

## **STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN 2019/20**

**Provider's name:** CECOS College London

**Provider's UKPRN:** 10037364

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**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 Student Protection Plan (the Plan) sets out what measures we have in place to protect you, as a student at the CECOS College London, in the event that a risk to the continuation of your studies arises. This plan is reviewed annually by the Academic Board and is an integral part of wider risk management strategy of CECOS College. This plan will be implemented with other parts of the risk strategy.

CECOS College London carries extensive experience in protecting quality of study for its students. This Student Protection Plan builds on our experience and is intended to assure our present and potential learners that we have appropriate measures in place to guard continuance of their studies with us.

In order to help further minimise any risks to students, CECOS College London has a Further Education arm to its business which can provide financial support to the Higher Education business element, the streams of revenue include:

- Apprenticeships
- Adult Education Budget
- ESF Programmes

We have covered the following types of events in the Student Protection Plan.

1. Discontinuity of Course
2. Closure of Campus/change of Location
3. Company ceases to operate/financial risk
4. Loss of accreditation
5. Risks of an Academic nature

Our plan investigates the kinds of risks, along with examples of events that may put a potential risk and explains what actions we might take in order to minimise the impact of these events if they happen.

The student protection plan of CECOS College London sets out what students can expect to happen should a course, campus, or institution close. The purpose of a plan is to ensure that students can continue and complete their studies, or can be compensated if this is not possible.

Our Student protection Plan is;

- Easily available to current and prospective students;
- Addresses the specific risks to the continuation of study for that provider's students in a proportionate way;

### **Risk to the Continuation of Studies for students identified by CECOS College London**

The College has taken into consideration a wide range of risks that may hinder its ability to provide education to its students. We have provided in detail below the potential risks and mitigation measures that we may adopt in case of their occurrences and how best we would minimise their affects or chances of occurrence.

### **Categorisation of Risk**

We have divided the risk into the following three categories;

**Low:** an event may occur only in exceptional circumstances (possibility at less than 10%)

**Medium:** an event may occur at sometime (possibility between 30-50%)

**High:** an event is expected (possibility at more than 90%)

We have also classified impacts as;

**Minor:** would be resolved through day to day activity **Moderate:** would be resolved through a dedicated and designated team **Extreme:** would be resolved through input from Senior Management or an external/third party

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

#### **1. Financial Risk**

**Risk:** The College is no longer able to operate due to poor financial performance or lack of financial strength **Likelihood:** very unlikely **Impact:** Extreme

**Reason:** CECOS College London has a good future prospective and its expected financial performance is reflected in the projections, business plan and commentary submitted by our accountants. The shareholders are committed to raise funds in case of any such financial crises. The College would also keep sufficient amount in reserve and has sufficient bank over draft facilities to protect such financial crisis. As mentioned in the introduction in order to help further minimise any risks to students, CECOS College has a Further Education arm to its business which can provide financial support to the Higher Education business element when needed.

We have business continuity plans in place coupled with the support from our shareholders and Directors. Such inside support would continue through the current year. Our balance sheet and reserves are comparative healthy and we plan to generate positive net cash flow from operations in the near and foreseeable future.

## 2. Premises Risk

**Risk:** All or part of our Campus is closed or not fit for study for a shorter or longer period of time.

**Likelihood:** very unlikely

**Impact:** extreme

**Reason:** The College has signed a proper and professional/legally binding lease for the premises that it holds for providing education. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the College is asked to change its premises or discontinue its operations. The premises is well maintained and its risk assessments are properly done which further ensure that it is highly unlikely to face a risk of closure or discontinuity. In case of temporary disruption due to a sudden damage to the premises, the College has an option to rent out external rooms at a nearby College or business park. In unusual circumstances of losing the lease, the College will find other appropriate premises for the delivery of programmes.

CECOS College London has no plans in future to close down its current site. The response to any associated problem would depend on the nature of the event. Under all circumstances, special consideration would be given to the individual needs of the students.

## 3. Risk of Delivery of Programmes

**Risk:** The College may not be able to deliver full programme due to lack of staff. Staff turnover or non availability of other resources **Likelihood:** Very unlikely

**Impact:** Extreme

**Reason:** The College does not expect a high staff turnover rate. The staffing numbers and profile are regularly reviewed by the Senior Management Team and the College has additional well qualified staff that it can call upon as well as the College Further Education teaching team all of whom qualifies to teach at HE level. All staff members are employed with a minimum notice period requirement. The College has a robust recruitment strategy and a comprehensive Human Resource Plan that allows it to review its staffing requirements and any shortages. The plan is reviewed on annual basis. The recruitment strategy accounts for all planned events (redundancies, restructuring, end of contracts) and unplanned events (unexpected death, illness etc). In either case, an impact assessment would be carried out immediately and gap filled with the help of multiple methods as explained above.

The College keeps all teaching and learning resources on its moodle VLE in the form of course outlines, lesson plans, lecture notes and presentation slides, articles and case studies etc,. Such resources are safely kept online with only authorised access to staff and students, wherever applicable. The website and moodle have a regular back up in the College server. In case if we want to change the IT supplier, we would manage the structure and timing of such change in order to ensure minimum or no disruption to studies. We would also consider alternate means of delivery during the implementation by making best use of alternate or affected systems. In the case of involvement of a third party, we would work closely with them to minimise or manage disaster recovery systems.

#### **4. Risk of Withdrawal by Awarding Organisation or Partnership**

**Risk:** Awarding bodies may withdraw their accreditation from the College or any partner colleges withdraw their validation or associated risks.

**Likelihood:** very unlikely

**Impact:** extreme

**Reason:** The College is fully aware of and up to date with the requirements needed in order to be accredited by such bodies and have processes in place to regularly review and renew such accreditation. The College has incorporated a Quality Assurance diagram, process, designated owner of the quality assurance process and a designated committee to look after the partnerships and awarding organization requirements. The College will seek to work with a range of awarding organisations and partnerships in order to mitigate against and reduce any risk of a particular course withdrawal. The current Principal is highly experienced at managing partnerships with awarding bodies and Universities alike.

Our stakeholders also carry out their due diligence checks on us on a regular basis including audits that keep us up to date with them help us to keep our processes and procedures robust and aligned with their requirements. Under any severe circumstances, if an awarding body or partner withdraws its accreditation, the College would provide an option to 'Teach Out' to its current students and would work out the details with the partner/awarding body. Any prospective closure, in case of withdrawal would be done systematically and through a phased method so that all affected students can complete their studies. We understand that the circumstances leading to the need to teach-out are exceptional, when they do take place, teach-out would usually be practical and attainable. We have had two Pearson AMR visits and both have resulted in no actions or recommendations- this is something we are very proud of.

#### **5. Academic Risks**

##### **Change of course, amendment, suspension or updates**

**Low Risk and Impact minor**

An ongoing commitment to quality assurance and enhancement at CECOS and its validating partner/awarding body means that, from time to time, programme content, regulations and policies will be updated managed by the embedded operational committee structure of the Quality and Standards Committee and the Academic Board.

Where updates to content are made, for example substitution of modules, changes to module contents or assessment activities, these will be proposed via Academic Board, here students are represented, before approval by the validating partner. CECOS undertakes not to make any changes to programme content within 3 months of the start of the first academic year affected.

Changes to regulations and policies may be prompted by the validating partner/awarding organization and will be considered at the Academic Board. These will also be considered and ratified by the Quality & Standards Committee and Academic Board both of which have student representation. Revised regulations shall only apply to students first enrolling after College approval of those revisions, unless changes are not deemed significant, thus different regulations may apply to different cohorts on a programme and will be documented in the Programme Handbook for that

cohort. New or revised policies shall apply to all students from the start of the academic term following approval by the College's Academic Board, with a proviso that for the remainder of the then current academic year, no student may be treated disadvantageously in comparison with the previous policy.

### **Closure of an individual course**

#### **Low Risk and Impact is minor**

The College may make a strategic decision to close a programme because insufficient enrolments render it non-viable from an academic, student experience or resourcing perspective; or because it has been superseded in the College portfolio; or no longer aligns with the College's mission. In such cases and where possible, the College will offer existing students a choice of two options, noting that the College undertakes not to close a programme within 3 calendar months of the start of an academic year: All decisions will be following full consultation with the Students' Council and ratified by the Academic Board.

To continue as planned to be "taught out" on the original programme, where the College considers this to be a viable option on academic and student experience grounds, noting that this may itself be subject to the number of students so electing. Where this is not viable, the College undertakes that in all cases current on-course students may continue with their current programme at for 22 teaching weeks following communication of the decision to close the programme and until the end of the term in which the 22-week period ends. Throughout this document, an on-course student means one who is actively enrolled, pursuing their course and attending classes at the relevant point. The college will also consider students' transfer to a similar or replacement programme at another provider, where available

## **6. Reputational Risk**

### **Public domain/Media**

- Negative Publicity
- Incident at the College / Accusation on Staff member

### **Impact - Low Public Domain/Media**

#### **Negative Publicity**

The College understands the sensitivity of negative publicity and would appoint Business development and marketing committee version controls on documents and all materials for publications to be signed off by the Academic Board and Principal.

#### **Incident at College/Accusation on staff member**

In the likely event of any incident at the College, CECOS has extensive health and safety policy in place. The college has a complaint policy and appeals process to cater for such incidents. In case of some adverse circumstances, CECOS is covered by a comprehensive insurance policy covering the subject incidents.

## **7. Closure of Business - Market Exit**

The management of the College is committed and enthusiastic on its continuous enhancement with very realistic business and strategic plans, these are reviewed in a bi-annual basis by both the Board

of Directors and Finance and Resources Committee.

**Impact Low**

- As with all providers, an extreme set of events may lead to the prospect of the College. This may be triggered, for example, by the College becoming insolvent or through falling student demand,
- withdrawal of validation or regulatory matters, or a major event rendering the College's mission
- Non-viable.
- In such cases, the following will apply:  
Where a decision to close is taken, the College will immediately enter a "continuity period" allowing all existing on-course students to continue with their current programme at CECOS for 22 teaching weeks following communication of the decision to close the College and until the end of the term in which the 22-week period ends. Where necessary, College reserves or shareholders will directly fund the College so that it may continue to operate normally for this continuity period. During the continuity period, where relevant to the circumstances and in consultation with the validating body, Shareholders may seek a buyer for the College. If this is not appropriate, and in any case should a sale not be agreed 2 months before the end of the continuity period, then staff from CECOS will work with the validating body to place students with the approved alternate providers, effective from the start of the alternate provider's academic term following the end of the continuity period.

**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**

CECOS College London has a comprehensive policy for refunds and compensation reviewed annually by the Finance and Resources Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors.

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

The Student Protection Plan will be available for students to view on the College's dedicated website for the Plan. Full consultation having being undertaken by the established Student Council involving student representatives from each cohort group studying at the College. If the Student Protection Plan was triggered and any changes implemented these would be fully debated by the Students' Council prior to change and be further discussed at the Quality & Standards Committee and Academic Board. The Principal would write to notify the stakeholders of this within ten full working days of the Plan being triggered. Once they have been notified, they would receive information on who they could contact to discuss their circumstances, especially if they had specialist needs, and where they would be able to access advice and support, once again via the Students Council comprehensive student consultation would be undertaken and led by the Principal.

The plan will also be available on the official website of the College to be used by its staff, current and potential students and other stakeholders. Its location on the website would be under downloads section.

The Plan would also be available on the Moodle in downloads section. Any extensions or quarterly changes, if at all required in the plan, would be communicated to the staff and students via email and Moodle. Updated version would be placed on the College website.

The Student Protection plan would be reviewed annually so that it remains relevant, effective and up

to date. The annual review team would also include all members of the Students Council and be finally ratified by Academic Board which has student representation at its core. The students would have access to external and independent advice should they so wish in the process and ultimately the Students' Council would be central and paramount to all decisions made in relation to the Student Protection Plan.