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Student protection plan for the period 2019 -2021

Introduction

This the Student Protection Plan for Kingston Maurward College for 2019 to 2021. This plan outlines the measures the college has to protect your study should the college find itself in a position to be unable to fulfil its obligation to ensure you complete your studies with the college.

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 risk the college as a whole provider is unable to operate is low. The college maintains a strong asset base. The college achieved a 'good' financial health status for 2018/19 and although the current financial position in 2019-20 is challenging, in 2020-21 the college with increased funding from the ESFA and modest increase in other income stream, the college is expected to deliver a small surplus. Expenditure is closely monitored by the Senior Management Team throughout the year to control spending to budget constraints. The college as a whole has a Business Continuity Plan which outlines responses to risks that may lead to the college being unable to perform its duties as a FE College and as a commercial enterprise.

The risk to not be able to continue to deliver any Higher Education programmes is moderate. The college only has a small number of programmes and needs to ensure viability for each programme. If it does not recruit a suitable number on all of its programmes this would involve the cancellation of all programmes for new entrants for that academic year.

The risk that we are unable to deliver material components of our programmes is moderate. The college's HE provision does involve specialism from staff to deliver these and suitable replacements may not be immediately available.

Marine Ecology and Conservation is at moderate risk from loss of staff due to the specialist nature of this topic. The BSc (hons) Animal Behaviour and Welfare Top Up/ BSc (hons) Animal Behaviour, Welfare and Conservation Top Up is at similar risk due to the specialist nature of some modules. The college's new programme FdSc Applied Agriculture Science is at moderate to high risk as a new programme due to early recruitment profiles and again subject specialism requirements for staff involved in delivery.

Tourism Park Management is taught by industry specialists and is at moderate risk if these are not available to deliver on the programme if they have other business commitments.

2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

If the college was no longer able to offer any of its degree level programmes in any capacity, then the following would be used to mitigate:

- New entrants can be offered places on similar or equivalent course at our HEI partners.
- The Royal Agricultural University can offer suitable places at its Cirencester campus for courses in Animal Management and Agriculture. This may also involve offers of places at other partner colleges linked to the RAU
- Bournemouth University can offer places on courses with some equivalency for Marine Ecology and Conservation at its main campus.
- Bournemouth University can offer programmes in Tourism Management but these may not be suitable to the learners on this programme, who are based across the UK. The college will need to explore with BU, and the industry body BHHPA, to investigate alternatives if this programme was to suddenly close.
- Other colleges in the region – Sparsholt, Wiltshire and Cornwall College Group (Bicton campus) – would also be contacted to discuss available places on suitable programmes for entry or transfer. There is no formalised agreement with these other providers to take transfer students at this time but if the risk was felt significant enough the college may seek to formalise this. Numbers of students at Kingston Maurward on HE programmes is not significantly high and for this academic year formal transfer agreements have not been sought. The college will review this policy annually on programme by programme basis as required.

If a programme was withdrawn for new entrants, because of poor recruitment or withdrawal by a partner HEI to validate the programme, the college under its terms of agreements with its partner HEIs is obliged to 'teach out' students on programme. If the risk factor was to lead to the college becoming unable to meet that obligation (e.g. college closure) then alternative transfers would be sought to other providers or the college's partners.

To reduce risk of poor recruitment on programmes the college has developed an HE marketing strategy including marketing materials to specifically promote its HE provision, such as videos, in the last 2 years. It is committed to a programme of regular events raising awareness of HE across the campus as well as course specific advice and guidance for progression in to HE. The senior management team includes a vice principal role that include progression and supports the college's Careers Lead to meet the Gatsby benchmarks. It has firm commitment to work with the Southern Universities Network as the local NCOP to identify low participation students and use resources to raise awareness across its whole student cohort. The re-validation of the FdSc/ BSc (hons) Animal Behaviour and Welfare has been ambitious and includes a name change to Animal Behaviour, Welfare and Conservation, as well as major module change to increase the effectiveness of the programme's unique selling point (USP).

The college will continue to forge close links with the British Holiday Homes and Parks Association (BHHPA) to promote the FdA Tourism Park Management to maintain successful recruitment, and to recruit any future specialist teaching staff if required. It is also developing this as a potential degree apprenticeship route.

The college always has a staff contingency in place for HE programmes in case of changes in staffing occur. This will also be a part of future recruitment within those departments with HE (Animal Welfare and Science; Agriculture, Environment and Land-based) to recruit staff with degree and postgraduate qualifications and with the potential to form part of HE delivery.

The college has two main university partners, Bournemouth University and the Royal Agricultural University. Both partners have the right to end the validating agreement with the college but the terms of agreements include suitable notice periods. This allows the college to prepare to find new partner HEIs to validate programmes or teach out programmes that may need to close if no new partner can be found. The risk of this end of partnership is low for the partnership with the RAU. This partnership is 5 years old but the RAU has a clear development policy towards partner colleges, and has been highly

supportive of HE provision at the college. The college completed an institutional review with the RAU in October 2018, which was successful and has identified areas for development in the partnership.

The risk of the end of the partnership with Bournemouth University is moderate. The partnership with Bournemouth University is a long standing one but Bournemouth have reduced partnership provision in the last 5 years and is not a priority development area for the university. BU has started a more regular partner review dialogue with the college in the academic year 2019-20 and the college will undergo partner review in 2020.

The college has successfully revalidated the FdSc Marine Ecology and Conservation and FdSc Animal Behaviour and Conservation/ BSc (Hons) Animal Behaviour and Conservation Top Up programmes with its partners in 2019/2020. The FdA Tourism Park Management will be revalidation by the end of 2020 with BU.

All terms or memoranda of agreement with the partner universities are reviewed and agreed each year to ensure they reflect the current provision validated by the university for delivery by the college. At partner review (every 3-5 years) the memoranda of understanding of each partnership is reviewed to ensure it reflects the wider partnership arrangements between the college and its partner.

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 continuation of study

The College has a Fees Policy, reviewed annually, that includes details of fees to be charged for each type of course together with its approach to refunds. This policy has been reviewed in January 2020 and can be found at:

<https://www.kmc.ac.uk/college/quick-links/policies/>

The college has a refunds policy which was reviewed in January 2020. This published on the college website at:

<https://www.kmc.ac.uk/college/quick-links/policies/>

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. For the majority of the year the College has sufficient cash reserves to provide refunds and compensation.

4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan

We will publicise our student protection plan to current students via the VLE, Moodle, provide copies within induction materials and it will be published on our website.

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

Staff will be given updates on the SPP in staff development/ CPD sessions and made aware of contingencies in place.

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.

Students will be contacted directly by the Head of Higher Education of any material changes to their course as soon as possible. This will be confirmed in writing, including details of the impact of these changes or details of alternative provision. This will also outline external advice available to the students for support such as the OIA. The college complaints officer would also act as a point of contact to support students in responses to changes. Any complaint in response to enacting the plan may need to be escalated by the complaints officer to the partner HEI for the relevant course or the OIA.

To implement measures in the plan such as transferring students to alternative providers, we will support students by contacting the alternative providers and supply details of applicants/ students on their behalf to secure places for them.

The latest fees policy is available from the college website at:

<https://www.kmc.ac.uk/college/quick-links/policies/>