

**HE Course Closure, Suspension or
Substantial Change****Purpose**

To inform staff, students, potential students and other external interested parties of the procedure for closing, suspending or making major changes to courses or programmes of study.

Overview

The College regularly reviews and updates the courses and modules offered in order to ensure that they remain current and reflect best practice. In exceptional circumstances this means that a course or programme may cease to exist or the College may no longer be able to teach a programme or an aspect of a programme to a specific group of students, or the College may introduce a substantial change which will impact on applicants and/or current students.

In all instances where courses are being considered for closure, suspension or a substantial change to a course, the College will follow a set procedure which aligns with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and takes account of the HEFCE statement of good practice on course change and closure (2015), as well as the Competition and Markets Authority guidance on consumer law for UK HE providers (2015).

In particular, this procedure seeks to protect the interests of applicants and students by ensuring clear and transparent processes for the management of course closure, suspension or substantial change in relation to the experience of:

- Applicants who have accepted an offer of a place, but not yet enrolled
- Applicants who have deferred their offer
- Current students
- Students who have intermitted (temporarily withdrawn) from the course

There are a number of reasons why the College might close or suspend recruitment to a course, or make substantial changes. These may include but are not limited to the following:

- demand for the course is too small to cover the cost of delivery (i.e. insufficient applicants)
- insufficient numbers applied to offer a positive student experience
- review of the academic portfolio through curriculum planning
- staff involved in the delivery of the course are temporarily/permanently unavailable and it is impossible to substitute them

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- external bodies (such as PSRBs) require changes that result in substantial change or a course being suspended/closed
- external funding may alter
- concerns about the quality and academic standards of the course
- replacing an existing course with a new one
- changing strategic priorities
- closure/termination by collaborative partner which results in the withdrawal of a course

Procedure**Course Closure**

Closing a course means that there will be no further intakes to the course and it will no longer be offered by the College. Those students already registered on the course will continue to progress and complete the course ('teach out'), or where this is not possible will be offered an alternative course or transfer to another provider.

During provision planning a date will be agreed with the Curriculum Leader when a decision needs to be made as to whether or not a course is viable, this will be largely influenced by the number of applications received. This date must be inserted onto the Course Specification advertising the course so applicants are aware. If the course has the potential to be withdrawn this will also be discussed with the applicant at interview to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

If a course is closed it must be removed immediately from the Colleges website and UCAS, if the course is delivered as part of a franchise agreement the HE Lead must notify the partner University of the decision to ensure it is removed from their website and relevant action taken. The Admissions Team must notify any applicants under offer and advise of alternatives available.

The Curriculum Leader or HE Lead will meet with current students to inform them of the course closure and arrangements for 'teaching out' the course. Students should be informed of how the College intends to ensure the quality of the student experience, how matters such as reassessment, intermittence etc will be handled. Students must be provided with opportunities to raise queries and concerns.

Course Suspension

Suspension of a course means that there will be no intake to the course for a specified period (normally the following academic year). Students currently registered on the course will continue to progress and complete the course.

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If a course is suspended it must be removed immediately from the Colleges website and UCAS, if the course is delivered as part of a Franchise agreement the HE Lead must notify the partner University of the decision to ensure it is removed from their website and relevant action taken. The Admissions Team must notify any applicants under offer and advise of alternatives available.

The Curriculum Leader or HE Lead will meet with current students to inform them of the course suspension and arrangements for teaching out the course. Students should be informed of how the College intends to ensure the quality of the student experience, how matters such as reassessment, intermittence etc will be handled. Students must be provided with opportunities to raise queries and concerns.

Substantial Change

Substantial changes constitutes alterations to a course that could potentially affect the decision of an applicant to take up their place and/or significantly vary the information provided to applicants or to students regarding the nature of the course and its component parts.

A substantial change might include:

- change of course location (eg. to another campus);
- change to the title of a course and/or associated award;
- change to the accreditation of a course (eg. Change of franchise partner)
- change to the mode of delivery of a course (eg. full-time to part-time, or through distance-learning)
- substantial change to the curriculum, assessment or modules within a course (eg. substantial changes to mandatory modules which results in a significant change to the course offer).

Substantial changes must be notified (and approved) in a timely fashion. Where substantial changes are intended to impact on current students and/or represent changes to the information already provided for applicants, these will be exceptional, must involve consultation with students, and may require the written consent of students and/or applicants

When considering making substantial changes that will impact on current students and/or applicants Curriculum Leaders must read the Colleges Terms and Conditions for HE Students to be clear on the legal obligations to applicants and to students, and consult with HE Lead at the earliest opportunity.

Once agreement has been reached that the proposed substantial change can be made the HE Lead will ensure appropriate communication with applicants. Where the

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proposed change will also impact on current students, the Curriculum Leader must ensure that the proposal has the agreement of all students.

Course closure, suspension or substantial change will normally be initiated for the following academic year unless there are circumstances beyond the College's control. In the event of closure or suspension, no new applicants will be recruited. Students already on the course will be supported to complete their course successfully or if this is not possible due to circumstances beyond the control of the College, transitional arrangements will be made in consultation with the student(s) affected.

The College will endeavour to mitigate the impact that course closure, suspension or substantial change will have on current and prospective students. In the event of course closure, a planned timeline and action plan for managing the closure and for communicating with applicants and current students will be drawn up by the College; this will explicitly consider the experience of current and prospective students.

Where collaborative partners wish to close or suspend courses, assessment of the strategic, contractual and operational implications will still be made and the College procedure followed.

The HE Lead or Curriculum Leader will be responsible for communicating course closure, suspension or substantial change to current students. Admissions will be responsible for communicating course closure, suspension or substantial change to applicants.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Student Protection Plan 2018-2020
Higher Education Admissions Policy
HE Intermittence and Withdrawal Policy
Terms and Conditions for applicants