

Annex D: Student Protection Plan for the period 2021-22

Provider's name: **Centre for Advanced Studies Ltd T/A City of London College**

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City of London College (CLC), established in 1979, is an alternative provider in the UK higher education sector and enjoys a long tradition of providing high quality, relevant higher education provision, promoting its expectation to be a leading provider of national and international academic, vocational and professional education opportunities. Over its thirty-eight years history, CLC has offered diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate courses in collaboration with a range of UK universities and was awarded the 'Queen's Award for Enterprise 2011' (International Trade). In July 2018, the College underwent a QAA Higher Education Review, successfully meeting all UK Quality Code Expectations.

The College has recently designed and implemented a new five-year Strategic Plan 2017-2022, to define and orchestrate a long-term vision of the College's higher education provision, aligned with the requirements of the Office for Students.

Management and governance processes that underpin this strategic plan, including the process of developing and implementing the Student Protection Plan and the mechanism for its approval are central to the mission of the College. This policy, written in line with the Office for Students (OfS) guidelines and regulations under the requirements of the Higher Education and Research Act (2017), confirms the College's commitment to ensuring the continuity of studies of students in the event of discontinuation in operations or wider College disruptions.

Student protection plan for the period [2021-22]

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

Events and circumstances, beyond the College's control, may result in the temporary or permanent withdrawal of continuation of study for students. These could include:

1. Significant human resource changes including the loss of key academic and support staff and the potential inability to recruit staff with the necessary teaching delivery skills.
2. Significant physical resource changes including loss of campus and estates facilities to maintain specific and necessary resources to deliver provision;
3. Inability to operate as intended due to loss or restriction of licenses/registrations/designation and withdrawal of validating agreement(s) by awarding bodies;
4. Industrial action by College staff;
5. Inability to deliver specific timings of study such as day-time or evening;

Risk 4 is assessed as a moderate risk beyond the control of the College in circumstances of a national dispute or action.

The **remaining risks are all assessed as low** and are mitigated through the College's Business Continuity Planning as outlined below. It is significant that the business planning framework is informed by the experiences and expectations of the student body and any awarding partners.

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

The College has a Business Continuity Plan and framework in place to assess and mitigate any perceived risks to the continuation of study for our students as outlined below. The Plan is reviewed annually by the Board of Governors and Senior Management Team, taking account of views of Student and Staff representatives. The Plan is designed to ensure financial stability, effective resource planning and delivery.

Significant human resource changes – To mitigate the potential loss of key staff, and the need to ensure the capability of new staff and build high achievement expectations, the College has, as part of its strategic planning, implemented a Staff Development Framework, Strategy and Policy. In addition, the College's 'Externality Framework and Strategy supports and enhances the further development of staff through the provision and input of external 'critical friends' in the staff development process.

The risk of disruption to normal College teaching and administrative activities due to staffing shortages or absences is considered low since the College will ensure that sufficient, qualified staff are recruited and that staff are able to cover for each other in the event of such shortage or absence.

To mitigate this risk the College will regularly review staff requirements and the recruitment of temporary teaching or administrative staff, as needed.

Risk – LOW

1. Significant physical resource changes - The provision of 'fit for purpose' estates, premises and resources suitable and appropriate for study at higher level is currently a key feature in the College's business continuity planning.

Should any programmes or modes of study be withdrawn as a result of the loss of physical resources, or withdrawal of collaborative arrangements by awarding body partners, the College will undertake to phase out courses in an open, transparent and timely fashion so that the 'teach out' of students will align with the stated timelines of the academic cycle to minimise the disturbance of the student learning experience.

In the unlikely event of the College premises being unavailable for use, for example due to damage, flooding or other reason, the College will mitigate the impact on students by:

- renting alternative nearby premises as needed;
- keeping students fully informed of any changed location for classes;
- ensuring that any repairs to the premises are carried out promptly.

Risk – LOW

3. Inability to operate as intended due to loss or restriction of licenses/registrations/designation and withdrawal of validating agreement(s) by awarding bodies

As a result of the College's accreditation arrangements being revoked by its regulator(s), or a partner awarding body withdraws validation agreement(s), we will implement a fair, open & transparent and gradual closure process to minimise disturbance to student studies.

In addition, if programmes and modes of study are withdrawn for reasons beyond the College's control, it will undertake to 'teach out' students under existing timescales and deadlines.

The College underwent a 'teach out' process in 2017/18 due to changes in collaborative arrangements. The 'teach out' was orderly and supportive of students – some students with re-submission requirements were supported by continued teaching support and financial help (tuition fees paid), demonstrating the College's commitment to ensuring continuity of study and appropriate learning support.

The College has demonstrated its ability for ensuring the provision of quality systems and monitoring to secure partner and regulatory body compliance through successfully engaging with the QAA Higher Education Review process. In July 2017, the College successfully met all UK Quality Expectations as a result of a QAA Higher Education Review. The implementation of a five year Strategic Plan and the operation of the new Quality Enhancement Framework, clearly demonstrates the strength of the College's governance and management of standards and quality to ensure continuity of delivery to students.

The College has demonstrated its ability for the provision of quality systems and monitoring to secure partner and regulatory body compliance.

In the unlikely event of the College losing accreditation, other measures that the College can implement to protect the student experience, may include:

- delivering a modified version of the same course;
- offering affected students the chance to move to another course;
- providing assistance to affected students to switch to a different provider holding the relevant accreditation.

Risk - LOW

4. Industrial action by college staff

The College is committed to maintaining effective employee relations and to working with trade union representatives, as applicable, to achieve reasonable solutions for any matters arising.

In the event that local or national industrial action by academic and support staff should occur, the College will ensure that all physical resources will, as far as possible, be made available to students during the period of the action and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that any disruption is minimised and that students are not disadvantaged by the action.

Due the College's inability to exercise full control over this issue the **on-going risk is MODERATE**

5. Inability to deliver specific timings of study such as day-time or evening;

Should issues arise related to timings of daytime or evening sessions, due to staff illness/absence, or an IT related malfunction the College will provide alternative modes of study delivered by consultant staff as a short-term interim measure.

The College maintains a comprehensive register/database of professional and academic specialists to be available at short notice to provide cover at a time of need.

In the event of the need to cancel classes due to staff shortages and/or illness, the College will offer repeat sessions at no extra cost to the student.

Risk – LOW

The College's Board of Governors and Senior Management Team also maintain an ongoing assessment of risk and risk mitigation via their regular meetings and are able to put any additional measures in place, as needed. Communication is maintained with, and input obtained from, students and staff and any other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

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

The College's Tuition Fee, **Tuition Fee, Refund and Compensation Policy** sets out our fees and charges, students' liabilities for course fees, and the College's provisions for refunds of tuition fees, relevant costs or compensation, where necessary, in the event that we are no longer able to preserve continuation of study.

The policy is available on the College website and hard copy may be obtained from the administrator if needed. The policy is revised annually and student representatives involved in any revisions.

The College's financial reserves and strategy, overseen by the Board of Governors, ensure that there are sufficient cash reserves to deliver the financial implications of this policy.

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

Student Engagement, Staff & External Participation

The Student Protection Plan was approved, after wider consultation, in May 2018 and is clearly signposted and accessible to current and prospective students and staff on the College website and intranet and also available in hard copy from the administrator.

The Plan, along with the College Strategic Plan and Strategic Enhancement Plan will be reviewed termly (x3) by the Quality Enhancement Committee and Academic Board. Students undertaking formal Student Representative roles are present on these committees ensuring that the student voice has a proactive role in development of the plan and any updates to it.

Students and staff will be kept informed about any risks arising by means of face-to-face meetings and also via their CLC email addresses as well as updates on the website and/or the VLE as appropriate.. In addition, students will be consulted and represented in relevant meetings with the College and its awarding bodies and given opportunities to discuss any potential risks or impacts on their study as well as to discuss any actions being taken to mitigate the perceived risks. Staff will also be informed about the Plan as part of their induction and any updates included at staff training events.