DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY LEICESTER

STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN

Provider's Name: De Montfort University

Provider's UKPRN: 10001883

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Introduction

1. De Montfort University (DMU) is committed to protecting the quality and continuation of study for our students. This document details the approach that the University has undertaken to ensure that we have in place appropriate arrangements.

2. This document is provided to demonstrate our commitment and to provide assurance to our current and future students and the Office for Students (OfS). This document does not replace the terms and conditions, student contract or other policies that define the relationship between the student and DMU.

3. For ease of reference the document is split into four sections;

    a. The first section highlights the overall approach the University takes to ensure the quality and continuation of provision. This section provides an overview of the key processes or activity that ensure the University approaches the risks highlighted later in a co-ordinated, robust and consistent manner.

    b. The second section details the assessment of risk performed by the University. This section also includes any actions and responses the University has or will take to mitigate any of the risks that materialise.

    c. The third section provides reference to our policy on tuition fee refunding, and our student contract, which can provide students with more information.

    d. The fourth section provides further information on how we communicate our Student Protection Plan to staff, current and future students, and how we continue to develop and refine this plan based on student consultation.

Part 1: Approach to protecting the quality and continuation of study for our students

4. This section provides details of the arrangements, policies and practices, and management controls that ensure DMU continues to provide a quality Higher Education (HE) experience for our students.

    Business Continuity

5. The University manages strategic risk throughout the business, not only to ensure we can meet our strategic aims, but also to address risks before they arise. We maintain a strategic risk register that ensures we are proactive in considering challenges to the continued success of the University, such as cyber security, financial control, and in maintaining the quality of our provision. The Strategic Risk register forms part of our annual review process and is considered at the senior committees of the University.

6. The University recognises that from time-to-time events or potential impact from situations may threaten the continuity of our University and will require a response that is beyond our normal day-to-day structures and processes. Such events may require executive intervention for decision-making, co-ordination and resolution and involve enhanced communication procedures to ensure that as an organisation we continue the operation of critical business activities at acceptable service levels.   We undertake exercises to train our senior command structure, and ensure co-ordination 24 hours, 7 days a week with an on-duty senior officer.

7. The University's approach to business continuity aims to ensure we safeguard the safety and wellbeing of our students, employees and the third parties we interact with; maintain continuity of services to our students in compliance with regulations and local laws; in addition to protecting the assets and the environment in which we work and live.

    Quality Assurance

8. The University is committed to offering quality provision and operates quality management processes which provide assurance internally and to our stakeholders. This ensures that the provision we offer is at the appropriate academic standard, as defined in the nationally agreed Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and provides learning opportunities which enable students to achieve that standard. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) confirmed in our last Higher Education Review (April 2015) that the University met the required expectations and DMU was commended on the enhancement of student learning opportunities. We are also inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) for our provision in further education and apprenticeships.

9. The validation (approval) of new programmes ensures that the curriculum is appropriate and coherent, that the assessment is relevant, that academic standards have been appropriately defined and that we will offer students the best opportunity to learn and achieve. The monitoring processes operated by the university are designed to ensure that programmes maintain and actively enhance quality and standards over time.

10. The University has a programme intake suspension and programme closure procedure. This ensures that any suspension or closure is managed in a measured, consistent way and safeguards the interests of both current students and applicants. Existing students should not be affected by the closure of a programme, which will be taught out and the programme only

formally closed when there are no students left enrolled. In the unlikely event that it is not possible to teach out the provision, the process provides guidance on making a suitable alternative available. The suspension and closure procedure applies to all programmes of the university including those of our partners.

11.   The Guide to Managing Collaborative Provision[i] covers the processes for programme and partner approval and review, the ongoing monitoring of the provision and the suspension/closure of programmes and partnerships both in the UK and overseas. The Guide refers to the suspension and closure process referenced above, but provides further guidance in relation to the collaborative context.

Prospective Students

12.   The University provides, through our website and prospectus, clear information to prospective students on the courses they are interested in. Further information is provided on the student experience including for example the City of Leicester, our Students' Union, disability and careers, sports and facilities.

13.   This information helps to ensure that a student makes an informed choice, but also to highlight the range of additional facilities and support that is available. The additional student services that we offer are critical in ensuring we provide a quality HE experience for our students.

Student Regulations

14.   The University publishes a set of Student Regulations to ensure that students understand the rules and regulations that apply to them while studying at DMU. The regulations set out expectations of both the university and the student that are essential to ensuring a quality provision. They do this by providing a clear and transparent approach to areas such as attendance, student discipline, disruption of service, payment of fees, examination regulations etc.

15.   All students (including all further education, undergraduate, postgraduate and research students, those attending for approved short courses and those attending DMU programmes in partner institutions) will be subject to the Regulations of the University in force at any time during the period of their studies. These Regulations are available via the Internet[ii] and in hard copy on request from Faculty Offices and Student & Academic Services.

16.   In addition, students attending DMU programmes in partner institutions or undertaking placement with approved providers as part of their programme, will be subject to codes of conduct and disciplinary regulations in force in the partner institution or placement provider.

Student Complaints

17.   The University recognises the importance of effective complaints management as both a tool and a source of information for service improvement. The University welcomes feedback from all our students and recognises the right of students or alumni to raise issues of concern about the services provided by the University, which may affect the quality of their student experience.

18. The University has a complaints procedure, which all students (including those at partner organisations) are made aware of through the student contract, and is accessible through the University website[iii].

Part 2: Assessment of the overall risk to the quality and continuation of study for our students

19. Through the extensive approach described above, our internal assessment has highlighted the following risks or events that would impact upon our activities and that would be of interest to current and prospective students, or the OfS.

20. Category: Study location is no longer available

    a. Risk 1: Closure of University buildings

       No risk identified; there are no plans to close any of the University teaching spaces or buildings.

       Mitigation: Whilst no specific risk has been identified, the University recognises potential concerns of students and highlights that business continuity plans are in place should a location not be available (paragraphs 6 and 7).

    b. Risk 2: Provision of services away from our campus

       Medium risk: DMU or partner change of strategy resulting in decision to close partnership/programme. Quality concerns at partner institution leading to decision to exit partnership. Closure of programme at DMU campus affecting franchise arrangement with partner.

       Mitigation: Exit strategy planning included in initial Faculty Evaluation of Proposal (FEP) and as part of partner risk assessment. Collaborative partner contract includes provision to protect students under 'consequences of termination' clause including commitment to ensure that students can complete study under maximum registration period. Arrangements for termination/managed exit supported by clear exit strategy process and template to guide partners in agreeing exit strategy.

    c. Risk 3: Commercial partners

       For programmes run by our commercial partners

       i. University Hospitals of Leicester

          There are no risks identified with this partner.

       ii. De Montfort University International Pathway College (DMUIC)

          Very low risk that DMUIC would cease to operate due to the embedded nature of the college and its successful financial position and progression rates.

Mitigation: None required.

iii. Leicester College

Very low risk that this partner would be unable to operate within the collaborative agreement set out due to the size, reputation and multi-functional purpose of the provider overall.

Mitigation: None required.

iv. North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

Very low risk that this partner would be unable to operate within the collaborative agreement set out due to the size, reputation and multi-functional purpose of the provider overall.

Mitigation: None required.

v. South and City College Birmingham

Very low risk that this partner would be unable to operate within the collaborative agreement set out due to the size, reputation and multi-functional purpose of the provider overall.

Mitigation: None required.

vi. Independent validated partners

Low risk that these partners will cease to operate, as they are small independently run providers whose business relies primarily on interest in their specific subject areas.

Mitigation: Whilst no specific risk has been identified, the University recognises potential concerns of students. Should a provider close we would support students to transfer to an alternative provider or offer an appropriate exit award where this is the preferred option for the student (paragraph 11).

vii. Degree apprenticeships

There are no risks identified with this area.

viii. Drama Studio London

Low risk that quality of provision and student satisfaction may be affected by the by the managed exit of the partnership as provision moves to University of West London.

Mitigation: Students have been advised of the change, and made aware of the options regarding continuation at DMU, or transfer to the University of West of London as appropriate.

ix. Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body (PRSB) (UK)

PRSBs have been reviewed including but not limited to: Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE), Chartered Institute for IT (BCS), Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), Skillset, Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Deloitte, AITS, and Channel 4, and a medium risk was identified.

Mitigation: The combined PRSB register is considered at each meeting of the Associate Professors Advisory Group for Teaching, Learning and Quality (APAG) and is reviewed annually by the Academic Quality Committee (AQC). In addition, the Associate Professor in Quality for each Faculty maintains oversight of the Faculty PSRB register, which is presented at Programme Management Boards for review.   Regular reviews occur by subject and programme teams.

21. Category: Subject or department of study is no longer available

a. Risk 4: Closing of subject area

No risk identified; there are no plans to close any department or subject areas of the University.

22. Category: Programme of study is no longer available

a. Risk 5: Closing of programmes (paragraph 10),

i. BA Animation (VFX)

Low risk identified as the programme has not run.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants, there are no existing cohorts.

ii. BA Film Studies with French

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing to new applicants.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

iii. BA Film Studies with Mandarin

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing to new applicants.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

iv. BA Graphic Design (Interactive)

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing to new applicants.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

v. MSc Forensic Computing for Pracitioners

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing to new applicants.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

vi. BSc Sociology

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

vii. BA Social Work

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

viii. MSc Renal Nursing.

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

ix. Postgraduate certificate in Housing Studies

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

x. MBA Sustainable Business

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

xi. MFA Performance Practices

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

xii. MA Design

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

xiii. MSc IB & Corporate Social Responsibility

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

xiv. Executive MBA / Part time MBA

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

xv. MBA Health Management

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

xvi. MBA Sustainable Business

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

xvii. MBA Business Economics (and Analytics/ and Marketing / and risk management / and international relations)

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

xviii.   MBA Housing / Housing (MSc/PG Dip/PG Cert)

Low risk identified as the programme is in the process of closing.

Mitigation: Closed to new applicants but existing cohorts will run through to the end of the programme and gain the award for which they registered.

23.   Category: Areas of a vulnerability

a.   Risk 6: Placements provision

i.   Private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors

Medium risk identified around PVI placement providers no longer operating and possibly affecting the following programmes: Nursing, Midwifery, Speech and Language Therapy, Audiology, Social Work, Policing, and Pharmacy.

Mitigation: Should placement availability not be possible due to reducing service provision in certain areas the Faculty would work with providers to increase capacity in existing or new areas as a short-term measure and work with placement providers to increase provision in the long-term (for example, by extending the geographical area for placement provision).

ii.   Placement competition from other universities

Low risk of competition for placements from other universities, resulting in a possible reduction in placement places available to DMU.

Mitigation: Alternative placements would be sought from the PVI sector to bridge the gap. There is also the potential to use the clinical skills facilities on campus to substitute for placement. This is allowable for some regulated programmes and would offer a short-term solution for a sudden unexpected loss of placement provider.

b.   Risk 7: Dependency on single academics

No risk identified: Whilst no specific risk has been identified, the University recognises the concerns of students.

Mitigation: In the event of single person dependencies for teaching a Faculty would cover gaps with part time lecturers, seek to replace the member of staff permanently with someone with the same expertise, review specialist subject content to assess whether changes could be made. Faculties also have strong links with industry, which could allow for short-term replacements for lost specialist Faculty staff.

c.   Risk 8: Dependency on specific equipment or technology

No risk identified: Whilst no specific risk has been identified, the University recognises the concerns of students.

Mitigation: A number of our Faculties have laboratories, workshops or other areas with with multiple pieces of equipment often for specialist activities. If certain equipment or technology became unavailable, the Faculty contingency plan would be activated. The Faculty would seek to use alternative equipment, replace equipment or use facilities at local alternative locations, e.g. University of Leicester, Leicester Royal Infirmary, etc.

24. Category: Restriction of student markets

   a. <u>Risk 9: Dependency on mode of study</u>

   No risk of potential impact to other modes of study as the University has limited provision outside of full-time, with part-time fitting within the full-time study offering.

   b. <u>Risk 10: Dependency on specific student markets</u>

   Low risk identified: Whilst no specific risk has been identified, the University recognises the concerns of students in maintaining our Tier 4 license.

   Mitigation: The risk of international recruitment is on the University risk register and our mitigations include the Immigration Compliance Manager ensuring robust process are in place to monitor compliance. That we continue to provide training to our staff, agents and partners. That Tier 4 responsibilities are coordinated through a UKVI Steering Group to ensure coordination of internal functions.

Part 3: Policy on refunding student tuition fees and costs

25. The Tuition Fee Charging and Refunding Policy is published on the University website[iv]. In addition, the Student Regulations and proposed Student Contract provide further information on tuition fees.

26. The policy provides details for the calculation of tuition fee charges. This includes the requirements should a student take a leave of absence/interrupt, withdraw or be excluded from their study. The policy provides the details for different markets including both undergraduate and postgraduate, and for home, EU and overseas students.

27. In the unlikely event that the University is unable to preserve continuation of study, the affected students will be contacted in writing by the University. The correspondence will provide the affected students with clear information on any compensation or refund that may be available.

28. The University commits to ensuring that a fair and reasonable approach will be taken in any event on a case-by-case basis depending on student circumstances. The use of compensation, if any, will include non-financial alternatives as appropriate. Where any students are dissatisfied with the outcome, the students will be offered to access our complaints procedure.

Part 4: Communicating our Student Protection Plan

Communication to students

29.   We will publicise our Student Protection Plan to current and future students by making the institution-specific plans easily accessible on the University website and, where applicable, the website of the Partner institution at which they study. We will notify all students when the Plan goes live, providing a hyperlink to the uploaded document. We will include reference to the Plan in the student handbook and any other electronic or public course information. We will ensure that the institution-specific plans are on our (and our partners) student portals e.g. Blackboard, HE Moodle etc.

30.   We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our Student Protection Plan when they propose course changes by circulating the Plan to all relevant staff, both academic and administrative as soon as the Plan becomes live.

31.   For Partners we will also update both online and hardcopy guidance on Collaborative Provision requirements, with particular emphasis within the guidance for course changes and curriculum modifications. We will use our existing channels of communications with Partners, including account management meetings and monthly bulletins, to ensure their understanding of the implications of the plan.

Review of Student Protection Plan

32.   We will review our Student Protection Plan by analysing the current provision in place within our Faculties. We will actively seek the view of our students, and will engage the student body through Faculty forums and through the Students' Union. This review will allow us to assess any gaps or areas of uncertainty.

33.   Partner students will be invited to feedback or contribute to the review via their institution and existing student feedback mechanisms.

34.   We will inform our students if there are to be material changes to their course by contacting them via their University email address and by requesting Faculties or Partners to notify affected students both through their local communication channels and by way of notification on relevant course pages on websites.

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i Guide to managing collaborative provision https://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/about-dmu-documents/quality-management-and-policy/academic-quality/collaborative-provision/collaborative-provision-guide.pdf

ii Student regulations https://www.dmu.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/exams-deferrals-regulations-policies/student-regulations-and-policies/index.aspx

iii Student complaints policy https://www.dmu.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/exams-deferrals-regulations-policies/student-complaints/index.aspx

iv Tuition fee charging and refunding policy http://www.dmu.ac.uk/dmu-students/the-student-gateway/student-finance-and-welfare/fees-and-funding/tuition-fees.aspx