



Annex D: Student Protection Plan 2021/ 2022

Provider's Name: Mont Rose College of Management & Sciences LTD

Provider's UKPRN: 10023777

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1. The Purpose

1.1. The document has been developed to provide assurance to current and future students and the Office of Students (OFS) that the College has appropriate arrangements in place to protect the quality and continuation of study for its students in case of non-continuation of courses.

1.2. This plan has been made available to our staff and all our current and potential students.

1.3. The College takes all reasonable steps to ensure that approved course programmes are run without any variations. However, the College is prepared for any unforeseen changes and ready to protect its learners if required.

2. Our Commitment

2.1. The College commits to consulting with the student body about any planned changes to the programmes prior to implementation. Any impact on students will always be considered when making the final decision to proceed with any changes.

2.2. The College commits to deliver the news about any change in a transparent and open manner.

2.3. The College commits to taking reasonable steps to ensure that any decision on a change to programmes or modules (unless insignificant) will not be implemented in the same academic year as the decision to change was taken.

2.4. If a decision is taken to change the delivery location, the College will ensure that the change will not take place until the start of the next academic year. In any case, the College undertakes to keep the location within 10 miles radius of the current campuses.

2.5. The College will aim to avoid making changes to programmes or modules close to the start of the academic year. If such changes occur, The College commits to informing prospective or continuing students within 5 working days of a change decision taken.

2.6. In the very unlikely event of the closing a programme, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that current students are not affected but able to complete their programmes.

2.7. The College commits to supporting the students if any programmes are discontinued and will take necessary action to transfer to other courses or to another provider.

2.8. The College commits to publishing any significant changes, including those outlined above, via the College website, email/ SMS within 5 working days of the decision date. All relevant students will be invited to attend the College for a meeting, where the changes will be discussed. The Welfare Officer will be assigned to contact any students who report having special needs or circumstances and require extra support.

2.9. The College commits to providing all required guidance to the students. The students will also be informed that they can seek independent advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Welfare Officer will help the students with special needs or special circumstances to make appointments.

3. Assessment of risks to the continuation of students' courses and likelihood of these risks to crystallise

3.1 The College emphasises the need to have strong internal controls (IC) to ensure that all legal and regulatory requirements and the College's relevant policies and procedures are met and that monitoring the effectiveness of IC is in place. The College has an Internal Audit Committee (IAC), which is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of internal controls and compliance with the statutory and regulatory requirements. All departments are reviewed by the IAC and must implement any recommendations for improvements issued by the Committee and approved by the Board of Governors.

3.2 The College prepares five-year financial forecasts every year for its strategic planning and to provide assurance to its stakeholders.

3.3 In its most recent audited financial statements, the College reported total revenue of £7,780,000 at 31st August 2020. The revenue remained constant with the previous year due to the effects of the pandemic. The College has no borrowings, and liquidity is 450 days. The liquidity increased by 67 days from the previous year. The College, therefore, believes that the risk of institutional financial failure is very low.

3.4 In preparing its annual budget, the College take into account the likely total refund and compensation. This has been the normal procedure for years. The College keeps a safety buffer fund for any unforeseen circumstances every year.

3.5 Because of the effective management of resources, the College can demonstrate a strong financial position with a healthy surplus transferred to reserves every year. The College maintains a Risk Register to identify all major risks, the impact and the likelihood.

3.6 The risk that one or more of the College's campuses will close is relatively low. The College has the experience and a good track record of running its business and managing academic programmes effectively.

3.7 The risk that the College decides to transfer some classes to another campus is high, but the impact is low. As part of its expansion plan, the College is acquiring another building that will become the main College campus. Mont Rose House at Gants Hill is only 1 mile away from the Churchill and Shakespeare campuses. There is a possibility that some classes will be transferred to Mont Rose House in order to provide better facilities. Before making a decision to transfer any classes to Mont Rose House, the College will first consult with the affected students and receive their feedback in writing. If the change likely affects any students adversely, they will be advised to refer to the College's *Refund and Compensation Policy* (<https://mrcollege.ac.uk/mrc-policies/>) to check if they qualify for compensation.

3.8 The College recognises that there is a risk that some students' needs will differ from others due to their personal characteristics or circumstances; therefore, it will not be possible to apply the same solution to all affected students. For this reason, the College has staff who can handle students with special needs or circumstances on an individual basis. (Welfare Policy)

3.9 The risk of course discontinuation is low as these types of decisions form part of the Strategic Plan, and the aim will always be to allow the affected students to complete their courses.

3.10 Discontinuation because of insufficient enrolment is low as the College prepares marketing and recruitment plans well in advance. The preparation includes the analysis of demand for courses.

If demand for some courses were to be reduced, the College would take this into account when making an annual review of strategic plans and financial forecasts.

3.11 The risk that the College exits the market is very low. The College's strategy is to expand its operations. There is no indication that the College will change its position.

3.12 The College has a strong team and succession plans for key staff members. Staff churn is therefore perceived to be low risk.

3.13 The risk that the College loses the right to provide programmes, either because of losing a specific course designation or sub-contractual arrangements, is low. The College's policy is to work openly, reliably and transparently to ensure stable and strong business relationships. Maintaining a strong financial position and an excellent working relationship with the Partner University and relevant professional accrediting bodies assure that the College will continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

3.14 If any of the above risks crystallise, the following policies/procedures would apply, some are available on <https://mrcollege.ac.uk/mrc-policies/>

- Student Protection Plan
- Refunds and Compensation Policy
- Transfer Policy
- Internal Control Procedures Ensuring the Effectiveness of Student Protection Plan (internal policy)
- Welfare Policy (internal policy)

4. The measures that the College has put in place to mitigate the risks

- **Measures to address changes to programme content or programme closure**

4.1. The Academic/Quality Assurance Committee might, time from time, decide to apply changes to the course modules or assessments to improve the quality of provision or, if so instructed by the accrediting body or Partner University. The College will take all reasonable steps to apply the required changes at least two months before the course. The students will be informed about implementing a change and invited to comment within 5 working days of the decision about the change taken.

4.2. Though very unlikely, but if the decision is taken to discontinue a course, the College will close the programme to new entrants but apply for a 'teach out' designation for all continuing students. The College will preserve the funds required to 'teach out' the current students if the need arises.

4.3. If for any reason some students prefer to transfer either to another course or provider, the College will offer the options:

- Transfer to another course within the institution
- Transfer to a modified version of the course within the institution
- Transfer to another provider

4.4. The College will put every effort in to find an alternative course with another provider if that is preferred by the student.

4.5. If the student chooses an option to transfer to another course or another provider after the first two weeks from the start of the course, following the change or cancellation of the course, the student is advised that the student loan should be arranged accordingly and the College Finance Team is there to assist the student. (Ref. Mont Rose College Student Transfer Policy)

The College's Admissions and Finance departments will provide all required advice to the students, based on their individual circumstances. (Ref. Mont Rose College Student Transfer Policy)

4.6. If any students with special needs or circumstances are affected, the Welfare Officer will be engaged together with the staff from the Admissions and Finance departments in order to find the right solution for the student.

4.7. If the student is affected adversely because of the above change, he/she should refer to College's Refund and Compensation Policy to check the eligibility for financial compensation.

- **Measures to address the risk of campus closure/ relocation**

4.8. In accordance with the requirements of HE regulatory bodies, the risk of campus closure will be monitored through the College's Risk Strategy. If the decision to close the campus is taken, the College will refer to *internal control procedures ensuring the effectiveness of the Student Protection Plan* and follow it to ensure that the closure is gradual, so the students are able to complete their course at the College. If this is not possible, then the students will be transferred either to other campuses running the same programmes or other institutions. The decisions will be taken after consulting the students.

4.9. In order to improve the students' experience or due to health and safety reasons, the College may see it necessary to close the campus or relocate. In these cases, the course timetables would be revised so the affected teaching can take place at the available facilities. Appropriate consultation will be conducted with all concerned stakeholders before the implementation of the change.

4.10. If a decision is taken to relocate, the College undertakes to move to a location within a 10-mile radius from the current location, transfer all programmes and help the affected students to arrange alternative travelling routes.

4.11. If the decision is taken to close the campus without relocation, the College undertakes to transfer the programmes to its other campuses in Redbridge and help the affected students to arrange alternative travelling routes.

4.12. If any students with special needs or special circumstances are affected, the Welfare Officer will be engaged together with the staff from the Student Services and Finance departments in order to find the right solution for the student.

4.13. If the student is affected adversely because of the above change, he/she has to refer to College's *Refund and Compensation Policy* to check the eligibility for financial compensation.

- **Measures to address the risk of de-designation**

4.14. In the very unlikely event of the College's specific course designation being withdrawn or suspended, the College will refer to *Internal Control Procedures Ensuring the Effectiveness of Student Protection Plan* and take the following actions:

- The College will appeal the decision or reapply for designation.
- The College will use the sub-contractual agreement with Buckinghamshire New University and transfer the students on their sub-contracted courses.
- If any programme cannot be transferred to the Partner University, the College may apply for the designation to 'teach out' the affected students, so they are able to continue and access the funding until they complete their programmes.
- If the 'teach out' designation is not granted, the College will help the students to transfer to other providers who run these programmes if it is what the students want and financially compensating students if they suffer a demonstrable financial loss because of disruption to their studies.

4.15. De-designation is unlikely to materially affect current students, while new applicants would also unlikely be affected as their loans could be transferred to the Partner University as per the agreement or to another provider if so agreed with the students.

4.16. If any special needs students are affected, the Welfare Officer will be engaged together with the staff of the Student Services Department and Finance departments in order to find the right solution for the student.

4.17. If the student is affected adversely because of the above change, he/she has to refer to the College's *Refund and Compensation Policy* to check the eligibility for financial compensation.

- **Measures to address the risk of withdrawal of the Agreement**

4.18. The College has a sub-contractual agreement with Buckinghamshire New University. In the event that the University decides to withdraw its sub-contractual agreement for any reason, then the University's own Student Protection Plan would come into effect for students registered on its programmes. The University ensures that it has a contractual commitment from its educational partners to 'teach out' their current students or to offer an alternative programme. An exception to this would be where concern over quality and standards has

been identified – in which case the University would take appropriate action to monitor through its Partnership Board.

4.19. If the University decides to withdraw the agreement, the College will approach other universities to obtain the sub-contractula agreement for the current and new programmes.

4.20. The students will receive all required advice and support from the College's Student Services team regarding the continuation of their programmes. They would be offered the following options:

- Completing their courses under Buckinghamshire New University
- Transferring into a course provided by another University
- Transferring to another university (if it is preferred by a student)

4.21. The College will liaise with the students and, according to their wishes, will help them to transfer to another provider smoothly, requesting transcripts promptly and liaising with the relevant University on the student's behalf.

4.22. If any special needs or special circumstances, students are affected, the Welfare Officer will be engaged together with the staff from the Admissions and Finance departments in order to find the right solution for the student.

4.23. If the student is affected adversely because of the above change, he/she has to refer to College's *Refund and Compensation Policy* to check the eligibility for financial compensation.

- **Measures to address the risk of market exit**

4.24. In the very unlikely event of a decision being taken to close the College, the College will refer to *Internal Control Procedures Ensuring the Effectiveness of Student Protection Plan*

The following will apply:

- The College undertakes to teach the students until the end of the academic year.
- The College will work to place the students for the following year of their course (if not completed) with another provider for the new academic year.

4.25. If any special needs students are affected, the Welfare Officer will be engaged together with the staff from the Student Services and Finance departments in order to find the right solution for the student.

4.26. If the student is affected adversely because of the above change, he/she has to refer to College's *Refund and Compensation Policy* to check the eligibility for financial compensation.

- **Measures to address the risk of disruption due to the loss of a key staff member**

4.27. The College recognises the risk of putting too much reliance on one person; therefore, a succession plan is developed for senior staff members. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that every single key staff member is covered by another staff member with the appropriate skills and experience to cover the vacant post.

4.28. Continuous training is provided to staff to ensure that there will be no disruptions to the quality of services provided.

4.29. Employment contract with the College incorporates a requirement for employees to provide at least four weeks' notice. In case a teaching staff member leaves in between the sessions, the College has the provision for continuous coverage. Data Bank was developed to provide all lecture notes and handouts to new staff members. The College also uses 'jobs.ac.uk' and 'indeed' to recruit new staff members.

- **Measures to address the risk of disruption due to an industrial action**

4.30. Though this event is very unlikely. However, if the risk crystallises, the College will continuously work, ensuring that all normal operations are in place.

4.31. The College will take all appropriate actions to minimise disruption by ensuring that the teaching schedule is not affected.

- **Measures to address the risk of Tier 4 licence removal**

4.32. The College has no international students enrolled at the moment, and there is no plan to enrol any in 21/22 AY. Therefore, the removal of Tier 4 licence will not affect our current students.

4.33. If the College starts taking international students, then, in the event of revocation of Tier4 sponsor license, the College will provide help and assistance to the affected students to switch over to another institution.

- **Measures to address the risk of Pearson's centre removal**

4.34. Though very unlikely, if for any reason Pearson decides to close our centre, the normal procedure will be to inform the students about the change within 5 working days.

4.35. The students' achievement record would be uploaded on the Pearson portal within 5 working days, allowing the institution where student transferred to access the data and arrange their continuation from the point they stopped at the College.

- **Measures to protect the student in case of other internal and external risks**

4.36. The College has its *Disaster Recovery Plan*, which covers internal and external risks (acts of terrorism, damage to building and equipment etc.). These risks are unlikely to crystallise, though the College has relevant procedures in place.

5. Monetary compensation schemes

5.1. If any decision is taken by the College that results in a disruption of studies and the affected students are not able to transfer to another course within the institution or to another institution due to special needs, or if the transfer results in a financial loss to the students, they may be eligible for financial compensation. The students can refer to the College's *Refund and Compensation Policy* to check the eligibility for financial compensation.

5.2 The affected students will be contacted via post within five working days, providing the details of the change and giving instructions and information about the claim process and eligibility criteria.

5.3 The students must be able to demonstrate that the change resulted in a financial loss.

5.4 All claims will be assessed based on the students' individual circumstances, considering the student's eligibility for compensation and the amount of compensation.

5.5 The Welfare Officers will be informed if any of the affected students have special needs or disabilities. They will offer their assistance in making claims within five working days. This information will also be on the College website guiding the affected students with special needs to contact the Welfare Officer if required.

5.6 After the assessment, eligible students will be paid financial compensations within five working days according to the College's *Refund and Compensation Policy*

6. The Partner University's reassurance for students studying at Mont Rose College:

Buckinghamshire New University provides the following reassurance for its students studying through a sub-contractual arrangement with a partner:

'In the event that a Partner College becomes unable for whatever reason to continue to provide the programme to each student in the manner and to the standard which the student and we might reasonably expect, the University is committed to ensuring that each student is able to continue with their programme to the natural conclusion of their studies with the minimum of disruption. The options open to the University in such a scenario depend largely upon the individual circumstances at the Partner but would include: providing direct teaching and support services to students at the Partner's teaching premises; securing appropriate teaching accommodation in the appropriate location for such teaching; arranging the transfer of

students to study at a University campus on the same or very close programme, or transferring students to such a programme at another HEI.’

7. Policy Review and Monitoring

7.1. The *Student Protection Plan* will be reviewed by the Academic/Quality Assurance Committee on an annual basis. The College will engage the student body every year to take part in the review process.

7.2 The College’s Audit Committee will take responsibility for monitoring that the *Student’s Protection Plan* is clearly understood and ready to be actioned in case the material change is triggered.

8. Complaints

If the students are not satisfied with the way the *Student Protection Plan* is implemented, they can—refer to College’s Complaints Policy and Procedures, available on our website:

<https://mrcollege.ac.uk/mrc-policies/>

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