Student protection plan

This student protection plan was established and approved by the Office for Students during the 2018/19 academic year. The principles of the Plan have not changed but some information has been updated here to provide transparency.

Bournemouth and Poole College

UKPRN: 10000820

Legal address: North Road, Poole, Dorset BH14 0LS

Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan: Executive Director of HE and Skills, carra@bpc.ac.uk

Student protection plan for the period: 2026/27

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 Bournemouth and Poole College's (BPC) financial performance has been consistently measured as good by the Department for Education (DfE). We generate significant cash each year even after investing in capital.

Current and prospective students can therefore be assured there is a very low financial risk to us as a provider which in turn means there is a very low probability of issues affecting the continuation of study for students.

BPC delivers HE provision across two separate campuses, one based in Bournemouth and the other in Poole. If there were to be an issue in one campus then provision can be speedily transferred to the other campus. We consider the likelihood of provision on both campuses at the same time as being extremely unlikely but if that were to occur, we have reciprocal arrangements in place with Bournemouth University and local schools to use space on a temporary basis.

<u>Programme Delivery</u>
The risk that we are no longer able to deliver a significant element of our courses is low because we design our programmes and units to be taught by established academic staff. During our internal course validation process we consider student demand through the use of LMI, the resources available for the delivery of the programme, including the staff base, to ensure the core components of a programme can be delivered to students. There is a small risk that an individual staff member with expertise may be absent due to unforeseen circumstances or through leaving BPC. This is unlikely to prevent BPC delivering a programme of study as planned because the Director of Learning can make an urgent request to the Executive Team, which includes the Vice-Principal Curriculum & Quality, the Executive Director of HE and Skills and the Chief People Officer, for changes including use of agency cover or the redeployment of staff from another area when the need is urgent. In rare cases where changes in the staff base effect our ability to deliver specific

aspects of a programme, students will be consulted under our standard approach to course communications. BPC has three Exec Planning Days a year and in each of these we look at succession planning and risk to ensure we are not exposed should staff with key skills leave.

Our communication process relates to any changes to programme delivery and includes a step by step process of how we communicate to students, including timeframes (i.e. as soon as possible but no less than 28 days) and who will be involved with this. In the example above, staffing changes will be discussed with the groups and course tutors and confirmed in writing by the Learning Manager for HE and the Director of Learning. At all stages in the communication process, student reps are given the opportunity to give feedback.

A key aim is ensuring students are able to enjoy a coherent programme of study even where there may be occasional changes in staffing.

Termination of validation arrangements with a BPC validating partner

BPC has franchise arrangements with Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) and Bournemouth University (BU). Students enrolled on these courses are students of either of those universities and protected by that university's Student Protection Plan.

In addition, BPC enjoys validating arrangements with Bournemouth University (BU) and Health Sciences University (HSU). These arrangements are subject to a contract (memorandum of agreement) that makes specific reference to the circumstances resulting from a decision by them to terminate the contract. These require that the university will continue to support BPC in the delivery to all students already enrolled on the course through to completion of their studies, meaning there should be little or no impact on these students.

Local Employers

BPC has very robust employer engagement including established Employer Advisory Boards (EAB) in each Curriculum Area. The membership of each EAB comprises local employers relevant to that sector and the meeting is chaired by a representative from one of the employers. The purpose of the EAB is to inform our curriculum development in order to ensure we are delivering training that is relevant to the workplace.

Our apprenticeship provision is such that we have established links with over 2000 employers.

Programme Closure

BPC's policy and procedure for the close of programmes is designed to ensure BPC can continue to maintain quality and standards of provision up until the point students are no longer enrolled on the programme, thus preserving continuity of study for individuals already on the programme. A simple flow chart which explains our decision-making process and student consultation process can be found on our website at https://www.thecollege.co.uk/college/about-us/corporate-information/college-policies

Students are directed to all the policies on this page of the website during their interview, at induction and in course handbooks.

Provision for the transfer of students

BPC provides clear guidance on the recognition of academic credit for the purposes of admission to the College. These provide options for students seeking to transfer from other academic institutions and also enables students who had previously withdrawn from the BPC to return to the College in order to undertake an equivalent programme of study.

In the unlikely event of a scenario where a programme is closed before all enrolled students have completed the programme (for example if a student has chosen to interrupt their studies) there is provision within BPC's academic processes for the transfer of students to another suitable programme. In all cases BPC will seek agreement from students before completing the transfer.

Students who are considering a transfer to another institution are able to request an official transcript of their BPC results. This provides a formal record for the purposes of allowing other institutions to assess an application for recognition of prior learning.

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

Programme Changes

We are bound to deliver the planned course content by our partner contracts meaning we cannot make changes unless we go through a validation process with our partner. Programme leaders, in conjunction with link tutors, are responsible for ensuring that all units and content is in accordance with the partner verified programme. This is all stated in the validation Memorandum of Agreements.

As outlined in the previous section, minor changes may sometimes be unavoidable because of unforeseen circumstances such as staff availability, student numbers, or the availability of other resources. We will seek to minimise the impact of changes on students and any negative impact on the student experience through our standard approach to course communications described above. In the case of programme changes we consult with students and gain their agreement to any minor modifications required. We reassure them that there would be no negative impact on their outcomes or career plans and we refer students to our Student Inclusion and Support team should they have the need for further support.

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 risk that BPC would not be able to preserve continuity of study is low. As stated previously, BPC enjoys a good financial health assessment from the Department for Education (DfE) and whilst the College has no formal reserves policy BPC recognises the importance of reserves in the financial stability of any organisation and ensures there are adequate reserves to support BPC's core activities.

In the unlikely event that continuity of study cannot be preserved, tuition fee liability will be calculated in accordance with the Tuition Fee Payment Policy https://www.thecollege.co.uk/college/about-us/corporate-information/college-policies which makes provision for refunding tuition fees to students, sponsors or the Students Loan Company using a calculation based on the formal date of withdrawal or interruption of study.

Any 'out of pocket 'compensation for interruption to continuation of study would be considered by the College's Board of Governors, be paid from College contingency funds and would, if appropriate, cover:

- the payment of additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course
- commitments to honour student bursaries
- compensation for maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study and/or
- compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer courses or provider.

The process for considering claims for compensation and making payments of compensation would align with our College Complaints policy.

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

BPC's Student Protection Plan will be communicated to current and future students and staff in the following ways:

- On our website and in downloadable format of pdf along with other relevant information made available to our students
- At interview
- Within the Fees Policy
- We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by including information about student protection in induction and ongoing training.

We will review all policies that relate to the student protection plan annually through our normal governance arrangements and students will be involved through their representation on our governance structures. The College will endeavour to provide as much notice as possible, dependent on the circumstances and would look at the individual needs of any students affected but the changes to identify the most appropriate means and level of support. The College Student Welfare and HE Services teams will advise students where they can access independent advice as well as offering pastoral support by specialist counsellors within the College should we need to implement the measures in the plan.

In the event of a critical and material change to continuity of study our Critical Incident Management Plan procedures will be followed which sets out communication procedures and who is responsible for them.

Approval Date: April 2026 **Next Review Date:** April 2027