

## **Student Protection Plan**

### *Introduction*

Richmond-upon-Thames College is committed to helping to ensure that all students achieve the best academic outcomes from their studies. However where unforeseen events occur and changes need to be made to courses or units delivered, the College will endeavour to keep any disruption to a minimum and to ensure that affected students are kept well-informed of any developments that may affect their studies.

In accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 the College will ensure that all reasonable measures are in place to protect students' interests in the case of material changes such as programme changes, course suspensions or course closures, changes to the costs of the course, qualification studied, location of study and any other key factors on which the student's enrolment was based on. Minor changes such as changes of units delivered or lecturing staff, timetabling, assessment methodology, etc. are not considered material changes.

### *Causes of changes*

These changes may be unavoidable due to a number of reasons such as:

- insufficient enrolment, significant reduction in attendance or circumstances beyond our control resulting in course closure
- loss of key academic staff
- updates to the course content in response to market trends, industry requirements, student feedback, etc.
- strategic decision by the College Leadership Team to discontinue a course
- restrictions or changes put in place by an external awarding body

### *Measures to protect students*

The College has plans to protect students by preventing or minimising disruption to their studies where material changes occur. These may include any one of the following, depending on what is appropriate for the circumstances:

- A rigorous and robust curriculum planning process operates to ensure courses are planned in advance that meet a range of set quality standards, ensuring a greater likelihood of planned courses running
- Courses can only be closed under strict conditions at the request of a Director of Curriculum and approved only by the College Leadership Team once all alternatives have been exhausted
- Where material changes (such as a number of changes to the structure of the programme, changes to units delivered, etc.) are made between the publication

of the course guide and enrolment, the College will draw these changes to the attention of applicants as soon as possible and advise them of their right to seek entry to another College programme for which they may be qualified or to withdraw their application and seek entry to another institution.

- Wherever possible, the College commits to 'teach out' a course for existing students enabling learners to complete the course that which they have started. In these circumstances, the standard of academic provision and the student experience will, as far as is reasonably practicable, be maintained throughout their period of enrolment. In particular, the conditions will be maintained to enable the stated learning outcomes in the relevant Programme Specification to be achievable by students who are being 'taught out'.
- In cases of loss of key academic staff, the College will seek to fill gaps as quickly as possible by moving other current members of staff with appropriate skills and experience into the vacant post(s) or recruiting externally to avoid disruption
- In consultation with students the College may agree changes to the programme delivery methods which may include distance learning or short-term suspension of the programme delivery
- Where it is unavoidable to prevent a course from closing, the College will provide information, advice and guidance in offering students an alternative course at the College
- Where it is not possible to place students on an alternative course, the College will support the students in making arrangements to switch to a different provider without having to start their course from the beginning and the College will co-operate with the new provider in recognising/accrediting any prior learning achieved on the course
- Full or partial refunds will only be considered in special cases where the College is unable to support students with continuation of their studies, either within the college itself or with a new provider

### *Keeping Students Informed*

Where unforeseen material changes do occur, the College is committed to communicating these changes to students as soon as possible with clear and detailed information in writing on the changes arising, the options available to students and who they can contact in the college for advice and guidance to support them in reviewing these options. A course meeting will be held with a member of the Senior Management Team to explain the rationale for the changes and their Personal Tutor and Curriculum Manager will be in regular communication to assist students and answer any questions they may have regarding the process.

### *Refunds/Withdrawals*

For further information on the College Refunds/Withdrawals Policy, please see:  
<https://www.rutc.ac.uk/images/pdfs/Policies/RuTC-Refunds-Withdrawals-Policy.pdf>

### *Feedback*

If the student would like to give feedback regarding the College's management of the process of change, they may follow the College's complaints procedure, which can be found at: [complaints@rutc.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@rutc.ac.uk)

For further details please see: <https://www.rutc.ac.uk/images/pdfs/Policies/RuTC-Student-Protection-Plan-OFS.pdf>