

## Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: Craven College

Provider's UKPRN: 10001743

Legal address: Craven College, Aireville Campus, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 1US

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### Student protection plan for the period [2020-21]

**1. 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**

#### RISK ASSESSMENT

The College has a Risk Policy and operates a Risk Register. A Risk Management Group has been formed that meets six times a year to review and update the risk register. The risk that the provider as a whole is unable to operate is very low. The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes is very low. Once enrolled on a programme, students will complete that programme at the College and the tutors ensure there is a 'teach out' plan in place. In order to ensure that the quality of the academic experience remains, the students are supported to succeed, and steps are taken to offer ongoing academic and pastoral support.

We have sufficient cash reserves to provide refunds and compensation for those students where there is an increased risk of non-continuation. The College issued refunds of £74K for non-continuing students in the previous year and expects to refund £80K of fees for such students in the current year. Our cash reserves are sufficient to support these refunds

#### Student Information

The College aspires to provide full and transparent information for students in order to create a questioning student body who have the information they need to challenge or ask for clarification on information. Measures include:

- Transparency of course information on the website including programme specifications
- Open days and applicant days for prospective students
- Terms and conditions document available on the website, and are sent as a PDF document to prospective students
- The HE Officer visits all first-year groups to explain the regulations for their course
- Help and advice about finance or issues concerning loans is available from Student Support Services staff
- Consultation with students as appropriate regarding any course changes

#### Ensuring that policies and practices for course closures and changes are transparent, fair and accessible

The College aims to ensure that all information is available to enable students to make informed decisions suited to their own needs. Information on specific policies and procedures regarding students are available on the College website.

#### Communicating with students when changes occur

Students are consulted when changes are made both in writing and through participation in meetings with College representatives.

Following validation or re-validation of a course, the College contacts all applicants to advise them that the course has been approved by the validating university and includes a copy of the approved programme specification.

### **Informing and consulting with students about material changes to continuing courses**

Higher Education students at College remain on the same fee structure throughout their studies: their fees do not increase.

Changes to programmes following review or revalidation from external partners only impact on new entrants to those programmes. This entails the College having clear regulations that match to specific programmes.

### **Arrangements for ensuring continuity of provision for students when a course is closed**

In the event of a programme failing to recruit sufficient students, applicants will be informed of the situation and if appropriate, they may be offered an alternative programme. The Central Admissions Team is also on hand to help applicants to apply elsewhere.

Once enrolled on a programme, students will complete that programme at the College and the tutors ensure there is a 'teach out' plan in place. In order to ensure that the quality of the academic experience remains, the students are supported to succeed, and steps are taken to offer ongoing academic and pastoral support.

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver specific modules is low because we have low staff turnover and relatively few specialist subjects. The one area where the risk of tutor-loss is slightly higher is for the aviation programmes and for this reason we work closely with partners at Leeds Bradford airport to identify possible future part-time tutors.

## **2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise**

In the event of a programme failing to recruit sufficient students, applicants will be informed of the situation and if appropriate, they may be offered an alternative programme. The Central Admissions Team is also on hand to help applicants to apply elsewhere.

Once enrolled on a programme, students will complete that programme at the College and the tutors ensure there is a 'teach out' plan in place. In order to ensure that the quality of the academic experience remains, the students are supported to succeed, and steps are taken to offer ongoing academic and pastoral support.

### **3. 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**

#### **DELIVERY OF REFUND POLICY**

Craven College is able to deliver the financial implications of our refund policy. We have sufficient cash reserves which would be able to provide refunds and compensation for those for whom we have identified an increased risk of non-continuation of study. In 2019-20, the College issued refunds of £74K for non-continuing students and expects to refund £80K of fees for such students in the current year. Our cash reserves are sufficient to support this policy.

#### **COURSE FEES**

The Governing Board is responsible for agreeing the College's Fee and Refunds Policy.

The fee policy shall comply with relevant funding bodies' rules and regulations including those relating to fee remission and fee levels. Any publication containing information on course fees will identify tuition fees, and where relevant and available, examination and registration fees.

Where a course has additional resource fees, these will be indicated in published materials and collected at enrolment. An administration charge may be included in the stated examination / registration fee.

If, at the required time of publishing, the cost of any of the above elements cannot be reasonably estimated, the published fee shall be exclusive of that element which shall be charged separately when the costs can be assessed with more certainty. This will be made clear at enrolment.

Course fee levels shall be set with the aim of recovering the costs of all of the elements making up the total course costs. In setting the tuition fee element of the course fees, reference will be made to the assumed fee income level set by the Office for Students (OfS) or other funding body and take account of:

- Impact on recruitment, retention and achievement
- Market conditions
- Widening participation
- Funding available from other sources

The tuition fee structure set for each academic year will apply throughout that year unless unforeseen circumstances intervene.

All students accept responsibility for payment in full of course fees and examination / registration fees by signing a College Student Enrolment Form.

#### **REFUND OF FEES**

Fees paid in advance shall generally not be refundable and outstanding fees shall remain payable. The circumstances where refunds / credits may be made include:

- Where a course has been closed by the College or the time and / or day changed such that the student can no longer attend, or the student has notified his / her withdrawal from the course at least 5 working days prior to the course start date.
- If the College changes the time and day of a course / class after it has started and the student is no longer able to attend, the amount of fees refunded will take into account the time the student has already been on the course. In every case the College will endeavour to offer a suitably acceptable alternative course.
- If the College's initial fee assessment is incorrect, resulting in an overcharge, it will refund the difference of fees charged to the student.

Refunds will normally be made within 15 working days. In all other circumstances, fees will not normally be refunded.

The College will consider a refund of fees in full or in part in the following circumstances:

The College can help with the completion of loan applications to Student Finance England. All responsibility for the initial application, the progress of the application and approval of the loan remains with the student / applicant.

Where fees are to be paid wholly, or in part, by an employer / sponsor, confirmation in writing must be provided at enrolment. Without this confirmation, students will be expected to pay directly at enrolment or will not be enrolled onto the course.

Students shall be liable for payment in the event that employers / sponsors withdraw their commitment to pay.

Higher Education Loans should be in place at the point of enrolment. Students shall be liable for payment in the event that the loan application does not proceed or is unsuccessful. Any unsecured loans will be billed directly to the students at the end of the first half term. If a student pays the course fee and subsequently successfully applies for a student loan, the fee paid by the student will be refunded.

Where students provide proof that they have a loan application with Student Finance England, any fees / charges over and above the amount in the application must be paid on enrolment.

All students accept responsibility for payment in full of course fees and examination / registration fees by signing a College Student Enrolment Form.

Fees paid in advance shall generally not be refundable and outstanding fees shall remain payable. The circumstances where refunds / credits may be made include:

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- If the College's initial fee assessment is incorrect, resulting in an overcharge, it will refund the difference of fees charged to the student.
- Refunds will normally be made within 15 working days.
- In all other circumstances, fees will not normally be refunded.

The College will consider a refund of fees in full or in part in the following circumstances:

Where the circumstances which make it impossible for the student to take up or continue with his / her studies are exceptional and entirely outside the control of the individual concerned. In such cases the College shall consider a refund / credit of fees in full or in part at the discretion of the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality. These cases can be difficult to rule upon and careful consideration will be given to the individual circumstances. Examples may be:

- The student relocating away from the area, such that attending the course is no longer feasible
- Death / serious illness of a member of the immediate family necessitating a change of responsibility for the student
- Long-term personal illness / injury preventing study and realistic completion of the course (medical certification will be required to support). In some instances, fees may be deferred to the following academic year.

Any refund under these circumstances will relate only to parts of the course not yet undertaken when the refund request is made and will be limited to remaining full terms of the course. If examination / registration fees have not yet been paid to the Awarding Organisation, these will be refunded in full.

Where the student has enrolled on a course and it is subsequently identified that, through no fault of the student, he / she has been directed to a learning programme that is inappropriate for his / her level of

ability. The Head of School / tutor concerned must support the case. The College will endeavour to offer a suitable, acceptable alternative course, or the refund.

Monthly payments made to the College by the Student Loans Company cease when a student leaves their course. In accordance with guidance from Government, HE students would not be liable for the amount outstanding in these circumstances.

### **APPEAL MECHANISM**

If the student is not satisfied with the decision taken in his / her case, he / she can submit an appeal setting out additional information in support of the case. The appeal must be in writing and within 15 working days of receiving the initial decision. Appeals will only be considered where relevant additional information is provided.

Responses to appeals will normally be given within 15 working days. An administration charge of £10 will generally be made for processing any refunds but may be waived in certain circumstances if considered appropriate.

### **COMPENSATION FOR MAINTENANCE COSTS**

Once enrolled on a programme, students will complete that programme at the College and the tutors ensure there is a 'teach out' plan in place. In order to ensure that the quality of the academic experience remains, the students are supported to succeed, and steps are taken to offer ongoing academic and pastoral support. The need for compensation for maintenance costs therefore does not arise.

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

We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students by publishing on the website and sending the link along with their offer letter.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by discussion at internal meetings, most importantly the HE Operational Meeting and the Scheme Management Board.

We will review our student protection plan at HE Operational Meetings on an annual basis. We will involve students in the process by sending to Course Representatives for comments and discussing at Scheme Management Board.

The College may make a strategic decision to close a programme due to poor recruitment or because it has been suspended from the College portfolio. In cases such as these:

- A 'teach out' programme will exist for those currently enrolled on programmes. Where numbers are low this will involve individual supervision.
- Applicants will be advised of potential closure by the end of July (for full time applicants) and at least a month before the start date (for part time students).
- Applicants will be advised of similar provision elsewhere by the College's Student Support Services and given advice on the best way to pursue their chosen programme