

# Student Protection Plan – Code of Practice

## DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

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<b>Target Audience</b>	
People who need a detailed knowledge of the document	Dean of Education; Management Committee, Academic Registrar; Admissions and Recruitment Manager, Admissions and Programme Administrators; Directors of Studies; Student Experience Officer, Finance Office, Quality Unit
People who need a broad understanding of the document	Students and Student Representatives
People who need to know that the Code of Practice exists	All academic staff

<b>Annex of Modifications</b>		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date of issue</b>	<b>Details of modification from previous version</b>

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction and Context</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Scope</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Roles and Responsibilities</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Measures to Inform and Protect Students</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Significant Material Change</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Disruption to LSTM Activity</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7. Loss of Key Staff</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8. Feedback</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>10</b>

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## 1 Introduction and Context

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1.1 The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) is committed to ensuring an optimal student experience for students throughout their student journey. This document outlines a Student Protection Plan to ensure that the interests of students are protected in the event of material change to their programme, suspensions, closures or institutional closure.

Such events can be triggered by scenarios such as (but not limited to):

- Significant material change to a programme
- A decision is taken not to run a programme for the subsequent year
- Major changes in year to course content
- Changes to regulatory framework affecting a specific course
- A decision is made to close the institution
- Loss or restriction of HEI status
- A strategic decision by the institution to close a programme or campus
- Removal of Tier 4 Sponsor License
- Disruption of LSTM activity
- Industrial action by LSTM staff
- Unanticipated departure of key members of LSTM Staff

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## 2 Scope

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This Code of Practice applies to all LSTM students who are enrolled or have applied to enrol on LSTM delivered programmes of study.

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## 3 Roles and Responsibilities

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3.1 The Dean of Education will:

- Monitor Institutional performance and act as a contact with the HE regulatory bodies.
- Work with regulatory bodies to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to minimise disruption to students' activity in the event of loss or restriction of HEI status.
- Authorise the recruitment of area specialists to resource the delivery of programmes.
- Ensure that normal operations are maintained (as far as possible) during periods of Industrial action.

- Operate and refer to LSTM's Business Continuity arrangements to ensure appropriate responses are made to sustain and deliver LSTM's teaching commitment, with as little impact on the student experience as is reasonable and practicable.
- 3.2 The Dean of Education will:
- Consider all requests for compensating students where disruption to their studies has led to demonstrable material financial loss.
  - Undertake Equality Impact Assessments to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.
  - Investigate feedback and respond to complaints made regarding the Student Protection plan, or implementation of said plan.
- 3.3 The Director of Studies will:
- Support students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers where significant material change impacts on delivery options.
  - Ensure that there is clear communication and consultation with students for all changes to student's programme of study (including but not limited to; location, timing, scheduling, timetabling, suspension or early closure)
  - Provide support for students to access a programme run by another provider, including making arrangements for the transfer of credit and academic progress.
- 3.4 LSTM Admissions team will:
- Contact students and provide detailed information, advice and guidance based on their individual circumstances.
  - Provide assistance for disrupted students by providing evidence/letters/statements/transfer assistance in support of continuation of their studies.
  - Make practical changes to programme delivery, including timetabling, room booking, notifications, staffing requests.
- 3.5 Learning and Teaching Committee will:
- Monitor feedback and complaints in relation to the Student Protection Plan, providing an annual report to Audit Committee on its performance.
  - Manage, monitor and report on Tier4 sponsorship applications, performance and feedback.

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## **4 Measures to Inform and Protect Students**

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4.1 LSTM is committed to communicating any changes to students as early as possible, with clear information and options.

4.2 All reasonable steps will be taken to minimise the resultant disruption to those services and to affected students by, for example:

- offering affected students, the chance to move to another course;
- delivering a modified version of the same course;
- providing assistance to affected students to switch to a different provider.

4.3 Where a student is required to transfer course, or move to another institution there are likely to be implications for student finance arrangements. LSTM's Admissions Team will be notified of students affected in the event of any the above steps being taken. Admissions will contact affected students and provide detailed information, advice and guidance based on their individual circumstances.

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## 5 Significant Material Change

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### 5.1 Institutional Closure

Institutional failure will be monitored through risk management in accordance with HE regulatory bodies and any instance of this will be managed in accordance with LSTM policies.

Where LSTM has no option, other than to close, it may consider measures such as those below to protect student experience:

- where possible, closing in a gradual way, over a period that would allow current enrolled students to complete their studies at the Institution;
- where the above is not possible, in supporting students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers and (where appropriate financially) by compensating students where because of disruption to their studies they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss;
- merging with another institution to maintain all or part of the current provision.

### 5.2 Institutional Closure of Part of Campus

Where part or all of the campus is rendered unusable for activities involving students, LSTM will typically consider remedies such as:

- relocating provision to an alternative location, this may include hiring spaces for programme delivery (where possible nearby) and/or installing temporary buildings on the LSTM's land (where available);
- revising timetabling to allow all of the scheduled teaching to take part in the available facilities. This may include student contact sessions being held outside of normal office hours. Where such an approach is taken, appropriate consultation will normally be conducted with stakeholders who may be affected; appropriate equality impact assessments will also be undertaken;

- delivering programmes via alternative means, such as Distance Learning. Where such an approach is taken, the LSTM will consider whether this it is appropriate for enrolled students who would be affected.

### **5.3 Loss or Restriction of HEI Status**

In the event of loss or restriction of HEI status, LSTM will work with the regulatory body to:

- ensure all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the resultant disruption to affected students;
- ensure that, as far as possible, changes are made in a transitional manner.

### **5.4 Withdrawal of Designation**

In the event of de-designation of its courses for 'Student Support' purposes (resulting in the withdrawal of statutory student finance for its courses) LSTM, will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resulting disruption to students by, for example:

- working with relevant funding bodies to allow enrolled students to complete their year of study/programme;
- where the above is not possible, supporting students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers and, where appropriate, financially compensating students where they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss because of disruption to their studies
- considering assistance for affected students by providing evidence/letters/statements in support of continuation of their studies;
- merging with another institution to maintain all or part of the current provision.

### **5.5 Suspension of Course**

LSTM has established and tested procedures in place of the event of a suspension / closure of course. Where there is a material impact on the students, the effect will be mitigated by:

- communication with current students to provide assurance that they will not be adversely affected by the decision, and provide assurance that they are able to complete their studies at the Institution;
- where possible, provision will be made to allow for the completion of studies where 'mitigated circumstances' have been presented;
- consultation with stakeholders who may be affected to ensure appropriate equality impact assessments will also be undertaken;

### **5.6 Major Changes in-Year to Course Content**

LSTM will use all reasonable endeavours to deliver the programme in accordance with the description applied to it in LSTM's prospectus for the academic year in which a student began their programme. However, in the event of major in-year changes to course content, LSTM will ensure that:

- changes are restricted to the minimum necessary to achieve the required quality of experience, and affected students are notified and consulted with as appropriate;
- it works with students to ensure the offer is still acceptable;
- where necessary it allows students the opportunity to withdraw from the programme;
- where required students will be offered reasonable support to transfer to another LSTM course, or to another provider.

### **5.7 Suspension of Tier 4 Sponsor Licence**

In the event of suspension of Tier 4 Sponsor status, LSTM will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resultant disruption to those services and to affected students by, for example;

- working with UKVI to allow enrolled students to complete their year of study/programme;
- allow students already in receipt of a VISA based upon an allocated CAS from the LSTM to enrol and commence their studies;
- offer students who have not commenced their travel to LSTM, the opportunity to postpone their application pending the resolution of the suspension.

### **5.8 Revocation of Tier 4 Sponsor Licence**

LSTM, in the event of revocation of Tier 4 Sponsor Licence will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resultant disruption to affected students by, for example providing assistance to affected students to switch to an alternative sponsor.

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## **6.0 Disruption to LSTM Activity**

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Where events result in term-time programme disruption, LSTM will normally consider whether it is practicable to make changes to programme delivery, rather than closing or suspending an affected programme. Actions to minimise disruption may include:

- temporary short-term suspension of programme delivery (e.g. where there is a change in the programme delivery location or staffing, with appropriate actions to mitigate impact on students);



- changes to the programme delivery location or method, which may include distance learning;
- changes to the staffing of a programme, for instance through a review of internal staff resources, including recruitment of area specialists, where appropriate;
- offering students, the opportunity to transfer to an alternative programme;
- provision of reasonable support to students for accessing a programme run by another provider, including making arrangements for the transfer of credits and information about academic progress.

## 6.1 Industrial Action

LSTM has established frameworks for consultation and negotiation with the recognised trade unions. It is highly committed to maintaining an effective employee relations culture and working with trade union colleagues to achieve reasonable solutions to matters that may arise from time to time.

Where industrial action does occur, LSTM will seek to:

- ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible;
- take all reasonable steps to fulfil its responsibilities to students in ensuring that any disruption is minimised and students are not, as far as is possible to determine, disadvantaged by the action.

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## 7.0 Loss of Key Staff

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Where possible LSTM will:

- seek to fill gaps as quickly as possible, by moving other current members of staff with appropriate skills and experience, into the vacant post(s) or recruiting externally, to avoid disruption;
- where LSTM cannot avoid closing a programme, the policy as outlined in section 5.5 will apply.

LSTM's Disaster Recovery Plan (incorporating our Business Continuity Plan) covers other actions affecting business continuity, such as acts of terrorism, damage to buildings or equipment.

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## 8.0 Feedback

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Students wishing to provide feedback regarding the LSTM's management of the process of change should follow LSTM'S complaints procedure.

## 6 Appendices

Summary of Key Risks and Mitigation			
Risk	Mitigation	Probability/Impact	Notes
Significant material change to a programme in an academic cycle	Robust programme approval process Material changes to be approved with sufficient notice to allow existing students to complete on existing format or have a choice to go onto new format of programme	Low/Medium	There would be a choice for students to complete the programme in the original format or alternatively in the revised format.
A decision is taken not to run a programme for the subsequent year	Process in place to provide sufficient notice for students be notified before making any commitment to enrol. Ensure clear messaging to existing enquirers and applicants to notify of change.	Low/Medium	Applicants and enquirers would be notified well in advance of course commencement of any potential changes
Major changes in year to course content	Very unlikely as it would require approval for the programme for major amendments and not valid for the existing cohort if they have already commenced studies	Low/High	This would be very unlikely to happen due to programme approval process and the need to reapprove major changes.
A decision is made to close the institution	Strong governance structure with Board of Trustees having oversight of the internal management structures. Ofs scrutiny. Established for over 120 years, strong financial governance and strategic plan.	Low/High	Very unlikely given the strong footprint and relevance our activity, financial and structural soundness. Established QA governance.

Summary of Key Risks and Mitigation			
Loss or restriction of HEI status	Strong governance structure with Board of Trustees having oversight of the internal management structures. Ofs scrutiny. Established for over 120 years, strong financial governance and strategic plan.	Low/High	Very unlikely given the strong footprint and relevance our activity, financial and structural soundness. Established QA governance.
A strategic decision by the institution to close a programme or campus	Clear process for decision making at strategic level tough Management committee and Board of Trustees for campus related issues.  Academic QA process for programme closures that is based on looking at transitional arrangements for programme closure and based in evidence to support decision	Low/High	Unlikely for this to happen without extensive consultation and evidence gathering to support the decision as well as a comprehensive plan for transitional arrangement for affected students.
Removal of Tier 4 Sponsor License	UKVI compliance process in place alongside UKVI Steering Group to review best practice of UKVI compliance	Low/High	Unlikely considering UKVI compliance structure that is continually enhanced and updated to reflect best practice in the sector.
Industrial action by university staff	Contingency planning in pace in advance of known periods of industrial action to reduce impact on students	Medium/medium	Advance planning and communication to students of potential impact will reduce any adverse impact for the students
Unanticipated departure of key members of University Staff	Succession planning is embedded within LSTM's Strategic Plan through Planning for growth priority in LSTM Strategic Plan.	Low/High	LSTM has clear deputies in place for key positions as part of contingency planning.