## Student protection plan

| Provider’s name: The Northern School of Art  Provider’s UKPRN: 10001503  Legal address: Newport Road, Middlesbrough TS1 1AL  Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan: Vice Principal (Resources) |
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| **Student protection plan for the period 2021-2022** |
| **1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students,** **how those risks may differ based on your students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise** |
| The Northern School of Art Student Protection Plan (SPP) is intended to assure our current and future students, and the Office for Students, that we have in place appropriate arrangements to protect the quality and continuation of study for students.  The SPP sets out our approach to protecting students interests transparently and clearly. The SPP is tailored to our specific circumstances and is based on our assessment of the extent of the risks to the continuation of study for students.  We recognise that there is not a ‘one size fits all’ approach and that the risks to continuation of study and the impact of changes will be different for students with different needs, characteristics and circumstances. Within the SPP we will have regard to the possible different needs of students sharing particular protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and the actions we will take to mitigate those risks.  The list below is an assessment of a range of risks to the continuation of study for students, how these risks may differ based on our students’ needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise:   * The risk that The Northern School of Art as a whole will no longer be able to operate, or decides to cease operating is **very low**. This is because we have a good financial standing, which is monitored by a financial health assessment carried out by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on an annual basis. We also have in place business continuity plans to mitigate against risks including:   + Risk Management Policy, which identifies potential risks and steps we are taking to mitigate against those risks.   + Disaster Recovery Plan, which outlines the steps we will take to ensure the continuation of studies in the event of a serious emergency occurs, examples include fire, flood, notifiable disease, business or IT system failure. The Plan outlines who in the organisation is responsible in the event of a serious incident and what action would be taken to communicate with students and measures to mitigate disruption to programmes.   + The Programme Closure Procedure, which outlines the process that is followed for the closure of a programme. This procedure provides details about the circumstances in which we would consider closing a programme. The procedure also includes the detailed steps that we would take to ensure that we protect academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities for students in the event of the closure of a programme. * The risk that we would lose validation for one or more of our programmes is **very low**. This is because of two reasons, the first is that we have an excellent working relationship with our validating partner, the Arts University Bournemouth (AUB), and the second is that the Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions gives the undertaking to ensure that all enrolled students are supported until the conclusion of their award. * The risk that we will significantly move one or more of the locations in which we deliver programmes to students is **very low**. This is because we have committed to developing our higher education provision in our current location in Hartlepool, as outlined in our Strategic Plan 2019-2024. In recent years, we have made a significant investment in our HE Campus in Hartlepool, with the opening of a new building in Church Street in 2017-18, and new studio and workshop space for the 2021-2022 academic year , along with improvements to our buildings in Church Square. * The risk that we will no longer be able to deliver programmes to one or more subject areas and/or departments is **not applicable**. This is because we are a specialist in Art and Design institution and we only offer programmes in one subject area. * The risk that we will no longer deliver one or more programmes due to programme closure in the near future is **very low**. This is because we undertake always to teach out our programmes in the event of programme closure. * The risk that we will no longer recruit students for one or more programmes that are listed in our prospectus is **low**. This is because we would always aim to run a programme unless the number of firm acceptances is so low that it would be detrimental to the student experience. If this is the case, we will advise applicants at the earliest possible date, but no later than 1 May of that year, and where appropriate offer applicants an alternative programme, or signpost applicants to alternative courses available with other providers, as detailed in our ‘Terms and Conditions’. * The risk that we are no longer able to deliver material components of one or more programmes, due to dependency on equipment or single person dependency for teaching is **very low**. This is because we have multi-disciplinary areas in which if necessary programmes could move to different locations within the institution in the event that the facility is no longer fit for purpose, i.e. fire or flood. All essential equipment is maintained regularly, normally through a maintenance contract, and we have contingencies in the event of equipment failure. All programmes are supported by integrated programme teams and are not reliant on individual members of staff. * The risk that we are no longer able to deliver one or more modes of study to our students due to the withdrawal of a mode of study is **not applicable**, as we only provide a full-time mode of study. * The risk that we are no longer able to recruit a particular type of student, i.e. international students, is **not applicable**. This is because we can only offer places to applicants who have been an EU resident for the last three years. * The risk that we are not able to recruit students from the EU is **very low**. This is because we expect the UK Government would provide us and prospective students guidance on this matter before the start of the recruitment cycle.   We believe that the risk of non-continuation of study for the vast majority of students **is low, or very low** as already indicated above. We do recognise that in some situations the risk of non-continuation of study will be different for some students with protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010). In such situations, we will seek to provide individual solutions for students effected. |
| **2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise** |
| The Northern School of Art in this SPP will set out measures that we have put in place to mitigate risks that are reasonably likely to crystallise. We recognise that single measures to allow students to continue their studies might not be uniformly appropriate for each student in each instance, as students from different backgrounds have different needs, and some students may need tailored support.  At present we believe that the risk to enrolled students in relation to non-continuation of study is **very low** as we have not identified any programmes that will not continue to completion. Notwithstanding this, the Northern School of Art has in place the following measures:   * We commit to ‘teach out’ all of our students enrolled on a registered programme. * The Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) has committed to ‘teach out’ all of our current students enrolled on a programme of study, as detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding if in the unlikely event that the Northern School of Art is unable to do so. * We commit that we will offer other, alternative, programmes of study to students who are affected by a programme that is discontinued, being mindful of Competitions and Marketing Authority (CMA) guidance on seeking to implement such a change. * We commit that we will make every effort to support individual students to find an alternative course with another provider. Including support for ‘transfer of study’, including but not limited to, certification of credit or a record of academic achievement to facilitate admission to the receiving provider.   As the Northern School of Art is a Further Education College, this SPP does not include measures to preserve the continuation of study for students in the event of whole provider closure, because our principal regulator, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) provides this assurance. |
| **3. Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that you are no longer able to preserve the continuation of study** |
| The Tuition Fee Refunds and Compensation Policy set out the circumstances in which the School will refund tuition fees and pay compensation to students if the School is no longer able to preserve the continuation of studies for one or more students. This includes instances in which the School has terminated or intends to terminate:   1. an academic programme on which an individual has accepted a place before that individual can enrol as a student, 2. an academic programme on which a student is enrolled before that student has completed the programme.   The Policy outlines the eligibility criteria and process for individuals or groups to follow to claim a refund or compensation, along with the factors that School will take into considering when considering a claim.  The Policy also outlines how payments of refunds or compensation will be made; along with details of internal and external review should students be dissatisfied with the decision of the School.  We have minimum cash reserves of £500,000, which would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation if any student was at risk of non-continuation of study, as detailed in our Reserves Policy. |
| **4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan** |
| This section of the SPP sets out how the arrangements that we have put in place to communicate the provisions of our plan to current and future students which includes:   * Publication of the SPP on our website * Providing a copy of the SPP with the offer letter sent to applicants * Making current students aware of the plan through an initial email to students, a central information tile on the Student VLE visible to students when they access the VLE   We will share and explain the SPP to staff by:   * Publication of the SPP on our staff VLE * Including the SPP in our procedure relating to course changes and closure * Providing training to relevant staff on the implications of our SPP and our commitment to students   We will work with our current students in the development of the SPP to ensure that it is a living document and that it is reviewed and updated appropriately as our risk changes, this will be achieved by incorporating the review of the SPP into our Student Engagement Strategy that includes:   * A designated staff member responsible for the updating the SPP on an ongoing basis, with an annual review by the Academic Board. * Student involvement in the review SPP through the Academic Board, Board of Governors; Student Assemblies and Programme Boards; and Student Representative and Student Union meetings.   The arrangements that we have in place to communicate with student affected should we need to implement the SPP are as follows:   * We will give enrolled students 60 days’ notice in the event of a programme, campus or planned provider closure, or if we need to make material changes to a programme. * We will communicate these changes through individual meetings with student, or group meetings, and where necessary by telephone so that we can actively engage with students in the implementation of the SPP. We will also provide students with this writing by letter and an email to the student email account. * If we are making a material change to an existing programme, we will consult with all students before changes are made; any changes will require the agreement of all students in the cohort. * We will put in place arrangement for students to speak with organisations including, but not limited to, the Student Loan Company (SLC), UCAS, the Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) and other HE Providers, to ensure that our students have access to independent advice and guidance.   If a student wishes to make a complaint about the way that we are implementing the plan they can do so through the Student Complaints Procedure. |