

Student protection plan

1. The Office for Students (OfS) requires registered higher education institutions to prepare student protection plans, which set out what students can expect to happen should a course, campus, or institution close. The purpose of a plan is to ensure that students can continue and complete their studies, or can be compensated if this is not possible. This student protection plan sets out the measures the School will take to deliver the expected student experience in the event that a material change occurs which potentially puts this at risk.

Low/very low risks:

2. The School believes that the risk of it being unable to operate as a provider is very low. The financial position of the School remains highly sustainable. In the event that there should be a significant negative financial change, the School has in place robust strategic financial planning processes and access to significant financial resources and credit facilities which would facilitate any necessary adaptation, with the aim of minimising any impact upon the student experience.
3. Should an event occur which significantly disrupts the School's business as the result of non-financial factors, such as industrial action or major incidents associated with public health, fire, flood or terrorism, the established business continuity and disaster recovery plans would be implemented, as they have been in the past, to manage the situation and to protect the interests of students. These plans, which are subject to regular review and testing, are designed to minimise any disruption experienced by students and to enable the resumption of normal/ adapted/ substitution activities in the shortest possible time while allowing the School to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its community, and the academic quality and standards of its educational provision. For example the School has developed remote teaching systems for the delivery of the student experience, and would look to balance these with in-person events when circumstances allow. The School has a well-established risk management process and there is currently no foreseen risk that any programmes of study would close in a way which would prevent it from being able to meet its contractual obligations to students.
4. The School is located on a single campus which is undergoing ongoing development to enhance the student experience on a contiguous site. There are no plans to extend the reach of the campus beyond its current single site footprint. Consequently, there is very low risk that students might be adversely affected by any plans to relocate individual areas of provision as a result of additional re-development.
5. There are a number of specialist programmes run by the School but there is a low risk that the School would not be able to deliver its provision due to its close relationship with other leading institutions of the University of London. In the unlikely scenario that it is no longer viable for the School to continue to run particular programmes, it would work in consultation with any offer holding students to transfer them to University of London, or other, institutions wherever possible; and restructure its staffing and support provision to enable any registered students to complete their studies before the programme was withdrawn.
6. The School is able to recruit international students as the result of maintaining its Student Visa Sponsor Licence with the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) by achieving compliance with the relevant regulations. The Student Visa Sponsor Licence the School holds demonstrates that UKVI has a high degree of trust and confidence; this has been evidenced by the number of assessment visits and audits in which the School has been successful. These include an annual UKVI assessment and other measures of compliance, including the use of internal audit.
7. The risk that the School might lose the professional, statutory or regulatory body accreditation which applies to a small number of its programmes is very low. While this cannot be absolutely guaranteed, the School works to continue to meet all the relevant requirements to maintain its accreditations. In the unlikely event that such provision was no longer available to students, the School would provide support to facilitate transfer of those affected to other institutions in order to complete their studies if necessary.

8. The possibility that the School would not be able to deliver elements of programmes is low. Where material changes to modules or programmes is unavoidable, these are designed to affect future cohorts of students rather than those currently registered – unless the change will have a material benefit to existing students. In such situations, existing and revised variants of the elements may be taught. In order to manage the demands of specialist teaching, staff cover is provided wherever possible, while plans for sabbatical research leave are managed to minimise any negative impact upon students.

Medium level risks:

9. There is a possibility that the School might not be able to run a programme for a particular student cohort and thus would need to withdraw it before the applicants registered. This might be due to low application rates making the programme financially unviable and putting the quality of the student experience at risk. It is recognised that, depending upon the timing of the programme closure, this might result in a breach of contract with the applicants, and the School would avoid taking such action whenever possible.
10. As the School runs a number of highly specialised programmes for both taught and research students, there is a moderate risk to the sustainability of these parts of the academic portfolio. However, as these programmes are of comparatively short duration and the School would make arrangements to 'teach out' such provision, there is a low risk that the LSE would not be able to protect these registered students from the negative impact of any changes and it is expected that it would be possible to support them to complete their programmes of study (this is covered in more detail at paragraph 5. above). The greatest element of this risk is the potential loss of specialist staff and the gap that this would create, particularly for research students in terms of having access to an appropriate supervisor.

Risk mitigation measures:

11. The School has a long-term history of financial sustainability and strong reputation which means that it is not believed that either individual subject areas or other parts of the LSE are at a high risk of closure. In addition, in the event that it would be necessary, the School would operate a general principle of 'teaching out' provision wherever possible by supporting registered students to complete their studies in accordance with its contractual obligations. This provision applies to all of the School's registered students, whether studying at the LSE, or on a joint programme with another provider.
12. The School has robust business continuity and disaster recovery plans, which would be implemented should an event occur which significantly disrupts the School's business as the result of non-financial factors.
13. The School benefits from close relationships with other leading institutions within the University of London and, in the event of unanticipated circumstances and to provide further reassurance to students, would work with these partners as much as possible where feasible and necessary to provide support to students on a reciprocal basis.
14. The School also has a thorough programme review process and would identify in the early stages any issues regarding the potential viability of programmes and, therefore, would normally be in a position to take actions before risks materialised.
15. Every effort is made to minimise the possibility of being required to close a programme before applicants can enrol on it by undertaking market analysis and modelling in order to assess demand before new programmes are launched. Should the unusual situation arise whereby a programme would be withdrawn after applications have been received, but before students enrol, those applicant students would be offered an alternative programme or year of entry and the School would undertake to make such decisions (ie about programme withdrawal) in good time within the application cycle to allow applicants to take up an offer from another institution. If such proposals were unacceptable to the applicant, there would be a right to

compensation and this would be included in the School's consolidated Refund and Compensation Policy.

16. If the School were unable to support a research student as the result of a supervisor leaving the institution, the student would be supported to find an alternative supervisor, either from within the School, or at another institution, or in exceptional circumstances from another institution. Where the School is unable to provide supervisory support to enable a student to continue on their programme of study, it will provide support, which may include financial support, to relocate to another institution.

Compensation and refund information

17. The School's Refund and Compensation Policy may be found [here](#).

Communication with students:

18. The School is committed to communicating to students any information about events which potentially put their experience at risk. In the event that any aspect of this Plan needs to be implemented, information will be conveyed promptly and clearly and provide students with appropriate options for action.
19. Students will be notified in writing as far in advance as possible of any changes, using email as the preferred method of communication. Opportunities will also be made available to students to discuss the impact of the changes on them with relevant members of staff, such as Academic Mentors, the Advice Team in Student Services, programme directors, or the Students' Union. This discussion may be undertaken through student representatives or with other groups of students. Except in exceptional situations, or with the consent of the relevant cohort, the School will not implement material changes to programmes in the course of the academic year, in which case staff-student liaison committees will be consulted in advance of any changes being approved. However, the School may make changes to regulations during the academic year to address unanticipated circumstances that affect the quality, standards or the delivery of a programme or to comply with a recommendation, direction or order made by a court, the Office for Students (OfS), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) or other external regulatory, validating or accrediting body. In addition to their Academic Mentors/supervisors and student representatives, students also have access to a range of independent advice available from a variety of School sources, including support, advice and guidance from the services provided within the LSE Students' Union.
20. The School's Student Protection Plan has been approved by the Office for Students. It will be publicised to current and future students to optimise awareness.
21. The Plan will be reviewed annually as part of the risk management framework of the School and any changes made as a result of the review will be communicated appropriately to any students who are directly affected. The system of student representation across the School on various senior committees (including the governing Council) and groups will facilitate appropriate involvement in these review processes. Staff will be reminded of the implications for the Plan when programme changes are proposed by providing clear guidelines through the associated process documentation and on the School website.