



## STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN FOR 2019-20

### About Us

- 1 The University of London is one of the oldest and largest universities in the UK – and the most diverse. Established by Royal Charter in 1836, the University is recognised globally as a world leader in Higher Education. It is a federal institution consisting of 17 self-governing higher education institutions (member institutions) of outstanding reputation, and a number of acclaimed Central Academic Bodies (CABs). The CABs include:
  - School of Advanced Study (SAS) The School brings together nine research institutes to form the UK's national centre for the support of researchers and the promotion of research in the humanities. It awards postgraduate degrees at master's and doctoral level (full-time and part-time). There are 255 students comprising 138 full-time and 117 part-time. It has no undergraduate provision.
  - University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP) ULIP is a small and specialised institution with a long standing academic partnership with Queen Mary, University of London (QMUL). ULIP provides research-led undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in the heart of Paris.
  - University of London Worldwide (UoLW) The University of London Worldwide collaborates with the University of London's member institutions to offer over 100 flexible and distance learning programmes to c. 50,000 students worldwide.

### What is a Student Protection Plan?

- 2 A Student Protection Plan (SPP) sets out what students can expect to happen should a programme, campus, or institution close. The purpose of the Plan is to ensure that students can continue to complete their studies, or can be compensated in the unlikely event that this is not possible.

### Does it apply to me?

- 3 This SPP applies to those of our students registered on programmes of study with SAS and UoLW. Students studying at ULIP are registered with a member institution, Queen Mary, University of London (QMUL) with which the University of London has a close partnership. All programme-related terms and conditions applying to QMUL students are governed by QMUL as the registering institution. As such, ULIP students should refer to QMUL's SPP which can be found on their website.
- 4 The SPP does not apply to students registered at any of the 17 member institutions of the federal University of London. View details of the member institutions and links to their websites. All will have their own Student Protection Plans published on their websites and/or available upon request.
- 5 We will collaborate with students registered on programmes of study with SAS and UoLW to review and refresh the plan on a regular basis.

## Context

- 6 The SPP recognises and protects students' interests in the case of material change e.g. programme changes, suspensions, closures or institutional closure, which could be caused by (but not limited to):
- (i) significant material change
  - (ii) a strategic decision to close the CAB
  - (iii) loss or restriction of University status
  - (iv) programme closure
  - (v) major changes in year to programme content
  - (vi) removal of the Tier 4 Sponsor Licence (the Home Office issued licence which allows a provider to teach international students)
  - (vii) changes to regulatory framework affecting a specific programme
  - (viii) disruption of University activity (e.g. temporary disruption within term-time not covered by any of the above)
  - (ix) industrial action by University staff or third parties
  - (x) the unanticipated departure of key members of University staff

## Assessment of Risks and Mitigation Strategies

- 7 We have considered all potential risks and reviewed our mitigation strategies at institutional and CAB level. Our overall assessment is that the risk of students not being able to complete their studies is **LOW**. Whilst all higher education institutions in the UK and elsewhere face financial challenges and external pressures, the University of London is financially stable. As an exempt charity and recipient of public funding, we are required to use our resources efficiently and effectively and to manage our resources responsibly to deliver long-term financial sustainability.
- 8 Identified risks will be kept under close review and revised as necessary to reflect any material change in circumstances, including the emergence of new risks or risks associated with pursuing new opportunities that could impact students. Such risks will be regularly reviewed through the appropriate University of London operational and Governance bodies.

## Organisational Risks

- 9 With regards to the overarching risk of the University not being able to continue operating as a learning provider due to financial or regulatory issues, the likelihood is deemed to be very low. The key mitigating strategies include a comprehensive governance framework with independent oversight, external and internal auditing of financial management, strategic decision-making and long-term planning, and periodic external assurance reviews. Further information about the University's strategy, annual reports and financial statements.
- 10 There are two further organisation-wide risks relevant to this Student Protection Plan:  
Inadequate disaster recovery plans for digital resources; and  
Information security failings involving personal data.
- 11 Both risks have been assessed as low/moderate as the established mitigating strategies are detailed, fully documented and regularly tested.

## SAS and UoLW Risks

- 12 SAS and UoLW have considered all potential risks and reviewed mitigation strategies relevant to this SPP. These are detailed in Annex 1. Clear measures are in place for ensuring that existing students can complete their programme and continue to access student

finance. Programme closure policies exist to enable students to be 'taught out' or to transfer to another member institution of the federation or another provider.

## Communicating with you

- 13 This [Student Protection Plan](#) is available for students to view on the University's website.
- 14 In the event of the SPP being implemented at either SAS or UoLW , the Deputy Chief Executive of SAS or the Deputy Chief Executive of UoLW (working with the Director of Compliance and Secretary to the Board) will contact you within 10 working days to inform you as to:
  - What has happened;
  - What the proposed course of action is;
  - Who you can contact to discuss your particular circumstances, needs, or concerns;
  - and
  - Sources of advice, support and information.
- 15 At the same time, student representatives on University of London committees (SAS or UoLW) will also be notified in order that they can provide information about where fellow students can seek assistance and/ or provide feedback.
- 16 Students at ULIP are covered by QMUL's Student Protection Plan. QMUL will follow its own processes for communicating with students if their Plan has to be implemented.
- 17 The Compensation and Refund Policies, as well as the Terms and Conditions, for the Central Academic Bodies are [available on the University's website.](#)

## Annex 1: Assessment of Risks and Mitigation Strategies

It must be noted that the following assessment of the risks identified are not listed in order of priority.

### School of Advanced Study

Risk 1: The School does not achieve successor funding following the special funding stream awarded to it (previously by HEFCE) now OfS. Likelihood: Low

*Mitigation:* The School was reviewed during 2018-19 with a successful outcome. However, in the unlikely event of School closure, students would be 'taught out' under the course closure policy or through one of the other federal Member Institutions (SAS awards University of London degrees which are offered by them).

Risk 2: The School finds it necessary to close one of its seven teaching institutes (Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Institute of English Studies, Institute of Historical Research, Institute of Latin American Studies, Institute of Modern Languages Research, Warburg Institute). Likelihood: Moderate

*Mitigation:* The School will commit to teaching out the programme in line with its programme closure policy. Supervision of research degrees will continue either through retention of the supervision which will be 'bought back' from any new employing institution, or purchased through a UoL supervision contract.

Risk 3: The School loses key academic staff involved in teaching and supervision. Likelihood: Low/moderate

*Mitigation:* Teaching teams are used to deliver individual programmes, so cover can be provided in this event. Being part of a federation also means that academic staff from other constituent member institutions can be more readily secured. Additionally, the multidisciplinary nature and cross-institute working operation in SAS means that other institute staff can step in to assist.

Risk 4: One of the partners involved with the School in its collaborative degrees provision ceases to operate/ withdraws from the collaboration. Likelihood: Low

*Mitigation:* The partner would be required to give adequate notice to the School which would allow it to seek a new partner, or force programme closure in which case the programme closure policy would come into play.

Risk 5: The School ceases to operate one of its programmes due to financial viability, change of external environment, etc. Likelihood: Moderate

*Mitigation:* The School operates annual and periodic reviews so any problems relating to programmes can be identified early on and if programmes are in jeopardy, notice of closure will be given and the programme closure policy will operate.

Risk 6: The School loses its Tier 4 licence or has it suspended, thereby rendering it unable to recruit international students. Likelihood: Low to Moderate

*Mitigation:* The School has been audited regularly and has passed on each occasion. Processes and procedures are in place to safeguard the licence. Communication and awareness of the terms and conditions relating to the licence are discussed at administrative and academic fora in SAS and other departments. In the event of suspension, the School will work with UKVI to allow enrolled students to complete their year of study/programme by:

- allowing students already in receipt of a VISA based upon an allocated CAS from the University to enrol and commence their studies;

- offering students who have not commenced their travel to the University, the opportunity to postpone their application pending the resolution of the suspension. In the event of revocation of Tier 4 Sponsor Licence all reasonable steps will be taken to minimise the resultant disruption to affected students by providing assistance to switch to an alternative sponsor.

Risk 7: Part or all of the campus is rendered unusable for activities involving students. Likelihood: Moderate

*Mitigation:* The School will typically consider remedies such as: (a) relocating provision to an alternative location, this may include hiring spaces for programme delivery (where possible nearby); (b) revising timetabling to allow all of the scheduled teaching to take part in the available facilities, this may include student contact sessions being held outside of normal office hours; where such an approach is taken, appropriate consultation will normally be conducted with stakeholders who may be affected; appropriate equality impact assessments will also be undertaken; and (c) delivering programmes via alternative means, such as Distance Learning.

Risk 8: Major in-year changes to programme content. Likelihood: Low

*Mitigation:* The School uses all reasonable endeavours to deliver the programme in accordance with the description applied to it in the prospectus for the academic year in which a student began their programme. It does not usually allow major in-year changes to be applied. Major changes are usually applied for the following academic year. However, in the unlikely event of major in-year changes the School will ensure that:

- changes are restricted to the minimum necessary to achieve the required quality of experience, and affected students are notified and consulted with as appropriate;
- it works with students to ensure the offer is still acceptable;
- where necessary it allows students the opportunity to withdraw from the programme;
- where required students will be offered reasonable support to transfer to another programme at the University, or to another provider.

Risk 9: Industrial Action. Likelihood: Moderate

*Mitigation:* The University has established frameworks for consultation and negotiation with the recognised trade unions. It is highly committed to maintaining an effective employee relations culture and working with trade union colleagues to achieve reasonable solutions to matters that may arise from time to time. Where industrial action does occur, the University and School will seek to ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible;

- take all reasonable steps to fulfil its responsibilities to students in ensuring that any disruption is minimised and students are not, as far as is possible to determine, disadvantaged by the action.

## University of London Worldwide

Risk 1: Industrial action by academics involved in assessment reduces ability to provide timely assessment information to students. Likelihood: Moderate

*Mitigation:* The University has established frameworks for consultation and negotiation with the recognised trade unions. It is highly committed to maintaining an effective employee relations culture and working with trade union colleagues to achieve reasonable solutions to matters that may arise from time to time. Where industrial action does occur, the University and UoLW will seek to:

- ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible;
- take all reasonable steps to fulfil its responsibilities to students in ensuring that any disruption is minimised and students are not, as far as is possible to determine, disadvantaged by the action.

Risk 2: Changes in government/ professional body regulations/recognitions that limit the ability to operate a particular programme in a particular market and therefore impacts students in that region. Likelihood: Low/Moderate

*Mitigation:* Member Institutions have relationships with regulatory bodies in major markets. The Global Engagement team is developing deeper relationships with relevant professional bodies/regulatory bodies, with a strategic aim to improve ability to influence organisations/governmental bodies. Programme revisions are undertaken to ensure programmes remain relevant and current across markets.

Risk 3: Actions of a recognised teaching centre or regulatory body has a reputational, legal or financial impact on the University and/or its local students. Likelihood: Low/Moderate

*Mitigation:* Revised Teaching Centres Recognition Framework (TCRF) has been finalised, and contractual arrangements with institutions will have been completed by the end of 2018-19 academic year. The new TCRF contract has been developed to mitigate against legal, financial and reputational risks while providing a simple, robust framework to support teaching centres, monitor their performance, and ensure the safety and support of UoL students. The interests of students are paramount and the framework obliges both parties to work together to ensure the interests of UoL students are appropriately safeguarded.

Risk 4: A recognised teaching centre ceases to operate and is unable to provide support for UoL students. Likelihood: Low/Moderate

*Mitigation:* The student is registered with the University and programmes are designed to provide sufficient online support for the student to enable them to study the required syllabus and succeed in examinations. However, for those students who are required to attend face to face teaching (approx. 6% of the total student body distributed across 20 institutions in multiple markets), the Refund and Compensation Policy may be applied where appropriate.

Risk 5: Failure of a particular source of supply (e.g. courier distribution, student database support, examination centre suppliers) limits student ability to engage with aspects of learning or assessment. Likelihood: Low

*Mitigation:* Student Services Continuous Improvement exercises. Back up resources to be offered via Virtual Learning Environment and online library. UoL shared services initiatives. Updating of critical functions directory.

Risk 6: Loss of key academic staff involved in programme leadership and/or teaching. Likelihood: Low

*Mitigation:* All UoLW's collaborative partnerships are covered by contractual responsibilities for both parties: member institutions are responsible for maintaining academic support for the programme and would be required to provide temporary leadership/support until a permanent replacement could be found.

Risk 7: UoLW ceases to offer one of its programmes due to a lack of financial viability or a change in operating environment. Likelihood: Low

*Mitigation:* In addition to its annual and periodic review process, UoL operates robust business and investment planning processes, so any issues would be identified early on and mitigating action taken. If all other courses of action were exhausted, notice of closure would be given and the programme closure policy would operate.

**Approved by the Board of Trustees  
17 July 2019**