



WAVERLEY ABBEY
COLLEGE

Student Protection Plan

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Student Protection Plan

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1. Introduction

This plan is underpinned by the *Statement of Vision, Mission and Values* of the College, available on the College website, www.waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk, and within the policy documents handbook, and should be read and understood in the context of that statement.

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires we maintain a Student Protection Plan that outlines how the College will protect student's interests in the event of significant change. This plan sets out the measures we have put in place to protect students should a risk to the continuation of studies arise. The kind of risks that might arise are outlined in this plan. The measures set out are in addition to the protection available to students under consumer protection law and do not impinge on consumer rights.

This plan has been approved by the regulator, the Office for Students (OfS) and is available to all current and potential students. It can be found on the College website and the student portal (Moodle).

Waverley Abbey College UKPRN: 10007361

2. Assessment of the Range of Risks

This Student Protection Plan (SPP) outlines the measures that Waverley Abbey College will take to protect you in the unlikely event that a risk to the continuation of your studies should arise. The type of risks, and how we manage those risks, are listed below. This plan applies to all our existing and prospective students.

CWR is the parent company of Waverley Abbey College. We have been a leading pioneer and provider of counselling training since the 1980s. To build on this success, the College has developed a long-term plan to expand the range of programmes we offer and has recently added a Spiritual Formation course to its suite of programmes. The College now offers programmes, which are underpinned by a Christian worldview, at graduate and postgraduate level. www.cwr.org.uk www.waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk

The position of CWR and the College is very stable in all areas, however, no business exists without risk. Therefore, it is important to state at the outset that our validating partner (Middlesex University) retains overall responsibility for the programmes that it validates. Within the Memorandum of Co-operation there are contingency plans and arrangements that, in the unlikely event that the College is unable to continue, ensure that you can complete your programme of study and qualify for your intended award. We therefore,

consider that the overall risk that you will be unable to complete your programme of study once enrolled with the College is very low. The areas of risk have been identified and these are listed below.

2.1 Financial risk

The College is part of the CWR charity (Registered Charity No. 294387) and has annual income in excess of £3million, assets of over £6million and reserves of more than £3million. The financial position of CWR, and therefore the College, remains robust.

The College has a very robust cycle of budgeting processes and mid-year checks. This process is overseen by the parent company CWR and is subject to its governance processes which includes a full review and assessment of programmes, staffing levels, continuing demand and currency of the content of our programmes. This takes place prior to the start of each academic year. For example, in 2017 we undertook a consolidation of our campuses, reducing the campuses from two to one main campus. This has further strengthened our financial stability by decreasing operational costs and ensuring that our financial position will remain robust in the future.

The College manages its income through credit control policies. Fees are paid in advance or by instalment, this provides financial stability throughout the financial and academic year. The nature of our student base means that it is not exposed to large credit risk. However, the College monitors and tracks its creditors to ensure that this risk is managed and minimised. We consider the risk to you from financial failure to be low.

2.2 Human Resources

Staffing risks include unplanned resignation, illness and underperformance. As a small College with a relatively small tutor team we recognise that loss of staff or illness can potentially have a significant impact on our students, therefore, we ensure that none of our programmes are dependent upon the skills of one key person to deliver modules.

The College has a high tutor to student ratio (a minimum of 1 to 10) which ensures each cohort has a team of well qualified tutors. It is important to note that all of our tutors are practicing within their professions. This ensures a broad level of subject and professional knowledge which, while it has never been necessary to date, would allow cross-over within tutor teams to cover in an emergency. We further mitigate the risks in the following ways:

Unplanned resignation or illness – succession planning is part of the yearly review

process and this, together with a staff development programme ensures the ongoing academic and personal development of the tutor teams. This lowers the dependency on a single key member of staff as any unplanned-for loss of staff can be covered by another member of the tutor team until longer-term solutions can be put in place.

Underperformance - the College implements an Observation of Teaching and Learning Policy to ensure that every tutor's performance is monitored by senior staff each academic year. A staff development plan can be put in place for individual staff if appropriate.

Additionally, as part of our Staff Development Policy, staff are encouraged and supported in developing their skills through further education. For example, two of our tutor team are currently undertaking postgraduate study. We are confident that the risk to you in this area is low.

2.3 IT systems

Electronic risks are monitored at governance level and at the operational level. The College manages its IT systems to ensure that they are robust, adequate and fit for purpose. We mitigate risks from external attack and internal system failure by maintaining our firewalls and fire-proof back-up systems. We consider the risk to you from an IT systems failure to be very low.

Future planning includes installation of a new student records system. This will enhance the stability and security of our databases and further ensure that your data is kept safe and secure.

2.4 Compliance

Compliance risks include those associated with the failure to comply with statutory and regulatory frameworks. Mitigation of these risks are overseen by the Waverley Abbey College Advisory Group (WACAG). WACAG is a sub-set of the Board of Trustees.

To date the College has complied with all statutory and regulatory requirements successfully. The College has performed well in this area obtaining successful Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) reviews since our first application in 2014 to our most recent QAA Higher Education Review in 2017. The results of the National Student Survey have also been very good. We are currently researching a new student records system and anticipate having this in place within the next twelve to eighteen months. This will enable us to comply with the additional requirements of the various statutory bodies and ensure that we continue to manage and comply with statutory obligations in the future.

A further layer of regulation lies with our validating partner who retains overall responsibility for the quality and continuation of the programmes. The validating partner requires completion of annual review documentation which includes a written report and data to ensure the overall quality of the programmes is maintained. We therefore consider the risk to be very low.

2.5 Major changes to programme content

While the College has no plans to make major changes in-year to programme content, it does recognise that this is a risk factor for you. We will therefore endeavour to deliver the programme of study in accordance with the Programme Specification for the academic year in which you begin your programme. Major changes will normally only occur within an established programme review or business planning cycle or where programmes are revalidated.

Minor in-year changes are made in full consultation with the faculty and student representatives before submission to the validating partner for approval. We always consult and seek a wide range of views to any proposed minor changes to a programme, this includes consultation process with students. Any consequent change will be notified to you as soon as possible and attention drawn to changes within the programme handbooks.

Where programmes are benchmarked against professional bodies (as is the case with counselling) it may become necessary to adjust content to meet professional requirements to ensure that the programmes continue to meet professional standards. The same consultation process noted above would apply and notice of such changes will be communicated to everyone impacted by the change as soon as practicable.

We consider the risk of a major and minor changes to your programme to be low.

2.6 Major changes to methods of delivery

The College's uses a variety of methods of delivery, for example, face-to-face lectures, process groups, other small groups, personal tuition and independent learning. These methods are outlined in the Programme Specification for each programme. We do not plan to change our methods of delivery, therefore the risk to you is very low. However, should the College decide to make such a change this would be made only after full consultation with staff, the student body and with the approval of the validating partner.

2.7 Closure of programmes

Once you are enrolled on a programme the College is committed to enabling you to complete your programme of study and, if closure did occur, we would aim to teach out

a programme to its conclusion so that you can complete your programme. We recognise, however, that there is a risk to you should one of the following instances occur:

- closure of a programme during the recruitment cycle
- closure of a programme mid-year
- closure of all programmes due to some disruption, closure of the College or financial failure
- loss of validation - the validating partner terminates validation

Closure of a programme – if we close a programme during the recruitment cycle, or make changes to the advertised programme, we will inform applicants at the earliest opportunity in order to minimise potential disruption. This risk may occur where recruitment for a specific programme has insufficient numbers to ensure financial viability and a good student learning experience. Where possible we would offer alternative programmes, defer a programme or assist you in finding another provider with a similar programme. At this point we have never cancelled a programme and we consider the risk level as very low.

Closure of a programme mid-year – Where numbers on a programme become too low to continue offering a good student learning experience a full consultation process (see section 2) would take place. We have never closed a programme mid-year and therefore, with our commitment to enabling you to complete your programme, we assess the risk as low.

Closure of all programmes – The risk that we are unable to continue to offer programmes due to some form of disruption, closure of the College or financial failure is low. As previously noted, the College is in a robust position. However, in the unlikely event that the College needs to close its programmes, the validating partner has contingency plans in place which would enable you to complete your programme of study and achieve your award. We assess the risk that you would be unable to complete your programme as very low.

Loss of validation – Potential risk of termination of validation is covered by the partnership agreement between the College and validating partner. The validating partner has agreed to ensure that, should validation be withdrawn from the College, you, as a current student would be enabled to continue your programme to completion of your award. To mitigate any risk of loss of validation the College maintains a close

relationship with its validating partner to understand its requirements, changes in policy or strategic direction. However, we recognise that this is largely outside of our control and therefore we note this as a moderate risk.

2.8 Impact of Brexit

The outcome of the Brexit process is unknown at this point. We anticipate however, that once the process is complete we may not be able to recruit students from the European Economic Area (EEA). The risk is that this could potentially impact recruitment numbers. However, the number of students that apply to study with us is very small and therefore, we do not believe that our inability to recruit students from within the EEA will have a substantive impact on the recruitment to any of our programmes. However, the risk that we will not be able to recruit students within the EEA is a moderate risk (please see section 2 for mitigation of this risk).

3. Measure in Place to Mitigate Risks

In assessing the risks that we consider to be reasonably likely to materialise we have included all risks assessed as low and moderate so that you are fully informed of the ways in which we mitigate those risks. We are aware that within a diverse body of students, some students may have specific requirements and we are committed to tailor support wherever that is appropriate and where the measures outlined below prove to be unsuitable.

3.1 Finance, closure of programmes, termination of validation

We have identified low to moderate risk in the areas of finance, closure of programmes and termination of validation.

We are committed to ensuring that you have the opportunity to complete your programme of study and to achieve your intended award. To mitigate risks in these areas WACAG (sub-set of the Board of Trustees) maintains oversight and governance of the management of all areas of risks to the delivery of the Colleges services in order to minimise disruption to those services in the event of an incident. It meets regularly to oversee all matters relating to the College.

These risks are further managed through a robust budgetary system that includes a review of programmes to be offered for the next academic year to monitor viability and continuing demand. The budgeting process includes a review of staffing levels and recruitment of additional staff. This ensures that adequate staff are appointed and staff development needs are catered for. Therefore, only programmes that are financially viable and adequately staffed are offered and promoted.

Our validating partner is equally committed to enabling you to complete your programme of study and achieve your award. This includes oversight of the College's performance, the quality of its programmes and financial stability. It maintains due diligence in these areas to ensure that the College remains in good standing. Oversight is maintained through its system of Link tutors, who maintain regular contact with us, and annual reports that monitor quality and statistics relating to the performance of the College and its students.

The validating partner's agreement with us includes a contingency plan, which identifies the process that will be used should the College fail for any reason. This plan also includes the risk that may arise from the university withdrawing validation from the College. The plan represents the validating partner's commitment to ensure that all our students have the opportunity to complete their award. The plan includes:

- arrangements to continue to teach students to the full completion of their programme of study
- the offer of an alternative programme on the validating body's own campus or at another partner's campus that operates locally and offers similar provision
- a requirement that we continue to work with the validating partner to ensure that the transition process is as smooth as possible and to minimise disruption to the students' programme of study

Where numbers on a particular programme become too low to continue, a full consultation process with staff, students and the validating partner, would take place before any action is taken. The various options would be discussed with all students impacted by the closure. This this might include transfer to a different mode of study, deferring your studies for a period of time or assisting you to find a place on a comparable course. The appropriate transcripts and academic references would be provided as required or appropriate. Compensation may be provided under the terms of the Refund and Compensation Policy <https://www.waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk/admissions/>

3.2 Major changes to programme content

There are no plans to make major changes to any College programmes. The programmes were initially validated in May 2017 and May 2018 and any major changes would normally only take place at revalidation.

We will take all reasonable actions to deliver your programme as described in the programme specification for the academic year in which you enrol. Our commitment to you is that we will restrict in-year major changes to those deemed absolutely necessary to achieve the required academic quality, quality of experience or professional body requirements. We will only do this after a consultation process with you, with all students impacted and with our validating partner. If appropriate, we would consider financial compensation should you suffer demonstrable, material financial loss because of major changes under our Refund and Compensation Policy <https://www.waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk/admissions/>

3.3 Impact of Brexit

The number of students recruited from the EEA is very small, for example, less than 2% of students enrolling on all programmes in the 17/18 academic year were resident in the EEA. Therefore, we do not anticipate that Brexit will impact recruitment to our programmes to the extent of putting continuation at risk. However, should recruitment from the EEA become a risk factor in the future, the College may consider applying for a Tier 4 licence.

4. Refund and Compensation Policy

The College has developed a Refund and Compensation Policy which outlines refunds or compensation that would be made to you in the event that we are unable to preserve continuation of your study <https://www.waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk/admissions/>. The parent company, CWR, has annual income in excess of £3million, assets of over £6million and reserves of more than £3million. Therefore, sufficient funds are available to provide refunds and compensation should they become necessary. However, as identified in this document, both the College and its validating partners are committed to ensuring that you have the opportunity to complete your studies and achieve your award.

5. Communication with Students

5.1 Where to find the plan

To ensure that current students are aware of the plan, we will place a copy on our Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) and draw students' attention to it through our Important Announcements process. Reviews or updates of the plan will be notified to current students in the same way.

We will ensure that Prospective students are aware of the plan by publishing a copy on the College website course information pages. A copy of the plan will be included with

any offer of a place on a programme.
<https://www.waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk/admissions/>

Staff will be able to view the plan on Moodle and notified initially through the Important Announcements process. Training on the content of the plan, and any subsequent reviews and updates, will be provided to staff during Academic Boards. This will ensure awareness when proposing programme changes or programme closure.

5.2 Updating the plan

A full consultation to identify new risks that may have emerged since the first implementation of the plan will be undertaken annually, this will include staff and students. A range of methods to consult students will be used, a collective consultation may take place through their student representatives or students may be consulted through an individual survey or class discussion. Once reviewed the plan will be submitted for approval to WACAG.

5.3 Implementation of the plan

Should this plan need to be implemented, we would aim to contact current students as soon as possible but within 14 working days of a significant risk materialising. We will use a number of methods to communicate, depending on the circumstance. Where appropriate and practical we may address the issue when students are on campus in order to offer an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the issue face-to-face with staff. We will write to students personally by email or letter and put a notice on our virtual learning environment (Moodle). We will consult students concerning arrangements and give regular updates on further developments during that process. Academic and administrative staff will provide assistance, advice and information to assist students with their individual questions related to their specific circumstances at any point during the process.

If the College closes or makes changes to a programme during the recruitment cycle, we will inform applicants in writing as early as possible and within 14 working days in order to minimise the potential disruption to the applicant and the application process. Where possible, we will offer an alternative programme in a similar subject area or offer the programme of study at a later date. If an alternative programme is unavailable or unsuitable we will offer assistance in finding a suitable programme at another provider.

Should a current or prospective student have a concern about the way the plan has been implemented, they may request a meeting with a member of staff or use the College

Student Complaints and Appeals Policy (on Moodle) or the Admissions Policy <https://www.waverleyabbeycollege.ac.uk/admissions/> as appropriate.