

North Kent College Student Protection Plan

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Person Responsible	Vice Principal Information and Learning Resources
Approval/ review bodies	Senior Leadership Team
Frequency of Review*	24 Months <i>Will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require</i>

Provider's name	North Kent College
Provider's UKPRN	10004721
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Review History:		
Date	Reviewed by	Reason for review

Student protection plan for the period [2023-2025]

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students, how those risks may differ based on your students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

'North Kent College is committed to ensuring students achieve the best academic outcome for their studies. However, the College is aware that there are extenuating circumstances that may affect students' progress including but not limited to course closure, campus or college closure or financial risk. This plan is to outline how North Kent College will deal with such unforeseen changes and protect the student interest to assure continuity of study in such an event. North Kent College have decided to review the Student Protection Plan every two years, to ensure it continues to be relevant, effective and practical.

1.1 Closure of Site/Campus: Low Risk

The college undertakes not to close a site or relocate a programme while teaching is underway for the academic year, nor within the first month of the start of an academic year, as this will be monitored through North Kent College risk management and in accordance to HE regulatory bodies. However, should it be necessary to close a site due to resources, student experience or on health and safety grounds, it may be necessary to move programmes between campuses. If this is the case, the programmes will be delivered at appropriate alternate premises of the college. This may include hiring spaces for programme delivery or installing temporary buildings.

The college as a whole has a track record of making a good operating surplus for the sector, which is demonstrated in our published financial statements, and available for scrutiny from our website. The College's cash reserves of £16m (provide the college with a strong foundation and has good financial health as rated by the Education Skills Funding Agency. The College has a business continuity plan to manage the college through significant events, and business interruption insurance cover for material disruption to help with the additional cost of providing services during a major event.

1.2 Closure of Programme: Moderate Risk

The college may take a strategic decision to close/suspend a programme due to insufficient recruitment and enrolment of students. If this is the case, the college is committed to communicating any changes to the students as early as possible, with clear information and options. Steps will be taken to minimise disruption to current students by:

- Communicating with current students to provide assurance that they will not be adversely affected by the decision.
- To continue their programme as planned and be 'taught out' on the original programme, where North Kent College considers this to be a viable option on academic and student experience.
- To transfer to a similar or replacement programme at North Kent College should the student wish.

1.3 Steps will be taken to minimise disruption to applicants by:

- Informing them of the decision only once the closure or suspension process has been fully completed.

1.4 Informing them of their options to transfer their application to another programme within the college or to another institute.

- Updating UCAS course management to reflect the discontinuation of the course.
- Inform future applicants in accordance with UCAS deadlines, allowing such a time for the future students to seek alternative programmes at the college or elsewhere.

- Update the Student Finance Portal to reflect the discontinuation of the programme.

Where courses are validated or quality assured by external university partners such as the University of Greenwich, a decision to suspend or close a course will not be made without the full university approval due to the implications of the contractual relationship between the college and the university. For Pearson awarded courses, a decision will be made by the Principal as part of strategic planning.

The college support team, which consists of course tutor, careers advisors, counsellors and admissions team will contact any student who is required to transfer to another institution and provide support, detailed independent advice and guidance on their individual circumstances.

1.5 Programme Content Changes: Low Risk

The college will endeavour to deliver the programme in accordance with the description applied to it, in the college prospectus and on the website. However, in the event of changes to course content the college will ensure:

- All changes are restricted to the minimum necessary to achieve the required quality of experience.
- If the applicant has already accepted an offer, they shall be provided with all the necessary information, advice and guidance by the college support team to help them make an informed decision on their future course of action.
- If necessary the student will be offered support to transfer to another programme at North Kent College or another provider.
- Where unavoidable changes are made after registration, students shall be consulted at the earliest opportunity on the changes and their views shall be taken into account.
- If a student feels that a change to their programme affects them adversely, the student may cancel their contract with the college. The college will offer appropriate advice and guidance to the student in supporting them to transfer to another institute. The refund/compensation will be looked at on a case by case scenario.
- There are times when minor amendments need to be made by the college in order to improve the quality of courses or respond to formal learner feedback. Where minor amendments to the delivery of the programme are necessary, the college will consult with and inform students of these changes, as appropriate in line with quality assurance processes.

1.6 Loss of Accreditation: Low Risk

In the event the college lose accreditation, the college will consider measures to protect student experience by:

- Supporting students in moving to another course
- Delivering a modified version of the course
- Supporting students in transferring to another provider who holds the relevant accreditation.
- Support will be offered on an individual basis by the college support team

1.7 Loss of Key Staff: Moderate Risk

Where possible the College will:

- Seek to fill gaps as quickly as possible, by moving other current members of staff with appropriate skills and experience, into the vacant post(s) or recruiting externally, to avoid disruption as we understand this can be detrimental and unsettling to our student body.
- Endeavour to keep students informed on all management decisions on the recruitment of replacement staff.
- Keep disruption to a minimum and if in year timetable amendments are necessary to accommodate the new member of staff and if students are unable to preserve their continuation of study, the support team will endeavour to offer advice and guidance and if necessary the Refund & Compensation Policy will come into effect.

- Avoid closing programmes. However, if it is unavoidable, the student protection plan will come into effect. The support team will offer advice and guidance and each student will be looked at on an individual basis, if compensation/refund was to be offered. The college will endeavour to run the programme, as originally advertised.
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1.8 Disruption to College Activity: Low Risk

Where events result in term-time programme disruption, the College will normally consider whether it is practicable to make changes to programme delivery, rather than closing or suspending an affected programme. Disruptive factors may include:

- Adverse weather conditions resulting in campus closure.
- Terrorist Attack
- Network/IT infrastructure failure
- Fire on campus

1.9 Actions to minimise disruption may include:

- Temporary short-term suspension of programme delivery (e.g., where there is a change in the programme delivery location or staffing, with appropriate actions to mitigate impact on students);
- Changes to the programme delivery location or method, which may include distance learning;

Changes to the staffing of a programme, for instance through a review of internal staff resources, including recruitment of area specialists, where appropriate.

2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

2.1 Industrial Action: Moderate Risk

The College has established frameworks for consultation and negotiation with the recognised trade unions. It is 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.

2.2 Where industrial action does occur, the College will seek to:

- Ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible;
- Take all reasonable steps to fulfil its responsibilities to students in ensuring that any disruption is minimised and students are not, as far as is possible to determine, disadvantaged by the action.

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

- The college aims to deliver a high quality further and higher education provision, in line with the requirements of students, employers, awarding bodies and, for Higher Education programmes, including the validating partner universities.
- The college will provide students with as much clarity as possible about the content of their further or higher education programme, location of their studies and timetable prior to the commencement of each academic year and will aim to minimise changes to programmes of study, which will result in disruption to learners during the academic year.
- The college will incorporate provisions within its annual budget for the potential payment of tuition fee and other refunds and compensation payments to students. The College has sufficient cash reserves of £13m and a business continuity plan to manage the college through

significant events, and business interruption insurance cover for material disruption to help with the additional cost of providing services during a major event.

- [Fees Policy \(northkent.ac.uk\)](https://www.northkent.ac.uk)

4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan

- We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students on the college website as well as on the Higher Education area on the college intranet.
- Applicants will be sent information on the student protection plan in their enrolment documentation.
- We will ensure staff are aware of the implications of the plan when they propose changes, by publishing the plan on Staffnet (Intranet) and offering Staff Development training to new and existing staff.

This plan outlines the student interest and assures continuity of study in the event of course, campus or college change, attack or closure. Should students wish to make a complaint about the implementation and communication of the plan, then they can do so by submitting the online complaint form, which is available on the college website and in accordance with the higher education complaints procedures. Additionally, students may also submit a complaint to the Office for Independent Adjudicators when internal procedures have been followed and exhausted and a successful outcome has not been reached.

**For enquires regarding the outline of this plan, please contact:
stevenhumphries@northkent.ac.uk**