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## **Student Protection Plan**

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.

This Student Protection Plan (SPP) is intended to provide assurances to our students, and to the Office for Students (OfS) that the College has appropriate arrangements in place to protect the quality and continuation of our student experience.

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.

### **Which students does this plan apply to?**

This plan covers CoWC higher education students. The College has a long established partnership with the Awarding Organisation, Pearsons, for higher national and certification programmes/courses and has a successful partnership with The University of Wolverhampton who validate our Foundation Degree programmes.

If you are studying with us through a partnership arrangement, their SPP will apply to you. Details can be found on The University of Wolverhampton website [www.wlv.ac.uk](http://www.wlv.ac.uk)

### **What does this plan cover?**

The likelihood of these risks occurring are low, but in this SPP we are committed to providing you with a wide range of potential scenarios and setting out what we would do in each eventuality, such as (but not limited to):

- a) If there was closure of a College campus
- b) If there was a loss of accreditation from Awarding Organisations or validation from partners
- c) If there was a need to close or make changes to a programme/course
- d) If there were changes required during a programme/course
- e) If there were disruptions due to the event of a major incident
- f) If the College experienced staff industrial action

### **How will this plan be communicated?**

We publicise our SPP to our students by:

- publication on our website
- writing to all our current student to advise of the implementation of the plan
- including it as part of essential information provided at interviews of potential students
- including it as part of induction to the College for enrolled students
- publication on our College Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Concerns relating to the implementation of this plan can be raised through the College's Complaints Policy and Procedures. Details can be found on our website [www.wolvcoll.ac.uk](http://www.wolvcoll.ac.uk)

We will share our SPP with our staff by publication on our staff intranet pages where our higher education policies and procedures are accessible. This will be regularly brought the attention of our staff through our tutor forums and annual CPD activities.

### **How will this plan be reviewed?**

We review our SPP annually. In addition to our programme of student engagement activities carried out throughout each academic year, the review may include consultation with:

- Our Student Facilitator(s)
- Student Union representative(s)
- Programme/course representative(s)
- Members of our Student Council.

The SPP will be approved by 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 the Governing Body.

We reserve the right to amend the SPP 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.

#### ***a) What if the College takes a decision to close a campus where I study?***

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 two main campuses. Two 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 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.

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.

**b) What if the College loses its accreditation powers from regulatory bodies?**

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
- 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 SPP by The University of Wolverhampton.

**c) What happens if the College needs to close your programme/course?**

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.

We will take all reasonable steps 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/course
- A modified version of the same programme/course
- Assistance to switch to a different provider
- A move to a different campus
- A financial refund (for cases where it is not possible to preserve the continuation of study) in accordance with our Refund and Transfer Policy.

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 Hub will provide detailed information, advice and guidance based on this plan, taking account of your individual circumstances.

**d) What if there are changes required during you programme/course?**

We will take all reasonable steps to enable you to complete your studies with minimum disruption as intended. Departures of staff may happen as a result of long term sickness, retirement, death or leaving the College. Here at City of Wolverhampton College most of our delivery teams teach on both higher education and further education programmes, therefore if there was an issue we would seek to fill gaps as quickly as possible by assigning responsibility to other current members of staff with appropriate skills and experience to avoid disruption.

In the event we were not able to provide the quality of teaching, we will:

- 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.

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.

**e) *What happens if the College is affected by an event of a major incident?***

We have 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. This plan sits alongside a Crisis Management Plan which sole purpose is to deal with the immediate crisis.

The Business Recovery Plan is designed to assist the recovery of services in a timely manner to protect the interests of the College, its staff and students. The Business Recovery Plan sets out a series of measures aimed at:

- Ensuring the College environment is fit for purpose
- Minimising or limiting the damage to buildings and assets
- Returning to full operational activities as soon as possible.

**f) *What if there is industrial action at the College that will affect my 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.