

Yeovil College Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: Yeovil College

Provider's UKPRN: 10007696

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Student protection plan

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

Yeovil College is committed to supporting students to achieve good academic outcomes from their studies. On rare occasion events may occur that mean unanticipated changes have to be made to programmes of study. The details relating to these provisions are contained within the Student Terms and Conditions and Student Charter. The College is committed to communicating any changes to students as early as possible, providing clear information and any relevant options. The College will ensure that any potential disruption is minimised to enable students to complete their programmes as planned.

Potential events may be prompted by, but not limited to circumstances such as:

- 1. Changes in course structure or content (moderate)**
- 2. Revision of course material (moderate)**
- 3. A decision to close a programme / course (low)**
- 4. A decision to not run a programme / course for the following academic year (moderate)**
- 5. Variations to regulatory frameworks affecting specific courses (low)**
- 6. Removal of accreditation from regulatory bodies (low)**
- 7. Any interruption to delivery (low)**
- 8. Industrial action by any third party or college staff (low)**
- 9. Unforeseen departure of central members of staff (moderate)**
- 10. The Tier 4 Sponsor Licence is suspended or revoked (low)**
- 11. If the College partially closes (low)**
- 12. If the College ceases to operate (low)**

The risk level for all of the potential scenarios detailed is low to moderate. If any of the potential scenarios occurred Yeovil College has sufficient contingency plans to ensure the continuity of study for students is sustained.

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

1. Changes in course structure or content

Yeovil College will ensure that programmes are delivered in accordance with the approved programme specification, and programme outline as detailed in the college prospectus for that academic year. However, in the unlikely event of a required in-year change to course structure or content due to changes in professional body, university partner or industry-specific requirements the College will ensure that:

- The Higher Education Management and Strategy Group and delivery sub-committee have the responsibility of monitoring, advising and approving all programme modifications; inappropriate modifications or changes without student consultation/sponsorship are not permissible.
- Changes in course structure have not been a feature of HE provision any Yeovil College
- Where changes have occurred in validated provision, they have been driven through the student voice process and as a result of student opinion
- Any changes are limited as far as reasonably possible
- All affected students will be notified and consulted as appropriate
- In exceptional cases and if required students will be supported to transfer to another programme within the College, or to another Higher Education provider
- Consultation, if applicable, will be held with any relevant stakeholders
- Future applicants will be informed via clear lines of communication if applicable

Where programmes are undergoing re-validation by a university partner, up to date information will be published on the website.

2. Revision of course material

Yeovil College has established procedures that would be followed in the event of any necessary changes within an academic year to the course material. If there would be a resultant impact on students this would be mitigated by:

- The Higher Education Management and Strategy Group and delivery sub-committee have the responsibility of monitoring, advising and approving all programme modifications; inappropriate modifications or changes without student consultation/sponsorship are not permissible.
- Effective communication to current students to notify them of any proposed changes and the rationale and ensure that they understand the implications and that they will not be adversely affected. Any concerns raised will then be addressed by the Programme Team.
- Consultation, if applicable, will be held with student body & council representatives in addition to any relevant stakeholders such as alumni, students, industry, professional bodies, university partners.

The aim of any consultations relating to course structure and content is to obtain as wide as possible critique and input from interested parties in order to strengthen the development and relevance of the programme. Such input may be in relation to subject matter, computer languages, work-based learning opportunities, and industry-specific technologies and skills. The purpose is to ensure that graduates of the programme have benefited from a learning experience that has academic currency and is relevant to the 21st century workplace.

3. A decision to close a programme / course

Yeovil College has an established Higher Education curriculum which includes prescribed and non-prescribed programmes, validated and franchised. In the history of our delivery, we have no record of in-year course closures and when a course has been discontinued or replaced with a revised programme, we have always taught out any learners through the whole duration of the programme.

Yeovil College has established procedures that would be followed in the event of any necessary changes or decisions within an academic year to close a programme or course. If there would be a resultant impact on students this would be mitigated by:

Effective communication to current students to notify them of any changes and ensure that they understand that they will not be adversely affected and will be able to complete their programme / course
Consultation if applicable will be held with any relevant stakeholders
Future applicants will be informed via clear lines of communication if applicable to enable them to seek an alternative programme / provider.

The risk of closing a course is considered low due to the various safeguards in place. For example, before any course can be run, proposals are considered by the Internal Academic Strategy Group (IASG), part of the Higher Education Management and Strategy Group (HEMSG). This process involves research into, for example, the requirements of the programme, the potential HE portfolio, university partnership, etc., and before approval is granted to run a course, this information is considered in depth by the university partner. University partnerships adhere to strict QA regulations which involve regular meetings to discuss the programme portfolio, student access, recruitment, success, performance, and retention. Any decision to close a course unexpectedly would be taken after consultation with the university partner and students would be made aware of the opportunities available to them. The college would support all students in this position with the transition to another provider, should they choose this option.

4. A decision to not run a programme / course for the following academic year

Yeovil College has established procedures that would be followed in the event of deciding not to run a programme for the following academic year. This is considered to be a moderate risk. Where the baseline number of applicants for admission to first year of a programme has not met the minimum number specified in the university partnership or Pearson contract, the college enters into discussions with the partner about options. Anxious to ensure that all students enjoy an enriching academic experience, the college has to consider class size and the level of resource required to provide a high quality learning experience. Where a decision is taken not to admit applicants to year one, applicants will be contacted as soon as possible to provide them with information and guidance about their options.

For continuing students, the college is committed to offering the programme, if agreed by the university partner, so that students already registered are not disadvantaged. In the very rare instances where programmes have been cancelled for new admissions for an academic year, all on programme learners have been supported to complete their studies in their entirety.

If there would be a resultant impact on students this would be mitigated by:

- Effective communication to each individual applicant/student by telephone, in person, or via email to notify them of any changes and ensure that they understand the rationale and the proposal to ensure that they will not be adversely affected and will be able to complete their programme / course
- Consultation if applicable will be held with any relevant stakeholders
- Future applicants will be informed via clear lines of communication if applicable to enable them to seek an alternative programme / provider

5. Variations to regulatory frameworks affecting specific courses

Yeovil College has established procedures that would be followed in the event of any variations or changes to regulatory frameworks affecting specific courses. If there would be a resultant impact on students this would be mitigated by:

- Effective communication to current students to notify them of any changes and ensure that they understand that they will not be adversely affected and will be able to complete their programme / course. For example, when programmes moved from the QCF to RCF, students were contacted by letter and email and encouraged them to engage with the college to discuss options.
- Consultation if applicable will be held with any relevant stakeholders, such as university partners, to ensure that courses are eligible for progression to further programmes.
- Future applicants will be informed via clear lines of communication, such as website and prospectus, if applicable, to enable them to seek an alternative programme / provider

6. Removal of accreditation from regulatory bodies

Yeovil College has established procedures that would be followed in the event of loss or removal of accreditation from regulatory bodies. If there would be a resultant impact on students this would be mitigated by:

- Yeovil College has an outstanding history in maintaining Quality Standards and there have not been any instances of loss or removal of accreditation from any regulatory bodies.
- Following consultation with students and university partners, students effected would be offered the chance to move to another programme of study if relevant
- The college may offer a modified type of the existing programme
- The college would, if needed, provide support to any students that may need to transition to a different provider that runs a course under the correct accreditation.

7. Any interruption to delivery

Yeovil College has established procedures that would be followed in the event of any interruption to delivery, however Yeovil College has an enviable record in maintaining the continuity of it's timetable and cancelled classes or programmes for any reason are extremely rare. The college will normally amend a programme of study in line with university partner regulations or put measures in place to prevent a programme being closed or suspended. If there would be a resultant impact on students this would be mitigated by:

- Honest and open conversations with students as soon as possible and an explanation of the options available and rationale.
- Any teaching time lost would be fully compensated with replacement sessions timetabled subsequently to fully make up any lost time.
- Short term suspension of the delivery or an element of the delivery if applicable.
- Changes to the programme delivery model, such as the introduction of supported distance or flexible learning.
- Changes to the staffing model including the recruitment of new staff or industry specialists.
- The college may offer a modified type of the existing programme.
- The college would, if needed, provide support to any students that may need to transition to a different provider including supporting the transfer of credits if applicable.

8. Industrial action by any third party or college staff

Yeovil College has established procedures for consultation and negotiation that would be followed in the event of Industrial action by any third party or college staff. The college is committed to ensuring excellent employee relations are maintained and thus has a good relationship with trade unions. If there would be a resultant impact on students from any industrial action this would be mitigated by:

- Ensuring the college operates as normal as far as is reasonably possible by ensuring continued access to resources
- Where possible, facilitate direct access to university partner staff.
- Take all necessary steps to minimise any disruption to students
- Any teaching time lost would be fully compensated with replacement sessions timetabled to fully make up all un-delivered time.

9. Unforeseen departure of central members of staff

Yeovil College has established procedures for the unforeseen departure of central or key members of staff, additionally there is a risk management plan which includes a staffing strand. Within the risk management plan there is a risk based succession plan to ensure that the organisation is not vulnerable to any one member of it's staff no longer being employed. All key functions within the college are protected by the risk management plan and departures of central members of staff would be immediately back-filled. If there were multiple departures effecting a key role and in the unlikely situation there would be a resultant impact on students from the loss of multiple key staff this would be mitigated by:

- As soon as possible, engage in discussions with students to explain situation and advise of activity underway and likely timescale and impact.
- Keep students informed of progress and provide additional support, where possible, to ensure that students are not disadvantaged.
- Working swiftly to fill any vacancies as quickly as possible by redistributing current staff and or the use of external recruitment.
- In the unlikely event that the college is unable to avoid closing a programme the actions as detailed in point 3 would apply.

10. The Tier 4 Sponsor Licence is suspended or revoked

Yeovil College will take reasonable steps to support students if the Tier 4 Sponsor status is suspended, this would include:

- As early as possible, discuss with students who are impacted and listen to their concerns. Work with relevant professional staff to address concerns.
- Working with the appropriate bodies to ensure that the programme of study can be completed. This could be university partners or other providers.
- Offering applicants the opportunity to postpone applications for programmes that have not commenced.
- If the Tier 4 Sponsor status is revoked the College will support all students impacted to transfer to another provider.

11. If the College partially closes

The college has an estates strategy to deal with most eventualities to ensure the estate is maintained and the delivery of services is protected. There is additional risk management delivered in our business continuity and disaster recovery plans to ensure that teaching would remain largely unaffected even by significant losses of college estate. If Yeovil College had to close part of the campus or a department, the College would take reasonable steps to support students and if there would be a resultant impact on students this would be mitigated by:

- Communicate, using range of modes available, as soon as possible, to students about the situation, including contact person and timeline.
- Relocating provision if possible to another part of the college site or to another suitable close site have been made with local partners, which are identified in our business continuity and disaster recovery plans.
- Altering the planned sessions / timetable to make use of other existing facilities.
- Making reasonable use of alternate delivery methods such as distance learning and online resources.

12. If the College ceases to operate

- The management of Yeovil College is monitored closely in accordance with the relevant regulatory bodies. Formal interventions are part of the regulatory framework for all Further Education Colleges and include Department for Education, Education and Skills Agency and the office for the Further Education Commissioner, where all colleges that enter into situations which jeopardise the continuity of delivery are supported financially and practically to sustain provision for the benefit of all students.

In the unlikely event that the College ceased to operate, the College would action its Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plans; and would take reasonable steps to support students, this would include:

- Early communications/conversations with students about the situation using various media.
- Managing the operation of the College to allow enrolled students to complete their studies where possible.
- Supporting students to transfer to another provider including the validating university partner if applicable.
- Providing compensation to individuals who have suffered due to a disruption in studies.
- Merging with another College or Higher Education Institution to maintain the current provision.

Business Continuity Plans are available on the internal Sharepoint site.

3. Information about the policy 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 Yeovil College Fees Policy and Refund and Compensation Policy have been designed to ensure that they meet the needs of all students and cover the full range of potential circumstances, to include but not limited to:

- Refunds for students in receipt of tuition 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.

Yeovil College is committed to supporting the continuation of study for all students and where this is not possible the Student Protection Plan and Refund and Compensation Policy will apply.

Yeovil College will put in place insurance arrangements that are sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for those students for whom we have identified an increased risk of non-continuation of study. We will ensure that this is in place by 1 August 2019.

Link: <http://www.ycuc.ac.uk/About/StudentLife.html>

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

The Student Protection Plan will be made available to all students and prospective students via the College website.

Students and prospective students will be referred to the Yeovil College HE Terms and Conditions and the Higher Education Student Charter.

Yeovil College is committed to clearly communicating all and any changes to students and prospective students as early as practicably possible. The communication will be clear and contain all relevant information and relevant options if applicable.

The student protection plan will be fully implemented and recorded at relevant Higher Education meetings within the college and it will be circulated to prospective students prior to enrolment and again during the induction of their course.

The student protection plan will be reviewed annually and this review will take into account the views of students as well as key staff members.

All reasonable steps will be taken where possible to minimise any disruption to students. If a student is required to transfer course within the college, or move to another institution there may be implications for student finance arrangements. If this is the case the Colleges Student Advice team will be notified and will contact all affected students to provide detailed information, advice and guidance based on individual circumstances.

All relevant individuals were consulted in the creation of this documentation including:

- The Governing Body (Corporation) via the Higher Education lead Governor.
- The Higher Education Student Governor
- The Yeovil College Senior Management Team
- The Higher Education Management and Strategy Group

If this document is required in an alternative format, please contact universitycentre@yeovil.ac.uk