



STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

cym.ac.uk

hello@cym.ac.uk
0115 7770102

Charity No. 1081144

Policy name	Student Protection Policy
Purpose of policy	To set out the Institute's approach to procedures for closure, suspension and changes to programmes
Approval given by	Board of Trustees
Last review date	July 2022
Review due date	July 2023
Responsible for review	Chief Executive Officer
Reviewed by Newman University	

These processes articulate the Institute's procedures for applicants and students.

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy sets out the Institute's procedures for closing, suspending or changing any programme of study. It is designed to reflect the Statement of Good Practice adopted by HEFCE, UUK, Guild HE, NUS in October 2015. It is also designed to meet the requirements for the CMA Student Protection Plan.

2. Closure and Suspension

2.1. The Institute or partner University may wish to close and remove a programme of study from its portfolio. Closure of a programme, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, means that the Institute will cease to recognise the programme as one for which a student may be registered.

2.2. Suspension of a programme of study is defined by a fixed timeframe in which the programme will not be delivered.

2.3. The Institute will not close or suspend a programme without the University's approval because of the implications for the contractual relationship between current and prospective students and the University.

2.4. A request to close or suspend a programme will be made by the CEO following agreement with the Institutes Board of Trustees. The Board should approve the proposal in line with their strategic plans. The CEO is required to make a business case to the Institutes Board of Trustees who will make the final decision.

2.5 On receipt of a request to close or suspend a programme, the Institutes Board of Trustees may agree one of the following:

- Decline the request
- Approve the request without condition(s)
- Approve the request with condition(s)

2.6. A request to suspend or remove a programme that has been approved by the Institutes Board of Trustees should then be submitted to the partner University, by the CEO, on any required proforma and be accompanied by the following information:

- Market rationale
- Strategic and financial implications
- Impact, if any, on arrangements with partner institutions and/or PSRBs
- Impact on current and prospective students and sponsored students
- Impact on existing or proposed programmes
- Impact on relationships with sponsors and employers
- The expected impact on staff and resources

2.7. The proforma shall also confirm that consultation will take place with academic staff affected by the request.

2.8. Where there are any expected changes to staff/staffing structure consultation with HR must be sought

3. Programme Changes Prior to Registration

3.1. The Institute may be required to make changes to programmes at the following times:

- between publication of the prospectus and registration
- after registration

3.2. Where material changes (such as a number of changes to the structure of the programme, or the removal or addition of a number of modules) are made between the publication of the prospectus and registration, the Institute will draw these changes to the attention of applicants as soon as possible and advise them of their right to seek entry to another Institute programme for which they may be qualified or to withdraw their application and seek entry to another institution.

3.3. Where the applicant has already accepted an offer, they shall be furnished with all necessary information, advice and guidance by the Institute to help them make an informed decision on their future course of action.

3.4. In normal circumstances, material changes to programmes should not be made after registration, but where this is unavoidable, students and their representatives shall be consulted at the earliest opportunity on the changes and, where practicable, their views shall be taken into account.

3.5. If a student reasonably believes that a material change to their programme adversely affects them, they may cancel their contract with the Institute and/or partner University. In such circumstances the Institute, in consultation with any partner University, will offer suitable information, advice and guidance to a student and, where possible, facilitate their transfer to another institution which offers an appropriate programme for which they are qualified.

3.6. Further to commencement of the programme and during the course of a student's studies, the Institute may make minor amendments to programmes in order to improve the quality; to meet the latest requirements of an accrediting body; or in response to student feedback. Where such minor amendments to the delivery of a programme are necessary, the Institute will consult with or inform students and their representatives of these changes, as appropriate, and in line with Institute quality assurance processes.

4. Student Protection

4.1. Current students

4.1.1. Current students should normally be allowed to complete the programme of study for which they are registered unless each gives their explicit written consent to the contrary. Such consent must not be sought until a closure or suspension recommendation has been agreed.

4.1.2. Where a programme is being closed to new entrants only, the Institute's proposed arrangements for students currently registered on the programme (including those whose registration is suspended but have not yet completed the programme) must comply with the following:

4.1.3. Current students should be informed of their option. The Institute will provide all necessary information, advice, guidance and support to facilitate students in deciding which option to follow.

4.1.4. The standard of academic provision and the student experience must, as far as is reasonably practicable, be maintained throughout their period of registration. In particular, the conditions must be maintained to enable the stated learning outcomes in the relevant Programme Specification to be achievable by students who are being 'taught out'.

4.1.5 To ensure the student experience and to support the students, the Director of Studies together with the Director of Operations will monitor their experience.

4.2. Applicants

4.2.1. In the event of a programme closure, suspension or material changes to programme content, all communications with applicants must be undertaken by the Admissions team of the partner University.

4.2.2. Applicants who have accepted offers should not be contacted until the closure or suspension process has been fully completed.

4.2.3. Applicants thus affected should then be informed of their options to transfer their applications to another programme within the Institute or to another institution.

4.2.4. Applicants who have been made offers, but have not yet accepted them, may however be advised that a closure or suspension request has been made. Such applicants should be advised that the offer of a place is suspended until a final decision has been made and will be withdrawn if the request is accepted. They should also be advised that they may choose another programme or institution.

4.2.5. UCAS should be notified when the closure or suspension request has been finalised by the University

5. Timing

5.1. Wherever possible, requests to delete, suspend or make material changes to the content of programmes should be made in a timely manner.

5.2. Since preparation for the production of the printed prospectus takes place sometime ahead of publication, the process of strategic planning should identify those programmes which are likely to be closed prior to the commencement of the prospectus production process.

5.3. As a result of unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. loss of specialist staff) it may be necessary to close or suspend a programme within a foreshortened timescale. In such circumstances, the student interest is paramount and full consultation should be undertaken with all affected students and their nominated representatives.

5.4. In order to ensure full compliance with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and related regulations, students should be given the fullest information, advice and guidance to enable them to make well-informed decisions in the event of programme closure or suspension.

6. Partnership Provision

6.1 Where a partner University is the owning party (i.e. registers the students as the University's students), but the delivery is undertaken by the Institute the processes as detailed above in section 4 will apply:

- Current students should be informed of their option to complete their programme of study or transfer to another programme within the University or to another University. The Institute will provide all necessary information, advice, guidance and support to facilitate students in deciding which option to follow.
- The standard of academic provision and the student experience must, as far as is reasonably practicable, be maintained throughout their period of registration. In particular, the conditions must be maintained to enable the stated learning outcomes in the relevant Programme Specification to be achievable by students who are being 'taught out'.

6.2 To ensure the student experience and to support the students, the designated Academic Link Tutor, together with the Collaborative Provision Unit at the partner University will monitor their experience.

6.3 Where the Institute through staff changes/resources is unable to deliver the programme at their premises, at least one full academic year's notice is expected and the Institute is expected to bear any expenses related to supporting the students in completing their studies. The Institute will provide all necessary information, advice, guidance and support to facilitate students in completing their studies.

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