

New College Durham Student Protection Plan (SPP)

Provider's name: New College Durham

Provider's UKPRN: 10004576

Legal address: New College Durham, Framwellgate Moor Campus, Framwellgate Moor, Durham, County Durham, DH1 5ES

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Student protection plan for the period 2023-24

All information outlined in this Student Protection Plan will be published on the College website and will be available for all students to access.

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, how those risks may differ based on students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will develop.

Risk 1. – Failure to recruit specialist teaching staff.

In some key specialist areas, previously we have found it a challenge to recruit staff of the right calibre. However, at the current time, this is not preventing us from delivering these programmes.

Risk 2. – Loss of specialist placement opportunities with employers within the region.

In the current economic climate, where programmes solely rely on one or two key employers, a potential risk was identified.

Risk 3. - Loss of Foundation Degree Awarding Powers (FDAP).

We consider this a low risk.

Risk 4. - Loss of Validation Arrangements with Validating Partners.

We consider this a low risk. We were validated by the OU as part of the Institutional Re-approval in November 2021 which provides the College with approval to deliver OU programmes for a further 5 years. The College currently has an outstanding financial status which would give financial flexibility to teach out any programme for 1 to 2 years as opposed to course closure.

Risk 5. - Course Closure.

Given the College's current reserves, this would provide financial flexibility to teach out any programme for one or two years as opposed to requiring a course closure. This position is reaffirmed through the College's EFSA 'outstanding' financial status; therefore, we consider this a low risk given all the mitigating factors identified.

Risk 6. – Course Changes / Modifications to programme modules.

The risk that your programme of study will change from when you enrolled is low, due to our robust programme design and programme validation process. There are occasions however, when minor enhancements are made to modules in response to student module feedback or as part of our quality enhancement review at the end of each academic year. Any such changes require full student consultation, External Examiner approval and formal validation agreement.

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

Risk 1. – Failure to recruit specialist training staff.

- a. Continue to build on established arrangements with employer partners to share specialist staff between employers and the College. This will reduce the requirement on recruiting specialist staff specifically to deliver the highly skilled elements of the curriculum.
- b. Well established recruitment processes utilise market rate supplements to support recruitment into posts that are challenging to fill. This has proved successful to date.
- c. Well established supply pool (NCD agency) along with external recruitment agencies provides effective short, medium and long term cover.
- d. Effective use of current staff to deliver specialist skills in the short term until the recruitment of specialist staff can take place.

Risk factor 1 is predominantly an external factor, which is outside our remit of control. Should we be unable to deliver a programme, having exhausted all other options, students would be able to seek a refund under our refund and compensation policy.

Risk 2. – Loss of specialist placement opportunities with employers within the region.

- a. The College is able to support a number of employers within the region and has links to supply chains and sister companies to encompass a broad and varied curriculum offer therefore it is not reliant on one single employer and in one sector area.
- b. Continuous development and delivery of marketing messages and activities designed to engage new employers.
- c. Robust curriculum planning in partnership with employers, ensures that the curriculum equips students with skills and qualifications that are relevant to a wider sector so that they are able to transfer across various sectors as well as create mobility for students to move beyond the region.
- d. We work closely with a large number of employers locally, regionally and nationally to ensure students can participate in wide ranging work experience activities. We work with employers to ensure there is a clear understanding of responsibilities and required levels of commitment for partners to provide to the College.
- e. In Social Work at Level 6 Non-statutory placements can be used where employers carry out statutory work.

Risk 3. - Loss of Foundation Degree Awarding Powers

- a. The College was recently awarded indefinite Foundation Degrees awarding powers. At this moment in time, we consider this to be a low risk to the organisation. Should the College lose its Foundation Degree Awarding Powers, we would seek to gain approval from our partnership with the OU or other HEI providers.

Risk 4. - Loss of Validation Arrangements with Validating Partners

- a. We have a strong working relationship with our Validating Partners and have regular dialogue to discuss all matters relating to curriculum design and development and quality assurance.
- b. We have a validation agreement in place with the Open University which has contingencies in place regarding course closure and 'teach out' should it be required.
- c. Centre Approval to validated Degree, Top-Up Degrees and Masters for a further 5 years with the Open University, the College considers this to be a low risk.
- d. We have a long-established track record of working with our validating partner, Pearson's (for our HNC/HND programmes) if this was to change, we would commit to "teach out" all existing students.
- e. The College currently has an outstanding financial status which would give financial flexibility to teach out any of our programmes for 1 to 2 years as opposed to course closure.

Risk 5. - Course Closure

- a. Due to the widening participation nature of the New College Durham student body, we would consider every student's individual needs. We would discuss all options available to students. This may include the offer of alternate courses, transfer to other provider or refund of fees.
- b. The College's reserve levels would give financial flexibility to teach out any programme for one to 2 years as opposed to course closure. This is reflected in the College's EFSA 'outstanding' financial status.

Risk 6. - Course Changes / Modifications to programme modules

- a. The risk that your programme of study will change from when you enrolled is low due to our robust programme design and formal validation process.
- b. There are occasions when minor enhancements are made to modules in response to student module feedback or as part of our quality enhancement review at the end of each academic year. Any such changes require full student consultation and External Examiner approval.
- c. All staff working with HE students receive training on the importance of being transparent in discussing the possibility of minor modifications to programmes of study for reasons identified above in point 6b.

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

Please see below link to New College Durham's refund and compensation policy which demonstrates how we ensure:

- 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.

[New College Durham | HE Information](#)

We have cash reserves which would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for those students for whom we have identified an increased risk of non-continuation of study.

Our Refund and Compensation Policy is reviewed every 5 years but may be amended by the College from time to time, as is deemed necessary. Any changes made will follow the formal approval process via Academic Board and Senior Leadership Team approval.

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

We publicise our student protection plan to current and future students through student handbooks, the virtual learning environment (VLE), Student Forums and the College HE Information website.

We ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by discussion at Curriculum and Quality Team (CQT) meetings, HE Approval Committees, HE Academic Standards and Quality Boards, and as part of the HE Quality Cycle.

We review our student protection plan through HE Student Forums and Curriculum Team meetings, which feed into Higher Education Quality, Curriculum and Students Committee (HEQCS) and Corporation meetings.

Our students participate in our reviews through HE Student Forums and consultation with the Students' Union President.

We inform our students if there are to be material changes to their course through Curriculum Team meetings, the VLE, emails, letter and Student Representatives.

We give students 14 days' notice when we need to make material changes to their course where possible.

If we need to implement the measures in our student protection plan we will carry out consultation in HE Student Forums, post information on the VLE and inform students through lines of communication such as emails and letters to support students collectively and individually.

We will put in place an action plan incorporating student access to individual advice and guidance to ensure that our students have access to independent advice if we need to implement the measures in our student protection plan.

All of the above will be mitigated through an operational action plan that takes account of all risks.