Policy on the Closure or Suspension of Higher Education Programmes 2025 - 2027

Equality Impact Assessment: Askham Bryan College recognises the importance of the Equality Act 2010 and its duties under the Act. This document has been assessed to ensure that it does not adversely affect staff, students or stakeholders on the grounds of any protected characteristics.

1. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date of Issue: 13th June 2025
Approved on: HEAB 30th April 2025 and at Policy Group on 15th May 2025
Next review: June 2027
SLT Owner: Assistant Principal HE and Academic Registrar
Author: Assistant Principal HE and Academic Registrar
Publication requirements: PUBLIC

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1. Askham Bryan College is committed to providing a quality student experience through careful management of its Higher Education programmes. The College is committed to upholding Consumer Markets Authority Guidance (2023).

2.2. Closure or suspension of programmes may be due to:

- Replacement of an old programme with a new one;
- Declining student numbers, evidenced by current admissions trends;
- Termination of a collaborative provision arrangement;
- A change in strategic direction/priorities of the College;
- Inability to recruit appropriate staff;
- Concerns about the quality of provision, including concerns relating to academic standards and quality.

2.3. This policy relates to suspension/closure of programmes in advance of the standard application cycle, prior to student applications.

2.4. This policy has been written to align with provision set out in the Student Protection Plan, which describes the College's commitment to safeguarding the student experience and protecting student expectations. The Student Protection Plan outlines mitigating measures to be put in place if a programme on which students are currently enrolled is at risk, and should be referred to in conjunction with this policy

2.5. This policy sets out the College's procedures for closing or suspending undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, and includes programmes validated by the College and by external partners.

3. PURPOSE

3.1. This policy refer to the College policy for closing or suspending Higher Education programmes of study.

- **Closure**: A programme is closed when it is no longer available for students to apply to;

- **Suspension**: A programme is suspended when it is temporary closed for a defined period.

3.2. Askham Bryan College is committed to ensuring that the experience of all Higher Education students is protected and assured. The College is committed to consulting with students on programmes or related programmes which have been identified as at risk of closure or suspension.

3.3. The College's decision to close or suspend a programme must take account of the needs of existing students, including deferred applications and will take appropriate steps to advise and support these students, and will pay due consideration to the requirements of any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body or other accrediting body.

3.4. This policy is designed to review programmes for future closure or suspension, i.e. before students enrol. The following limitations must be considered:

3.4.1. Where offers have been accepted, it is not usually possible to close or suspend a programme, unless the delivery of that programme would be to the detriment of student experience. The Chair of the Academic Board must be consulted in this instance;

3.4.2. Where applications have been received but offers not yet made, a decision to close or suspend a programme will be made early in the academic cycle, typically no later than 6-months prior to expected enrolment, so that applicants are not disadvantaged.

3.5. Where a programme has been listed as 'subject to validation' in any UCAS cycle, and in the event of the validation not being successful, and where applications have been received for that programme, applicants will be informed immediately after the validation event and an alternative programme offered.

3.6. The Student Protection Plan outlines provision for programmes already with registered/enrolled students enrolled, which may be in danger of closing.

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

4.1 This policy applies to:

- All students on undergraduate or postgraduate programmes at Askham Bryan College;
- All undergraduate and postgraduate Higher Education provision including certificates and diplomas in Higher Education;
- All on-campus and blended/ distance Higher Education provision.

4.2 This policy *does not apply* to:

- Programme modifications;
- Module modifications, including alterations to learning outcomes, assessment methods or other minor modifications.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. The Assistant Principal HE and Academic Registrar will have overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy. The Assistant Principal HE and Academic Registrar will be assisted by Head of HE Academic Services and Quality Assurance to ensure compliance with this policy.

5.2. **The HE Management Group will:**

- Monitor applications on a monthly basis;
- CAMs will liaise with course teams on recruitment activity and trends;
- Assist the Marketing team in relation to updating customer information;
- Ensure appropriate registry and administrative updates occur in a timely manner following decision on programme closure or suspension;
- Monitor compliance on all actions arising following a decision on closure/suspension of a programme to ensure completion (including actions designated to other departments within the College);
- Generate timely and regular reports in relation to:
    - recruitment trends
    - staffing requirements (including subject specialisms)
    - staffing turnover

- Make recommendations to the HE Academic Board on programmes deemed ‘at risk’ of closure or suspension.

5.3. **The HE Academic Board will:**

- Make decisions regarding closure and suspension of programmes;

- Communicate decisions regarding course suspension or closure to appropriate departments at the College, including Marketing, Student Records and Finance to ensure timely updating of public information, student loans/finance information and UCAS details. These communications will be made formally by the HE Academic Registrar following confirmation at Academic Board.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 Assistant Principal HE and Academic Registrar will maintain oversight of the effectiveness of these arrangements. This policy and the implementation arrangements which underpin it will be reviewed every two years by the Assistant Principal HE and Academic Registrar

7. SUPPORTING/RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Procedure for the Closure or Suspension of Higher Education Programmes
- HE Admissions Policy and Proceedure
- UK Higher Education providers - advice on consumer protection law (Competition and Markets Authority)
- Askham Bryan College's Student Protection Plan