



## **Student Protection Plan 2018 – 2020**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Regent College is committed to ensuring its students achieve the best possible academic outcomes from their studies. Occasionally circumstances may arise which mean that unforeseen changes have to be made to units or programmes (provision for such events is detailed within the college's Terms and Conditions). The College recognises that students investing significant time and money in their higher education are entitled to be confident that their provider will treat them fairly, deliver the course chosen and have adequate contingency arrangements in place if that ceases to be possible

1.2 The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires all Higher Education Institutions to maintain a Student Protection Plan that protects students' interests in the case of material change to their programme of study, e.g. programme changes, suspensions, closures, or institutional closure.

These events may be triggered by situations such as (but not limited to):

- a decision to close the College has been taken because of business failure;
- a decision by the College to close some or all of the campus;
- closure of a course;
- major variations, in year, to course content;
- withdrawal of Course Designation for student support purposes;
- removal of the Tier 4 Sponsor Licence;
- loss of validation by Pearson;
- external disruption to delivery of courses;

### **2. Background**

2.1 Regent College has delivered HNDs in Business and Management, validated by Pearson, at its Wembley campus since January 2013. Over the last five years it has steadily grown the number of enrolled students to the current level of 1,200 across the two years of the programme. The course currently recruits three cohorts per year in September, January and April.

2.2 In February 2018 the College also began delivery of a one year BA (Hons) Business and Management Top-up franchised through Bucks New University as a progression route for its HND students. This programme is delivered at the College's Kingsbury campus and it is anticipated that this programme will recruit two cohorts pre year, in September and April, with total student numbers reaching between 150 and 200 at any given time. The responsibility for student protection on this programme lies with Buck New University. However, any potential issues that might come up in relation to campus closure or external

disruption, would most likely be dealt with by the College in the first instance, in consultation with Bucks New University.

### **3. Purpose**

3.1 The purpose of this plan is to make students and prospective students aware of the range of potential risks to the continuation of their study, how those risks may differ based on individual students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise. It also outlines what measures the College has taken to mitigate risks and what it would do to support students to continue with their studies

### **4. Measures to Inform and Protect Students**

4.1 Students should make themselves familiar with the Regent College Terms and Conditions. The College is committed to communicating any material changes in circumstances to students as early as practicable, with clear information and alternatives.

4.2 Based on its assessment of potential risks, the College will take all reasonable steps to minimise any resulting disruption to services and to students affected by changes by, for example:

- delivering a modified version of the same course;
- delivering the same course in a different location or in a different way
- providing assistance to affected students to switch to a different provider.
- making provision for refunds or compensation, where applicable

4.3 The College's assessment of risk to the continuation of study for students takes into account that its HND programmes are two years in duration. Once approved by the OfS it will be published on the College's website and included in student handbooks and included in student induction.

4.4 The College is committed to supporting students to make informed decisions about what their best options are in the event of material changes to their academic situation. It will use all resources available to it to ensure students have all necessary information to evaluate any changes in a timely manner and enable them to access independent advice, for them to make the most informed decisions possible.

4.5 This plan will be reviewed and updated on a yearly basis, or in the event, there is an increased likelihood of one or more of the risks occurring.

### **5. Significant Material Change**

#### **College closure**

5.1 The possibility of institutional failure by the college on business grounds will be monitored through a risk management process in accordance with the regulations of the Office for Students and any instance of this will be managed in accordance with College policies and procedures. The risk that the College as a whole is unable to operate is assessed as **very low** because the College has sufficient financial reserves and it has business continuity plans in place to deal with any potential financial issues. This ensures

that, in the unlikely event of any decision being taken to close the College, it would be in a phased manner so it would be able to teach out all existing HND programmes

5.2 If the College finds itself in a position where it has no option, other than to close, it would consider measures such as those below to protect student experience:

- where possible, the primary objective would be closing in a phased manner, over a period of time that would allow current enrolled students to complete their studies at the College;
- in a situation where this is not possible, the college would support students to transfer to appropriate/equivalent programmes provided by other providers and (where appropriate financially) would look to compensating students if, because of the change of location of their studies, they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss;
- alternatively it may explore the possibility of merging with another provider in order to maintain all or part of the current provision.

### **Campus Closure**

5.3 The risk of the College having to close part or all of any of its campus has been assessed as **low** because it undertakes regular safety audits, planned maintenance and regular testing of alarm systems to ensure that the fabric of the building is fit for purpose. The lease on the Madison House Campus, where the HND is delivered, is not due for renewal until 2024 so there is no imminent risk attached to any renewal process. Additionally, a factor that strongly mitigates against this risk is that Regent Group owns or leases 4 other educational buildings and other property in the North West London area. This would ensure that in the unlikely event of the College having to move HND provision away from its Madison House Campus any disruption to students and additional travel costs would be minimised.

In the event that part or all of the campus is rendered unusable for activities involving students, the College would usually consider remedies such as:

- relocating provision to an alternative location, this may include utilising other property used by Regent Group or hiring spaces for programme delivery (where possible nearby, but definitely in North west London)
- rescheduling the timetabled hours to allow all of the scheduled teaching to take part in the available facilities. This may include student contact sessions being held outside of usual planned hours. Where such an approach is taken, appropriate consultation will normally be conducted with students and stakeholders who may be affected;
- delivering part or all of programmes through alternative means, such as distance learning. Where such an approach is taken, the College will consider whether this is appropriate for students who would be affected.
- In the event that any student may not be able to move their studies to an alternative location, or engage with alternative modes of study for credible and demonstrable reasons, the College would consider where appropriate possible refunds if students had to change providers or compensating students if, because of disruption to their studies, they suffer demonstrable, financial loss.

5.4 In the event of the College having to close significant parts of the campus it is possible that it would adopt a strategy of employing a combination of the methods outlined above

### **Course Closure**

5.5 The College has procedures in place in the event of it making the decision to close a course. At the current time it has no plans to permanently close its HND course for either strategic reasons or relating to recruitment. Current recruitment targets are consistently met, therefore the risk of this occurring has been assessed as **low**. If this were likely to happen and have a material impact on the students, the effects would be mitigated by:

- Closing the course over a phased period to enable students to be taught out;
- timely communication with all current students to provide assurance that they will not be adversely affected by this decision, and provide assurance that they will be able to complete their studies at the College;
- additionally, where possible, provision will be made to allow for students to complete their studies where 'mitigated circumstances' have been presented or an interruption of studies has been requested;
- possible future applicants will be notified, allowing time for them to successfully apply for an alternative programme of study
- in the event of individual students not wanting to complete their programme of study at the College during any teach out period, or the College having to close the programme before teach out was complete, it would employ measures outlined above to facilitate student transfer to other providers to complete their studies.

### **Course Variation**

5.6 The College consistently aims to deliver programmes in accordance with the descriptions in its published prospectus. The most likely reason for the College having to make changes to courses 'in-year' would be the unexpected loss of a number of staff. The risk of the College having to make changes to a student's programme of study because it is no longer able to deliver material components is **low**. This is because all modules are taught by integrated teams of academic staff and the College is not reliant on single highly specialist members of staff to deliver any one part of the programmes. The College would mitigate the risk of having to make changes to student programmes due to the loss of key staff and minimise disruption by:

- filling any gaps in staffing as quickly as possible;
- deploying other current members of staff with appropriate skills and experience into any vacant post(s) or recruiting externally as quickly as possible.

However, in the event of major in-year changes to course content the College will ensure that:

- any changes are restricted to the minimum necessary to achieve the required quality of student experience;
- affected students will notified and consulted with in a timely and appropriate manner;
- The College will work with students to ensure that any revised offer is still acceptable;
- where necessary, the College allows students the opportunity to withdraw from the programme;
- if required students will be offered every reasonable support to transfer to another programme, or provider.
- In the event that any student finds the revised offer unacceptable or is not able to move their studies to an alternative location, or engage with alternative modes of

study for credible and demonstrable reasons, the College would consider, where appropriate, possible refunds if students had to change providers or compensating students if, because of disruption to their studies, they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss.

### **Course Designation**

5.7 The risk of the College losing its Course Designation has been assessed as **low** as it has a consistent track record of achieving all quality measures required by QAA and was awarded an assessment of commendable progress in its most recent QAA Annual Review (Dec 2017). The College has also a consistent track record of achieving all Financial Sustainability, Management and Governance criteria set by HEFCE for Course designation. However, in the unlikely event of de-designation of its courses for 'Student Support' purposes (resulting in the withdrawal of statutory student finance for its courses) the College, would take reasonable steps to minimise the resulting disruption to students by, for example:

- working with relevant funding bodies to allow enrolled students to complete their programme;
- where the above is not possible, supporting students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers and, if appropriate, financially compensating students where they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss because of disruption to their studies;
- support students by providing any evidence required to facilitate the continuation of their studies with another provider;
- in the event that some students may not be able to move their studies to an alternative provider, or suffered demonstrable, financial loss from doing so for credible reasons, the College would consider, where appropriate possible refunds to students had to change providers or compensating students if, because of disruption to their studies, they suffer demonstrable, financial loss.
- explore the possibility of merging with another provider to maintain all or part of the current provision.

### **Course Validation**

5.8 The assessed risk of losing validation with Pearson for its HND programme is **low**. The College has an excellent track record of meeting all Pearson quality requirements through Annual Monitoring review and External Examiner visits. In addition, the College has been able to respond successfully to any Pearson unannounced, thematic spot-checks on matters such as attendance and registration. In the event of the College losing validation through Pearson, the College will consider measures to protect student experience, such as those listed below:

- Work with the validating partner to ensure students could complete their programmes prior to the validation being withdrawn
- providing assistance to any affected students to switch to a different provider who holds the relevant accreditation, as outlined above;
- exploring the possibility of finding a new validation partner;

### **Tier 4 Sponsorship Licence**

5.9 Whilst the College has a Tier 4 sponsorship license, it currently has no Tier 4 visa students and does not plan to actively recruit from abroad in the period September 2018 to

September 2020. However, in the event of suspension of the College's Tier 4 Sponsor status, it will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resultant disruption to those services and to affected students by, for example;

- working with UKVI to allow any enrolled students to complete their year of study/programme;
- allow any students already in receipt of a VISA based upon an allocated CAS from the College to enrol and commence their studies;
- offer any students who have not commenced their travel to the College, the opportunity to postpone their application pending the resolution of the suspension.
- In the event of a revocation of its Tier 4 Sponsor status the college will provide all reasonable assistance to any affected students to switch to an alternative sponsor

## External Disruption

5.10 Although the likelihood of this type of disruption to College activity brought on by external factors is slight, the fact that campus is in a major capital city, where external or internal events could result in term-time programme disruption is a possibility. Such events could include:

- Industrial action
- External environmental incidents
- Large scale public health incidents

The College would consider whether it is practicable to make changes to programme delivery rather than closing or suspending an affected programme

5.11 Whilst it is highly unlikely that the College itself would be affected by internal industrial action, it is possible that the College and its students may be unduly affected by industrial action by a third party, for instance during a prolonged Tube strike. Similarly, ongoing public monitoring of environmental and public health issues usually ensure that significant disruption to students completing their programmes is highly unlikely. However, the College has to consider the possibility that it could. In the unlikely event disruption of institutional activity, the College will usually seek to:

- ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible. This may also include taking actions outlined for partial campus closure above;
- 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.
- in the event that the external event may be traumatic for students, to offer one to one support internally or referral externally for any students who may be disproportionately affected by any such event.

5.12 The College is familiar with the guidance issued by the Metropolitan Police regarding potential terrorist incidents in London and has assessed the potential risk of short-term disruption to Institutional activity from such an incident as **moderate**, due to the College's proximity to Wembley Stadium. The Institute also recognises that such an incident may have disproportionate effects on differing individual students and staff.

5.13 In the event of a significant terrorist event in London, which impacted upon the College, it would:

- ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible. This may also include taking actions outlined in the section addressing closure or partial closure of the campus, above;
- offer one to one support internally or referred externally for any students who may be disproportionately affected by any such event
- in the event that a student or students were not able to return to the College after a terrorist event, it would consider implementing measures outlined in 3.3 above.

## **6. Feedback**

6.1 Regent College will seek feedback from students before publishing this plan and on an annual basis thereafter. A copy of this plan will be posted on the College's website and in student handbooks. In the event that any of the circumstances outlined above comes about, the College will re-publish its plan and open discussions with students about how they can be supported during any period of disruption to the continuity of their study. If the College has to enact any part of this plan, it will seek feedback from students as to the effectiveness of actions taken.