

Student Protection Plan for the period 2019-20

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1. What is a Student Protection Plan?

Student Protection Plans set out how a university protects its students, and what its students can expect to happen, should a course, campus or university close. The purpose of these plans is to ensure that students can continue and complete their studies, or can be compensated if this is not possible.

The University is required to have an approved Student Protection Plan as a condition of its registration with the [Office for Students \(OfS\)](#).

2. How have students shaped Winchester's Student Protection Plan?

This Student Protection Plan was developed in partnership between the University and Winchester Student Union.

It is reviewed annually by the Student Academic Council, an advisory group to the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Management Team that includes the [Student Union sabbatical officers](#), student representatives from each programme at the University and representatives from prescribed student demographics (e.g. disabled students, mature students and commuting students).

If you have any questions about the Student Protection Plan, please contact SU_education@winchester.ac.uk

3. What are the risks for students at Winchester and how are students protected?

We have considered scenarios that could result in course, campus or closure, and evaluated the likelihood of these risks materialising and the potential impact of these risks on students (low, medium, high). Most scenarios are low risk, except for 2:

- Risk 1: we are no longer able to deliver one or more of our courses to students.
- Risk 2: we are unable to deliver material components of one or more courses.

Measures are in place to lessen these 2 risks.

The University also has a Refund and Compensation Policy in place, to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to students and compensation where necessary in the event that it is no longer able to preserve continuation of study.

4. Key terms explained

The terms below are referred to in the Student Protection Plan.

Term	Definition
Cash flow	Cash flow is the money that is moving (flowing) in and out of the University at any point in time. A positive level of cash flow should be maintained for the University to remain financially sustainable.
HEFCE	The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) distributed public money for teaching and research to universities and colleges. It closed on 1 April 2018 and has been replaced, in part, by the Office for Students (OfS).
Material component	A significant component, inclusion or trace in the 'material' of which a course is made. Examples of material components include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Award - Course title - Professional accreditation - Core modules - Additional costs (for example the addition of a DBS clearance check) - Assessment patterns
Net liquidity	Liquidity describes the degree to which an asset can be bought or sold in the market at a price reflecting its market value. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash is universally considered the most liquid asset • Fixed assets, such as buildings and land, are all relatively illiquid. Liabilities are obligations of the University; they are amounts owed (or bills that need to be paid) for a current or past transaction. Staff wages and tax are examples of liabilities. Net liquidity is a strict measure of an immediate or near-term liquidity position of the University, calculated as liquid assets less current liabilities.
OfS	The Office for Students (OfS) is a non-departmental public body of the Department for Education, acting as the regulator and competition authority for the higher education sector in England.
OFSTED	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) is a non-ministerial department of the UK government, reporting to Parliament. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting a range of educational institutions, including state schools and some independent schools.
QAA	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is the independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education.
Reserves	Reserves - the accumulated funds (historic surpluses less deficits) produced from the University's activities. Restricted reserves - these come from funds which must be spent in accordance with the funding body's instructions. Any expenditure from these funds will decrease the restricted reserve Unrestricted reserves - these arise from the funds which have been earned or received with no imposed restrictions. We do have to spend these funds for the University's charitable purpose, which is the advancement of education.
Student Union sabbatical officers	A sabbatical officer is a full-time officer elected by students (i.e. the members of a students' union). There are 3 sabbatical officer roles at Winchester Student Union: President; Vice President, Education and Welfare and Vice President Activities.
Tier 4 visa licence	The University has a Tier 4 visa licence . This means it is eligible to enrol international students (students from outside of the European Economic Area - EEA).
Valuable fixed asset estate	Asset – an item of property or resource owned by the University, regarded as having value and available to meet our commitments. Fixed asset – assets which are purchased for long-term use and are not likely to be converted quickly into cash, such as land, buildings, and equipment. The University's estate (buildings and land) is a fixed asset .

5. Student Protection Plan for the period 2019-20

Risks

- a) The risk that the University of Winchester as a whole would be unable to operate is very low because our financial performance is strong, with [net liquidity](#) of 71 days (2018/19). We have recently reviewed our business continuity approach and have plans in place to respond to a range of scenarios including: lack of availability of all or part of the campus teaching space and student accommodation, significant disruption to our online and digital services, or a terrorist incident on campus.. This very low risk affects all of our students equally.
- b) The risk that the University of Winchester would lose the power to award degrees is very low as we are an established HE provider with a successful track record of awarding both teaching and research degrees. We were commended in our last [QAA](#) review of quality and standards, are rated 'Outstanding' by [OFSTED](#) and had our last successful [HEFCE](#) Assurance Review in January 2018. This very low risk affects all of our students equally.
- c) The University will not be operating with probationary degree awarding powers. This is not a risk for our students.
- d) The risk that one or more of the locations at which the University of Winchester operates would become unavailable is very low because we are a campus-based University and we own the vast majority of land on which our buildings are situated. The University is not considering any closures or significant changes, and we are investing in new buildings and student accommodation. Where the University leases premises, we have business continuity plans in place in the event of these teaching spaces or student accommodation becoming unexpectedly unavailable. This very low risk would be likely to disproportionately affect our disabled students and those with caring responsibilities if it were to materialise, as they generally have less flexibility with regards to location and timing of teaching.
- e) The risk that the University is no longer able to deliver courses to our students in one or more subject areas or departments is relatively low. Although the University regularly reviews its portfolio, this is with a view to expanding subject areas and broadening the range of departments and subjects available. This risk is relatively low for all of our students equally.
- f) The risk that the University is no longer able to deliver one or more courses to our students is low but could crystallise because we continuously review the portfolio and seek to rationalise courses with low overall demand or where student experience and satisfaction levels do not meet the University's standards and expectations. However, it should be noted that the University would always endeavour to teach out current students, except in extreme circumstances. This low risk would therefore only potentially affect applicants, and is very unlikely to affect current students.
- g) The risk that the University is no longer able to deliver [material components](#) of one or more courses is low but could crystallise because we are a relatively small institution and therefore do have some single person dependencies for teaching in some areas. However it should also be noted that, as a smaller institution, we are well-practised at managing these risks. This low risk is more significant for the students on our smallest courses but does not disproportionately affect any particular group of student characteristics.
- h) The risk that the University is no longer able to deliver one or more modes of study is low. We have business continuity plans in place in the event that teaching space, student accommodation and/or our digital and online resources become unavailable. This low risk is more significant for the students on our distance learning programmes but does not disproportionately affect any particular group of student characteristics.
- i) The risk that the University of Winchester would no longer be able to recruit or teach a particular type of student is low, pending any major changes to Government policy. We are an established and trusted holder of a [Tier 4 visa licence](#) and have an excellent track record of successful visa applications. This risk is relatively low for all of our students equally.

Measures in place to mitigate those risks considered to be reasonably likely to crystallise

There are two risks identified above where we consider the risk of their crystallisation to be low but possible.

The first risk is that we are no longer able to deliver one or more of our courses to students. A decision to cease to offer a course with low demand would impact applicants but not current students as the University would continue to teach out current students. A decision to cease to recruit to a course would be taken at least 28 calendar days before the course starts and applicants would be notified as soon as reasonably practicable. The University would work proactively with the applicant to provide a suitable alternative course at the University or suggest a suitable course at an alternative educational institution.

Any decision to discontinue a course with students enrolled on it would only be taken in exceptional circumstances, for example where there were serious concerns about the student experience and satisfaction that could not be resolved by changes to the current course, and where such a decision was believed to be in the best interests of the student. If such a decision were necessary the University would consult with students and seek their agreement to transfer to an alternative course at the University. The University would also take all reasonable steps to assist a student to transfer to a course at another institution where this was the preferred option of the student.

The second risk is that we are unable to deliver material components of one or more courses. As noted above, as a smaller institution we are well-practised at managing these risks. Where such changes are necessary students on the course will be notified in writing as soon as reasonably practicable and wherever possible changes will not come into effect until the next academic year. Students would be consulted in advance wherever possible and the University would take all reasonable steps to mitigate the impact on students. If a student does not agree that the change is fair they are able to seek redress under the University's Complaints Policy.

The University's and partner's responsibilities for students enrolled on provision at collaborative partner institutions under validation arrangements are detailed in Memoranda of Understanding between the University and each partner. In all cases where a student's programme of study is at risk of not being delivered the University would provide appropriate support to the partner institution and to the affected students to ensure that they can continue to study towards their intended award. Where possible the University would offer the option of transfer to a relevant course at the University.

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

The University has a Refund and Compensation Policy in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to our students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that we are no longer able to preserve continuation of study.

The University of Winchester considers itself financially sustainable and at low risk of being unable to operate due to financial instability. The risk is low due to:

- Consistently strong net liquidity (71 days, 2018/19)
- Healthy net [cash flow](#) as a percentage of income (7.1%, 2018/19)
- Strong unrestricted [reserves](#) (1.7 times income, 2018/19)
- Valuable [fixed asset](#) estate (£199mil net book value, 2018/19)

The University's historical financial performance has been strong and, as a long established and respected University, we have a wealth of experience in preserving continuation and quality of study for affected students on those rare occasions when we have ceased to offer a particular area of curriculum. The University also operates an active Business Continuity Planning group that regularly tests our resilience to business interruption scenarios and develops mitigation plans.

The University is investigating the possibility of insurance arrangements to support the provision of funds and compensation, where necessary, in the event we are no longer able to preserve continuation of study for one or more students.

Information about how we communicate with students about our Student Protection Plan

Before arrival, we will communicate our Student Protection Plan with offer holders through a link to the Plan on our website. Our Plan will be on our website, under our Policies and Procedures section. The Policies and Procedures section is referred to a number of times in the communications applicants receive from us pre-arrival.

On arrival, as part of the enrolment process, students are given a Student Handbook which will include the Student Protection Plan. The Student Handbook is given out in hard copy and is also available digitally. The Student Protection Plan will also be available via an intranet search and will be referred to on course and Faculty homepages on Canvas.

Information about how we communicate with staff about our Student Protection Plan

The Student Protection Plan is published on the staff intranet pages. It will also be incorporated into our policy and procedures for course changes and withdrawal and will be included in relevant staff training activities.