

Student protection plan for the period 2018-2019

Dudley College of

Technology UKPRN:

10007924



This student protection plan has been submitted as part of our registration process with the Office for Students (OfS). It outlines the potential risks for students studying at Dudley College of Technology and the measures taken to mitigate those risks.

For further information please contact customerservices@dudleycol.ac.uk

What are the risks Dudley College of Technology has identified in relation to my studies?

Potential Risk	Probability of occurrence of risk	Evidence to support judgement
Significant financial issues leading to the College being unable to operate	Low	The risk that Dudley College of Technology is unable to operate is very low because our financial performance is strong and has been for a number of years. Financial performance is regularly reviewed to maintain this position. This is done at a number of levels to ensure transparency and is published on the Dudley College dashboard https://www.dudleycol.ac.uk/Dashboard .
Closure of a campus delivering Higher Education programmes	Low	<p>The risk that a course would need to move sites is small, as Dudley College provision for HE is deliberately a local model of delivery. Arrangements with partner providers (Worcester University) are agreed on that basis. All student taught under a partnership arrangement are taught on Dudley College of Technology sites. Dudley College has operated in the area since 1862.</p> <p>There are currently plans in place for expanding college HE sites. Until the building is finalised there will be no corresponding delivery dependant on the site.</p> <p>We have business continuity plans to deal with any events which could lead us to lose part or whole of the college campus. The number of separate buildings within the college makes the risk of non-continuity very low as classes could be relocated.</p>

Course closure	Medium	<p>Courses at Dudley College are planned well in advance of enrolment and there is a small risk of fluctuations in enrolment creating very small groups of students that are not financially viable to run.</p> <p>In the event of a course failing to run, any students that have applied to the programme would have alternates suggested.</p> <p>If a decision is made to close a course it would be only for new enrolment, with all programmes guaranteeing a teach out to the end of their programme of study. This is also true for all partnership programmes (Worcester University) and will be written within any new partnership arrangements.</p>
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Loss of validation	Low	<p>The majority of Dudley College of Technology courses are validated by Pearson. External verification visits have been consistently successful and therefore the risk that these would not be in the future is low.</p> <p>The Quality lead and nominee ensure that quality procedures are consistently followed and Curriculum Leader for Higher Education supports this process specifically for Higher Studies programmes.</p> <p>Quality Improvement Plans for all departments are centrally monitored to ensure a consistently high standard of quality across the institution.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that validation is withdrawn the college would work with awarding bodies to ensure that an alternate was sourced to preserve continuation of study.</p> <p>The risk that a partnership agreement ending would compromise student outcomes is negligible as all contracts around partnership have a teach out clause provided. Worcester University also has a student protection plan in place, available on their website.</p>
Inability to offer specific modes of study	Low	<p>The risk that delivery times or mode would need to change is low due to the extensive business planning process within Dudley College, this means that timetabling is complete and coordinated before programme start.</p> <p>Both part-time and full-time September and January start times are available for students, which ensures course viability and quality of experience.</p>

<p>Inability to teach specific types of students</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The risk that high needs students would not be provided for is very low because we have substantive experience in delivering through FE provision for high needs learners. We are in the process of applying for high needs provision and until this is confirmed support is offered by in house services for students with high needs.</p> <p>Delivery of HE at Dudley College is focussed on widening participation for students in employment, from low income backgrounds, of wide range of ages and from the local community. Our courses are planned to allow students to work, arrange consistent childcare and to travel easily to their place of study. Our priority is in maintaining consistency of delivery. The likelihood of a change to course timings creating a barrier to student enrolment is low because these timings are set and publicised ahead of enrolment.</p>
<p>Loss of apprenticeship placement due to employer forced redundancy, or closure of employer premises/business. (Applicable to Higher Apprenticeship programmes funded via the ESFA)</p>	<p>Medium to low</p>	<p>Dudley College of Technology has a robust sign up process for both employers and students and ensures the robust natures of businesses with which it works. There is a risk to apprentices that employers may not be able to sustain a placement or that the employer themselves may be at risk of closure. In the event of this happening every effort would be made to find an alternative placement or if it occurred towards the end of the course approval would be sought for alternate arrangements to be made.</p> <p>This is a medium to low risk based on the frequency with which it has occurred historically.</p>
<p>Inability organisation in which the apprentice is employed to fully support the training requirements of an individual. (Applicable to Higher Apprenticeship programmes funded via the ESFA)</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Dudley College of Technology employs a number of Business Development Managers who have a key role in working with employers to ensure they understand the requirements of the apprenticeship before its start. There is also a team of Professional Development Officers who have a role in supporting the employer while students are on programme. In this way there is coherent support to ensure employers understand and follow the training needs of an individual.</p> <p>Should this not materialise staff will intervene to ensure appropriate skills are delivered within the programme.</p>
<p>Inability to deliver components of a programme (loss of staff, failure of required plant/machinery etc.)</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes in high specialised areas or material components of our courses is low because all courses are taught by teams of academic staff. Should there be a specific staff absence other academic staff are able to deliver content within the programme.</p> <p>Partnership arrangements with local universities (Wolverhampton University & Worcester University) mean that should there be a gap in provision alternate arrangements may be made using university staff or facilities.</p>

What could Dudley College of Technology do to mitigate the risks that have been identified?

Potential Risk	Probability of occurrence of risk	Measure in place
Significant financial issues leading to the College being unable to operate	Low	<p>We produce a transparent review of financial stability within the college. Changes in material circumstances would be evident to the public and to students before enrolment.</p> <p>We have external funding in place to support the building works and facility development for our HE provision.</p>
Closure of a campus delivering Higher Education programmes	Low	<p>The risk that we do not have suitable space to house new provision is small – new provision is business planned around estate growth and development.</p> <p>Dudley College of Technology has grown year on year over the last 5 years and has committed substantial resources to increasing HE provision with robust business continuity plans in place for all college business, including HE. We have no plans to reduce any existing HE provision or facilities, but do have plans to improve HE facilities and to offer provision in new areas.</p>
Course closure or change	Medium	<p>In order to mitigate risk of not being able to deliver a course component other alternate modules would be made available to students. Students will be consulted in the event of a material change being necessary. Progression arrangements and recognition of prior learning agreements with HEIs would be reviewed before this change was made.</p> <p>The risk of a partnership delivered programme ceasing to run is small. Should this be the case our contracts with lead partners, (currently Worcester University) have a ‘teach out’ clause which would prevent any impact on enrolled students. Provision would continue without impact until the end of an enrolled programme. An alternate course would be in place once that arrangement had ended. Information would be published on the college website and any students who had enquired or applied for the programme would be contacted with full details.</p> <p>The risk of an individual course not running is small. In the event of interested parties or enrolled numbers being non- viable financially an alternate model of delivery would be proposed which may involve different modes of delivery, module choices or students being infilled with other student groups.</p>

Inability to offer specific modes of study	Medium	<p>Days and modes of delivery are published on the college website. In the event that any details change they will be updated and any students who have applied will be notified. We endeavour not to make changes to the published days of study. For courses with a high proportion of employer funded places delivery days will remain consistent from the point of publication as the highest priority.</p> <p>In the event that a change in delivery mode prevents an enrolled student from completing their course a refund of fees would be given.</p>
Inability to deliver components of a programme (loss of staff, failure of required plant/ machinery etc.)	Low	<p>We have a continued staff development programme to ensure that we grow expertise in potential shortage areas. We operate a progression planning system to ensure that trained staff are available throughout the taught and management sectors of college. In the event of staff shortages, we would look to recruit temporary staff if we were not able to cover this internally. Temporary staff would be extensively supported by our outstanding practitioners to ensure consistent quality of delivery.</p>

How will Dudley College ensure students are not financially disadvantaged in the event that any risks materialise and study cannot continue?

Refund of course fees

Our refund policy is available here: <https://www.dudleycol.ac.uk/Portals/0/downloads/college-fee-refund-policy.pdf?ver=2018-11-13-163530-907>

Refunds for materials/exam registrations

Refunds will not be made for any personalised kits or materials which are being retained by the learner or any registration fees which have been paid to another party by the college on behalf of the learner.

Compensation

Financial compensation may be considered in exceptional circumstances, for example, where the College has made such changes to a programme of study that attendance of learners is made impossible.

Examples of this may include; 'loss of opportunity' e.g. failure to complete a placement, apply for a bursary or to seek paid employment where this arises from an act or omission by the College, expenses the student has had to pay or money they have lost as a result of any College/course failings or closure. When considering whether financial compensation is appropriate, the College will take into account the following:

- Any reasonable steps which have or have not been taken by the student and/or the College to minimise financial loss.
- Whether the student has unreasonably refused or rejected an option that was available Whether the delays in resolving a matter may have been partly caused by the student.

In all cases, the College requires the student to provide evidence of actual financial loss.

We have appropriate cash reserves, which would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for those students for any groups at increased risk of non-continuation of study.

How will Dudley College of Technology communicate with students about the student protection plan and ensure it is kept up to date?

We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students via the college website and within induction materials, given to students after enrolment onto the HE course.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by validating all course changes through the Key Client Group meetings to ensure that changes to courses do not have a detrimental impact on students.

We will review our student protection plan within the HE Key Client Group, which is attended by the lead HE student representative.

Our students will be involved in our review by through learner voice meetings and directly through discussions with the lead HE rep, who runs a student enhancement group.

What happens if the plan needs to be actioned?

Following a staff meeting, we will inform our students if there are to be material changes to their course both by email and through discussion within their tutorials and with tutors.

We will endeavour to give students 30 days' notice when we need to make material changes to their course, though we would perceive this to be extremely low risk.

If we need to implement the measures in our student protection plan, we will use our extensive learner support process to support students collectively and individually.

Through learner services and with support from partnership HEIs, we will put in place arrangements to ensure that our students have access to independent advice if we need to implement the measures in our student protection plan.