

Provider's name: Askham Bryan College

Provider's UKPRN: 10000415

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Student Protection Plan 2024 to 2027

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students, how those risks may differ based on your students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise.

The risk that the provider would be unable to continue to operate and provide services to our students is considered to be low due to the following:

Askham Byran College is a mixed economy provider delivering provision at Further and Higher Education (HE), Apprenticeships, adult skills and commercial courses. The College estate extends through Yorkshire and the Northeast of England, with HE provision being hosted at the York and Gateshead centres. In addition to our main campus at York and Gateshead, the College operates out of a further three campuses across the North of England. From September 2024, HE delivery will take place at the York and Gateshead campuses. Most of our students are on full-time programmes, with a standard semester delivery of lectures, seminars, and practicals, therefore no additional arrangements need to be considered for different modes of delivery.

The College has a Crisis Management Plan for immediate/unexpected threats to normal College operations, and there is an established Risk Management Group that meets regularly to review and update the College's risk register. The College has appropriate insurance in place to protect against a range of threats. The College includes this student protection plan within their risk register to ensure full consideration and review, as appropriate, takes place. This plan includes a summary of possible risks, perceived likelihood of occurrence and mitigations we would implement in the event of these risks crystallising. These plans are supported by our business continuity policy which outlines our approach should "serious incidents" arise which impact on the colleges ability to function as a business.

The mitigations stated in this plan are put into place, then the severity of impact to the students in each of these scenarios is rated as low. Were any such risks to materialise without mitigation measures in place, the resulting impact on students could be significant, except in relation to change in staffing and other material changes to programmes, which would have a moderate impact on students. The mitigation measures identified in this plan will reduce the impact of risk to students to low and are designed support any impacted students.

If any of the scenarios were to occur and present a risk of non-completion or adverse impact on students or staff, an equality impact assessment would be undertaken to identify indivual characteristics of students affected and the potential level of impact, which would be used to assist with the identification of appropriate mitigations.

All students potentially impacted will be provided with information and guidance, that is tailored to individual needs where appropriate. This may include academic or wellbeing related support. As a college we adopt a trauma informed approach to supporting our students, which would guide our mitigation approaches. Where appropriate we may also direct students to our financial hardship fund.

- ***Site closure (York campus) leading to non-continuation of course(s)***

The College considers itself to be **low risk** in this area as the York campus is the biggest campus, serving both further education (FE) and HE students. Our financial performance is satisfactory, and we have business continuity plans to deal with unexpected loss of resources or closure of the main site. These include the following:

- Utilisation of specialist resources at one of the College's other campuses.
- In the event of part of the York campus closing (e.g. due to unexpected damage), we will arrange relocation of courses and students to another of the College's campuses or online delivery.
- Engaging with local Colleges, including a specialist land-based provider, regarding sharing of resources, in relation to access to specialist land-based resources.

- ***Site closure (Gateshead campus) leading to non-continuation of course(s)***

The College considers itself to be **low risk** in this area as the Gateshead campus also serves both further education (FE) and HE students. Our financial performance is satisfactory, and we have business continuity plans to deal with unexpected loss of resources or closure of the main site. These include the following:

- Utilisation of specialist resources at one of the College's other campuses.
- In the event of part of the Gateshead campus closing (e.g. due to unexpected damage), we will arrange relocation of courses and students to another of the College's campuses.
- Engaging with local Colleges, including a specialist land-based provider, regarding sharing of resources, in relation to access to specialist land-based resources.

- ***Material loss of specialist resources leading to non-continuation of course(s)***

The College considers itself to be **low- risk** in this area, as we operate out of multiple sites, the College will take immediate steps to ensure continuity of access to specialist resources by engaging with one of the satellite campuses as described above.

- ***Course closure leading to non-continuation of course(s)***

The College considers itself to be **low- risk** in this area. In the event of deciding to cease recruitment onto a particular course, the College will ensure that currently enrolled students on such a programme remain on their enrolled programme of study until the time of award. This is a commitment bound by our terms of agreement with our partner universities and within our own academic regulations.

- ***Inability to deliver material components of a course, including loss of specialist staff***

The College considers itself to be **low risk** in this area. A significant number of core modules (credits) on each programme are designed to be delivered by an integrated team of staff within the Higher Education department. There is reliance on specialist HE staff to deliver components of programmes, however as we deliver FE at all campuses, there is a core specialist staff in all curriculum areas which could be deployed to deliver specialist elements of higher education courses should the need arise. If required, interim arrangements would be made to ensure continuation of staffing on specialist modules.

- ***Termination of validation arrangements with validating partners***

Although the College currently judges itself as **low risk** in this respect, termination of validation arrangements is an inherent risk when relying on validating universities. We currently work with two validating universities; therefore, we are not reliant on one validating university for all our programmes, which spreads the risk. This situation also provides some options if one partner were to terminate validation arrangements, in that the College would consider extending validation arrangements with one of the other partners to ensure programmes could be revalidated to ensure continuation of recruitment. The College also has its own degree awarding powers, which is utilised for the validation of foundation degree level programmes. In any event that the degree awarding power status of the college or validating partner was to change then the College would seek to utilise an alternative provider to make interim awards to any students affected.

- ***Risks to relationships with local employers***

The College considers itself to be **low risk** in this respect. For courses that require placements, the College works with a wide network of placement providers and there is no over-reliance on one placement provider. The College would strive to ensure all students requiring placements were suitably placed in the event of a non-continuation of a relationship with an employer. The College considers itself to have sufficient links with a wide range of employers to ensure that alternative arrangements could be made in the event of losing employer support

2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

As described in Section 1, we have not identified any risks to continuation of delivery that are reasonably likely to crystallise. However, we will continue to monitor our risk and update our risk register accordingly.

If we are unable to deliver courses at the York or Gateshead Campus, or parts of either campus, we will put into place one or more of the plans outlined in Section 1. The nature of this mitigation will be dependent on the level of impact to the students and the nature of the risk itself.

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

The College has a range of policies in place which are reviewed annually or biennially which can be found via [Higher Education - Policies - \(askham-bryan.ac.uk\)](http://askham-bryan.ac.uk).

Relevant policies include:

- HE Admissions Policy
- Terms and Conditions for Higher Education Courses
- Policy on Closure or Suspension of HE Programmes
- College Closure Policy
- Tuition Fees Policy
- Student Payment and Collection Policy
- Academic Refunds Policy
- HE Hardship Fund Procedure

The College currently operates in accordance with Student Finance England guidelines, which considers the time of year of withdrawal from a programme of study, and the Academic Refund Policy includes guidance on the following:

- Refunds for students in receipt of tuitions fee loan from the Student Loans Company.
- Refunds for students who pay their own tuition fees and whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor.
- Compensation/payment for additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course.
- Plans to honour student bursaries.
- Compensation/payment for costs where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study.

If the instance arises whereby, we identify a group or groups of students at significantly increased risk of non-continuation, we will put in place insurance arrangements to provide refunds and compensation for those students for whom we have identified an increased risk of non-continuation of study. We will ensure that this is in place by 1st of August immediately prior to the start of each academic year whereby we have identified this increased risk.

The College currently has adequate insurance to mitigate against risks of non-continuation. It will be necessary to review the student protection plan annually to ensure appropriate consideration is given to the risks, existing and new, identified by the HE Academic Board and the College's senior leadership team. As a college, we have significant land assets, which could become disposed of, if the risks were significantly increased. This would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for those groups of students who in future may be identified as at an increased risk of non-continuation of study.

4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan

We will use the website and intranet pages as the main communication method to students and staff regarding the provisions made in the student protection plan. We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students via the website and on the Key Information Page (website). In addition, current students may also access the student protection plan via the intranet.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by:

- Updating our course proposal paperwork (e.g. Application for Development Approval) to ensure consideration is given to the student protection plan when proposing new courses
- Ensuring Chairs of relevant committees where new courses proposals are considered/approved have given due regard to the student protection plan. Relevant committees include, but are not limited to the Periodic and Critical Review Panel, Academic Quality and Standards Committee, Academic Board and Senior Leadership Team, Corporation (Quality and Standards)
- Delivering wider staff development sessions on the student protection plan to key central teams at the College, e.g. Student Services, Finance, Student Records teams.

The student protection plan will be reviewed annually through the Higher Education Academic Board. We will work with students on the development of our student protection plan via their participation as members in our key committees (Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Academic Board).

Periodic review of the plan will include;

- Review of the risks and threat status of current risks at the Risk Management Group meetings
- Identification of new risks to non-continuation as determined by external factors such as changes to government policy, demographics, funding etc.
- Identification of new risks to non-continuation as determined by internal factors such as changes to the College's financial health status, enrolment trends, staffing and other resource changes, etc.
- Student-led input via discussion forums and targeted focus groups with a sample of the student population.

If the student protection plan needs to be implemented, we will make immediate (3-5 working days) arrangements to inform the students if we need to make material arrangements to their course of study. Communication with students will normally be face-to-face in the first instance as most of our programmes are full-time, face-to-face delivery. We will further communicate via email and/or letter to inform all students of material changes to their course. Support will be offered to the students by our Student Services, Higher Education and Finance teams, in addition to advice and guidance provided by the course manager and academic leaders for the curriculum area in question. Collective support will be provided via a bespoke focus group to the groups of students affected, and will be delivered by the Higher Education management, supported by the Finance and Student Services teams.

Independent advice will be provided by the Student Services team and students may be supported by the College counselling service. Further advice may be sought from the Citizens Advice Bureau. We will ensure students are aware of these support services by signposting on our intranet and via curriculum staff.