



HIGHER EDUCATION

PROGRAMME CLOSURE, SUSPENSION AND MAJOR CHANGE POLICY

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Table of Contents

Introduction 2

Scope 2

Key Principles 2

Process 3

Programme Closure/Suspension - Existing Students 3

Programme Closure/Suspension - Applicants 3

Substantial Change – Existing Students 4

Substantial Change - Applicants 4

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out the criteria for programme closure, suspension and major change(s) to higher education programmes offered by Telford College.

The policy aligns with Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education and is informed by the Competitions and Markets Authority guidance on consumer law for UK HE providers (2015).

Scope

This policy applies to all Higher Education students and applicants to Telford College who are eligible for funding through the Student Loans Company.

Key Principles

Telford College regularly reviews and updates the programmes and modules offered in order to ensure that they remain current and reflect best practice. In exceptional circumstances this means that a programme may cease to exist or the College may no longer be able to teach a programme or an aspect of a programme to a specific group of students, or the College may introduce a substantial change which will impact on current students and/or applicants.

In particular, this policy seeks to protect the interests of applicants and students by ensuring clear and transparent processes for the management of programme closure, suspension or substantial change in relation to the experience of:

- Applicants who have accepted an offer of a place, but not yet enrolled
- Applicants who have deferred their offer
- Current students
- Students who have intermitted (temporarily withdrawn) from the programme.

There are a number of reasons why the College might close or suspend recruitment to a programme, or make substantial changes. These may include but are not limited to the following:

- demand for the programme is too small to cover the cost of delivery (i.e. insufficient applicants)
- insufficient numbers applied to offer a positive student experience
- review of the academic portfolio through curriculum planning
- staff involved in the delivery of the programme are temporarily/permanently unavailable and it is impossible to substitute them
- external bodies (such as PSRBs) require changes that result in substantial change or a programme being suspended/closed
- external funding may alter
- concerns about the quality and academic standards of the programme
- replacing an existing programme with a new one
- changing strategic priorities
- closure/termination by collaborative partner which results in the withdrawal of a programme

When programmes are closed or changed the following precepts will underpin the process:

- Students currently on programmes will be supported to complete the course of study on

which they are enrolled. This includes provision made for those with extenuating circumstances and leave of absence which may require completion beyond the normal period.

- Programme closures and changes will normally be planned in the previous academic year for closure and before the recruitment process begins.
- Where it is impossible to make alterations or closures prior to recruitment as far as is possible, those who are prospective students (in receipt of course information or have entered the admission process) the College will engage with affected students to ensure a mutually acceptable outcome.
- External partners including awarding bodies and professional statutory and regulatory bodies will be fully informed of plans.

Process

Programme Closure/Suspension - Existing Students

Closing a programme means that there will be no further intakes to the programme and it will no longer be offered by the College. Suspension of a programme means that there will be no intake to the programme for a specified period (normally the following academic year). Students already enrolled on the programme will continue to progress and complete the programme ('teach out'), or where this is not possible will be offered an alternative programme or transfer to another provider.

Any programme closures must be approved by the Director of Higher Education, who will ensure compliance with the CMA guidance.

The Curriculum Director will meet with current and intermitted students to inform them of the programme closure or suspension and arrangements in place for 'teaching out' the programme. Students will be informed of how the College intends to ensure the quality of the student experience, how matters such as reassessment, intermittence etc will be handled. Students will be provided with opportunities to raise queries and concerns. Any students unable to attend the meeting will be informed formally in writing of the programme closure/ suspension and arrangements to be put in place.

Programme Closure/Suspension - Applicants

During provision planning a date will be agreed with the Director when a decision needs to be made as to whether or not a programme is viable, this will be largely influenced by the number of applications received. If the programme has the potential to be withdrawn this will also be discussed with the applicant at interview to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

Any programme closures must be approved by the Director of Higher Education, who will ensure compliance with the CMA guidance.

If a programme is closed or suspended it will be removed immediately from the Colleges website, if the programme is delivered as part of a franchise agreement the Director for Higher Education will also notify the partner University of the decision to ensure it is removed from their website and relevant action taken.

The Admissions Team will notify applicants under offer of the closure/suspension and offer the opportunity for course advice and guidance.

Substantial Change – Existing Students

When considering making substantial changes that will impact on current students Directors will consult with existing students and draft up a proposal to address the proposed changes, ensuring they operate within the HE Student Agreement issued to Higher Education students at enrolment.

Examples of substantial changes:

- change of programme location (eg. to another campus);
- change to the mode of delivery of a programme (eg. full-time to part-time, or through distance-learning)
- substantial change to the curriculum, assessment or modules within a programme (eg. substantial changes to mandatory modules).

Any programme changes must be approved by the Director of Higher Education, who will ensure compliance with the CMA guidance. Once approved it is the Curriculum Directors responsibility to inform current and intermitted students, and implement the plan to address the changes.

Substantial Change - Applicants

When considering making substantial changes that will impact on applicants Directors will draft up a proposal to address the proposed changes.

Examples of substantial changes that could potentially affect the decision of an applicant to take up their place are:

- change of programme location (eg. to another campus);
- change to the title of a programme and/or associated award;
- change to the accreditation of a programme (eg. Change of franchise partner)
- change to the mode of delivery of a programme (eg. full-time to part-time, or through distance-learning)
- substantial change to the curriculum, assessment or modules within a programme (eg. substantial changes to mandatory modules which results in a significant change to the programme offer).

Any programme changes must be approved by the Director of Higher Education, who will ensure compliance with the CMA guidance.

The Admissions Team will notify applicants under offer of the substantial change and offer the opportunity for course advice and guidance.