



Name of Policy:	Programme Closures, Suspensions and Closures Policy
Scope of Policy:	The policy sets out the University's procedures for closing, suspending or changing any programme of study
Owner and Author:	Deputy Vice Chancellor (External Relations)
Applicable to:	Staff
Consultation Process:	Portfolio & Partnerships Oversight Group and deliberated and endorsed the policy for Academic Affairs Committee approval
Approval Body:	Academic Affairs Committee
Date of Approval:	December 2015
Date of Implementation	As above
Review Date:	-
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Contact for Further Information:	Officer of the Portfolio & Partnerships Oversight Group

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy sets out the University's procedures for closing, suspending or changing any programme of study. It is designed to reflect the Statement of Good Practice adopted by HEFCE, UUK, Guild HE, AoC, NUS, Independent Universities Group and Study UK in October 2015. It is also designed to be consistent with, and to further elaborate, the provisions relating to course changes and closures ('withdrawals') contained in the University's Contractual Terms and Conditions.

2. Closure and Suspension

- 2.1. A College may wish to close and remove a programme of study from the University's portfolio. Closure of a programme, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, means that the University will cease to recognise the programme as one for which a student may be registered as a candidate.
- 2.2. Suspension of a programme study, is defined by a fixed timeframe in which the programme will not be delivered.
- 2.3. A College or constituent School may not close or suspend a programme without University approval because of the implications for the contractual relationship between current and prospective students and the University.
- 2.4. A request to close or suspend a programme must be made by the College in which that programme is located. In the case of joint programmes that span more than one College, the relevant Colleges must consult and obtain the agreement to the closure or suspension. College Management Teams should approve the proposal in line with their strategic plans.
- 2.5. Subsequently, the request to close or suspend must be made to the Portfolio and Partnerships Oversight Group (PPOG). PPOG will then make a recommendation to the Senior Management Team (SMT) which shall then refer the matter to Academic Affairs Committee (AAC), if appropriate.
- 2.6. A College's request to suspend or remove a programme must be submitted on the approved proforma and shall be accompanied by the following information;
- Market rationale
 - Strategic and financial implications
 - Impact, if any, on arrangements with partner institutions and/or PSRBs
 - Impact on current and prospective students and sponsored students
 - Impact on existing or proposed programmes
 - Impact on relationships with sponsors and list inclusion
- 2.7. The proforma shall also confirm that consultation has taken place with academic staff affected by the request.
- 2.8. On receipt of a request to close or suspend a programme, PPOG shall recommend one of the following to SMT:
- Decline the request
 - Approve the request without condition(s)

- Approve the request with condition(s)

3. Programme Changes Prior to Registration

- 3.1. The University may be required to make changes to programmes at the following times:
 - Between publication of the prospectus and registration
 - After registration
- 3.2. Where material changes are made between the publication of the prospectus and registration, the University will draw these changes to the attention of applicants as soon as possible and advise them of their right to seek entry to another University programme for which they may be qualified or to withdraw their application and seek entry to another institution.
- 3.3. Where the applicant has already accepted an offer, they shall be furnished with all necessary information, advice and guidance by the University to help them make an informed decision on their future course of action.
- 3.4. In normal circumstances, material changes to programmes should not be made after registration, but where this is unavoidable, students and their representatives shall be consulted at the earliest opportunity on the changes and, where practicable, their views shall be taken into account.
- 3.5. If a student reasonably believes that a material change to their programme adversely affects them, they may cancel their contract with the University. In such circumstances the University will offer suitable information, advice and guidance to a student and, where possible, facilitate their transfer to another institution which offers an appropriate programme for which they are qualified.
- 3.6. Further to commencement of and during the course of a student's studies, the University may make minor amendments to programmes in order to improve the quality of educational services; to meet the latest requirements of a commissioning or accrediting body; or in response to student feedback. Where such minor amendments to the delivery of a programme are necessary, the University will consult with or inform students and their representatives of these changes, as appropriate, and in line with institutional quality assurance processes.

4. Consideration of the student interest

4.1. Current students

- 4.1.1. Current students must be allowed to complete the programme of study for which they are registered unless each gives their explicit written consent to the contrary. Such consent must not be sought until a closure or suspension recommendation has been agreed (subject to each student's individual consent being obtained) by PPOG, SMT and AAC.
- 4.1.2. Where a programme is being closed to new entrants only, the College's proposed arrangements for students currently registered on the programme (including those whose registration is suspended but have not yet completed the programme) must comply with the following:

- 4.1.3. Current students should be informed of their option to complete their programme of study or transfer to another programme within the University or to another institution. The University will provide all necessary information, advice, guidance and support to facilitate students in deciding which option to follow.
 - 4.1.4. The standard of academic provision and the student experience must, as far as is reasonably practicable, be maintained throughout their period of registration. In particular, the conditions must be maintained to enable the stated learning outcomes in the relevant Programme Specification to be achievable by students who are being 'taught out'.
- 4.2. *Applicants*
- 4.2.1. In the event of a programme closure, suspension or material changes to programme content, all communications with applicants must be undertaken *via* the Admissions Office in Student Administration.
 - 4.2.2. Applicants who have accepted offers should not be contacted until the closure or suspension process has been fully completed.
 - 4.2.3. Applicants thus affected should then be informed of their options to transfer their applications to another programme within the University or to another institution.
 - 4.2.4. Applicants who have been made offers, but have not yet accepted them, may however be advised that a closure or suspension request has been made. Such applicants should be advised that the offer of a place is suspended until a final decision has been made and will be withdrawn if the request is accepted. They should also be advised that they may choose another programme or institution.
 - 4.2.5. UCAS should be notified by informing the University UCAS contact when the closure or suspension request has been finalised by SMT and AAC.

5. Timing

- 5.1. Wherever possible, requests to delete, suspend or make material changes to the content of programmes should be made in a timely manner.
- 5.2. Since preparation for the production of the printed prospectus takes place some two years ahead of publication, the process of strategic planning should identify those programmes which are likely to be closed prior to the commencement of the prospectus production process.
- 5.3. As a result of unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. loss of specialist staff) it may be necessary to close or suspend a programme within a foreshortened timescale. In such circumstances, the student interest is paramount and full consultation should be undertaken with all affected students and their nominated representatives.
- 5.4. In order to ensure full compliance with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and related regulations, students should be given the fullest information, advice and guidance to enable them to make well-informed decisions in the event of programme closure or suspension.