



# Student Protection Plan (SPP) Academic Year 2022-2023

## Introduction

A Student Protection Plan is a document that is approved by the Office for Students (OfS), that every Higher Education provider registered with the OfS is required to have in place. The student protection plans set out what students can expect to happen should a course, campus, or institution close. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that students can continue and complete their studies or can be compensated if this is not possible.

## Who is covered by the plan?

The plan is available to all current and prospective students.

All students registered at Empire College London at both sites and across all courses delivered by the College are covered by this plan.

For those students who have been offered a place but are yet to be registered, the College will inform students if the plan is triggered and provide the relevant support to minimise the impact and offer suitable alternative arrangements.

The plan does **not** apply to students who have had their registration closed/cancelled for any of the following reasons:

- at the student's request.
- course completion.
- student conduct and/or non-payment of tuition-related fees,
- academic misconduct/failure or other related matters.

## **The College student protection plan (SPP)**

The College is committed to supporting and ensuring that all students achieve the best possible academic experience and that all students have the opportunity to complete the qualification for which they are registered successfully. The College will make every effort to protect all students' interests and ensure continuity of study for current and future students.

The SPP aims to protect students from the types of risks that would affect the continuation of studies and explains the measure the College has in place and what steps the College will take if these risks were likely to crystallise.

The plan has been put together considering the student's point of view, student's needs, characteristics, and circumstances. Current students have been part of the consultation processes undertaken in the review of this SPP. Consultation on the plan is part of the annual cycle of policy review. Legal advice is also taken to ensure that compliance is in place under consumer protection law.

The plan is for current and future students, subject to approval by the OfS.

### **Our commitment:**

- To be open and transparent with students regarding the SPP.
- To take student views and allow students to be part of the review of the SPP.
- To consider students' needs and characteristics.
- To Inform external bodies of any significant changes regarding the SPP.
- Ensuring that the College complaints procedure is transparent and accessible.

The risks identified below could result in a failure to provide an appropriate student experience. The College has assessed these risks and put into place measures to mitigate them if the risk was to crystallise.

Risk	Severity	Reasons for Likelihood category	Mitigation Steps
A decision to close the College due to poor financial position.	High	<p>Low - This is considered a very low risk due to the strong financial position of the College, which has continued over the years.</p> <p>This is closely monitored internally and by external auditors at interval periods throughout the year.</p>	<p>The College will continue to maintain financial reserves and a strong credit rating.</p> <p>This will allow any refund, compensation or additional purchasing of resources and support costs that may need to be made.</p>
Loss of awarding body approval	High	<p>Low- The College has been approved by existing bodies for several years and has continued to meet the standards set by those bodies. Positive outcomes of reviews have continued for several years.</p> <p>The College has a strong academic quality assurance framework reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year allowing assurance of meeting awarding body requirements.</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that the college loses its awarding body approval, the College will:</p> <p>Appeal the decision with the awarding body.</p> <p>Agree with the awarding body for “teach out” of existing students. Teach-out would allow existing students to complete their studies and gain full/exit awards where applicable.</p> <p>Provide students with opportunities to transfer to a local provider if the College is unable to “teach out” existing students.</p> <p>Provide students with unit awards to apply during transfer arrangements.</p>

			<p>Provide support to those students affected during the process, considering the needs of students.</p> <p>Provide options for students to receive tuition fee refunds/compensation. This would apply on a case-by-case basis.</p>
Programme closure	High	Low – There are no plans for course closures or modes of study to existing provisions.	<p>In the unlikely event that the College closes a programme, the College will:</p> <p>Teach out existing students with the agreement of the student and awarding body. Teach-out would allow existing students to complete their studies and gain full/exit awards where applicable.</p> <p>Provide options for students to receive tuition fee refunds/compensation. This would apply on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Provide support to those students affected during the process, considering the needs of students.</p>
Insufficient students continuing to 2nd year on the HND programme	Medium	Low–realistic targets are set at each recruitment cycle. Over the year, retention from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> year per intake has continued to be adequate to allow continuation of the course.	<p>In the unlikely event that the College has insufficient student numbers continuing onto the second year, the College will:</p> <p>Revisit its programme delivery plan.</p> <p>Consult with students and staff on combining cohorts together.</p> <p>Add 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students onto HNC top-up groups, subject to consultation/consent by students.</p>

			If the students do not agree to combine groups, the College will try to accommodate different delivery patterns and ensure students are not disadvantaged and are able to complete their qualifications.
Insufficient student numbers are recruited to make a course viable.	Medium	Low – over the past several years, realistic recruitment targets have been consistently met, and the College will continue to expand with modest growth at all its sites. This helps to minimise the risk of a course not running due to poor recruitment.	<p>In the unlikely event that the College cannot meet its student recruitment targets and therefore needs to cancel the course, the College will:</p> <p>Timely refund of full tuition fees to those students who have paid in advance and are yet to start their studies.</p> <p>Discuss options with individual students who have been accepted with suitable alternative courses or entry to the next intake.</p> <p>Provide students with opportunities to enrol at another local provider.</p> <p>Ensure existing cohorts will continue the course through to completion at all sites.</p>
Loss of regulatory licenses/approval	High	Low – The College has robust systems in place to monitor and review ongoing compliance. The College has continued to comply with and meet the conditions set by regulatory bodies and has continued to liaise with regulatory bodies to ensure that these continue.	<p>In the unlikely event that the College loses its regulatory licenses, the College will:</p> <p>Appeal the decision and seek re-approval with the regulatory bodies.</p> <p>Agree on a plan with the regulatory body for teach out/support for existing students to allow the completion of studies.</p>

			<p>Provide support information and guidance to those students affected during the process, considering the needs of students.</p> <p>Provide options for students to receive tuition fee refunds/compensation. This would apply on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Teach out existing students with the agreement of the student and awarding body. Teach-out would allow existing students to complete their studies and gain full/exit awards where applicable.</p> <p>Provide students with opportunities to enrol at another local provider license if the College cannot “teach out”.</p>
Suspension/revocation of Student Visa Sponsor Licence	Low	Low – The College has had its sponsor license since 2009 and continues to be compliant with UK Visa & Immigration (UKVI). The College currently has no international students and thus does not rely only on recruiting international students for its continuing viability.	<p>In the unlikely event that the College loses its student visa sponsor licence, the college will:</p> <p>Appeal against the decision of the UKVI.</p> <p>Teach out existing students with the agreement of the student and awarding body. Teach-out would allow existing students to complete their studies and gain full/exit awards where applicable.</p> <p>Provide students with opportunities to transfer to a local provider with a student visa sponsor license if the College cannot “teach out”.</p> <p>Provide support to those students affected during the process, considering the needs of students.</p>

			<p>Provide options for students to receive tuition fee refunds/compensation. This would apply on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Refund of full tuition fees to those students who have paid in advance and are yet to start their studies.</p>
Permanent loss of Key Staff	Medium	Low – Due to the stability and experience of key staff operating as a small team, there is a considerable amount of shared experience amongst the team to maintain the College function.	<p>In the unlikely event that there is a permanent loss of key staff, the College will:</p> <p>Seek temporary or permanent replacements internally or externally.</p> <p>Provide cover from existing staff.</p> <p>Engage in a succession planning strategy to help mitigate any loss of key staff by having trained and knowledgeable successors in place.</p> <p>Continue to work with the external organisation to support students where additional expertise is needed to care for students with learning difficulties, which may have an effect due to the loss of key staff.</p>
Learning resources	Low	Low – Current resources are more than adequate for the College’s needs, and alternative educational resource suppliers exist. Resources are reviewed during	If the learning resources are unavailable, the College will ensure that teaching and learning are continued by purchasing alternative or additional learning resources to meet student and course needs.

		semester planning to allow early detection of any changes that may need to be made.	
Competition Risk	Medium	Medium –The college continues to have a good reputation within its London catchment area, and much recruitment is known to be by student recommendation. The College offers good value for money within its HE offer and does not need to undercut potential competitors due to its good reputation for academic and student pastoral support.	<p>To mitigate the risk of competition, the College will ensure that course delivery is developed and reviewed to support academic achievement and meets the needs of its students, including personal /social development.</p> <p>The experienced marketing and recruitment team are always vigilant and keeps themselves informed about the sector’s developments to diminish the probable risk of competition.</p> <p>One of the main assets of the College is its students, who will continue to engage and contribute to its development to support and increase the profile of the College.</p>
Loss/damage to IT infrastructure	High	Low/Moderate –Onsite IT support is available. Maintenance of IT equipment is regular. IT systems are backed up regularly onsite and online.	<p>In the unlikely event that the College lose its IT infrastructure, the steps the College will take will depend on the nature of the problem.</p> <p>The problem would be assessed, and an appropriate action plan devised. All data will be retrieved via online backup storage.</p>
<p>Disruption to College Activity</p> <p>Long-term disruption to the course as a result of extreme circumstances</p>	High	Low/Moderate - The challenging times during Covid 19 allowed the college to implement strategies for long-term disruption to the delivery of its activities. If required, online delivery systems are in place, and students will be provided with a smooth transition. All students are	<p>In the unlikely event that there is a long-term disruption to teaching and learning, the College will:</p> <p>Revert to online delivery to ensure teaching and learning continues for all students.</p>



<p>outside of the College control</p> <p>“Acts of God” (e.g. weather, fire, flood, pandemic)</p>		<p>informed that online delivery may be implemented in activities that result in long-term disruption.</p>	<p>Implement additional support available to students during the online delivery.</p> <p>Approval from external bodies will be requested where applicable.</p>
<p>Building Infrastructure</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Low - The College has plans in place to deal with unexpected circumstances, which are within our reach.</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that the College faces issues with its building infrastructure, the steps the College will take will depend on the nature of the problem.</p> <p>Issues will be assessed to mitigate the impact, and appropriate actions will be put into place.</p> <p>Offer online delivery during the transitional period.</p> <p>Relocation to alternative venues for teaching nearby to existing premises.</p> <p>All student support services will be relocated to ensure these continue to be in place.</p> <p>Students will be provided financial support for additional costs, such as travel costs.</p>

This plan is in addition to the protections students have under consumer protection law and does not impinge on the student's consumer rights. The College takes students' legal rights very seriously, and the College publishes these on its website, for example, its Consumer protection statement: <https://web.empirecollege.london/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Consumer-Protection-Statement-Aug-20.pdf>

Students also have access to all of the College's terms and conditions and its policies (including the refund and/or compensation policy in the event that the College is unable to preserve the continuity of study), either by asking for a copy at the Administration Office, or online at <https://web.empirecollege.london/policies/>

The College terms and conditions are also brought to all students' attention at the time of application when they are offered a place and reinforced at the time of induction; therefore, they are fully aware of and can access the information to understand what they can expect in terms of teaching and support available.

### **Communication with students**

The College will publicise its SPP to current and prospective students by ensuring it is publicly available on the website, VLE and communicated during the admissions and induction processes.

The College will ensure that staff is aware of the SPP and its implications via the VLE and induction process.

The College will review its SPP at the annual review cycles and engage students and staff to develop the plan further.

If the SPP is triggered, students and staff will be informed by email and via student representatives.

The College will give students adequate notice if it needs to make significant material changes to courses. Depending on the nature of the change, we will do this well in advance to allow minimum disruption to students and their course of study. Students will be provided with information on the reasons for the change, what we will do to support them, and the options available.

The management team and teaching staff will continue to provide support on academic and pastoral aspects throughout any transitional period.

The College will put in arrangements to ensure that students have access to independent advice if we need to implement the SPP. These may include careers advice centres, OIA and immigration services, where relevant.

The College will incorporate provisions within its annual budget for the potential payment of tuition fees and other refunds and compensation payments to students. A combination of cash reserves and (where appropriate) insurance policies will be designated for those students where an increased risk of non-continuation of study has been identified.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Students who consider this plan has not been correctly applied may bring a complaint under the College Complaints Procedures.

Further information is available on our website: <https://web.empirecollege.london/policies/>

Students with questions, comments or difficulty understanding the SPP should contact the management team.