



Newbury College

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Student Protection Plan 2018-2019

This document can be made available in other formats,
on request

Provider's name: Newbury College

Provider's UKPRN: 10004596

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Student protection plan for the period [2018-19]

1.1 Introduction and Purpose

Since the 2017 Higher Education Research Act, all providers of Higher Education have been required to provide and maintain a Student Protection Plan. The plan is intended to protect student interests should the provision of their programme be adversely affected by substantial change. This plan is in addition to the protection provided by consumer protection law. The Student Protection Plan explains the processes and measures in place to protect student interests should there be a risk to the continuation of studies and it identifies the types of circumstances that may cause such a risk. Newbury College submits the plan to the Office for Students (OfS) who regulate Higher Education providers. The plan is made available to students on the College website and is referenced along with other key policies as part of student guidance for HE programmes at Newbury College and during induction to the College.

1.2. Newbury College's commitment to protect student interests.

Newbury College is committed to:

- Inform students in a timely manner of any risk to the continuity of their studies.
- take action to protect student interests if a decision is made to discontinue the provision of a programme, change or close all or part of the teaching and learning accommodation or cease operation as a provider.
- Involve students, partners and supporting employers in discussions of any proposed changes and the likely impacts on provision and the measures in place to protect the provision.
- Provide relevant advice, guidance and support to students if significant changes occur that affect the provision of their studies.
- engage students in the discussion of this plan to ensure awareness and to obtain feedback to inform any future revision requirements.
- make reference to the Student Protection Plan and its implications when programme changes are proposed and discussed.
- inform the Office for Students of revisions made to the plan.

1.3. Key factors addressed by this plan.

The risk that the College as a whole is unable to operate is very low because the financial performance is consistently good or outstanding. The college has strong cash solvency and owns a site of 40 acres; which has the potential for development if the need arose. The College has

business continuity plans to deal with an incident that causes the access to premises to be affected, such as fire, flood or local evacuation; staff strike; IT failure or a loss of phone lines; power failure; flu pandemic or extreme staff sickness and the inability of staff to get into work for example during episodes of snow.

The risk that the college may lose validation for its courses is low. The Teaching and Quality Manager ensures teaching, learning and assessment meet the expectations of validating organisations. The college works with two universities. The University of Reading franchise delivery of its Foundation Degree in Supporting Children's Development and Learning and Buckinghamshire New University deliver and validate the BEng (Hons) in Engineering Design, which forms part of the Degree Apprenticeship in Production Design that is delivered at the College.

The College is regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency for its Higher Education provision, whose most recent assessment (2016) confirms that:

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree awarding bodies and other awarding organisations meets UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities meets UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations

The risk that the College will not be able to deliver its activity at the current location is very low. The College has been operating for 70 years (2018) and provision has been established at the current site since 2002.

The risk that the college is unable to deliver courses in a particular subject area is low. Our core area for HE is in Engineering, which has just seen significant investment from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP) to develop an Engineering Solutions Lab, which supported the development of our Engineering Degree Apprenticeship, in partnership with Buckinghamshire New University. In 2018 the structure of the Senior Management Team was revised with the addition of the post of Director of Business and Partnerships, this role supports the Vice Principal Curriculum and Students and the Teaching and Quality Manager by developing new HE programmes and University partnerships. We intend to expand our HE offer into additional areas of the College such as Business, IT and Computing, and Health and Social Care. Growth areas are aligned to sectors that have been identified as having higher level skills shortages in the TVBLEP Skills Priority Statement

The risk that the college may not be able to deliver some individual courses is moderate, because if low recruitment means that student numbers do not make the course viable then the provision may be closed for a year and reviewed again the following year.

The risk that some components are unavailable to be delivered is moderate, as tutors in the College may change and new tutors may not have the exact specialisms required. Module choice is agreed with the students and in many cases with their employers. In some cases, specialist tutors are employed to teach a specific module that an employer requires for their students. The Degree component of the Degree Apprenticeship in Engineering is taught by tutors from Buckinghamshire New University at the College site.

The risk that the college is unable to deliver a particular mode of study is low. Courses are available through a part-time or full-time basis, depending on the subject. The College is currently developing

a University Centre on the main College site. This facility will enable more remote access for HE provision in the future (2020 onward), at the current time students can be supported with materials through the VLE (Moodle and Blackboard).

The college does not recruit international students and has no plans for this at the current time.

2. The measures in place to mitigate those risks that are considered to be reasonably likely to crystallise

2.1 Risk of the College being unable to operate:

The risk of Newbury College being unable to operate is very low because the financial performance is consistently good. The College has strong cash solvency and owns a site of 40 acres; which has the potential for further development if required. The College has a business continuity plan to deal with any incident that causes access to premises to be affected, such as fire, flood or local evacuation; staff strike; IT failure or a loss of phone lines; power failure; flu pandemic or extreme staff sickness and the inability of staff to get into work, for example during episodes of snow. The College has not identified any major risks to quality or provision through its governance and management or through reviews by regulatory bodies (Ofsted in 2017 and QAA in 2016). The College also seeks to maintain high standards by participating in quality standards such as Matrix where the standard of information, advice, guidance and support for students are considered. The College monitors reports from awarding body external examiners and takes action based upon their feedback to ensure that the quality of provision is sustained and improved where required. In addition to this the College maintains a range of internal quality assurance measures to maintain the quality of provision.

Strategies, policies and plans are reviewed by the College Corporation to ensure that they support the sustained operation of the College. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are reviewed routinely in College Management meetings to manage any risks which may impact upon the financial viability of the College and its provision.

2.2 Awarding body approval and partnership arrangements to provide qualifications.

The risk of Newbury College losing approval to provide Higher Education programmes is low to moderate as any risk to awarding bodies is beyond the control of the College. Newbury College provides its Higher National, Foundation Degree and Degree Apprenticeship qualifications through approval agreements with awarding bodies. Annual monitoring processes are in place with each awarding body and periodic reviews check the validity and sustainability of university endorsed partnership provision. Agreements with all awarding bodies require the College to sustain provision for enrolled students until the planned completion if a decision is made to withdraw a programme of study.

2.3 Specialist Programmes

There is a low risk of a programme not being sustainable due to its specialist nature. It is possible that a unit or module is selected for delivery due to the expertise of an individual teacher or a requirements of local employers. The risk occurs if the College is dependent upon the specialist skills of one teacher to provide that unit or module. The College endeavours to plan and manage its programmes to reduce the risk associated with highly specialised provision. Where there is demand for specialist provision from the employers who inform the development of programmes, the College would seek their support to train existing staff to limit the risk should one teacher leave, or to draw upon their expertise to manage the gap in recruiting a replacement member of staff.

2.4 Withdrawal of Programmes

Newbury College carries out annual reviews of its curriculum plan to ensure that the offer is relevant to both student and industry needs. This presents a moderate risk of a programme being withdrawn on the basis of recruitment being too low to be financially sustainable; staff being unavailable for the provision or if there is no labour market evidence to support the ongoing provision of the course.

2.5. Events that instigate the student protection plan.

Newbury College will implement the Student Protection Plan in the following circumstances:

- A decision is made to withdraw or stop teaching a programme of study.
- A decision is made to close the building or facilities used for teaching the programme and suitable alternative premises cannot be found locally.
- The College stops the operation of educational provision.
- The programme cannot be provided for other reasons e.g:
 - The College loses approval to provide the programme/ qualification.
 - An enforced change to the College and its provision e.g. in a required merger.

Newbury College will continue to review and adjust its programmes annually through the self-assessment process, monitoring reviews and curriculum planning processes to maintain the validity and relevance of programmes without activating the Student Protection Plan. The student voice is included in self-assessment and monitoring processes which enables students to raise any concerns about the manner in which the programme is provided and to inform improvement and development.

3. Information about the policy in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that the College is no longer able to preserve continuation of study

3.1 Programmes being withdrawn including specialist provision:

Newbury College aims to complete the teaching of any programme that is to be withdrawn including those being closed due to the specialist nature of the programme. No further recruitment will take place. If there is good reason for enrolled students to choose not to continue their study at Newbury College, the Careers Guidance team will provide support for the students to find an alternative provider to continue their studies and return any fees paid so that they may be used with the new provider.

3.2 Partnerships

Newbury College has agreements in place with its partner universities to ensure that provision is put in place to complete the teaching of students already enrolled on the programmes they provide. However, if it is not possible for that agreement to be implemented, Newbury College will seek alternative partners to provide the programme accreditation to enable students to complete the course and achieve their qualification. In this situation the fees paid by students will be refunded so that they may be used with the new provider.

Should there be a situation where a satisfactory arrangement for the continuation of a programme cannot be found, the College will refer to the Policy for the Refund of Fees (<https://www.newbury-college.ac.uk/info/policies.html>) and consider if compensation is necessary.

4. Information about how Newbury College will communicate with students about the student protection plan

4.1 Communication and Support

Newbury College aims to inform students as soon as possible of any changes that may affect their studies and activate the Student Protection Plan, to ensure that they have sufficient time to receive advice, guidance and support if required. It is difficult to put a precise time frame in place for informing students of change caused by unforeseen circumstances, but where a change is determined by the College, students should be informed 20 working days of the planned change. Students will also be informed of the advice, guidance and support available to them and how to access this.

4.2 Dissatisfaction and Complaints

Newbury College recognises that students may be unhappy with any disruption to their planned programme of study and will only implement the Student Protection Plan where all possibilities for continuity have been exhausted. If the proposed actions and solutions derived from the plan fail to meet student satisfaction, they are able to make a complaint following the Newbury College Complaints Procedure. They may also raise their concerns with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

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