

STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN

Provider's name: London Metropolitan University

Provider's UKPRN: 10004048

Legal address: 166 – 220 Holloway Road, London, N7 8DB

Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan: The University Secretary and Registrar
<mailto:uso@londonmet.ac.uk>

Student protection plan for the period 2017/18 and 2018/19

OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR STUDENTS

We are committed to ensuring that our students have the best possible academic experience and this includes a commitment to ensuring that they can continue their studies on the course on which they are enrolled.

OUR STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN (SPP)

Our overall assessment for the University is that the risk of students not being able to complete their studies is **LOW**. Our risk assessment is set out in **Section One**.

Our plans to mitigate the impact of possible unplanned events on the ability of our students to complete their studies is set out in **Section Two**.

Our **Refund and Compensation Policy** is set out in **Section Three**.

Our **Student Communication Plan** is set out in **Section Four**.

SECTION ONE – RISK ASSESSMENT

1 Overall Risk Assessment

Our overall assessment of the risk to our students of not being able to continue their studies at the University is **LOW**. In reaching this assessment we have evaluated the likelihood of the following risks crystallising and the possible impact on students:

1.1 Low Risk

1.1.1 The University becoming unsustainable leading to closure

The University made an operating surplus of £6.5M for 2016-17 and had net assets of £149.3M at 31 July 2017, including cash and cash equivalents of £107.7M. We have no charges over our assets and no material loans. Our Strategic Plan contains no plans to close all or part of our operations.

At each of its meetings, the University's Board of Governors reviews our financial position and forecasts. The higher education regulator receives the Board's papers and attends its meetings as an observer.

1.1.2 Loss of licence to sponsor international students

We employ staff with expertise in UKVI's requirements and have robust procedures for ensuring compliance with our licence conditions and maintenance of our licence. The University's Board of Governors receives regular reports on visa compliance.

1.1.3 Loss of Degree Awarding Powers

Our powers to grant degrees and other educational awards are enshrined in our Articles of Association which set out the University's legal status and powers. Our processes and procedures are fully aligned with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and have been externally assessed as being compliant.

1.1.4 Planned Course Closures

The University's processes for planned course closures are fully aligned with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education which is designed to ensure that universities operate a process to protect the academic interests of students when a course is closed. Full details can be found in our Quality Manual at [http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/media/london-metropolitan-university/london-met-documents/professional-service-departments/quality-enhancement-unit/Quality-Manual-2017-18-\(19-02-18\).pdf](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/media/london-metropolitan-university/london-met-documents/professional-service-departments/quality-enhancement-unit/Quality-Manual-2017-18-(19-02-18).pdf)

1.1.5 Management of academic partnerships

Our procedures for managing academic partnerships, including termination arrangements, are fully aligned with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education. Full details can be found at <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/about/quality-enhancement-unit/partnerships-operational-manual/>

1.1.6 Planned closure of University teaching or other facilities

We plan to relocate all activities from our Moorgate and Aldgate campuses to our north London campus at Holloway Road within the next ten years. The risk of this preventing our students continuing with their studies is low. The moves involve a transition from two sites in London to a single London site with equivalent, or better, facilities and transport access. Planning will involve staff and students and a communication plan will be in place for each move.

1.1.7 Supervision of postgraduate research students

In the event a postgraduate research student's supervisor leaves the employment of the University a replacement supervisor will be sought immediately, where possible before the departure of the outgoing supervisor. The appointment of a replacement supervisor will normally be made by the student and supervisory team acting together. Full details of the process can be found at [http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/media/london-metropolitan-university/london-met-documents/professional-service-departments/academic-registry/academic-regulations/split-up-regs/5.2-Research-Degree-Regulations-for-MPhil,-PhD,-PhD\(Eur\),-PhD-by-Prior-Output,-DLitt,-DSc.pdf](http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/media/london-metropolitan-university/london-met-documents/professional-service-departments/academic-registry/academic-regulations/split-up-regs/5.2-Research-Degree-Regulations-for-MPhil,-PhD,-PhD(Eur),-PhD-by-Prior-Output,-DLitt,-DSc.pdf).

1.2 Medium Risk

1.2.1 *Unplanned Course Closures and unplanned closure of teaching or other facilities*

Unplanned course closures or unplanned buildings closures would only arise as a result of a matter outside our control, for example, unanticipated loss of professional accreditation for a course, or an emergency event such as a major fire. Section 2 of this SPP sets out how we would minimise the impact of unplanned events on our students being able to continue their studies and Section 3 explains our Refund and Compensation Policy for unplanned events which may unavoidably lead to a course being closed.

SECTION TWO – MANAGING AND MITIGATING RISK

We have the following arrangements in place for managing and mitigating risk in **MEDIUM** risk areas:

2.1 *Unplanned course closures and unplanned closure of University teaching or other facilities*

Unplanned course closures are only likely to arise from an emergency event outside our control, for example a major fire leading to the closure of teaching or other facilities. We would follow our procedures for planned course closures set out in 1.1.4 as far as possible to mitigate the impact on students' studies. We would also work on a 1:1 basis with individual students to either facilitate their transfer to another university and/or to receive a fee refund or financial compensation in accordance with the University's Refund and Compensation Policy set out in Section 3 of this SPP. The University's central London location in close proximity to many other universities would facilitate this process.

We also have business continuity plans in the event that University facilities are closed due to an unplanned event such as a fire. We operate and continue to improve a number of systems which mean that there is a low risk of an unplanned closure of buildings or facilities preventing teaching and normal activities from continuing. Every unforeseen closure or loss of facility has its own unique set of circumstances and we have identified a number of options for re-providing facilities based on space type.

SECTION THREE – REFUND AND COMPENSATION POLICY (RCP)

The University's net assets would enable us to meet our obligations under this RCP.

1 Introduction

The University's general policy regarding refunds is set out in its fees policy <http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/tuition-fee-payment-policy/>.

This RCP applies to unplanned events as described in Section Two of the SPP and which may result in a student or group of students not being able to complete the course on which they have enrolled.

The University and the Students' Union consider refunds and compensation to be a remedy of last resort and we are committed to ensuring that where at all possible all students are able to continue and complete their studies.

2 Termination of a course at the end of an academic year

Where the University can no longer maintain continuity of a course due to an unplanned event it will use reasonable endeavours to align termination of courses with the end of an academic year.

The University will, when preparing for the course termination, consult the students enrolled on the course and, as a minimum, will:

- (i) ensure all students on the course receive formal confirmation from the University that recognises the stage they have reached in their studies and the credits (if any) they have achieved;
- (ii) offer those students advice and support to help them decide whether or not to transfer to a different course at the University or seek transfer to a suitable alternative provider to complete the course which is to be terminated;
- (iii) offer to pay reasonable travel costs to cover at least one visit per student to a suitable alternative provider;
- (iv) put in place, in consultation with the Students' Union, a compensation plan appropriate to the circumstances of the particular termination that includes provision for compensation in respect of additional costs reasonably incurred by students as a result of any transfer to another suitable provider;
- (v) ensure that any student who has been in receipt of a bursary or similar funding, and who would have continued to receive that bursary or funding had the course not terminated, receives the remainder of that bursary or funding whether they transfer to a different course at the University or to another course at a suitable alternative provider.
- (vi) communicate with individuals who have been offered or who have accepted a place on a course, to include, as a minimum, an offer of advice and support to help them decide whether or not to apply for a different course at the University or seek a suitable alternative course at another provider.

3 Termination of a course during an academic year

Where the University can no longer maintain continuity of a course due to an unplanned event and where it has to terminate a course during the course of an academic year the University will treat communication and consultation with the students affected as a priority.

As a minimum, the University will:

- (i) ensure all students on the course receive formal confirmation from the University that recognises the stage they have reached in their studies and the credits (if any) they have achieved;
- (ii) offer those students advice and support to help them decide whether or not to transfer to a different course at the University or seek transfer to a suitable alternative provider to complete the course which is to be terminated;
- (iii) offer to pay reasonable travel costs to cover at least one visit per student to a suitable alternative provider;
- (iv) put in place, in consultation with the Students' Union, a refund and compensation plan appropriate to the circumstances of the particular termination that is likely to include provision for a refund of tuition fees and compensation in respect of additional costs reasonably incurred by students as a result of the termination, any change of course and any relocation; and

- (v) ensure that any student who has been in receipt of a bursary or similar funding and who would have continued to receive that bursary or funding had the course not terminated receives the remainder of that bursary or funding whether they transfer to a different course at the University or to the same course at an alternative provider.

4 Compensation

The compensation plan referred to in paragraphs 2 (iv) and 3(iv) above will include appropriate consideration of:

- maintenance costs;
- costs specific to particular students (e.g. carers or students with disabilities);
- lost time;
- additional tuition costs;
- travel costs as a result of relocation to another suitable alternative provider.

Relevant guidance published by the Office for Students and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education will be taken into account in preparing any such plans.

5 Payments

Payments made under this Policy will normally only be made to the bank and account holder (or other financial institution or funder) that originally paid the tuition fee and will not be paid in cash. This applies whether the student is in receipt of a tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company, pays their own tuition fees or has their tuition fees paid by a sponsor.

6 Procedure for claiming refunds and compensation

This Policy deals with unplanned events and envisages that in any such circumstance a special scheme will be put in place to deal with refunds and compensation for students who have been affected in accordance with this RCP. A student may choose to use this special scheme or make a formal complaint asking for a refund and/or compensation under the University's Complaints Regulations (see www.londonmet.ac.uk/complaints).

If a student is not happy with a decision made under the special scheme they have two options: either, to make a formal complaint about that decision under the Regulations; or to request a letter stating that the University has completed its procedures, which then clears the path for them to take their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

SECTION FOUR – COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITY STAFF

We will communicate this SPP through live links in the information provided to prospective students at offer stage and in student handbooks.

We have a web page on our external website dedicated to the Office for Students, drawing students' attention to the Regulatory Framework and other key aspects of the Office for Students' role, the Student Protection Plan and our Refund and Compensation Policy.

We will communicate this SPP to staff via the staff newsletter and by a reference in our internal quality procedures to ensure staff are aware of the implications of the SPP when proposing changes to courses.

The format, content and operation of this SPP will be considered annually by the University's Academic Board which has representation from both staff and students and will be approved by the University's Board of Governors.