



Student Protection Plan

Introduction

This Student Protection Plan (SPP) provides assurance to you (our current and future students) that we have in place appropriate arrangements to protect the quality and continuation of study for you all. This plan sets out our approach to protect your interests in a transparent and clear way. The SPP assures that procedures are in place to protect your interests and you have redress to the Office for Students (OfS) if you feel our SPP is not mitigating risks to your satisfaction.

We are actively supporting and encouraging widening participation and we are aware that ranges of students studying at the College may have differing needs, circumstances and are from diverse cultures. We are committed to Equal Opportunities **[See QAEM Manual: Part 4: Admissions P39]** and our SPP gives regard to the possible different needs of students sharing protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. Our plan provides the actions we are taking to mitigate these risks.

Key features of the Plan

The key features of the plan ensuring your protection to study are as follows:

- a) The provision of a Risk Register Assessment underpinning support for your continued study.
- b) A statement of our Financial Performance demonstrating low risk to inability to operate successfully.
- c) A Business Continuity Plan in the event of unforeseen or surprising circumstances occurring.
- d) A Refund and Compensation Policy in the event of no longer being able to preserve continuation of study.
- e) Effective communication of the SPP on our website and appropriate mediums of communication.
- f) Clear measures in place to ensure business continuity.
- g) The Plan ensures that students with differing needs circumstances or characteristics are appropriately supported

Student Protection Plan for the period 2022-23

1. An assessment of the range of risks to your continued study accounting for your differing needs, characteristics and circumstances and an assessment of the likelihood that those risks will crystallise (Low, Moderate or High)

The risk that the College as a whole will be unable to operate is very low because our financial performance is sound and we have produced both a Risk Management Strategy and Risk Register Assessment to address and mitigate all possible uncertainties and ensure the continuation of the business **[See Risk Register and Risk Management Strategy]**

Our Risk Register covers the following areas:

- Student Recruitment
- Student learning experience
- Financial Risks

- Human Resources
- Property and Estates
- Attendance and SLC Records
- Board of Directors
- Management Board
- Statutes and Regulations
- External Policy Context
- Curriculum Change
- Information Resources

It is measured in terms of risk likelihood expressed as Red (High Risk), Amber (Medium Risk) and Green (Low Risk) and is visited every six months at Management Board (MB) meetings and reviewed annually. A robust Student Protection Plan (SPP) now further strengthens it.

Our ability to continuously deliver at the Adler Street campus is high with little or no risk to students as we have a lease for the next 3 to 5 years. We also have the opportunity to expand the campus if it becomes available.

The risk that we may be unable to deliver material components of our courses is moderate to high because our modules are tailor made by Pearson. At present it is uncertain whether HND/C's will continue to be supported as programmes of higher education and may move to further education attracting a lower fee base. We have little or no control on the design of modules or assessment procedure.

We are dealing with this in the following ways in the short term and long term:

- a) Seeking multiple partnerships with universities
- b) Ensuring that we maintain competent staff to write and deliver the validated programmes
- c) Seeking validation for more undergraduate programmes in our specialist areas
- d) Pursuing Taught Degree Awarding Powers

2 (a). The actions we have put in place to mitigate risks to your study that we consider are reasonably likely to crystallise.

The clearest risk we face at the College at present is the future of our accredited programmes with Pearson. We believe in the current climate this risk to be increasing and we need to achieve Taught Degree Awarding Powers and validate our own programmes in the long run to mitigate the risk.

Action: Achieve a UK university accreditation, build validations, grow delegated authority, and move towards TDAP.

Other risks, some indirect include the following:

Failure to recruit the UK/EU students: This is mitigated by the application of effective College policies and robust monitoring supported, if necessary, though highly unlikely, by a Refund and Compensation Policy [see Section 3 p 3.]

Action: To focus strategic and recruitment plans on a greater number of underprivileged UK students in our access and participation plan including an increased number of disabled students; young disadvantaged white males and BME students in the local community.

Failure to achieve an adequate level of student retention that puts course continuation into jeopardy: This is mitigated by fingerprint technology to ensure student attendance and followed up with a dedicated student monitoring and attendance report.

Action: The College has improved its admissions policy to ensure suitable students are recruited. It has an attendance policy that is monitored on a weekly basis and the revised learning and teaching strategy ensures assessment meets preferred learning styles whilst maintaining the appropriate academic level.

Failure to maintain and/or improve teaching, learning and assessment quality: This is mitigated by robust quality assurance and enhancement systems, procedures, policies and practices, approved by the QAA and overseen by the Principal/Vice Principal (Academic).

Action: The College has revised its learning and teaching strategy to meet preferred learning styles.

Failure to ensure adequate student representation across ICON College able to support student study: This is mitigated by ICON striving year on year to retain 'good practice' from the QAA in this area.

Action: The College has achieved a 'good practice' in student representation from the QAA (HERA 2017) and continues to focus on monitoring, evaluation, and review of the student representation system.

The College's facilities fail to provide appropriate resources to support the student learning experience: This is mitigated by the Teaching, Learning and Resources Committee (TLRC) which ensures sufficiency of learning resources through updating IT skills, improving the ICON VLE, introducing online library and increasing the library stocks.

Action: The College has put student resources as a fixed item on all Board and Committee agendas including the staff/student liaison committee (SSLC). Issues and actions are then reported to the MB to deliver the necessary outcomes.

Failure to recruit staff to deliver the requisite standards: This is mitigated by the operation of a staff recruitment system that begins with a person specification and job description followed by interview with experienced members enabling us to recruit qualified and subject specialist staff.

Action: Quality staff are recruited through our offer of a sound staff development opportunities and improved conditions of service. It is anticipated on approval of the access and participation plan we will be able to charge a more competitive fee, thereby freeing greater resources to purchase higher quality staff.

Maintenance of financial stability to mitigate unforeseen risk e.g. changes in funding: This is mitigated by the Board of Directors who continuously monitor finances with rational decision-making and have done so successfully since 2004.

Action: Financial stability is guaranteed through the maintenance of a 'war chest' to protect against risk e.g., falling recruitment numbers.

Overall, the College operates a Risk Management Strategy and a Risk Register and has undertaken a thorough review of all potential risks to the College. The MB reviews the Risk Register every 6 months, reporting annually to the Board of Directors.

Action: The new risk register is monitored monthly by the MB enabling risk to be identified and quickly negated.

2 (b) Measures we have put in place to mitigate a major risk to your study.

Whilst the College has a Risk Register and Risk Strategy it has also produced a Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The BCP addresses business continuity in the event of a major disruption to your studies. A typical example of such a disruption would be if the ICON campus became suddenly, without warning, unavailable, or where there were to be any unforeseen long-term situations that affected the College's ability to teach you.

Business Continuity Plan

Introduction

This plan is to be used to assist in the recovery of ICON College in general and your studies in particular, in the event of a major disruption to the business. For example, where a fire destroys most of the building or the foundations render the building to be suddenly unsafe. A major disruption is defined by the College as a significant incident threatening personnel, buildings or the operation of the business and requires special measures to be taken to restore activity to normal, as quickly as possible. The College acknowledges its responsibility to maintain the quality of all students' studies in the event of a foreseen but unexpected major catastrophe.

The College operates a Risk Strategy and Assessment to cover all other academic and personal risk to student learning, staffing, learning resources etc. **[See Risk Assessment and Risk Strategy]**. However, the College also has measures in place that guard against an event that brings a potential catastrophic disruption to your studies. The College recognises that a disruption of up to five days to your learning is manageable by normal measures through the implementation of a model encouraging a short period of self-study. However, in the event of a major disruption, the College has a contingency plan to deal with this, minimising the overall disruption to both staff and students.

1.1 Aim

The aim of the Plan is to set out the responsibilities and actions to be taken by ICON College to re-instate the business operation following a major disruption quickly and efficiently. The primary goal would be to ensure little or no disruption to studies.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Provide for continuity of the activities essential to the business.
- Reduce to a minimum the disruption to students, staff, and services restoring them to an acceptable level.

1.3 Scope of the Document

This plan sets out details of the key recovery measure to be taken in the event of a major disruption to the key activities of the business.

Activation of the Plan

The **Management Board (MB)** will be responsible for the activation of the Business Continuity Management Plan. At the point the plan is activated, all staff and students are to be immediately informed. All staff members will be contacted and advised of the current situation and what their role will be in the recovery phase. You will be contacted through your student representatives,

or individually, where possible and you will be kept up to date with actions taken, as they are taken.

Action to be taken

The College has an insurance policy that would cover us financially enabling us to rent another premises in the event of a major disruption. The College also has reserves to approximately cover one year of operations.

Students with differing characteristics or circumstances in the event of major disruption

The College will ensure that the temporary premises are equipped with resources that will enable access for students with disabilities as well as providing learning resources appropriate for the whole gamut of student disabilities.

3. We provide information for you about the policy we have in place to refund tuition fees and any other relevant costs. This also covers compensation, where necessary, in the event that we were no longer able to preserve your continued study.

The Refund and Compensation policy provides clear and transparent information about a refund and/or compensation in the event of our inability to maintain continuation of study. The policy has been reviewed by the Office for Students and is available on the College website [**See Refunds and Compensation Policy 2022**]. The Academic Board has also evaluated the policy prior to approval by the Board of Directors. Its aim is to give you full protection under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 for refunds and/or compensation, where reasonable. The policy covers the following areas:

- Refunds for students in receipt of tuition fee loans to the Student Loan Company
- Refunds for students who pay their own tuition fees
- Refunds for students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor
- The payment of additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course
- A commitment to honour student bursaries, where appropriate
- Compensation for maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study and
- Compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer courses or provider.

Delivering financial implications of the Refund and Compensation Policy

The College maintains a minimum of six months cash reserve which would be sufficient to provide either a refund or compensation to the students to whom we have identified an increased risk of non-continuation of study. Also, the Risk Register we have produced gives us a clear indication of the likelihood and weight of each risk enabling us to be proactive if the risk is growing.

Furthermore, we have now put in place insurance arrangements to mitigate finance to provide refunds and compensation, where appropriate under the policy for those students for whom we have identified an increased risk of non-continuation of study.

4. This section provides information on how we communicate to our students about the SPP

We will publicise our SPP to current and future students in the following ways:

- On the College website

- Covered in the induction
- Available in the College VLE

We will ensure staff are aware of the implications of our SPP through initial staff development **[See: SPP Action Plan]**. It will be the responsibility of each Head of Department to make staff aware of the implications to the SPP when changes are being proposed. This will also be monitored by the Academic Board which signs off changes.

We will review our SPP annually and it will iterate the staff meeting; Programme Committee; Academic Board and Advisory Board as a consultative document before being signed off by the Board of Directors.

Student representatives will be involved in the initial review of the SPP through an arranged meeting with the MB. At this point they will be informed of their responsibility to disseminate to the student body. The SPP will be tabled at all Programme Committee meetings for comment and student representatives are present when the SPP is received by both Academic and Management Boards. It is part of the terms of reference for a student representative to inform their constituents of any important issues and it is always checked in Academic Board meeting that this has occurred.

Should our SPP need to be revised, we will inform our students if there are to be material changes with an immediate meeting of all students with the MB and Heads of Department. At the meeting the students will be given a strategic plan of how changes are to be implemented with opportunities for consultation covering the effect of the material changes and dates of change to be agreed and then confirmed in writing to all students. In the event of termination of an accredited course the plan will contain clear instructions as to the 'teach out' arrangements for the course. The students will have a minimum 30 days' notice prior to a material change being enacted. At the same time the Principal will inform all external members of the Academic and Management Boards. Management Board members may be required to act as independent advisers for the students.

If material changes need to be made and our SPP implemented we will ensure the following:

- Each student is individually supported by a personal tutor who will give clear and continuous advice on the effect of the changes.
- The tutor will help the student make effective choices to mitigate the effect of the changes
- Compensation will be agreed, where appropriate, as swiftly as possible
- Students will have open access to the respective Head of Department and MB
- Full advice will be provided about choice of new options where appropriate
- Substantial advice and support will be given by personal tutors, welfare officers, careers guidance and senior academics if the student needs to find an alternative course with another provider.

The Board of Directors, where there are three external members, who will be in a position to offer independent advice.

5. Protecting students with differing circumstances, characteristics and needs

The SPP ensures that students with disabilities, whatever it may be, will be protected through continuous review that learning and physical resources will be appropriate to support you. The College will also ensure that continuous access to the College and your studies will be of paramount importance and respect differing needs and circumstances. In this way the College will continue to encourage students with disability that ICON is a welcoming and supportive place to study.

6. Access to all documents cited in this SPP is available with the Management Board