Student Protection Plan

1. Overview

1.1 When you accept an offer and register for a programme at Walbrook, we fully expect to be able to deliver that programme until you complete your studies. The purpose of this Student Protection Plan is to show you how we assess the risks that could impact on our ability to deliver your programme and the measures that we put in place to mitigate the risks. We are required to publish a Student Protection Plan by the Office for Students which is the regulator for Higher Education in England.

1.2 We publish this Student Protection Plan alongside the Terms and Conditions that apply to studying a programme at Walbrook. Academic Board reviews the Student Protection Plan regularly, and at least annually, to ensure that our assessment of risks and mitigations remain up to date.

1.3 This Student Protection Plan applies to all students studying a Higher Education programme at Walbrook. Walbrook also has responsibility to ensure that any student studying through a collaborative provision arrangement is covered by a Student Protection Plan that is either this plan or a plan that has been approved by Walbrook.

2. How we assess risks

2.1 Walbrook has a well-developed system of risk assessment and management that is underpinned by a risk management policy. The main responsibilities are as follows:

i The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for risk management systems

ii The Audit Committee monitors and advises the Board of Directors on the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance

iii The Senior Leadership Team oversees strategic and operational risk registers which are reviewed and updated quarterly and inform reports to the Audit Committee and Board of Directors

iv The Academic Board oversees the review of our programmes, including any intentions to close programmes.

3. Our assessment of risks

3.1 The measures that Walbrook has in place leads to the risk assessment set out in this section.

3.2 The risk of institutional closure is low. This assessment is based on our financial reserves that would allow us to continue to operate for at least the next three years, our corporate risk management and business plans that are kept under review and the annual external auditing of Walbrook that provides independent assurance of our stability.

3.3 The risk of campus delivery moving to alternative premises is moderate.

3.4 The risk of imminent programme closure is low. Proposed programme closure could be due to:

i The on-going viability of a programme due to insufficient student numbers and/or where it is superseded by a new programme. The low risk assessment is based upon the on-going focus we have on market demand as well as the processes we have to regularly review the direction of each programme

ii It not being possible for us to recruit or retain staff to deliver the programme. The low risk assessment is based upon Walbrook having robust processes for talent management, succession planning, pay review and career development opportunities. Walbrook would seek to fill staffing gaps wherever possible. This would be achieved through using the staff recruitment process or drawing upon expertise within the institution or from our external network.

3.5 The risk of loss of degree awarding powers is low. This assessment is based on the robust management structures we have in place and the regular review of the effectiveness of our governance and policy framework.

3.6 The risk of losing our registration with the Office for Students is low. This assessment is based upon the robustness of our approach to finances, management, governance, policy, academic quality and all other conditions set out in the Office for Students registration requirements.

3.7 The risk of losing our Tier 4 licence to sponsor international students is low. This assessment is based upon the staff expertise we have in place to manage our licence obligations, the robust policies we use to manage implementation of license requirements, the low number of students that we sponsor and the external expertise we draw upon for specialist advice where necessary.

3.8 The risk of our IT infrastructure failing to an extent that it impacts on students' ability to progress with their studies is moderate. This assessment is based upon the staff expertise we have in place to manage the infrastructure and our approaches to IT security, including monitoring and managing risks and business continuity plans.

3.9 The risk of events occurring beyond our control is moderate. The Student Terms and Conditions sets out these types of events, our liabilities and the actions we would take in those circumstances.

4. Actions to support students where risks materialise

4.1 Where any event within our control meant that it was necessary for a Higher Education programme to be discontinued, our first intention would be to teach out the programme until all students have completed their studies. Where it is feasible for Walbrook to teach out the programme, the Academic Board is responsible for ensuring that plans are in place to uphold the academic quality and standards of the provision and the broader student experience. The Programme and Module Approval and Modification Policy provides more information.

4.2 Where it is not possible for Walbrook to teach out a discontinued programme due to reasons within our control, we will provide students with the reason why. Examples of where it would not be possible to teach out a programme include where the institution closed, if we lost our degree awarding powers or where we lost registration with the Office for Students. In these circumstances, all efforts would be made for students to transfer their studies to an alternative provider.

4.3 In a situation where Walbrook lost its licence to issue Tier 4 visas for international students, we would make all efforts to support students transfer to another provider if the Home Office did not allow us to teach out.

4.4 If the delivery of a Walbrook programme was affected by a significant impact on facilities including on the IT infrastructure or the campus, we would make all efforts within our control to establish an alternative way of delivering the provision and/or change the schedule for delivery.

4.5 If Walbrook was to move premises for its campus delivery, we would consult with students and work with them about our plans.

4.6 The Student Terms and Conditions set out the actions we will take when changes to programme content are proposed following you being made an offer on a Walbrook programme or where you are a registered student.

5. Communication with students

5.1 We provide all students studying on a Higher Education programme with access to this Student Protection Plan as well as to the Student Terms and Conditions by publishing them on our website and on our VLE. Communicating with students where a risk materialises will be a priority. In instances where there is significant disruption to the delivery of a programme, we will liaise with students about the plan to address the disruption and this communication will continue until the matter is resolved.

5.2 Where a programme is to be discontinued, we will provide students with a notice period, which would depend on the specific circumstances of the intended closure, along with the plans for teach out or transfer to another suitable programme or institution. We will provide opportunities to meet with students to explain the situation and the follow-up plans and would ensure that facts are also provided in writing.

5.3 As part of our plans, we will ensure that students had access to support services where they wished to seek additional support. We also recognise that each student will be affected in different ways, and we would make sure that any individual needs or differences are supported in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

6. Complaints

6.1 The Student Complaints Policy sets out the way in which a student can complain about any aspect of their experience, including how we use the Student Protection Plan.

7. Refund and Compensation Policy

7.1 Students can consult the Refund and Compensation Policy if we are unable to provide a reasonable outcome to student protection matters.

8. Questions

8.1 Any questions about the Student Protection Plan can be addressed by the Registrar.

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