

## Student Protection Plan 2018/19

Provider	University of Leicester
Address	University Road Leicester LE1 7RH
Date of Plan	July 2018
Regulator	Office for Students

### 1. Introduction: Purpose of the Student Protection Plan

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires universities to maintain a Student Protection Plan to protect students' interests in the case of substantial change. This student protection plan sets out what measures we have in place to protect our students, in the event that a risk to the continuation of studies should arise. The type of event or changes which might cause such a risk are detailed below.

This plan has been approved by our regulator, the Office for Students (OfS) and is available to all current and potential students.

The measures contained in this plan are in addition to the protections available to students under consumer protection law and do not impinge on consumer rights.

### 2. Our commitments to our students

The University of Leicester (the University) commits to:

- Being open and transparent with students should any risk to the continuity of studies arise and inform them in a timely manner
- Taking reasonable steps to protect students should the University discontinue a programme or discipline, close a location (building or campus) where a programme is taught or close altogether
- Taking into consideration the needs of all of our students and the impact on them of any proposed changes and protective measures
- Supporting our students with advice and guidance and other support as appropriate, in the event of significant changes that impact their studies.

The University commit to Informing the OfS of any changes that may necessitate a review of the plan or any of the measures contained within it.

The University will regularly seek students' views on this plan as part of our student feedback processes.

The University will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of the Student Protection Plan when proposing programme changes.

### 3. Why is this plan necessary?

In designing and seeking approval for this plan, the University has worked with our regulator, the OfS, to ensure it addresses our specific circumstances and have assessed them as follows:

### **Institutional Sustainability**

The risk that the University as a whole is unable to operate is very low. In the most recent Annual Provider Review (February 2017) the review group identified no concerns on quality and standards matters, and no concerns on financial sustainability, good management and governance matters relating to the University. The University continues to engage with all standard internal and external mechanisms for assuring and enhancing academic quality. The University continues to comply with all relevant external regulatory requirements for individual programmes, where these apply.

Council, our governing body, regularly reviews the sustainability of our strategies, plans and processes. In particular, that our academic strategies are financially sustainable and take account of the environment in which we operate as an institution.

Council obtains assurance in this area through regular reviews of our financial performance using a number of key performance indicators in areas that are relevant to institutional sustainability.

### **Tier 4**

The Risk that the University could lose its Tier 4 licence is very low because it is overseen by a robust internal governance structure and undertake regular external audits. External audits were undertaken by KPMG, Fragomen and Eversheds in 2014, 2016 and 2018 respectively. The University successfully underwent a Home Office UKVI HEAT audit in April 2017 with no further action taken.

### **Degree Awarding Powers**

The risk that the University could lose its Degree Awarding Powers is very low. The University of Leicester was given degree awarding powers by Act of Parliament (University of Leicester Act, 1958), as set out in its Charter, granted by Queen Elizabeth II. The University has met all annual assurance requirements set by HEFCE, including the academic annual assurances given annually. The University met expectations on all four core judgements in its most recent Higher Education Review by the Quality Assurance Agency (February 2016).

### **Placements**

The risk that compulsory placement elements not delivered or administered by the University of Leicester could not be maintained is low to moderate because the University has limited control of the placement facilities and estate management.

### **Specialist Programmes**

The risk that programmes could close due to the specialist nature of their programme in the next three years is low to moderate as the University is dependent on particular members of staff to deliver them.

### **Withdrawal of Programmes**

The risk that programmes of study could be withdrawn in the next three years is moderate as the University undertake annual curriculum planning and all programmes are reviewed. If programmes are found to have low student numbers or the University are unable to provide staff to deliver teaching, the University could choose to withdraw the programme.

## **Partnerships**

The risk that programmes of study offered in an agreement with a partner institution could be withdrawn is low to moderate because the University have limited control of the facilities and estate management. The risk is also low because our student numbers in this area make up only 0.8% of our student population.

### **4. What type of events will prompt this student protection plan?**

The Student Protection Plan will be triggered in the event of major changes including circumstances in which the University:

- decide to discontinue a specific programme or stop teaching this discipline
- decide to close the location (building or campus) in which the programme is taught and cannot find suitable premises at a nearby location
- decide to cease operating altogether
- can no longer provide the programme for any other reason for example:
  - the University ceases operating through no choice of our own
  - the University loses the right to provide the programme or qualification
  - the University loses our tier 4 licence

The University retains the right to make minor adjustments and improvements to programme and module content year on year and these in themselves do not warrant the triggering of student protection measures. However, where the Student Protection Plan is not triggered but students feel the programme as delivered varies significantly from what they expected, they may be able to seek recourse under consumer or contract law.

### **5. Student Protection measures**

The University will take the following measures to protect continuity of study based on the risks considered likely to crystallise:

#### **Placements**

If one of our placement providers is no longer able to offer a particular placement for a compulsory element of the programme in the next three years, the University commits to finding an alternative provider to ensure that all registered students are able to continue their programme of study without interruption.

#### **Specialist Programmes**

If the University is required to withdraw a programme due to its specialist nature in the next three years, arrangements will be made to 'teach out' current students. This means the University commits to ensuring the programme of study can be completed by all registered students, even though the programme is being discontinued and will not be taking on new student cohorts. If the student does not wish to continue their studies with the University, they will be supported in seeking another provider with which to continue their studies. Our agreement to teach out can be found in our Code of Practice [here](#), items 70-76. Our agreement to provide support to students in finding an alternative provider can be found in our terms and conditions [here](#), item 6.5.

#### **Withdrawal of Programmes**

If the University chooses to withdraw a course in the next three years we will make arrangements to 'teach out' current students. This means the University commits to ensuring the programme of study can be completed by all registered students, even though the programme is being discontinued and will not be taking on new student cohorts. If the student does not wish to continue their studies with the University, they will be supported in seeking another provider with which to continue their studies. Our agreement to teach out can be found in our Code of Practice [here](#), items 70-76. Our agreement to provide support to students in finding an alternative provider can be found in our terms and conditions [here](#), item 6.5.

## **Partnerships**

If one of our partner institutions is no longer able to deliver teaching in the next three years, the University have agreements in place to ensure that participating students have a right to complete their programme of study. In the event that that it is not possible to sustain the partnership arrangement, the University commit to taking all necessary steps to identify partners within the region to ensure the continuation of study for registered students.

The University will take into consideration the needs of all our students, including those with mobility, consideration or special educational requirements.

If the University is unable to ensure a satisfactory outcome for students by the measures described above, the University will consider refunds and compensation as necessary. The University policy on refunds for students is available for current students [here](#). This is taken from our refund information provided in the University Senate Regulations 3.30-3.39 [here](#). The University policy on compensation can be found [here](#).

## **6. Notification, advice and support**

The University will notify students of any changes which may affect their studies in a timely manner. Should the student protection plan need to be triggered, all affected students will be notified as soon as possible and no later than 25 days before the change to their programme comes into effect. This commitment is outlined in our terms and conditions of an offer [here](#) under item 6.5. Affected students will also be directed towards an offer of support from the University's Student Support Services. They can access advice in relation to financial hardship and any pastoral support required. Students will also be directed to their personal tutors for additional support.

## **7. Student Complaints**

If students are not content with the proposed outcomes of our Student Protection Plan, they can raise a complaint with the University and can raise the issue with the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#). Students may also have the right to complain to the Competition and Markets Authority.