

## Student Protection Plan

Provider's name:	Bournemouth University
Provider's UKPRN:	10000824
Legal address:	Poole House, Talbot Campus, Fern Barrow, Poole, BH12 5BB
Contact point for enquiries:	Jules Forrest, Head of Academic Quality jforrest@bournemouth.ac.uk

### **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**

#### **Financial Sustainability**

Our most recent financial statement demonstrates a trend of growing positive surplus generation (before applying pension adjustments and restructuring charges) and our external auditors' completion report confirms going concern is assessed as normal risk. The University has continued to engage with the Office for Students' (OfS) annual accountability return mechanism which includes an assessment of BU's financial sustainability, good management and governance.

The financial sustainability of the institution underpins our approach to assuring students that any risks to continuation of study are being managed and mitigated as appropriate.

#### **Programme Delivery**

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver material components of our courses is low because we design our programmes and units to be taught by integrated teams of academic staff. During the programme approval process Faculties consider the resources available for the delivery of the programme, including the staffing base, to ensure the core components of a programme can be delivered to students. There is a small risk that individual staff members with expertise applicable to a programme of study will be absent due to unforeseen circumstances or through leaving the University. This is unlikely to prevent the University delivering a programme of study as planned. In rare cases where changes in the staffing base affect our ability to deliver specific aspects of a programme, students will be consulted under our standard approach to course communications as outlined in section 13 of the Student Agreement. A key aim of this provision is ensuring students are able to enjoy a coherent programme of study even where there may be occasional changes in our staffing base.

#### **Partnership Provision**

The University is engaged in franchise partnership arrangements with the following institutions during 2022/23 as shown in the table below:

Franchise Partner	Franchised Programmes
Bournemouth and Poole College	FdEng Engineering (Electronic Design) HNC Engineering (Electronic Design) FdEng Engineering (Manufacturing Management) HNC Engineering (Manufacturing Management) FdEng Engineering (Mechanical Design)

	HNC Engineering (Mechanical Design) FdEng Engineering (Marine Technologies) HNC Engineering (Marine Technologies)
Kingston Maurward College	FdA Tourism Park Management
Wiltshire College and University Centre	BA (Hons) Film Production and Cinematography BA (Hons) Commercial Photography BA (Hons) Photography Foundation Year in Applied Science FdSc Applied Science FdSc Applied Science (with foundation year) FdSc Biomedical Science FdSc Biomedical Science (with foundation year) FdSc Environmental Science and Sustainability FdSc Environmental Science and Sustainability (with foundation year) FdSc Forensic Science FdSc Forensic Science (with foundation year) FdSc Health and Nutrition FdSc Health and Nutrition (with foundation year) FdSc Pharmaceuticals FdSc Pharmaceuticals (with foundation year)

BU performs legal and financial due diligence at the point of partner approval and contract renewal to assure itself of the ability of the partner to carry out delivery leading to a BU award. The University has a contractual relationship with each of these providers that makes explicit reference to the need to ensure continuity of study through a 'teach out period' in the event that the franchise agreement is terminated. 'Teaching out' means enabling students to complete their programme of study.

Where more general changes are made to the programme portfolio, including the closure of individual programmes, the standard University processes apply (see 'Programme Changes' and 'Programme Closure' below).

These measures ensure that the overall residual risk to continuity of study is low for students studying at these franchise partners.

A small number of our partnerships are due to close in the next few years, with some continuing to have students enrolled during 2022/23. As outlined below these risks have been effectively mitigated through collaboration between BU and the partner institution, with both institutions committed to ensuring students are able to complete the programmes for which they enrolled.

#### Kingston Maurward College

The franchise partnership arrangement with Kingston Maurward College is currently in a 'teach out' phase following the closure of FdA Tourism Park Management. BU is committed to supporting the delivery of FdA Tourism Park Management until all students have completed their programme or are no longer registered as students to ensure that the student experience is not adversely affected, and academic quality and standards are maintained.

## Delivery off-campus

The University has some limited off-campus delivery, undertaken by University staff to students registered with BU at sites in the following locations and subject areas. These are examples where there is regular teaching at these sites as an integrated part of the programme and is not inclusive of occasional teaching using facilities off site.

- |                 |                                   |            |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| • Portsmouth    | St Mary's Community Health Campus | Midwifery  |
| • St Peter Port | GTA University Centre             | Management |
| • Yeovil        | Yeovil College University Centre  | Nursing    |

Off-campus delivery arrangements are considered at the point of programme approval or review and oversight of formal partnerships is provided by the University's Academic Standards and Education Committee. As the University may not have direct control over these sites, there is a marginally higher risk that the sites could become unavailable at some point in the future. Where this risk materialises, the approach to managing this would be consistent with other significant changes to programmes (see 'Programme Changes' and 'Programme Closure' below). Ensuring continuing access to appropriate teaching facilities is a key consideration within the University's approach to business continuity planning.

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

### Programme Changes

Section 13 of the Student Agreement outlines our approach to programme changes and consulting students on these changes. This policy states that we will normally make changes only if the overall effect is either neutral or advantageous to students. As outlined in the previous section, changes may sometimes be unavoidable in very rare cases because of unforeseen issues such as staff availability, student numbers or the availability of other resources. We will seek to minimise the impact of the changes on students and any negative impact on the student experience.

Updates to a programme following a formal review or under the modifications procedure will usually apply only to new intakes of students. However, in some circumstances, changes may affect current students. If a proposed change does affect current students, and is a material change, we will consult the students concerned. We will not implement a change for current students unless we obtain agreement from the affected students in line with the procedure for modifying programmes and as reflected in the Student Agreement. We will make reasonable efforts to obtain student support for the changes and we will inform the affected students if we implement the changes. In the event that an individual student does not agree with the change and this causes issues for them, we will work closely with individuals to reduce any adverse impacts.

### Programme Closure

BU's policy and procedure for the closure of programmes is designed to ensure the University can continue to maintain quality and standards of provision up until the point students are no longer enrolled on the programme, thus preserving continuity of study for individuals already on the programme. When the decision is taken to close a programme, a formal 'Review for Closure' meeting takes place to consider the impact on current cohorts and to agree how to facilitate teaching out of current students given their expected completion dates.

Where a student continues beyond the closure date for the programme, perhaps due to assessment failure requiring repetition of a unit or interruption of study (including periods of maternity leave), the relevant Faculty will consider how continuity of study can be achieved through the substitution of units with equivalent learning outcomes or through transfer to another programme (see below). Provision for these circumstances is outlined in the University's standard assessment regulations for taught programmes and the interruption of study procedure.

### **Provision for the transfer of students**

BU provides clear guidance on the recognition of academic credit for the purposes of admission to the University. This provides options for students seeking to transfer from other academic institutions and also enables students who had previously withdrawn from BU to return to the University in order to undertake an equivalent programme of study.

In the unlikely event of a scenario where a programme is closed before all enrolled students have completed the programme (for example if a student has chosen to interrupt their studies) there is provision within BU's academic regulations for the transfer of students to another suitable programme. In all cases the University will seek agreement from students before completing the transfer.

Students who are considering a transfer to another institution are able to request an official transcript of their BU results. This provides a formal record for the purposes of allowing other institutions to assess an application for recognition of prior learning.

### **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 risk that the University would not be able to preserve continuity of study is low. As part of the general approach to financial stewardship, BU has in place a Reserves Policy that provides sufficient cash for providing refunds and/or compensation on a case by case basis. The University will maintain one months' cash (30-days) in order to manage its day-to-day needs for working capital and also act as a contingency reserve. In addition the University will maintain a Revolving Credit Facility equivalent to 25 cash days. Therefore in aggregate the University's lower limit is 55 cash days.

In the unlikely event that continuity of study cannot be preserved, tuition fee liability will be calculated under section 7 of the University's Fees Policy. This part of the Fees Policy makes provision for refunding tuition fees to students, sponsors or the Students Loan Company using a calculation based on the formal date of withdrawal or interruption of study.

In the event that students believe further compensation is warranted they are able to access the student complaints procedure. This will allow due consideration of a student's claim in line with the University's refund and compensation (non-continuation of study) policy.

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

The Student Protection Plan will be communicated to staff and students in the following ways:

- Publication on the University website
- Reference to the Student Protection Plan within the Student Agreement
- Explicit reference to the Student Protection Plan and its implications as part of relevant academic policies governing programme approval, review and closure and programme modifications

We have consulted with the Students' Union at Bournemouth University during the development of the Student Protection Plan. We will review the Student Protection Plan on an annual basis through both executive and deliberative committee structures, facilitating ongoing dialogue with student representatives on the content of the Student Protection Plan.

In the event that the student protection plan is to be implemented, section 13 of the Student Agreement outlines our approach to programme changes and consulting students on these changes. The procedure for communicating changes to programmes provides further detail on how this communication is managed.