

Student Protection Plan

September 2019 – August 2020

Tyne Coast College is committed to providing all students that enrol with us their full expectation of teaching quality, and physical resources, to enable them to meet their potential and successfully complete their programme. This is undertaken through the range of published policies and procedures contained with the Higher Education Quality Manual and on the College website.

The College is Office for Students Registered. Consequently, it meets the Office for Students requirements for course quality, academic standards, student support, student protection and more.

This Protection Plan forms one of the College's planning documents and highlights the actions that Senior Managers will undertake to protect the interests of students from a range of factors, to ensure that the qualification they have enrolled on, can be duly delivered by Tyne Coast College. This plan is agreed annually by the Senior Executive Group, approved by the Board of Governors at the Main Board, and informed to current and prospective students via the College website.

Tyne Coast College operates a Risk Management process, where the main risks are identified, assessed, and control measures created to reduce the risks created, with the residual risk monitored.

Risks are classified as:

- Corporate
 - top 10 institutional risks
- Academic
 - risks affecting the quality of the student experience
- Support
 - risks affecting the cross college support functions

Planning for the student experience is undertaken through an established process which entails the identification of resources, both human and physical, which are required to ensure that the College is able to meet its promotional curriculum offer within the financial and quality regulations and best practices.

The College holds a strong financial rating, which is assessed annually by the ESFA, and monitored by the Deputy Chief Executive each month, as well as by the Board of Governors at the termly meetings of the Finance Committee.

Should a risk rating increase, or the College's financial standing reduces from "good" then further corrective measures will be introduced and undertaken to ensure our students are confident that their programme will be delivered under the terms of their initial enrolment.

Measures in place to mitigate Possible Risks

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Confirmation</i>
Tyne Coast College no longer able to operate all published courses due to financial issues	Financial status falls below satisfactory	Financial planning will review all programmes and reduce ineffective future programmes. All current enrolments and programmes will be "taught out".	Students affected will be contacted individually and their reply retained as confirmation
Tyne Coast College approval from awarding bodies has been withdrawn	Formal notification from Edexcel and / or SQA	All current enrolments and programmes will be "taught out". No new enrolments will be undertaken	Students affected will be contacted individually and their reply retained as confirmation
Tyne Coast College approval from validating partner has been withdrawn	Formal notification from University of Sunderland	All current enrolments and programmes will be "taught out". No new enrolments will be undertaken Tyne Coast College will search for new validating partner for Foundation Degree programmes	Students affected will be contacted individually and their reply retained as confirmation
The specific classroom or classrooms are no longer available	Report from College Estates Department	Other facilities will be utilised across Tyne Coast College campuses to continue with the teaching level	Student timetables will be modified and student informed

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<i>Issue</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Confirmation</i>
The specific specialised teacher resources are no available	Notification of staff resignations from HR	Alternative suitably qualified existing staff will be used, or replacement staff sourced through website advertisements and specialist manning agencies	Student timetables will be modified and student informed
Risk register shows increasing risk that students can not complete their qualification	Tyne Coast College Risk Assessment Plan to include the Student Protection Plan mitigating actions	Actions are reviewed within the Risk Assessment annual review	Risk Register report presented to the Board of Governors
Office for Students (OfS) "lead indicators" highlight major issue	Student Protection Plan actions triggered	OfS to be informed on the actions taken and expected outcomes	Confirmation from OfS
High level of student dissatisfaction reported to Board of Governors	Complaints from HE students rise or if OIA notified of COP letter(s)	Implement college policies and corrective procedures	Confirmation from OIA
The College does not monitor the achievement of all students	Under-represented groups, including Ethnicity and gender data within the annual assessment, shows a wide disparity of achievement	The Improvement Plan must show new corrective actions	Review of the Improvement Plan is undertaken in formal local Board meetings

Refund of tuition fees and other relevant costs in the event that the College is no longer able to preserve continuation of study

The College reviews and publishes annually the Fees Policy which is available for students and staff on the College website (www.stc.ac.uk/page/policies).

This Fees Policy highlights the College policy on all fee payments and refunds, as well as compensation when the students have not been provided with the programme of study that they enrolled to complete.

In circumstances where the College has significantly changed its advertised programmes, tuition fee refunds will be granted where authorised by the Deputy Chief Executive or nominated deputy. Refunds or reductions in fees will only be given automatically if a course is cancelled or postponed.

Students, or their sponsors as appropriate, are required to sign an Acceptance of Fees declaration which specifies the following refund process in the event of withdrawal from a course:

- withdrawal up to one week *before* the course start date – full refund
- withdrawal within the 7 days prior to and the first 2 weeks after the course start date – 67% refund (33% of the course fees paid will be retained to cover administrative costs)
- withdrawal after the 2 weeks – no refund

Where the fees have been paid by the Student Loan Company (SLC), then when a student withdraws from her/his programme, then the SLC will be informed and the appropriate course refund made to it.

Where the College withdraws its original higher education programme offer, then students will be compensated for the following:

- where the course location is required to change to another Tyne Coast College location, then the additional travel costs will be paid
- where the student needs to transfer to another provider, then the additional travel costs and possible maintenance costs will be paid

The College holds financial cash reserves, declared on its annual accounts. The funds for course delivery are only released over the length of the provision period. Therefore, any remaining fees paid are held as deposits to ensure all outstanding fees can be repaid in line with College policy. Where compensation payments are required, they will be paid out of cash reserves.

Communicating the Student Protection Plan

This Student Protection Plan is revised annually, and approved by the Board of Governors, which includes student representation at that Board. The Student Protection Plan is then published online, linked under the Equality and Diversity section of the College website and listed together with the Access and Participation statement at:

www.stc.ac.uk/page/equality-and-diversity

www.tynemet.ac.uk/policies-governance/equality-diversity

Where there is a material change in the course, for example:

- a) change of College financial status to *unsatisfactory*
- b) removal of awarding body course approvals
- c) over 40% of physical facilities for programme are no longer available
- d) over 30% of staffing assigned to that programme are no longer available

... then, as per the mitigation schedule of this Student Protection Plan, students will be informed in person and by personal email, and their responses recorded.

Such information will be given to students immediately once any material change is known, and the corrective College actions to mitigate these effects will be published. These corrective actions will always include support and advice from the Student Services as well as academic managers.