



## Coastland College (Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College)

UKPRN: 10007469

### Higher Education (HE) Student Protection Plan (SPP)

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#### HE Student Protection Plan

Coastland College is committed to help you achieve the best from your academic studies and to prepare you for your future career.

However, there may be unforeseen circumstances, often outside the College's control which result in changes having to be made to your modules/units or programmes of study. This document is designed to make clear the arrangements for consulting with students when changes occur. These processes should ensure continuity of studies and minimise any potential negative impacts on students affected by changes.

Mechanisms are in place to ensure that in the highly unlikely event of the College and being unable to complete delivery of the course of study as offered then students will be able to transfer to other institutions to complete their studies. Should this not prove possible (for example through a student's inability to move educational venue) then mechanisms are also in place to ensure that they would receive a refund of fees.

The overall goal of this Plan is to protect the student and the student's investment in study and promoting equality, diversity and an inclusive and supportive environment for our learners, staff and others closely associated with us. We support the rights of individuals to be treated fairly and with respect.

Harassment and bullying can cause serious harm to health and well-being and can ruin an individual's chances of success both in College and in their future career.

Any incidents of bullying or harassment will be regarded extremely seriously and can grounds for disciplinary action, which may include expulsion or dismissal.

The Student Protection Plan will be:

- reviewed annually
- made available to all students and prospective students via the website

In particular:

- applicants will be made aware of this plan at point of offer
- current students will be signposted to the plan as part of induction/re-enrolment
- links to the plan will be available within handbooks
- the plan will be available via the staff intranet and student VLE's

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# HE Student Protection Plan 2025-26

## Purpose

The Office for Students as regulator for register of higher education providers requires us to publish a Student Protection Plan (SPP). This Plan outlines how we propose to protect your interests should events crystallise that pose a risk to you continuing your studies.

The plan is tailored to our specific circumstances and sets out the measures which are in place to:

- Mitigate the impact on you in the event of the failure of the College;
- Deliver continuity of study;
- Manage the risks we can foresee;
- Outline the impact on students *should the risks crystallise*.

and sets out in advance

- what you can expect from us as a regulated provider in the event we need to activate our SPP to support you.

The plan has four elements:

1. An assessment of the possible risks facing the continuation of studies and the measures in place to mitigate the likely risks identified.
2. The measures in place to protect student continuity of study should the college no longer be able to offer any of its degree level programmes in any capacity.
3. The policy in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that the College is no longer able to preserve continuation of study.
4. How these measures will be communicated to you.

## Risk to Continuity of Study and Mitigation Measures

Here we assess the range, and likelihood of occurrence, of risks to the continuation of study for our students:

### 1. Financial Failure of the Institution (Low Risk)

(The College is no longer able to operate or no longer intends to operate)

*Scenario: Students would not be able to complete their chosen course of study.*

We have assessed the likelihood of this risk materialising as low for the following reasons:

- 1.1. The College maintains a strong asset base to support its activities. The merger of the two colleges (Weymouth College and Kingston Maurward College) on 1 August 2024 had a clear purpose to secure the long-term sustainability of FE and HE provision in Dorset.
- 1.2. The College has robust financial systems with ongoing budget and close to real time income/expenditure profile monitoring.

- 1.3. There is close monitoring by the Senior Management Team to manage short-term decision making and longer-term planning.
- 1.4. Business continuity plans covering estate and information technology, backed by insurance cover which includes disaster recovery assistance.
- 1.5. The College has been designated for student funding for many years and has never had a cause for concern raised by any regulatory body.
- 1.6. The College holds a Tier 4 licence for recruitment of international students without ever having it withdrawn or suspended.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the unlikely event that Coastland College is no longer able to or intends to operate we have the following measures in place:

- We have measures in place to ensure our financial management is sound and has sufficient liquidity;
- Arrangements will be made for the transfer of students to identified providers where possible;
- We will provide support and advice regarding other options that may be open to students;
- We have put in place and published clear policies in order to be able to refund fees or provide compensation should that ever become necessary;
- We have Business continuity plans backed by insurance cover to manage this scenario should it ever occur.

**2. Withdrawal of Designation (Low Risk)**

(The College is no longer able to deliver qualifications to registered students because the Office for Students (OfS) has restricted their ability to deliver higher education programmes.)

*Scenario: Students may not be able to complete their chosen course of study because the Office for Students (OfS) has restricted the College's ability to deliver higher education programmes.*

We have assessed the likelihood of this risk materialising as low for the following reasons:

- 2.1. We will work with the OfS and the Student Loans Company (SLC) to ensure:
  - all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the resultant disruption to you;
  - where possible changes are made in a transitional manner.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

We will seek to mitigate disruption to you as follows:

- Work with the OfS and SLC to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the resultant disruption to you;
- Where possible we will work with OfS and SLC so that changes are made in a transitional manner allowing you to complete your studies with us;
- Provide support and advice regarding other options for students who wish to transfer;
- Assist you by providing evidence/letters/statements in support of continuation of

- your studies;
- We ensure our financial management is sound to ensure sufficient liquidity and we have put in place and published clear policies in order to be able to refund fees or provide compensation should that ever become necessary.

### **3. Campus Closure (Low Risk)**

(One or more of the locations at which the College delivers courses to students is no longer available.)

*Scenario: Students may not be able to complete their chosen course of study.*

We have assessed the likelihood of this risk materialising as low for the following reasons:

- 3.1. The merger of the two colleges (Weymouth College and Kingston Maurward College) on 1 August 2024 had a clear purpose to secure the long-term sustainability of FE and HE provision in Dorset. However, where we have no option than to cease operating or closure of a campus, we would consider the following measures to mitigate the disruption to your student experience.

#### ***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the unlikely event that Coastland College is no longer able to deliver on a particular campus we would seek to put in place the following measures to protect your experience and ensure continuity of study in place. These might include:

- Where possible, closing in a gradual way, over a period that would allow you to complete your studies;
- Transfer the delivery of the programme to our other campus;
- Where the above is not possible, supporting you to transfer to an appropriate programme at another provider;
- Provide support and advice regarding other options that may be open to students;
- Refund fees or provide compensation should that ever become necessary.

### **4. Risk of Failure to Deliver Qualifications: Students Already Registered (Low Risk)**

(The College is no longer able to deliver courses to students in one or more subject areas and/or departments.)

*Scenario: Some students would not be able to complete their chosen course of study with the College.*

We have assessed the likelihood of this risk materialising as low for the following reasons:

- 4.1. Coastland College currently have contractual partnership arrangement with the University of Plymouth and Pearson to deliver higher education qualifications. Therefore, the only reason why the above scenario would crystallise would be if one of these awarding bodies withdrew their agreement with the College.
- 4.2. To ensure the we meet with the contractual requirements the College and the awarding bodies engage in a range of quality assurance processes and checks on the financial sustainability and management together with academic capability

to deliver courses.

- 4.3. As part of these processes the College engages in regular communication and contact with key members of staff from our awarding bodies to address and identify any areas of concern to enable them to be addressed well ahead of time.
- 4.4. On occasions the Awarding Bodies and the College may choose to end their contractual arrangements for a course. Where a decision has been made to withdraw a programme the College under its terms of agreement with partner HEI's is obliged to 'teach out' students already enrolled on the programme to enable them to complete their award.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the unlikely event that Coastland College is no longer able to deliver a particular programme we would seek to put in place the following measures to protect your experience and ensure continuity of study in place:

- Put in place measures to teach out your existing qualification;
- Transfer the qualification to another awarding body;
- Provide support and advice regarding options that may be open should they wish to transfer;
- Refund fees or provide compensation should that ever become necessary.

## **5. Course Closures (Enrolled Students) (Low Risk)**

The College is no longer able to deliver one or more courses to students, particularly if course closures are likely in the next three years.

*Scenario: some students would not be able to complete their chosen course of study with the College.*

We have assessed the likelihood of this risk materialising as low for the following reasons:

- 5.1. On occasions the Awarding Bodies and the College may choose to end their contractual arrangements for a course.
- 5.2. The College may consider that a programme of study is no longer aligned to their HE Strategy and may seek to undergo closure of a programme.
- 5.3. Under the terms of agreement with the partner HEI the College is obliged to teach out student already enrolled on the programme to enable them to complete their award.
- 5.4. Where a decision has been made to close a programme this would be timetabled to allow all students enrolled on the programme to complete their studies.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the unlikely event that the College is no longer able to deliver a particular programme we would seek to put in place the following measures to protect your experience and ensure continuity of study in place:

- Put in place measures to teach out your existing qualification;
- Transfer the qualification to another awarding body;
- Provide support and advice regarding options that may be open should they wish to transfer;
- Refund fees or provide compensation should that ever become necessary.

**6. Specialist Staff Movement & Retirement (Moderate Risk)**

(The College is no longer able to deliver material components of one or more courses, particularly if there are areas of vulnerability, such as single person dependencies for teaching.)

*Scenario: This may occur if we were dependent on specific staff expertise, and had no alternative member of staff in place to cover a particular course component.*

The risk that the College is unable to deliver material components of our programmes is moderate. However, this may happen due to the following circumstances: long-term sickness, retirement, death or leaving the College.

Where possible we will seek to mitigate the impact on the delivery of programmes as follows:

- 6.1. Assign responsibility to other current members of staff with appropriate skills.
- 6.2. Look to recruit externally where the HE provision does involve specialism from staff to deliver these elements and suitable replacements may not be immediately available. This is more likely with some of our Kingston Maurward campus courses due to the specialist nature of their programmes.
- 6.3. Efforts will be made to recruit new staff in identified areas. Particular emphasis is being placed on recruiting early career lecturers and tutors with the intention of them growing into more senior positions over time. A mentoring system is being developed to support early career workers featuring a combination of internal training and external mentoring. Staff recruitment processes can approve enhanced pay and conditions to encourage recruitment of specialists from industry.
- 6.4. Where possible move the module/unit to later in the academic year to allow time for recruitment of a suitable replacement.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the unlikely event that the College is no longer able to deliver material components of one or more of its courses due to staffing issues the following measures will be put in place:

- Where possible assign responsibility to other current members of staff with appropriate skills;
- Recruit an appropriately skilled staff replacement;
- Employ agency staff with appropriate skills as an interim measure;

- Move the module/unit to later in the academic year to allow time to recruit staff replacement;
- Where possible offer an alternative module/unit.

## **7. Inability to deliver one or more mode of study (Low Risk)**

(The College is no longer able to deliver one or more modes of study to students, particularly if withdrawal of a mode of study is likely.)

*Scenario: Students enrolled on programmes would not be able to complete their chosen course of study with the College. This may also apply to students who have applied (See Section 10 & 11).*

We have assessed the likelihood of this risk materialising as **low** for the following reasons:

- 7.1. Under the terms of agreement with the partner HEI the College is obliged to teach out students already enrolled on the programme to enable them to complete their award.

### ***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the unlikely event that the College is no longer able to deliver a particular mode of study we would seek to put in place the following measures to protect your experience and ensure continuity of study in place:

- Put in place measures to teach out your existing qualification;
- Transfer the qualification to another awarding body;
- Provide support and advice regarding options that may be open should you wish to transfer;
- Refund fees or provide compensation should that ever become necessary.

## **8. Special Provision & Support for Students (Low Risk)**

(The College is no longer able to recruit or teach a particular type of student.)

*Scenario: Some students would not be able to enrol on or complete their chosen course their chosen course of study with the College.*

We have assessed the likelihood of this risk materialising as Low for the following reasons:

- 8.1. The College admissions process has been developed to ensure that all applicants are able to meet the requirements of the content of the course.
- 8.2. The College has an obligation through our Tier 4 licence with the UKVI to properly enrol and monitor attendance of international students and should we for any reason lose our Tier 4 licence then we would not be able to recruit or retain any student who is studying under this type of visa. (See Section 9 below)
- 8.3. Where an applicant declares a disability or identified learning support need risk assessments may need to take into account physical disabilities and mental health conditions. Staff will collaborate with relevant support services to gather necessary information and expertise to adequately evaluate risks and their potential impact on different student groups.

- 8.4. In line with the Equality Act 2010 the College will take reasonable steps to make adjustments to remove any barriers to study to students who have identified a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities within their educational journey. These adjustments are in relation to:
- Assessments (exams, presentations etc) or fieldtrips;
  - Physical barriers such as steps, classroom access;
  - Use of auxiliary aids within the classroom setting.
- 8.5. We consider the diverse needs of our students and staff, ensuring that appropriate support and assistance can be provided during emergencies. The College has support services such as counselling and disability services who are readily available to address specific needs of students who may be impacted by a risk crystallising.
- 8.6. The College is committed to promoting equality and diversity within its student body and staff. However, there is a moderate risk that on occasions based on legitimate justifications, such as the inability to meet specific requirements or safeguarding concerns where the College cannot provide (or can no longer provide) a place for students. Where this happens, the College will ensure that all actions taken align with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.
- 8.7. When it is determined that the College is unable to recruit or teach a specific type of student, the decision-making process will be documented and supported by evidence. This may include consultation with relevant College staff, external experts, or professional bodies.
- 8.8. Where possible, the College will explore alternative provisions to accommodate the needs of students who fall within the identified category. This may involve providing online resources, or referring students to external organisations that can offer appropriate support.
- 8.9. The College can provide financial support through the Hardship Fund and advice and guidance to assist students with the support available through Student Finance.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the event that the College is unable to recruit or teach a particular type of student, we have put in place measures to protect the student interest, as follows:

- We will provide clear explanation to any student impacted regarding our reasons for not being able to recruit or teach them this will be discussed with the applicant;
- We will provide support and advice regarding other options including alternative courses that may be open to you.

## **9. Suspension of Tier 4 Sponsor Licence (Low Risk)**

*Scenario: International students would not be able to enrol on or complete their chosen course their chosen course of study with the College.*

We have assessed the likelihood of this risk materialising as Low for the following reasons:

- 9.1. The College maintains a licence with the UK Visas and Immigration service (UKVI) for the recruitment and retention of international (Tier 4) students. In order to retain this licence, which is reviewed annually, The College ensures continual compliance with the terms of the Tier 4 licence and regularly report to UKVI relevant metrics associated with this licence,
- 9.2. We provide training and regular communication to key staff and students of the requirements of the Tier 4 licence and their obligations.
- 9.3. We have never had any suspension or withdrawal of this licence.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the event that the College loses the right to recruit and retain international students through our 'Tier 4' Licence, we have put in place measures to protect the student interest, as follows:

- We will provide clear explanation to any student impacted regarding our reasons for not being able to recruit or teach them;
- We will provide support and advice regarding other options including alternative courses that may be open to them;
- We ensure our financial management is sound to ensure sufficient liquidity and we have put in place and published clear policies in order to be able to refund fees or provide compensation should that ever become necessary.

## **10. Significant Material Change to Advertised Programmes (Low/Moderate Risk)**

*Scenario: A change to an advertised programme such as course content takes place prior to the start or during the course.*

We have assessed the likelihood of this risk materialising as Low/Moderate for the following reasons:

- 10.1 Changes to programme content to ensure they are up to date and appropriate is a regular and normal activity which is often instigated by an awarding body.
- 10.2 Where the College is aware of a likely change at the start of a recruitment cycle we will notify students of potential changes to content to manage expectations.
- 10.3 Where it is necessary to make a change to unit content once a course is underway we will communicate and work with you to ensure that the programme content is still acceptable.
- 10.4 Should you wish to withdraw you will be offered reasonable support to transfer to another programme or provider.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the event that the College has to make changes to programmes we are committed

to:

- Let you know as soon as possible;
- Provide you with advice and guidance on the proposed changes and the options available;
- Obtaining your agreement to the changes;
- Applying where relevant our HE Refund and Compensation Policy.

### **11. Closure of Advertised Qualifications (New Applicants) (Moderate Risk)**

(The College is no longer able to deliver courses to students in one or more subject areas and/or departments.)

*Scenario: Some students would not be able to start their chosen course of study with the College.*

These events may be triggered by a situation such as (but not limited to) a strategic decision by the College to close a programme due to insufficient applications and programme take-up.

Under these circumstances then the following would be used to mitigate:

- 11.1. If you have applied for a College programme, but have not yet enrolled, you will be notified (in accordance with UCAS deadlines where appropriate) in time for you to source an alternative suitable programme, where relevant, at the College or another HEI.
- 11.2. We will provide you with support and advice in these circumstances to help signpost you to similar courses offered at the College or other colleges/HEI's in the region based on your individual circumstances.
- 11.3. If you are required to transfer programme, or move to another provider, there may be implications for your student finance arrangements. If you are affected you will be provided with advice and guidance based on this Plan, the HE Student Contract, the HE Refund and Compensation Policy taking account your individual circumstances.
- 11.4. The College is currently developing a new HE Marketing Strategy in light of the recent merger. We are committed to programming regular events raising awareness of HE across the campus as well as course specific advice and guidance for progression in to HE in order to minimise the likelihood of poor recruitment to our courses.
- 11.5. Both campuses have a firm commitment to work with the Southern Universities Network as the local National Collaborative Outreach Programme to identify low participation students and use resources to raise awareness across its whole student cohort.
- 11.6. The College has an ongoing strategy to revalidate programmes and develop new courses with current awarding bodies and HEI partners. The College is currently partnered with University of Plymouth, as well as Pearson for delivery of HNC/HND courses.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the event that the College is unable to run an advertised programme of study the following measures are in place to minimise the impact and assist you with finding alternatives.

- You will be notified (in accordance with UCAS deadlines where appropriate) in time for you to source an alternative suitable programme, where relevant, at the College or another HEI;
- We will provide support and advice to help signpost you to similar courses offered by the College or other providers;
- You will be given advice about how to amend your student finance application to your chosen new course and/or provider.

**12. Temporary Disruption due to unforeseen circumstances (Low Risk)**

- 12.1. Should a temporary disruption occur you will be contacted via your College email and VLE and will be given work that can be carried out during this period at home.
- 12.2. The College's Incident Management Policy covers actions affecting business continuity, such as damage to buildings or equipment or acts of terrorism.
- 12.3. The risk that the College would be unable to operate due to an adverse event affecting property is low. The College has multi-building campuses in Weymouth and Kingston Maurward.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the event that the College has a temporary disruption:

- You will be notified via your College email and VLE and where possible be given work to do from home.

**13. Industrial Action Affecting Studies (Low Risk)**

We have established frameworks for consultation and negotiation with the recognised trade unions. We are 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 therefore we would assess this as low risk.

However, should industrial action occur we will seek to mitigate the disruption to your studies as follows:

- 13.1. Ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible.
- 13.2. Take reasonable steps to ensure that any disruption is minimised and that you are not as far as possible disadvantaged by the action.

***Impact on students should the risks crystallise:***

In the event that the College has a temporary disruption:

- You will be notified via your College email and VLE and where possible be given work to do from home.

**14. Refund of Tuition Fees in the Event of Inability to Provide a Qualification**

14.1. The risk associated with the College being required to compensate students in the event of not being able to preserve continuation of study is low. The College has sufficient cash reserves to provide refunds and compensation.

14.2. The refund of fees in the event of the failure of the Centre or College is covered by the provisions of:

- HE Student Contract
- Fees Policy
- Refund & Compensation Policy

14.3. These make clear the provisions which are in place to ensure that you will receive a refund of tuition fees and other relevant costs in the event of the College no longer able to preserve continuation of study.

14.4. The College Fees Policy is reviewed annually. It includes details of fees to be charged for each type of course together with its approach to refunds and can be found on the College website.

14.5. For the avoidance of doubt you are not able to obtain redress under both this Plan and the College HE Refund and Compensation Policy; in some instances, you may be given a choice between accepting redress under either this Plan or the Refund and Compensation Policy in which case they will be able to opt to accept redress under only one of this Plan or the Policy and not both.

**15. Communication about the Student Protection Plan**

15.1. We will communicate with you about the Student Protection Plan (SPP) in the following ways on our website and via the VLE, we will provide copies within induction materials and it will be published on our website.

15.2. The SPP (and supporting policies) will be available on our website for prospective students to view and applicants will be directed to view it within our interview/offer paperwork.

15.3. The SPP will be reviewed annually by the HE Academic Board, which includes student representation as well as link tutors from our partner HEIs and senior managers.

**16. Responsibility**

16.1. Deputy Principal

