



# Student Protection Plan

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## INTRODUCTION

Vantage College is committed to helping to ensure students achieve the best academic outcomes from their studies. Events may occasionally occur which mean that unforeseen changes have to be made to modules or programmes.

## LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires HEI's & Further Education colleges to maintain a Student Protection Plan to protect students' interests in the case of material change, e.g. programme changes, suspensions, closures, or institutional closure.

This plan was written in accordance with Regulatory Advice 2: Registration of current providers for 2023-24 guidance published by Office for Students February 2018.

Material changes may be triggered by situations such as (but not limited to):

- Institutional Closure
- Institution Closure of a Campus
- Cancellation of a Higher Education Course
- Loss or Restriction of a Collaborative Arrangement with Awarding Higher Education Institution
- Loss of Eligibility as a Registered Provider of Higher Education
- Major Changes in Year to Course Content
- Disruption of College Activity
- Industrial Action by College Staff or Third Parties
- The Unanticipated Departure of Key Members of College Staff

## RISK

The Vantage College has assessed these risks and, where they are considered reasonably likely to occur, put into place the following measures to mitigate them. The College will use its system of risk management to calculate the risk to non-continuation. The systematic process of risk management and mitigation is summarised visually using a 4-point Likert Scale as shown in Table 1 to measure the probability of the risk to non-continuation. Risks and their likelihood of crystallisation, will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Table 1 4-point likelihood rating scale

Student Protection Plan Risk Assessment

Low	Medium	Significant	High
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Area of risk	Risk RAG	Assessment of risk
Institutional Closure	Low	<p>The risk to institutional closure is rated low, the College's financial health is currently rated as Satisfactory.</p> <p>The College currently meets all its statutory requirements to provide higher quality Higher Education.</p> <p>a. Institutional failure will be monitored through risk management in accordance with HE regulatory bodies and any instance of this will be managed in accordance with college policies.</p> <p>b. Where the College has no option, other than to close, it may consider measures such as those below to protect student experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. where possible, closing gradually, over a period that would allow currently enrolled students to complete their studies at the Institution;</li> <li>II. where the above is not possible, in supporting students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers and (where appropriate financially) by compensating students where because of disruption to their studies they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss;</li> <li>III. iii. merging with another institution to maintain all or part of the current provision.</li> </ul>
Institution Closure of a Campus	Low	<p>The College operates across one main campus. Where part or all of the campus is rendered unusable for activities involving students, the College will typically consider remedies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. relocating provision to an alternative location, this may include hiring spaces for programme delivery (where possible nearby) and / or installing temporary buildings on the College's land (where available);</li> <li>II. revising timetabling to allow all of the scheduled teaching to take part in the available facilities. This may include student contact sessions being held outside of normal office hours. Where such an approach is taken, appropriate consultation will normally be conducted with stakeholders who</li> </ul>

		<p>may be affected; appropriate equality impact assessments will also be undertaken;</p> <p>III. iii. delivering programmes via alternative means, such as Distance Learning. Where such an approach is taken, the College will consider whether this it is appropriate for enrolled students who would be affected.</p>
Cancelation of a Higher Education Course	Medium	<p>The College operates on small cohort sizes, where student numbers determine viability. The College has mitigating processes in place to measure risk to course closure.</p> <p>a. Where the College decides for strategic reasons that a course is not viable to run; the College will consider the following:</p> <p>i. communicating any changes to students as early as possible, with clear information and options</p>
Loss or Restriction of a Collaborative Arrangement with Awarding Higher Education Institution	Low	<p>a. If the College suffers loss or restriction from it awarding pattern, the College will work collaboratively with the lead provider to implement the student protection plan of the awarding HEI, while aiming to minimise the disruption to the student.</p> <p>b. This process may include the possibility of teaching out the current programmes, though is subject to the awarding bodies academic regulations.</p>
Loss of Eligibility as a Registered Provider of Higher Education	Medium	<p>The College is regulated by the Office for Students and is aiming to comply to the ongoing conditions of registration. The OfS is a new regulatory body, and whenever working with a new regulator, and a new regulatory framework the risk to the provider not meeting regulatory compliance increases. The College has a well governed and managed Higher Education provision with processes to mitigate these risks.</p>
Major Changes in Year to Course Content	Low	<p>The College has a process to ensure that the delivery of programmes are provided as advertised.</p> <p>However, in the event of major in-year changes to course content, the College will ensure that:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. changes are restricted to the minimum necessary to achieve the required quality of experience, and affected students are notified and consulted with as appropriate;</li> <li>II. it works with students to ensure the offer is still acceptable;</li> <li>III. where necessary it allows students the opportunity to withdraw from the programme;</li> <li>IV. iv. where required students will be offered reasonable support to transfer to another programme at the College, or to another provider.</li> <li>V.</li> </ul>
Disruption of College Activity	Low	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.
Industrial Action by College Staff or Third Parties	Low	Where industrial action does occur, the College will seek to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible;</li> <li>ii. 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.</li> </ul>
The Unanticipated Departure of Key Members of College Staff	Low	All staff have a three-month notice period, to terminate employment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Where possible the College will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. 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.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## **REFUNDS AND COMPENSATION**

Where a student is required to transfer course or move to another institution there are likely to be implications for student finance arrangements. The College's Fees & Refunds Policy outlines information on the refund of tuition fees if the college is no longer able to preserve the continuation of study.

A combination of cash reserves and (where appropriate) insurance policies will be designated for those students where an increased risk of non-continuation of study has been identified.

## **COMMUNICATION FEEDBACK AND REVIEW**

The College will operate a minimum notice period of 20 working days to inform students in the event of course, campus or planned provider closure.

Should the Student Protection Plan need to be implemented, affected students will be contacted in a variety of methods, this will include, but not limited to; direct telephone communication, personal written correspondence, and email. Indirect communication will be presented through the College website.

This policy will be reviewed annually. The risks will be re-rated using the student protection plan risk register tool.

Document Information	
Status:	Approved
Document Title:	Student Protection Plan
Version:	1
Date:	September 2023
Previous Review:	N/A
Next Review:	September 2024
Classification:	Internal and External
Approve By:	Board of Governors
External Reference:	The regulatory requirements of the Office for Students (OfS).