

OFFICE FOR STUDENTS

Student Protection Plan for the period 2023 to the present time

Provider's Name:	University of Wolverhampton
Provider's UKPRN:	10007166
Legal Address:	Wulfruna Building, City Campus Wulfruna, Wolverhampton WV1 1LY
Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan:	Daniel Kidd, Director of Registry Services
Dated:	February 2023

Assessment of risks and mitigation measures

The University has considered the likelihood of non-continuation of study for our students in a range of circumstances. Using OfS guidance a range of potential risks has been considered. The table includes the measures that the University has put in place to mitigate the risks to students' suffering an interruption of studies. The University's approach is also guided by the QAA Quality Code and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance relating to universities and higher education.

TABLE 1

Area of Risk	Risk assessment of likelihood	Measures in place to mitigate risks to students' non-continuation of study
The University unable to operate, or has decided to cease operating.	<p>Risk: Medium</p> <p>The University incurred a relatively high loss in 21/22 and is forecast to have another loss in 22/23 but should then be moving into surpluses in future years. Reserves are relatively strong and the University has access to good credit facilities although current cash balances are more than adequate for working capital purposes.</p>	<p>The University is a member of the West Midlands Combined Universities Group comprising the universities of Wolverhampton, Coventry and Birmingham City University. The group has entered into an agreement to provide support to each other's students where necessary and feasible in the unlikely event that an individual university found itself unable to meet its commitments to students. In addition, the University has signed a memorandum of understanding creating an Academic Continuation Operating Framework for Major Disruptive Events with the larger Midlands Enterprise Universities Group.</p>

Area of Risk	Risk assessment of likelihood	Measures in place to mitigate risks to students' non-continuation of study
<p>The University loses the power to award degrees</p>	<p>Risk: Low</p> <p>This risk is considered to be very low.</p> <p>The University has rigorous and robust quality assurance processes in place and it has been reviewed at regular intervals since 1992 by the QAA (and predecessors) with successful outcomes in each instance. The most recent QAA Higher Education Review in February 2015 commended the University for the enhancement of its student learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Although this risk is extremely low, mitigating measures are in place. The University is a member of the West Midlands Combined Universities Group comprising the universities of Wolverhampton, Coventry and Birmingham City University. The group has entered into an agreement to provide support to each other's students where necessary and feasible in the event that an individual university found itself unable to meet its commitments to students. In addition, the University has signed a memorandum of understanding creating an Academic Continuation Operating Framework for Major Disruptive Events with the larger Midlands Enterprise Universities Group.</p>
<p>The University decides to cease operating from one of its campuses</p>	<p>Risk: Low</p> <p>There are no current plans to close any of its existing locations in England, and the University owns its campuses and buildings.</p>	<p>In the very unlikely circumstance that the University closes one of its English campuses unexpectedly, in the first instance it would seek to 'teach out' students (where possible) at a different location. Otherwise, it would transfer teaching to another location, noting the University provides students with a free University bus service between campuses and that there are also extensive public transport links in the metropolitan area.</p>
<p>The University is unable to operate from one of its campuses due to catastrophic loss of part of a campus or building, e.g. as a consequence of fire.</p>	<p>Risk: Low</p> <p>The University has an excellent fire safety record and has well-developed contingency and business continuity plans for major incidents. Each campus has multiple buildings and therefore there are opportunities to relocate teaching within a campus in case of a building needing to close due to some catastrophic event or to rent facilities close by.</p>	<p>In the first instance, the appropriate major incident contingency plan would be implemented. If necessary, teaching would be transferred to another building and/or campus, noting the University provides students with a free University bus service between campuses and that there are also extensive public transport links in the metropolitan area. In addition, the University has signed a memorandum of understanding creating an Academic Continuation Operating Framework for Major Disruptive Events with the larger Midlands Enterprise Universities Group.</p>

Area of Risk	Risk assessment of likelihood	Measures in place to mitigate risks to students' non-continuation of study
<p>The University is unable to operate from one or more of its campuses due to a public health emergency or risk, e.g. a pandemic.</p>	<p>Risk: Low</p> <p>This risk, whilst high in the previous two years, has returned to a low likelihood. This assessment is based on the current public health landscape, as well as reflecting the previous 12 months.</p>	<p>The University now has well developed contingencies for the delivery of teaching, assessment and support services online, should public health restrictions prevent delivery on campus or should the University assess the risk to personal safety of its students and staff to be unacceptably high. In such a situation, clear communications would be sent to all students providing full details of the arrangements for their continuation of studies.</p> <p>Recruitment, continuation and completion for all students would continue virtually until it was safe to return to campus. Some delay may be necessary for teaching of practical subjects and assessments that must take place face to face, because of the nature of the learning outcomes being tested.</p>
<p>The University is unable to deliver one or more courses to students, because it is considering closing courses within the next three years.</p>	<p>Risk: Medium</p> <p>It is likely that courses will close over the next three years. However, mitigating measures should ensure such decisions have limited impact on students.</p> <p>The University reviews courses to ensure that they remain relevant, refreshed and of high quality. Consequently, there can be planned changes to courses, including closure. This is part of the University's normal processes, and the University has experience of introducing such changes without adverse consequences for students. The exit-strategy for existing students is a required component of a course change or closure proposal.</p>	<p>In such a situation, the University would normally 'teach out' the course in question. It would cease recruiting new students and continue to teach, assess and provide awards for existing students until all students had completed their studies.</p> <p>Where appropriate, students would be offered opportunities to transfer to other University of Wolverhampton courses with transfer of existing credit.</p> <p>Alternatively, students have access to the Midlands Credit Compass scheme of the Midlands Enterprise Universities group, offering fast track transfer application routes.</p>

Area of Risk	Risk assessment of likelihood	Measures in place to mitigate risks to students' non-continuation of study
<p>The University is unable to offer one or more modes of study.</p>	<p>Risk: Low</p> <p>It is possible that a course may alter its mode of delivery. However, mitigating measures should ensure such decisions have limited impact on students.</p> <p>The University of Wolverhampton, in common with many universities in England, has experience of a mode being discontinued or closed, as a consequence of normal quality review and course refresh.</p>	<p>In such a situation, the University would normally 'teach out' the course in question. It would cease recruiting new students and continue to teach, assess and provide awards for existing students until all students had completed their studies.</p> <p>Where appropriate students would be offered opportunities to transfer to other University of Wolverhampton courses with transfer of existing credit. Alternatively, students have access to the Midlands Credit Compass scheme of the Midlands Enterprise Universities group, offering fast track transfer application routes.</p>
<p>The University is no longer able to recruit or teach a particular type of student, such as international students.</p>	<p>Risk: Medium</p> <p>This risk is predominantly related to the loss of the University's Tier 4 Licence.</p> <p>The University has robust UKVI Compliance procedures to significantly reduce the potential of this occurrence. The University would also liaise with the UKVI to ensure minimal impact on students.</p> <p>The University has effective equality and diversity policies and procedures to ensure it is able to support the teaching of a diverse range of students.</p>	<p>In the case of the loss of the University's Tier 4 Licence, the University would cease recruiting overseas students and would either teach out existing students (if permitted to do so) or work with UKVI to support students to transfer with credit to equivalent courses. If possible and appropriate, then the arrangements between the West Midlands Combined Universities Group would be drawn upon.</p>

Each of the remedies described above would also apply to disruptions to teaching at one of our franchise partners. Students studying on franchised courses at our partners are University of Wolverhampton students. They would be treated in the same way as students studying on campus. Contracts with partners and quality processes ensure exit arrangements are in place.

There are two subjects/courses which are not offered widely in the sector: British Sign Language and Interpreting and Computational Linguistics. However, we have established staff teams supporting both these areas, so the courses are not dependent on individual teachers. Additionally, as we have an established national reputation in these areas, we do not have difficulty recruiting appropriately qualified staff. There are non-local universities which provide similar courses. In the very unlikely event that the University was unable to teach these courses it would work with these providers to offer students opportunities for transfer with credit.

Refund and remedy

In circumstances in which the University is not able to provide the remedies as described above or in which students have incurred costs but are prevented from completing their studies to a point which provides transferable credit, the University will make provision for the payment of refunds to students whether in receipt of a tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company (SLC); or paying their own tuition fees; or if their tuition fees are paid by a sponsor. In respect of the SLC, the University will ensure that it provides affected students with the evidence and support required to enable them to confirm their changing circumstances with the SLC.

Links to the University's Tuition Fee Liability, Debtor & Refund Policy and to our Refund and Remedy Policy are given in our terms and conditions.

The University has not identified any students at an increased risk of non-continuation of study. In circumstances where students are identified as being at an increased risk, the University would identify reserves to provide refunds and remedies as appropriate.

Communication of the Student Protection Plan

The University will communicate the provisions of our plan to current and future students. The plan will be published on our website, included with the material we provide to applicants at the time of offer and will be disseminated to current students at the start of the academic year. References and links to the Student Protection Plan will be made in the course materials which are disseminated to students.

The plan will be published on staff intranet pages and referred to in our policy and process documents for course changes and closure ([Course Approval & Deletion - University of Wolverhampton \(wlv.ac.uk\)](https://www.wlv.ac.uk/course-approval-deletion)).

Consultation with students, review and implementation of the Student Protection Plan

The University's Students' Union was consulted in the preparation and development of this plan.

The plan will be reviewed annually as part of the University's risk assessment review process. Students, through the Students' Union, will be asked to comment and contribute to future revised versions of the plan.

Should the plan need to be implemented, the University will establish an appropriate team to implement the plan. The Students' Union would be informed and consulted on the implementation of the plan and when appropriate would be represented on the plan implementation team. The size and composition of the implementation team will vary according to the scale of the interruption to studies.

The team would ensure that all affected students were provided with timely, accurate and understandable information concerning the options available to them, and they would be given the opportunity to seek advice relevant and appropriate to their personal circumstances, so that individually satisfactory remedies are identified and implemented. Students from different backgrounds will likely have different needs. The Students' Union

operates an independent Advice and Representation Centre delivered by expert, professional staff and are available to give free, impartial and confidential advice to students on all academic and financial matters. They can be contacted on 01902 322038 or by completing an online enquiry form ([Advice \(wolvesunion.org\)](http://Advice.wolvesunion.org)) as well as offering a year-round drop in service.

We will give students as much notice as possible, in writing, in advance of any planned disruption to teaching. Normally, we would not implement a course change during an academic year, so there would be opportunities to involve and consult with student course representatives prior to a course / teaching disruption.

The University's complaints procedure ([Current Student Complaints - University of Wolverhampton \(wlv.ac.uk\)](http://Current Student Complaints - University of Wolverhampton (wlv.ac.uk))) will apply to University's decisions and actions relating to the Student Protection Plan and those affected will be reminded of this further option for remedy.

Any action taken by the University will be done so with the students as our primary focus. Prior to confirming any decision the University will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that no particular group is adversely affected and if there are adverse impacts, the University will take mitigating action to insure no one group suffers undue harm.