

Annex D: Template for a student protection plan

Provider's name: Grantham College

Provider's UKPRN: 10002743

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Student protection plan for the period 2018-19

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

The risk that Grantham College as a whole is unable to operate is very low because our financial performance is graded as 'Good' by ESFA, our financial plan forecasts that this is likely to rise to 'Outstanding' in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and we have comprehensive risk management processes and a comprehensive business continuity plan to deal with the full range of risks facing an FE college.

The college conducts a rigorous risk assessment in terms of courses currently being offered and those which are being considered for introduction in future years. Risks are assessed and reviewed by the Risk Management Group, SLT and governors at the Audit committee on a termly basis and inform the Business Continuity Plan. The Business Continuity Plan is comprehensive and contains plans to deal with emergencies in the areas of finance, premises and equipment, staff and students, curriculum, and Health and Safety. The College's Risk Management Plan is reviewed and revised termly to assess other potential risks to the delivery of HE and FE programmes such as staffing issues and industrial action. An assessment of identified potential risks and associated risk levels in each area is given below.

a. Financial risks:

The risk that Grantham College as a whole is unable to operate is very low because our financial performance is graded as 'Good' by ESFA, our financial plan forecasts that this is likely to rise to 'Outstanding' in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and we have a comprehensive business continuity plan to deal with the full range of risks facing an FE college.

b. Premises and equipment

Grantham College Higher Education is housed on a single campus with adequate accommodation to house the HE provision. The buildings and contents are covered by comprehensive insurance and procedures for dealing with emergencies are covered in the Business Continuity Plan. The risk of not being able to provide suitable accommodation is considered to be low. The college has another site which has the potential to provide temporary accommodation.

c. Staffing

The risk that the college will be unable to deliver our HE programmes is considered to be low as the delivery is integrated and staff are able to teach across subject areas such as Health and Social Care, Art and Design, Sport, Media and Performing Arts. There is, however, a moderate risk in some specialist areas where the college is dependent on staff with specific expertise or knowledge for delivery. The moderate risk is associated with the areas of Engineering, Computing and Science.

d. Industrial Action

The risk that the college will be unable to deliver HE programmes due to industrial action by staff is considered to be low. The college has had excellent industrial relations in recent years with no disruption to curriculum delivery due to industrial action. The SLT has previous experience of dealing with industrial action and preparing appropriate contingency plans to avoid disruption to students.

e. Curriculum

The curriculum offer at the College is established and is a blend of Foundation Degree (FdA) courses accredited by partner universities and HNC/HND courses offered in partnership with BTEC/Pearson. The risk of the awarding body withdrawing courses or course approval in a way that would cause disruption to students is considered low. Institutional and course approval and quality processes are well established and recent QAA HE Reviews and Awarding body reviews have confirmed that the college meets required standards. The risk for these students is therefore considered to be low. The College has a small number of HNC/HND courses which currently have low enrolments such as Art and Design and Computing. The risk of registered students not being able to continue on these courses and complete their studies is considered to be low as the college commits to 'teach out' all courses to existing students. The risk of applicants to courses with low application numbers not being able to take up a place on the course is moderate and the college keeps applicants informed where

there is a risk of a course not starting due to these reasons. The college commits to provide timely advice on suitable alternative provision to such students so that they are able to apply to take up a place at an alternative provider.

Periodically partner institutions/awarding bodies 'refresh' the content of courses which can impact on the curriculum offer. The lead time on these changes is sufficient to ensure that students registered on existing programmes can complete the course. The risk of registered students not being able to continue on these courses and complete their studies is considered to be low.

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

a. Financial risks

The college Risk Register and Risk Management Action Plan covers financial risks and identifies appropriate actions to minimise and mitigate financial risks.

The college financial plans and budget are approved by the governing body and shared with the ESFA. Should the financial health of the college deteriorate significantly the ESFA has an early intervention regime to support colleges likely to experience financial difficulties back to good financial health.

Management accounts are prepared monthly and reviewed by the SLT so that variances from budget are identified and mitigating actions can be implemented.

The college Finance Committee meets termly to monitor financial performance and the college Audit Committee receives updates from the Risk Management Group at every meeting.

b. Premises & Equipment

The buildings and contents are covered by comprehensive insurance and procedures for dealing with emergencies are covered in the Business Continuity Plan. The risk of not being able to provide suitable accommodation is considered to be low. The college has another site which has the potential to provide temporary accommodation.

c. Staffing

Where specialist staff will no longer be available (due to retirement or illness etc.) posts are advertised locally and nationally during the notice period.

In the event of staff not being recruited for any reason the college has links with other local providers and will approach the relevant organisation to secure specialist support on a short term basis.

The college has good links with staffing agencies. Agencies which specialise in supplying temporary staff will also be approached if necessary.

d. Industrial Action

The SLT has previous experience of dealing with industrial action and preparing appropriate contingency plans to avoid disruption to students. Where it is assessed that industrial action may impact upon HE students they will be informed at the earliest opportunity and the college commits to consult with students to ensure that any lost teaching contact time is made up in a way that meets their needs.

e. Curriculum

Under our agreement with partner universities the university's Student Protection Plan covers curriculum issues and the College is responsible for campus related issues such as accommodation

and equipment.

Although the viability of such courses is assessed annually the College undertakes to 'teach out' these courses. The college keeps applicants informed where there is a risk of a course not starting due to low numbers of applicants or other reasons. The college commits to provide timely advice on suitable alternative provision to such students so that they are able to apply to take up a place at an alternative provider.

If it is impossible for the College to teach out the course:

The College would meet with the affected students to ensure that their needs and wishes in respect of continuing studies are understood;

The College would arrange for students to continue with their studies with local colleges/providers who offer similar courses;

Arrangements would be made to enable students to claim any additional expenses incurred i.e. as travel costs from the College;

Throughout the process the awarding body would be kept informed and transfers to other establishments would be subject to their approval.

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 has a Refund and Compensation Policy in place which is available to all students here: <https://www.grantham.ac.uk/our-college/our-policies/>

This covers:

- refunds for students in receipt of tuitions fee loan from the Student Loans Company.
- refunds for students who pay their own tuition fees.
- refunds for students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor.
- the payment of additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course.
- commitments to honour student bursaries.
- compensation for maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study.
- compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer courses or provider.

The risk of non-continuation is considered low but our published accounts demonstrate that we have sufficient cash reserves to provide refunds and compensation should the risk of non-continuation increase. We also have insurance to cover a loss of business continuity.

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

We will publicise our student protection plan to future students by:

- Posting the student protection plan on the website;
- Including the student protection plan in the prospectus;
- Including links to all of our HE policies, including the student protection plan, in our applicant pack;
- Discussing the student protection plan with students at interview;
- Including links to all of our HE policies, including the student protection plan, with information offering students a place on a specific course.

We will publicise our student protection plan to existing students by:

- Posting the student protection plan on the VLE;
- Including the student protection plan in course handbooks;
- Signposting students to the student protection plan during induction.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by:

- Posting the student protection plan on the HE section of the staff intranet;
- Communicating the content of the student protection plan to HE staff;

- Ensuring that any changes to course are communicated to and endorsed by the HE group.

We will review the student protection plan annually and include the student voice in the process:

- Changes or amendments to the student protection plan will follow consultation with students during HE focus groups and HE forums;
- Changes or amendments will be considered by the Standards Committee;
- The Corporation (which has student representation) will oversee and give final approval to changes or amendments.

We will inform prospective students if there are to be material changes to their course:

- Inform students of the changes to the course by letter at least 4 weeks before the start of the course;
- Inform students of nearby providers and support students in the application process by letter;
- Inform students of how they can obtain independent advice about alternative provision by letter.

If we need to implement the measures in our student protection plan we will at least 4 weeks before introduction:

- Inform the students of the need for the implementation in meetings with those affected;
- Inform students collectively and individually of their rights under the student protection plan in writing;
- Work with other colleges operating similar courses to enable students to register with them to complete their studies;
- Offer students independent advice about careers and progression;
- Support students in advising SLC of any changes that need to be made;
- Support students in the transition process to another provider if appropriate;
- Ensure that students are not disadvantaged financially by arranging for the reimbursement of travel costs for the duration of their studies where appropriate;
- Offer emotional and psychological support through access to counselling and welfare services provided by the College.