

## Annex D: Template for a student protection plan

Provider's name: South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS)

Provider's UKPRN: 10036143

Legal address: SGS College, Stratford Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4AH.

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### Student protection plan for the period 2018/19

**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.**

1. The risk that SGS College as a whole is unable to operate is very low. We have had consistently good financial health ratings as confirmed by the ESFA since the organisation was merged in 2012.
2. The risk of notice from our validating partner, the University of Gloucestershire, is low. The Strategic Alliance with UoG has existed since 2012 and a 10 year Memorandum of Understanding was established.
3. The risk of notice from Bristol Zoo Society (BZS) (who provide the rooms, facilities and some teaching for our HE Zoological Management and Conservation programmes) is low. A contract supports a well-established relationship with BZS (since 2006) which is reviewed on an annual basis.
4. The risk of notice from the Royal West of England Academy (RWA) (who provide the building which houses our Bristol School of Art) is low. We have been renting these facilities since 1991 and we signed a new 10 year contract with the RWA in December 2017.
5. A low risk is posed by insufficient numbers of applicants for courses during the recruitment cycle meaning that courses have to be withdrawn.
6. There is a low risk from both diminishing class size in some of our courses which have relatively low starting numbers and from the poor conversion of firmly accepted applicants.
7. The risk of a subject-specialist member of staff leaving impacting on course delivery and student experience is low. We have no courses that are dependent on single teacher delivery.

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

1. If SGS College was unable to operate as a whole we have full business continuity and disaster recovery plans in place.
2. If the Strategic Alliance with our validating partner, the University of Gloucestershire, was terminated it would be done in a timely way to allow for the running out of courses. A contractual commitment exists to ensure that all registered students are supported to complete their programme of study after any notice issued. This supports and protects students and our institutional reputations. Students may also choose to bank their interim award and continue their studies at another institution.
3. If the contract with Bristol Zoo Society (BZS) was terminated, a contractual commitment exists to ensure that all registered students are supported to complete their programme of study after any notice issued.
4. If our contract with the Royal West of England Academy (RWA) was terminated, there is a 5 year 'break out clause' which would allow more than adequate 'run out' time for our HE programmes delivered on this site. This would also give time for the relocation of these courses to the art department at our WISE campus.
5. We mitigate against low applicant numbers by continuously reviewing numbers throughout the recruitment cycle to ensure the timely closure of courses, enabling applicants to pursue other options (including those at UoG). Students are personally supported in their decision-making by advice and guidance from the HE Student Admissions and Experience Team and subject-specialist tutors who are able to advise on alternative relevant opportunities both within the institution and elsewhere.
6. We mitigate against course closure due to small group sizes by committing to 'running out' programmes already in existence, even if they have very low numbers. Current reviewing of strategies across our subject areas is allowing for more opportunities for shared modules which will lead to increased group sizes and an enhanced student experience. Students who may wish to transfer are personally supported in their decision-making by advice and guidance from the HE Student Admissions and Experience Team and subject-specialist tutors who are able to advise on alternative relevant opportunities both within the institution and elsewhere.
7. We mitigate against the loss of a subject-specialist member of staff as our staff contracts require a minimum of one term's notice and we have no courses that are dependent on single teacher delivery. We have designed our curriculums to be delivered by integrated teams of academic staff.

### **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.**

Our Fee and Charges Policy (available at:

[http://www.sgscol.ac.uk/repository/documents/policies/Fees\\_and\\_Charges\\_Policy\\_201819.pdf](http://www.sgscol.ac.uk/repository/documents/policies/Fees_and_Charges_Policy_201819.pdf))

has been fully revised and ensures that it makes provision for:

- refunds for students in receipt of tuitions fee loan from the Student Loans Company
- refunds for students who pay their own tuition fees
- refunds for students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor
- the payment of additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course
- commitments to honour student bursaries
- compensation for maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study
- compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer courses or provider

We will ring-fence sufficient cash reserves to provide refunds and compensation for those students for whom we identify an increased risk of non-continuation of study.

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

We will communicate the provisions in our Student Protection Plan to current and future students by:

1. Publishing our Fee Policy and Complaints Policy on the College website.
2. Providing students with Terms & Conditions prior to enrolment.
3. Producing a student-friendly version of the Plan (which will make direct reference to and include a link to the approved Plan) outlining our commitments.

We will review and develop our Student Protection Plan:

1. Through formal discussions with our Lead Student Representative.
2. Through our reporting structure as set out in our Students as Partners Strategy.

In the event that our Student Protection Plan needs to be implemented we will:

1. Give students at least 30 days' notice (in writing) when we need to make material or major changes to their course.
2. Call a series of formal meetings with Class Reps and open forums for all students who are affected. Formal minutes of these meetings will be circulated within 48 hours via the College email system to these students.
3. Signpost students to independent organisations and sources of information (e.g. UCAS, OIA, OfS).