

Student Protection Plan for the period 2023/24

Provider's name: Royal Holloway, University of London

Provider's UKPRN: 10005553

Legal address: Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX.

Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan: StudentServices@rhul.ac.uk

What is the Student Protection Plan?

The plan tells you, as a student or applicant, what actions will be taken if a course, the campus, or the whole institution closes. The plan outlines: our assessment of the risk of these things happening; the measures we have in place to protect you as our students in the event that one of these risks occurs; and the possible impacts on the continuation of your studies if certain events occur.

Royal Holloway has a clear commitment to preserving the continuation of study for all students. Any issues that arise relating to this are brought to the attention of the Executive Board. If this plan needs to be triggered, then this document explains how we will support you to continue or complete your studies or reimburse you if this is not possible. This Student Protection Plan is reviewed annually by Academic Board, Council (via the Council Students, Education and Research Committee) and the Students' Union. The plan is owned by the Executive Director Student Journey.

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, how those risks may differ based on students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

Royal Holloway delivers degree courses which lead to awards of the University of London, and degree courses, diplomas and certificates that lead to awards of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. The university is a UKVI Sponsor Licence holder with Student Sponsor status, allowing the university to sponsor international students to study in the UK.

Permanent closure of the whole university – Very low

The university is long established with consistently strong financial performance. The university has healthy cash reserves and a significant asset base. The governing body of the university oversees the financial performance and there is a comprehensive committee structure responsible for governance of financial planning, risk management and strategy.

Temporary shutdown of the whole, or part of the campus – Very low

In the event of a natural disaster or an incident such as a major fire, which resulted in the unavailability of specialist space or resources, the business continuity plan would be implemented to secure alternative facilities in the local area.

Permanent closure of a campus location – Low

Our central London provision continues to be successful, and recruitment is growing year on year. Should the university deem it necessary to close the central London campus, it would either endeavour to find a suitable venue in London for your courses to be delivered or move delivery to the Egham campus. For courses currently delivered on the Egham campus, the university would strive in the first instance to teach out your course, and has approved processes in place for course closure, withdrawal or suspension as indicated below.

Course closure and/or changes to material components of courses of study - Low

The risk that the university would be unable to deliver your course and would need to close it or remove material components of courses (for example due to key specialist staff or postgraduate research (PhD) supervisors leaving) is low. The initial course approval process ensures that new or revised courses have sufficient resource to deliver them, and changes to material components are considered as part of ongoing course review and development. In the rare instance that a course is required to close or materially change, the university would strive in the first instance to teach out your course and has approved processes in place for course closure, withdrawal or suspension. These processes include discussing such closures with students detailed in the [Course closure and suspension policy](#).

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The university has an agreed process in place to minimise the risk of losing a professional body (e.g. Professional Regulatory Statutory Body - PRSB) on relevant courses.

Closure of collaborative partners - Low

The university's Register of Collaborative Provision provides details of all partners and types of partnerships. A robust due diligence process is followed before setting up such agreements, they are carefully monitored annually and appropriate contractual mechanisms in place in the event of failure. Should the university close, we would support students at collaborative organisations (where Royal Holloway is the awarding body) in the same way as the main student cohort. The risk is low, however in the unlikely event that a collaboration were to collapse, where Royal Holloway is the awarding body the university would strive in the first instance to teach out your course. As noted above, there are approved processes in place for the university to discuss such closures with students: Policy for course closure and suspension

In the unlikely event that the progression agreement with Study Group International Study Centre is terminated, then the university will honour any offers of places on university courses as at the date of termination (subject to students meeting the conditions of their respective offers) and will honour any remaining obligations to students already enrolled on courses at International Study Centre via Study Group.

University of London closure – Very Low

The risk that the university would no longer be able to award University of London awards is very low. If this were to happen, the university would be able to use its own degree awarding powers for taught and research degrees to award Royal Holloway and Bedford New College degrees to students who would have been eligible for a Royal Holloway, University of London award. If University of London shared services were no longer available, then we would seek alternative equitable provision for students.

Loss of UKVI Sponsor Licence – Very low

The University has a strong track record, having had Student (previously Tier 4) Sponsor status since Tier 4 (now Student Route) of the points-based system was introduced in 2008. The university has robust monitoring processes in place to continue to meet stipulated requirements and also has an A rating for the Skilled Worker Visa (previously Tier 2) and Temporary Work Visa (previously Tier 5) of the Sponsor Licence.

Industrial action – Very High

The university is committed to effective working relationships with trade unions and aims to minimise impact on your studies in the event of industrial action by its staff. The university has a robust contingency plan which can be put in place to mitigate against the risk of disruption to your study. The plan aims to minimise the impact of industrial action on students with the expectation that, on working days, activities continue to be delivered that enable you to meet the learning outcomes of your course. During any strike action, the university will monitor closely which classes take place so that the impact of the action on courses and assessment is understood. Support services such as the Library, Student Services Centre and the Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS) should continue to operate during any strike periods.

The university also recognises that, should any of these risks materialise, they may not only impact on continuing students, but also applicants who have accepted a firm offer of a place and who are committed to studying at the university. The university would be committed to offer these applicants a place on an alternative course at the university where possible.

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2. The measures that the university has put in place to mitigate those risks that we consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

As indicated in the risk section above, if your campus, course, or department had to be closed or a collaboration ceased, the university would strive in the first instance to 'teach out' your course to ensure that you are able to complete your degree at the university.

We have contingency arrangements in place to address disruption to teaching or assessment. For example, teaching and assessment can now be delivered using methods such as (but not limited to) online delivery, recording of lectures, provision of independent learning materials and modification of assessment methods, ensuring that academic standards are met. This also extends to our student and academic services.

Issues of 'pathways' of study, such as a foundation year that leads to a main degree or moving from undergraduate to masters level in a particular discipline, would be carefully considered during the implementation of the policy for course closure and suspension.

If for any reason it was not possible to 'teach out' then the university would assist you to transfer to a related alternative course within the university, or if appropriate, to another institution. In the unlikely event that you were transferred to alternative provider then consideration would be given to ensure the alternative course was 'comparable', in terms of graduate prospects and student satisfaction levels.

3. Information about the policy the University has in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to our students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that we are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

Financial Effect of Course Closure

In the unlikely event the university closes a course and/or moves teaching to an alternative campus or institution, the university will consider reimbursing you. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the circumstances and in line with any mitigation offerings which will allow you to complete your period of study.

The university's policy on refunds and compensation is encapsulated in the university's [Student Fee Regulations](#).

The university has cash reserves of £88 million, at 31 July 2022, which would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for students in all foreseeable circumstances.

Re-imburement may be given in relation to the following:

- Additional travel/relocation costs to enable completion at an alternative university campus.
- Additional travel/relocation costs to enable a student to transfer to complete at an alternative institution
- Maintenance costs if a student is required to lengthen their period of study to enable them to complete the course
- Continuation of an expected bursary for the remainder of the academic year

If this occurs you will be advised of the re-imburements claim process, and your refund will be processed in line with the [Admissions policy](#).

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4. Information about how the university will communicate with students about our student protection plan

Student involvement in creating and updating the plan

The current Student Protection Plan has been drawn up in collaboration with the University's Students' Union. The university's Executive Board meets regularly with the key members of the Students' Union to discuss matters such as those covered in this protection plan and how students' interests might be protected in the event of a risk materialising.

Going forward the plan will be reviewed annually by the Academic Board and Council (via the Council Students, Education and Research Committee), as the governing body of the university, both of which include student representation.

How can students access the plan?

The plan will be publicised to current and future students by posting a link on the relevant sections of the [Admissions page](#) and [Student Intranet](#)

How are students involved if a course needs to close?

The university has in place a [Policy for Course Closure and Suspension](#)

As outlined in the policy, student consultation is a part of this process, and the relevant academic staff will meet with students enrolled on any affected course and representatives from the Students' Union to discuss the implications of the proposed closure and will endeavour to teach out the course to minimise the impact on students. There may, however, be cases where departments wish to withdraw courses after they have been advertised and offers made. To minimise the impact on students, the university has agreed strict deadlines in terms of making and communicating decisions about course closures/withdrawals and suspensions before students commence their studies. This is to ensure that undergraduate students can amend their final choice of course and to allow postgraduate students sufficient time to explore alternative study opportunities at the university or at other institutions.

Student support

In the unlikely event that the any of the measures in the Student Protection plan need to be implemented, the university will ensure that students have ready access to the full range of services provided by the Student Services Centre, and internal support, health, and welfare services, bringing in additional resources in times of increased demand. The university will also make sure that students are aware of the support they can receive from the Students' Union, including the [Advice Centre](#), and of how they can make a complaint if necessary. This information is readily available on the university [website](#).

Ensuring good communication

The university ensures that staff are made aware of the implications of the student protection plan when they propose course closures and about their responsibilities in terms of consultation with students through the course closure process.