

Provider's name: University College Birmingham

Provider's UKPRN:10000712

Legal address: University College Birmingham, Summer Row, Birmingham, B3 1JB

Contact point for enquiries about this Student Protection Plan: Alice Wilby, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Access, Participation and Student Experience)

Student Protection Plan

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

- University College Birmingham (UCB) has a Disaster Recovery Plan to minimise the immediate impact on the business as a consequence of a significant event. The University has reviewed with its insurance advisors those serious occurrences that are likely to have significant consequences for the business.
- University College Birmingham also has a Business Recovery Plan (BRP) which is the overarching institutional plan to be applied when a significant occurrence impacts upon the normal operations of the University. The BRP identifies critical areas and provides procedures for business resumption and recovery in the event of any disruption to normal business operations. The procedures have been designed to recover critical business activities within a time frame that poses no major risk to customer service, cash flow or market share and aims to re-establish the normal workings of the University in a timely and cost effective manner.
- The risk that UCB as a whole would be unable to operate is very low because of its financial performance. UCB typically has a significant surplus each year and it has significant financial reserves made up of cash and realisable investments.
- The integrity and security of the learning process is fundamental to UCB's approach to quality. Wherever possible, where programmes are replaced or discontinued UCB will seek to maintain the 'contract' with those students by seeking to give sufficient notice and enabling the last cohort of students to complete the final phase of their programme. The stability and financial strength of UCB has enabled this approach to be practised for many years and has ensured that students continue to have a high degree of confidence in the qualifications delivered.
- It is considered that for the majority of programmes at UCB that there is a low risk that we would no longer be able to deliver the material components of our programmes because UCB design modules to be taught by integrated teams of academic staff and are not dependent on particular members of academic staff to deliver core teaching.
- Due to the vocational focus of some programmes at UCB, and the importance of high level skills development it is recognised that if the specialist practical facilities required to support the delivery of these programmes was negatively impacted upon for example: kitchens, clinics and specialist media make-up facilities this has the potential to be a significant risk to continuity of teaching. In the event of all specialist facilities becoming unavailable simultaneously, UCB's BRP and Disaster Plan sets out the relevant actions necessary to ensure continuity of planning and/or minimise disruption. We have made significant investment in digital infrastructure to support us to be able to minimize disruption to all kinds of teaching, in the event of students being unable to access the campus. This includes the option to live stream teaching sessions, to run alternative provision online, or to reschedule teaching for a period where students are able to access facilities.

- A significant number of students at UCB are enrolled on programmes awarded by the University of Birmingham (UoB). There is a legal and contractual arrangement in place that ensures students currently enrolled on UoB programmes who successfully complete their course will have their degrees awarded by UoB.
- The risk of collaborative partners being unable to complete delivery of UCB awarded programmes is considered low as all collaborative partners go through a rigorous quality assessment process prior to being approved, this includes assessment of the partner's financial strength and commitment to the delivery of UCB programmes.
- The risk that UCB can no longer deliver programmes at our Moss House, Summer Row or McIntyre House campuses in the next three years is low. Due to UCB's campus design the delivery of programmes could be moved to one of our alternative venues. We also have substantial online and digital resources available to provide back up teaching options if face to face teaching cannot be delivered on our campuses.
- Removal/Suspension of Tier 4 Sponsor Licence, is considered low risk as independent audit by PriceWaterhouseCoopers reported that the University is low risk and remains compliant with United Kingdom Visa and Immigration requirements. Regular strong and supportive relationships exist with Government Enforcement agencies to ensure compliance with all required regulations.

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

- Where circumstances require a programme or group of programmes to be withdrawn before completion by the final cohort of students or that material changes are to be made to a programme this would be managed in accordance with the closure of and material changes to programmes procedure.
(<https://www.ucb.ac.uk/media/2kcokojo/closure-and-material-changes-to-programmes-procedure.pdf>)
- If UCB were unable to provide continuity of teaching and learning students would be compensated appropriately for the lack of service in accordance with the UCB's Refund Policy.
- UCB would ensure that students were able to continue with their studies on the same or an equivalent course. Our preference would be that arrangements would be made to 'teach out' the programme, or to transfer students to the equivalent programme at UCB, but where that was not practical (eg where students were at a considerable distance), as a last resort, students would be supported to transfer to a different provider. We would ensure that students are not disadvantaged in terms of their period of study, qualification or financially.'
- The risk that UCB as a whole would be unable to operate is very low because of its financial performance. UCB typically has a surplus each year and it has significant financial reserves made up of cash and realisable investments.

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

- UCB would normally expect to teach out courses or facilitate transfer to another institution. Where UCB is not able to teach out a course and, in its reasonable academic and professional judgment, there is no suitable alternative course at UCB, students should be given the option of ending their contract. In these circumstances, students should be refunded fees already paid and not be under any obligation to pay any further fees.
- In the circumstances described above, UCB should consider reimbursing a student's reasonable maintenance and accommodation costs, where these have been wasted costs as a result of the inability to teach out the course and/or offer a reasonable alternative course
- Where students are materially delayed in completing their courses because of an interruption to their studies within the scope of the Student Protection Plan that is within the reasonable control of UCB it should consider claims for other losses (e.g. lost time claims, or additional maintenance and accommodation costs) on a case-by case-basis.
- Where UCB is not able to teach out a course, and in its reasonable academic and professional judgment, it is able to deliver an appropriately modified version of the same course or there is a suitable alternative course at UCB, but the student does not wish to transfer to that course, the student should be given the option of ending the contract. In those circumstances, the student is not under any obligation to pay any further fees but is not entitled to any refund of fees already paid
- Where students transfer to alternative courses at UCB or where they are materially delayed in completing their existing course at UCB through an interruption to their studies that is within the reasonable control of UCB, it should ensure that any bursaries that were offered to students as a condition of offer are maintained throughout their studies
- Tuition fees are refunded in the same way that they are received. Where fees are paid directly by students, they are refunded to the student. Where fees are paid by way of tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company, they are refunded to the Student Loans Company. Where tuition fees are paid by a sponsor, they are refunded to the sponsor

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

- UCB will publicise our Student Protection Plan by placing an announcement on the University website and providing current and future students with a link to the Student Protection Plan on the University portal.
- UCB are committed to communicating any changes to a student's programme of study at the earliest possible opportunity.
- UCB will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of programme/material changes in relation to the Student Protection Plan by including "The impact of programme/material changes" as a standing item at all validation/re-validation committee meetings.
- UCB have worked with our current students in the development of our Student Protection Plan through liaison/discussion with UCB Guild of Students.
- UCB will review our Student Protection Plan annually. Students will be involved in the review of the plan by including the Student Protection Plan in the Annual Review of Student Documentation, this committee includes representation from the Student Guild
- Should UCB's Student Protection Plan need to be implemented the arrangements put in place to inform students would be to communicate with affected students by informing them individually in writing of the intended change/s to the programme they are studying. This communication would be provided with as much notice as possible. In addition, UCB would work in partnership with UCB Guild of Students to ensure that relevant information is shared as broadly as necessary with the student body.
- UCB's Academic Management Team is responsible for identifying programmes to be closed and for the preparation of the proposal submission. This involves structured consultation with stakeholders where relevant, including students, teaching staff and industry partners. Should a programme need to be closed students will be made aware of this at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The Academic Board through its Validation and Approvals Committee is responsible for approving proposals for programme closure. Programmes considered for closure may be delivered by UCB or through a collaborative arrangement with other providers.
- Should there be any material changes to their programme, students will be advised of this in writing at the earliest possible opportunity.
- UCB will provide clear information and options to ensure that where, appropriate, students have access to independent advice and guidance if it is necessary to implement the measures in our Student Protection Plan.