

Student Protection Plan

Effective from September 2023 to present

Student Regulations and Policies

uclan.ac.uk/studentcontract

Purpose of Policy	This Plan has been produced in line with the requirements from the Office of Students and outlines the measures in place within the university to protect the interests of students and prospective students.
Internal services involved	Academic Quality Unit Legal and Governance
Related UCLan regulations, policies and procedures	
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Version	Approved	Effective from	Revisions made	Next Review
1	May 2022	September 2022		
2	May 2023	September 2023	Accuracy - Visas	May 2024

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Last update May 2023

The University of Central Lancashire, alongside every other registered provider, is required by the Office for Students to have in place a student protection plan. Student protection plans set out what students can expect to happen should a course, campus, or institution close. The purpose of a plan is to ensure that UCLan have considered how students can continue and complete their studies or can be compensated if this is not possible. The University of Central Lancashire is a large multi-campus University tracing its roots back to 1828. We are financially very strong and the likelihood of the student protection plan having to be implemented is generally considered very low.

The student protection plan covers all courses, awards and types of provision awarded and delivered through the University of Central Lancashire. This includes all taught courses at any level from level 3 to level 8 as well as apprentice provision and where relevant the provision of End Point Assessment services. The University has several collaborative partners delivering UCLan programmes. Whilst recognising that many of these partners are also regulated by the Office for Students and will therefore have their own student protection plan in place, the University remains committed to supporting its partner institutions to teach-out any programme leading to a UCLan award and has processes in place to agree termination plans ensuring that academic standards and the quality of the programmes are protected and that appropriate support for students is maintained during teach-out.

This student protection plan covers events such as no longer being able to operate as a university, losing our degree awarding powers, closing a campus, or changing your location of study. Planned programme or module amendments, planned suspension or withdrawal of programmes are covered by established procedures included within your student contract and in line with the Competition and Markets Authority guidance. Such planned activities include established processes for communication with students and relevant teach-out arrangements where appropriate.

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

- Institutional/campus closure:
The financial performance of the University remains strong, with a satisfactory surplus and a strengthened balance sheet and cash position as evidenced in the most recent University's Financial Statement. The University also has robust risk management procedures and plans in place. Consequently, there is minimal risk that the University will be unable to continue to operate. The University currently operates from three sites: Main Campus Preston, Burnley Campus and Westlakes Campus. All sites are covered by robust risk management procedures and ambitious plans are in place to significantly develop our Burnley Campus over the next few years following a successful bid to the Government's levelling up fund.
- Closure of a Collaborative partner:
Many of our UK partners have in place their own student protection plans. However, that aside, we undergo extensive due diligence ahead of entering into any new partnership agreement. Institutional approval of a new partner is based on evidence of both financial and academic due diligence in accordance with its Collaborative Provision - Policy and Procedures. Consequently, the risk of partner institutions being unable to continue to operate is low, however, this does not preclude either the University or any of its Partner Institutions terminating their Institutional Agreement or courses early for academic or financial reasons. Should this situation arise, the provisions within the Partnership Agreements mitigates any risks to students in terms of being able to complete their course.
- Course change or closure of subjects areas and/or schools:
The risk of students not being able to complete their course due to course closure or material change is minimal in view of the University's adherence to the Consumer Protection regulations and the QAA UK Quality Code for HE. The University's Course/Module Amendment Process sets out the circumstances prompting amendments to courses or modules and the requirement for changes to be approved for subsequent cohorts of students and not for current students unless they are in the best interests of the students or unavoidable due to circumstances beyond the University's control. Where material changes are proposed, there must be consultation with the affected students and consent obtained from the majority (80%) of affected students.

Agreements relating to the delivery, establishment, and quality of awards at all UCLan campuses contain provision for ensuring students at those campuses are given the opportunity to complete the full duration of their

course to have an opportunity to receive their award. This may be through the making of alternative accommodation available for students to be taught and for alternative arrangements for the delivery of academic courses similar to the courses and the award of certificates, degrees, and diplomas similar to the awards from a third party. This also applies to apprentice programmes and EPA services.

The University offers a wide range of programmes with varying modes of study. Most provision is offered on a full-time basis, but many programmes offer part-time study or online / distanced learning. Frequently, programmes use more than one mode of study, and the University successfully integrates students studying on either full or part-time modes. Such delivery protects the student experience and reduces the likelihood of the University having to suspend programmes

- Loss of professional, statutory or regulatory body approval (PSRB):
The risk of a loss of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation for specific courses is very low because of the level of monitoring undertaken by the University to ensure compliance with PSRB requirements. UCLan does make a distinction between those PSRBs which have to be in place for particular courses to operate; medicine, nursing, architecture, and pharmacy for example, and additional PSRB recognition which is regulatory.
- Suspension or removal of Student route visa Sponsor Licence:
The risk that we will lose or UKVI sponsor licences is deemed to be low because internal and external audits concluded that the University has robust policies and procedures in place to ensure that its responsibilities as a licenced immigration sponsor are met. The University has mechanisms in place to provide cross - functional oversight and assurance to the Vice Chancellors Group.
- Exceptional events:
There are some circumstances which are beyond the control of the University which may impact on its ability to deliver educational services for a period or require us to change the way we are delivering those services. Examples include industrial action; power failure; acts of terrorism; damage to buildings or equipment; or acts of any governmental or local authority. The University has robust business contingency plans in operation and as we have seen during the recent pandemic these plans allow us to adapt to meet the exceptional event quickly and with minimal impact on continuation of studies. The risk that we are no longer able to deliver components of a course due to the departure of key members of academic staff is low in view of how courses and modules are delivered by teams of academic staff and the size and strength of our overall staffing base.

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

- Upon early termination of any Institutional Agreement or termination of a Course, the University and Partner Institution shall each use reasonable endeavours and cooperate to ensure that each existing student may have the opportunity to complete the course on which he or she is enrolled. Where it is not possible for students to complete the course, the University will support students in transferring onto an alternative course either provided by the Partner Institution or provided by the University, to take an appropriate exit award, or to transfer to another Institution whichever is in the best interests of the student.
- In the unlikely situation whereby, the University loses its Student route visa Licence, The University will comply with Home Office requirements in terms of providing information for its current and prospective students and working with relevant external bodies to allow students to complete their year of study or to support students to transfer to an appropriate course at an alternative provider.
- The University will make reasonable efforts to minimise disruption to educational services caused by any circumstances beyond its control (for example: industrial action; power failure or damage to buildings or equipment). Action taken by the University may include the relocation of provision to an alternative location, amendments to timetabling, rescheduling of teaching activities, using different modes of delivery or reallocation of teaching staff to deliver the course. Any resultant material changes to the course would require prior consultation with affected students. The University will also, where appropriate, implement Academic Regulations (section K) pertaining to extraordinary circumstances governing the assessment process which contains provision for the approval of special arrangements for conducting assessment and the determination of awards and progression.
- In the rare event of a course closure, existing students will be able to continue the course on which they have enrolled until the completion of their studies. Any proposed material changes that are required to ensure a smooth closure that effect existing students will require consultation with those students and the informed consent of 80% of affected students unless the proposed changes are beneficial to all students or are required due to circumstances beyond the control of the University. Details are provided in the University's Taught Course Withdrawal Process.
- In the unlikely event of the loss of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body accreditation for a course, the University would take all reasonable steps to ensure students could continue the same or equivalent accredited course at another institution.

- In the event of a decision to suspend recruitment to a course or cancel a course within 6 months prior to enrolment and/or after enrolment, the University fully recognises and accepts its responsibilities towards any applicants who have been made offers for admission to the course and will provide the applicants with reasonable support to transfer to another course either at UCLan or at another institution. In these circumstances, the University will contact applicants to agree appropriate transfer arrangements paying particular attention to the applicant's needs. If applicants with offers do not wish to transfer to another UCLan course or a course delivered by another institution, then UCLan will continue to run the course unless cancellation is necessary because of a loss of accreditation by an associated Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body. Where applicants withdraw from the course without any other study, they will receive a refund of any Tuition Fees paid.

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

In terms of refunds in relation to tuition fees this is included within the Tuition Fee Policy which is part of the student contract and is available to all students. If we were not able to preserve continuation of study then we would of course refund all relevant Tuition Fees that had been paid. We have never had such a situation as we always seek to preserve continuation of study and our Tuition Fee Policy in the main is written in relation to no continuation of a course by a student rather than by ourselves. It is however our intention, working with the newly published UUK Good Practice Guidance 'Briefing: Compensation and refund policies - developing good practice' to further review our Tuition Fee Policy to include more guidance on refunds and compensation in the future.

In relation to compensation and/or other course costs decisions are made on a case-by-case basis because each student's personal circumstances and impact is different however in doing so, we follow the principles of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator with regards to remedies and redress, including financial remedies and compensation.

If a decision is taken to cancel or suspend recruitment to a course within 6 months prior to enrolment and/or after enrolment and an applicant with an offer consequently decides to withdraw from the course without any other study, the applicant will receive a refund of any tuition fees paid.

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 through the University's Student Portal (current students) and the external web pages (future students). It will also be included as part of the

accompanying information and conditions of offer provided to potential students.

- We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by referring to the plan within the Course Developers Handbook and the Quality Assurance Manual.
- The University's Student Protection Plan will be reviewed annually through the University's Committee Structure which includes student representation.
- The policy and procedures within the University's Academic Quality Assurance Manual related to on campus and collaborative provision sets out how students will be consulted with and informed of any material changes to their course.