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HE STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN

This policy applies to all College activity including ESF contracts.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Leicester College (“the College”) is committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for students. Occasionally, it may be necessary to make changes to courses or modules that have implications for students’ continued study. In order to protect the interests of students all higher education providers are required by the Office for Students (OfS) to maintain a HE Student Protection Plan.
- 1.2 We have considered the range of risks to continuation of study and are confident that these risks are low. However, the College will provide students with reasonable notice and will consult with them with regards to significant changes that might, in exceptional circumstances, be necessary. As the College continues to respond to the impact of COVID-19 it will ensure that students are fully informed of the latest official advice from the UK Health Security Agency, NHS and any other local health authority guidance. Students will be advised of any changes being made to their programme as a result of the pandemic. In some circumstances, the College may need to make changes at short notice.
- 1.3 This plan outlines the measures that the College will take to protect the interests of its current and prospective higher education students in the event of:
 - Course closure
 - Material change to course content or delivery including a move to online delivery in response to Government instigated lockdown or other such event
 - Change of awarding partner
 - Campus change or closure
 - Change to mode of study
 - Loss or restriction of Office for Students registration.

2. COURSE CLOSURE – EXISTING STUDENTS

- 2.1 The risk of closure of an ongoing course is low, however, the College has established procedures in place in the event of suspension or closure of a course. In such an event the College will operate a ‘teach out’ procedure that allows students to complete their qualification within the maximum period of enrolment and will ensure the maintenance of academic standards and

conditions required for students to meet the stated learning outcomes of their course. Students will be notified of the impact any closure has on the opportunity to interrupt and/or resit their studies. All other reassessment opportunities remain the same.

- 2.2 In the extremely unlikely event that it is not possible to teach out a course, we will consult with students about the most appropriate action which might include, but is not limited to, the transfer to another suitable course within Leicester College, transfer to another suitable course at another provider in the region, or early exit from the course with an exit award such as a Certificate of Higher Education. The College will endeavour to ensure that students' learning aspirations are met. Refunds would be allocated in accordance with the College's Fee Policy.

3. COURSE CLOSURE – APPLICANTS

- 3.1 If the decision is taken to close a course to new entrants, we will notify applicants and inform them of their options, which may include transferring their application to another Leicester College course, if relevant and appropriate. The College will also make available support from our careers team who will work with them to find alternative courses at other HE institutions. We will assist with making changes to UCAS choices with no further undue cost.

4. CLOSURE OR SUSPENSION OF HONOURS DEGREE TOP-UP ROUTE

- 4.1 Many of our programmes at Level 4 (i.e. HNC) and 5 (i.e. Foundation Degree/HND) are designed to lead to progression to articulated one year Honours Degree 'top up'. In the unlikely event of closure or termination of a Honours top-up route, the College's HE team and careers service will work with students to identify appropriate alternative top-up courses where required.

5. MATERIAL CHANGES IN-YEAR TO COURSE CONTENT AND DELIVERY

- 5.1 The risk of in-year changes to course content is low as our HE courses are delivered by integrated teams of academic staff. In rare cases, however, changes to modules or units may be required where the College finds itself unable to deliver particular components of a course due to staffing or resource issues. In some cases, such as enforced College closure or inability of staff to be on site, it may be necessary to move some face to face delivery online in order to ensure that delivery can continue. Should this happen, we would endeavour to keep changes to a minimum and keep students informed that they may withdraw and transfer to another institution if they feel the course no longer meets their requirements. The College will ensure that students are supported throughout the process.
- 5.2 It is more likely is that changes to course content may occur due to re-validation of programmes and updating the curriculum in line with developments in the associated industry or profession. In such cases, academic staff will consult with existing students and the College will amend previously published information, for example the prospectus, and notify applicants of the changes.

- 5.3 In cases where significant and material changes have to be made to delivery patterns (i.e. timetables) the College will carefully consider impact to students, taking account of their needs, characteristics, and circumstances, and students will be consulted and given timely information about the outcome. We would endeavour to keep changes to a minimum and inform students that they may, with our support, withdraw and transfer to another institution if they feel the course no longer meets their requirements.

6. CHANGE OF AWARDING PARTNER

- 6.1 All Leicester College HE qualifications are validated and awarded by De Montfort University or Pearson Edexcel. These are well-established, reputable awarding organisations and their position in the HE market is strong so closure and market exit is extremely unlikely.
- 6.2 In the event of withdrawal or non-renewal of validation of a course, provision is made for students to complete their qualification through teach out within the maximum period of enrolment (including reassessment of work where relevant).
- 6.3 Current applicants will be advised of alternative courses and existing students notified of the termination of the partnership and arrangements agreed to manage it.

7. CAMPUS CLOSURE OR CHANGE TO COURSE DELIVERY LOCATION

- 7.1 Leicester College's higher education courses are delivered over three established and well-maintained campuses: Abbey Park, Freeman's Park, and St Margaret's. There are currently no plans to dispose of any of these properties.
- 7.2 Occasionally, the decision to move a course from one campus to another might be taken where it is felt this is in the best interest of students in terms of the facilities and resources available in a certain location. Should this happen, the College will carefully consider impact to students, taking account of their needs, characteristics, and circumstances, and students will be consulted and given timely information about the outcome. The campuses are all within Leicester city centre with good access to public transport. Childcare facilities are available on site at Freeman's Park and Abbey Park. Should students be affected by campus change in relation to childcare requirements they will be advised on alternative services and this will be taken into consideration as far as is reasonable and possible when making timetabling decisions.
- 7.3 In some circumstances beyond our control campuses may be closed temporarily. In such instances alternative sites may be used in line with our business continuity plan after consultation with students. This might involve accessing resources from our strategic partner DMU, other local colleges or Leicester City Council. Where this is not possible for example in the case of a public health related local lockdown, course teams will move towards greater delivery via online.

8. CHANGE TO MODE OF STUDY

- 8.1 The risk of changes between full and part-time modes of study is extremely low. Should there be a requirement to suspend part-time options of course delivery

this would be managed using the 'teach-out' procedure outlined above and the College will carefully consider impact to students, taking account of their needs, characteristics, and circumstances.

9. LOSS OR RESTRICTION OF OFFICE FOR STUDENTS REGISTRATION

- 9.1 Leicester College must register with the Office for Students in order to access public higher education grant funding and student support. The OfS will carry out ongoing monitoring to ensure we continue to meet the conditions of registration. Should this monitoring result in our removal from the register the College will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students and to ensure they are able to complete their qualifications, including working with Student Finance England to allow students to complete their course or year of study and, should this not be possible, supporting them to transfer to alternative providers.
- 9.2 Simultaneously, the College will take all necessary actions to meet the required criteria for registration.

10 COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 10.1 This protection plan has outlined the action the College will take in the unlikely event of significant change to a course or programme. The College does not offer compensation for tuition, maintenance or lost time but will consider reasonable claims to cover additional material costs, for example, travel or childcare. The College will meet the financial obligations of the plan through its cash reserves.

11. COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS AND FEEDBACK

- 11.1 The HE Student Protection Plan is reviewed annually in consultation with students through the College's governance and management board structure. The HE Student Protection Plan can be accessed from the College [website](#) and the student representative Moodle VLE page. As part of the HE Welcome Pack new applicants will be provided with the web link to the document in correspondence from the HE office.
- 11.2 Should it be necessary to implement the Student Protection Plan (ie where material changes to a course cannot be avoided) students will be contacted in writing to advise them of the expected change, the consequences of this, and an explanation of what will happen next.
- 11.3 If you wish to offer feedback on the College's management of change you can do so by speaking directly to your course team or the HE office heoffice@leicestercollege.ac.uk, or engaging with the Student Voice process. Should you be unhappy with the outcomes of these processes please refer to the College Complaints Policy.

12. FURTHER SPECIFIC INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND IN THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

- [HE Academic Regulations](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Fees Policy](#).