

Student Protection Plan

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This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation, Disability.

Alternative Format

This policy is available in alternative formats, to request this, please email marketingcampaigns@mkcollege.ac.uk

Version Control

Version Number	Author	Approver	Date approved	Next review date
1	Group Director HE, Adult & IoT	Group Leadership Team	7/10/25	Oct 26

Change log

Version Number	Summary of changes

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Introduction

As a registered provider of Higher Education, we are required to publish this Student Protection Plan (SPP) which sets out how we will ensure that the quality of study will be maintained, and students can continue to study in the event of college, campus or course closure.

The documents and policies set out below, taken together, constitute Milton Keynes College (MKC) SPP, and covers all students registered with MKC on Higher National qualifications, and students on all awards registered with institutions that MKC hold a current validation partnership arrangement. The College is expected to ensure that we maintain the level of protection for students set out in these documents on an ongoing basis.

This SPP does not cover risks to students' continuation of study due to the student's own personal circumstances, these are outside the scope of the SPP.

The following documents set out important protections for students:

- **HE Terms and Conditions:** This sets out the terms and conditions for the provision of higher education and includes clauses relating to eligibility for refund in the event of an SPP event.
- **Policy on Closure and Suspension of HE Programmes:** Setting out the circumstances in which we may take a course closure or suspension decision. It explains how we will protect your interests if we make any of these changes.
- **Complaints Policy:** This explains how you can make a complaint about your higher education experience and how we will handle your complaint.

Student Protection Plan for the period 2025/26

1 An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study.

The college has a mature risk assessment and reporting process, which includes financial risk assessment of MKC, and also curriculum planning and delivery risk assessment.

Financial risk assessment shows that the residual risk is managed and stable, with effective mitigation. Published College accounts also demonstrate a strong financial position, with no indication of impending risk of either college or campus closure. The College also has a Business Continuity Plan for the management of any major incident.

College curriculum planning and management risk assessment also shows a stable risk environment, with effective risk management strategies in place to ensure that the curriculum offer is meeting student needs. The annual curriculum planning cycle identifies any changes to the planned curriculum are approved in sufficient time in advance for changes to advertised to potential students. The College accepts that it may become necessary to discontinue courses to reflect market trends.

The likelihood of the College losing accreditation, either by a validating partner, or from the regulatory body, is low. However, in this event, the College would expect to receive appropriate advanced warning of this possibility in order to manage and address concerns. If this could not be prevented the College would take steps to seek alternative options for affected students including consideration of transfer to another provider.

2 Measures in place to mitigate those risks that may crystallise.

The College Policy on Closure or Suspension of HE programmes sets out the circumstances and timescales, and approval mechanism for a closure or suspension decision. It also identifies the action planning required in order to protect students on existing programmes and articulate the “teach-out” mechanisms.

Risks to teaching on specialist programmes is a risk which may crystallise. Recruitment and retention of highly specialist staff is a recognised risk in key technical disciplines, such as Engineering and Digital. MKC has a strong regional reputation as an employer of choice and has strong staff relationship management. Management of key employer relationships in technical areas also helps to mitigate risk, as staff may be seconded for specific specialist delivery or guest lecturing.

Oversight of the quality of programmes managed by a robust in-year data-driven quality assurance process. In the case that under-performance in a specialist area is identified, this would be subject to intervention and action planning to ensure that the needs of students are met, this may include the recruitment of external specialists in order to provide particular expertise. In this case, student focus groups would ensure that student voice is included in mitigation action planning.

3 Information about policies in place to refund or compensate in the event that MKC is not able to preserve continuation of study

The College’s approach to refunds is set out in the HE Terms and Conditions.

MKC does not have a specific Compensation Policy. Each request for compensation would be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the outcomes of a robust implementation of the Complaints Policy, the outcome of which may be a consideration of appropriate compensation to a student. The Complaints Policy ensures a consistent, standardised approach to the consideration of complaints and outcomes.

Students are made aware of the Policy via various communications, and it is available on the College website.

4 Communication of the Student Protection Plan

The College will make the SPP available to current and prospective students by publishing on the college website.

The college will ensure that staff are aware of the requirements of the SPP in the curriculum planning cycle and the SPP is referenced in the Policy on Closure and Suspension of programmes.

If you think we have not followed our policies or processes, or you are unhappy with how we have done so, you can make a formal complaint using our complaints process in the first instance (as above).

Further Regulatory Information

The financial position of Milton Keynes College is monitored by the Office for Students (OfS) and if the OfS considers the institution is at material risk of closure, it can require the College to take specific actions to protect students. This might include a requirement to produce, and comply with, a 'market exit plan'. This is a detailed document setting out plans and arrangements for any or all of the following:

- Plans which would allow us to keep teaching you until you have completed your course
- Arrangements for you to transfer to another university or college to complete your course
- Arrangements for you to receive evidence of your studies to date (for example, certificates or academic transcripts setting out the modules you have studied and the grades you have achieved)
- Information advice and guidance
- Complaints
- Refunds and compensation
- Archiving of our academic records so students have access to the information they may need in future.

If the OfS considers that Milton Keynes College is at material risk of closure it will work with the College to consider very carefully the information students need to know and when.