatory body requirements and any likelihood of this identified and carefully managed through the College's risk register procedures. The risk that City of Wolverhampton College as a whole organisation would be unable to continue operating is medium to high. However, the College has put in place measures to ensure you would not be adversely affected by any situation that may arise.

The procedure for closing a college is set out in statute and the priority of the secretary of state is to ensure the continued availability of the provision the college was providing and to safeguard your learning. Where we have no option other than to cease operating, we would consider measures to protect your student experience, such as:

- where possible, closing in a gradual way, over a period that would allow you to complete your studies at the college;
- merging with another institution to maintain all or part of the college's current provision;
- where the above is not possible, by supporting you to transfer to an appropriate programme at another provider;
- where appropriate, by compensating you for disruption to your studies where you have suffered demonstrable material financial loss.

The College has a detailed Business Recovery Plan that aims to provide guidance for the resumption and recovery of College services in the event of a disruption/disaster/crisis.

If part or all of a site closes:

In the event of the College having to close or significantly reduce provision on one of our sites, full consideration will be given to the nature of our student population. City of Wolverhampton College is made up of four main campuses. Three of these campuses are within close proximity within the City of Wolverhampton, the other is based within Telford.

For example, if we were unable to deliver our courses at our Paget Road site, we have similar facilities at our Wellington Road campus and would, if required, revisit timetabling to allow all of the scheduled teaching to take part in the available facilities. This may include student contact sessions being held

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outside of normal office hours. Where such an approach is taken, appropriate consultation will normally be conducted with students who may be affected. If required, we may need to deliver programmes via alternative means, such as distance learning. If necessary, there would also be consideration of relocating provision to an alternative suitable location. This may include hiring spaces for programme delivery and/or installing temporary buildings on the College's campus or other locations.

In the event that under any of the above scenarios, or where you are a student studying directly at the College and for any other reason caused by our omission or default, you are unable reasonably to continue your studies then [our Refund and Transfer Policy](#) will apply.

We are currently exploring the move to a City Learning Quarter by 2020, which would see the closure of our Paget Road campus. We are committed to letting you know about any proposed changes as early as possible, setting out clear information about what we plan to do. Students and provision will be moved to the new campus at end of programmes to avoid any unnecessary disruptions.

What happens if the College needs to make a change to programmes?

We are committed to letting you know about any proposed changes as early as possible, setting out clear information about what we plan to do and what your options are. We will take all reasonable steps to enable you to complete your studies with minimum disruption as intended. If this is not possible we may offer you:

- the opportunity to move to another programme;
- a modified version of the same programme;
- assistance to switch to a different provider;
- a move to a different campus;
- where all reasonable steps have been taken to secure continuity of your studies, as a last resort, a financial refund and/or compensation (for cases where it is not possible to preserve the continuation of study) will be agreed in accordance with and [our Refund and Transfer Policy](#).

Where you are required to transfer programme, or move to another site, there may be implications for your student finance arrangements and/ or you may need support from the College to access the new arrangement. If you are affected, the College's Student Services team will contact you and provide detailed information, advice and guidance based on this plan, our Fees Policy and [our Refund and Transfer Policy](#).

Where we anticipate changes which will affect your studies we are committed to:

- Letting you know as soon as possible
- Where appropriate working with student representatives to discuss the changes
- Providing you with advice and guidance on the proposed changes and the options that you have applying, where relevant, [our Refund and Transfer Policy](#).

The programme you are enrolled on loses its accreditation

In the unlikely event of the College losing its accreditation for your programme, full consideration will be given to the nature of our student population. We would consider measures to protect your student experience, such as those below:

- Working with relevant bodies to allow you to complete your year of study/programme

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- Where the above is not possible, supporting you to transfer to an appropriate programme at another provider and, where appropriate, financially compensating you where you suffer demonstrable, material financial loss because of disruption to your studies
- Assisting you by providing evidence/letters/statements in support of continuation of your studies.

For loss of validation for our Foundation Degree programmes, please refer to the Student Protection Plan by The University of Wolverhampton.

If we cease delivering a programme or change its delivery mode:

In the event that there is disruption to programme delivery we will, rather than closing the programme, take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption. These may include any one of the following, depending on what is appropriate for the circumstances:

- temporary short-term suspension of programme delivery
- changes to the delivery location or method, which may include distance learning;
- delivering a modified version of the same course;
- offering you the opportunity to transfer to an alternative programme;
- providing reasonable support to you to access a programme run by another provider, including making arrangements for the transfer of your credits and information about your academic progress;
- provision to ‘teach out’ a course for existing students.

We are committed to letting you know about any proposed closures as early as possible, setting out clear information about what we plan to do and what your options are.

City of Wolverhampton College has a formalised procedure for closing or withdrawing programmes/courses, taking account of the need to safeguard the interests of any students and interests of applicants. A decision will normally be made giving students approximately two-weeks' notice.

Where you are required to transfer your programme/course, or move to another campus, there may be implications for your student finance arrangements and you may need support from the College to access new arrangements such as through transport, support with childcare or caring responsibilities etc.

If you are affected, the College's Student Services team will contact you and provide detailed information, advice and guidance based on this plan, our Fees Policy and [our Refund and Transfer Policy](#).

Key academic staff involved in delivering a programme becoming unavailable

This may happen as a result of long term sickness, retirement, death or leaving the College. Where possible we will:

- seek to fill gaps as quickly as possible, by assigning responsibility to other current members of staff with appropriate skills and experience or recruiting externally, to avoid disruption
- Contact teaching agencies who we have established relationships with to provide cover
- Consider further recruitment opportunities

If the above were fully exhausted we would then look to our partner, The University of Wolverhampton, to assist in support.

The structure of the College contributes to the security of the provision by established links between our Further Education and Higher Education provision. For example, sharing of facilities and resources

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(especially in terms of staff) provides increased flexibility and security for the continuation of the provision.

If industrial action affects your studies

We have established frameworks for consultation and negotiation with recognised Trade Unions. We are 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. Where industrial action does occur, we will seek to ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible and take all reasonable steps so that you are not disadvantaged by the action.