

# Student Protection Plan

## 2024–2025

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## Introduction

1. The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires Higher Education Institution's (HEIs) to maintain a Student Protection Plan to protect students' interests in the event of 'material change', such as programme (course) changes, suspensions, closures, or institutional closure. Students are advised to read this document with reference to the [Student Contract](#) which explains Ravensbourne's commitment to communicating any changes to students as early as possible, with clear information and options.

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## Who is covered by this plan?

2. To see who is covered by this plan, please see the diagram in Annex A below.

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## Why is this plan necessary?

- 3.1 The purpose of the Student Protection Plan is to preserve the continuation and quality of study for all of the provider's students whenever a risk to the continued study of students crystallises. There must be a plan to ensure that there are arrangements in place to ensure the protection of students if an institution ceases to operate, or is forced for financial or other reasons to make major changes in the way it operates. In designing and seeking approval for the SPP for Ravensbourne, we have worked with the higher education regulator for England, the Office for Students (OfS), to ensure that it addresses the specific circumstances of Ravensbourne and the risks associated with the provision of specialist higher education in design and media in London. The updated SPP was considered by the Board of Governors in September 2024, at which consideration by the representative of Ravensbourne Student Union (RSU) was sought. Continuing student input is sought on an ongoing basis through RSU's representatives on Academic Board when the Plan is subject to annual review.
- 3.2 The plan covers specific events that would trigger its implementation, i.e. instances where continuity of study is put at risk through no fault of the students. These may include:
  - a decision to close Ravensbourne;
  - a strategic decision to close a course;
  - cyber security breach
  - loss or restriction of university status;
  - withdrawal of Ravensbourne's designation for student finance purposes;
  - removal of the Student Visa Sponsor Licence (the Home Office issued licence which allows a provider to teach international students);
  - changes to regulatory framework affecting a specific course;
  - loss of accreditation from professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), e.g. ARB, etc.

- major changes in-year to course content;
- industrial action by Ravensbourne staff or third parties;
- the unanticipated departure of key members of staff;
- other disruption of institutional activity (e.g. temporary disruption within term- time not covered by any of the above).

3.3 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.

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

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## Measures to inform and protect students

### 4. Institutional Closure

4.1 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 Ravensbourne policies. The likelihood of institutional closure is extremely low. Ravensbourne publishes statutory accounts which show it is a 'going concern' with strong reserves and liquidity.

4.2 In the highly unlikely event that Ravensbourne has no option other than to close, it may consider measures such as those below to protect the student experience and to mitigate the impact on students:

- 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.

4.3 Students will be informed within 10 working days of any formal decision by the Board of Governors to undertake any of the actions above.

4.4 Ravensbourne has two state-of-the-art campuses for its discipline areas, equipped with up-to-date safety features. It is therefore unlikely that part or all of the campuses would be rendered unusable for activities involving students. However, should this happen, students will be informed as quickly as possible

and normally within 10 working days of the decision and informed of the proposed remedy.

The University will typically consider remedies such as:

- relocating provision to an alternative location, this may include hiring spaces for programme delivery (where possible nearby);
- 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 institution will consider whether this it is appropriate for enrolled students who would be affected.

## **5. Course Withdrawal or Suspension**

5.1 Withdrawal or suspension of courses at Ravensbourne's is strictly governed by procedures put in place by the Academic Board. The risk that students will be impacted by the withdrawal or suspension of courses is considered low. The University has established procedures for the approval of course withdrawal and suspension via the Academic Board, which duly consider the impact on students and the arrangements for their continuation and completion (see [General Academic Regulations](#), Section 3, Chapter 4 – Procedures for the Suspension and Withdrawal of Courses and Modules) Withdrawal or suspensions will normally be phased, enabling existing students to complete their course of study In the exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, alternative arrangements will be put in place to safeguard the ability of students to complete their studies by supporting students with transferring to another course or institution in line with the University's Student Transfer Plan. All affected students will receive detailed communications at all stages and will be offered the option to discuss the implications with an appropriate member of Ravensbourne's Executive Team and such advisers as are appropriate, within 10 working days of the formal decision.

5.2 The implications of the closure of the programme will already have been carefully considered including:

- the impact of the closure on students;
- the strategic consequences of the closure including the impact on other course and/or collaborative projects.
- how the quality and standards of the student experience will be maintained until the completion of the termination process.
- the process of consultation with or notification of students where the delivery of the programme will materially change.
- progression of students who may need to repeat units.
- the strategy for ongoing delivery and support (including areas such as external examiner arrangements, revalidation requirements, etc.) during the phasing-out period.

- the implications regarding professional body registration (where applicable).
- notification of prospective students (where applicable).
- Loss or Restriction of University Status

6.1 Ravensbourne has strong systems in place to assure academic standards. Ravensbourne was awarded Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) having been subject to a full scrutiny by the Designated Quality Body (the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, QAA) in 2016/17. The risk of loss or restriction of our University status or TDAP is low. In the unlikely event of loss or restriction of University status or TDAP, Ravensbourne will inform students immediately and work with the regulatory body to:

- ensure all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the resultant disruption to affected students by supporting students to transfer to degrees validated by another degree awarding body;
- ensure that, as far as possible, changes are made in a transitional manner.

## **7. Withdrawal of Designation**

7.1 Ravensbourne University is committed to meeting all the conditions of registration with the Office for Students (OfS) which will ensure that its courses are designated and remain so. This is managed and monitored on an ongoing basis by the University's Executive Team, with oversight by the Board of Governors, to ensure that the likelihood of withdrawal of designation remains low.

7.2 However, in the event of de-designation of its courses for 'Student Support' purposes (resulting in the withdrawal of statutory student finance for its courses) Ravensbourne will inform students immediately. Where we identify that de-designation could potentially affect students' financial circumstances, ability to continue their studies or to secure a Ravensbourne University qualification, we 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.

## **8. Major changes in-year to course content**

8.1 Ravensbourne University will use all reasonable endeavours to deliver the programme in accordance with the description applied to it in the institution's prospectus for the academic year in which a student began their programme. The University is embarking on a Quinquennial review with the implementation of a new Common Academic Framework during 2021/22 which may inspire changes to current course content for relevance and currency purposes, therefore the risk is medium.

- 8.2 In the event that major in-year changes to course content become necessary, Ravensbourne will inform students immediately. In terms of impact on students and how we will mitigate these impacts, we 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 programme at the Institution, or to another provider.

## **9. Suspension of Student Visa Sponsor Licence**

- 9.1 We consider the risk of suspension of our Sponsor Licence as low. Ravensbourne University is a Student Visa Sponsor and reviews its compliance with the Government's UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) guidance annually. We have a dedicated UKVI Authorising Officer (a member of our Executive Team), a UKVI Compliance Manager, and other officer roles in line with the UKVI's guidance to ensure the risk of license suspension is minimised.
- 9.2 In the unlikely event of suspension of Student Visa Sponsor status, those students who require a Student Visa to study in the UK would be impacted and the University will inform affected students immediately and 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 confirmation of acceptance of studies (CAS) from Ravensbourne to enrol and commence their studies;
  - offer students who have not commenced their travel to the institution, the opportunity to postpone their application pending the resolution of the suspension.

## **10. Revocation of Student Visa Sponsor Licence**

- 10.1 We consider the risk of revocation of our Sponsor Licence as low. Ravensbourne, in the event of revocation of Student Visa Sponsor Licence will inform affected students immediately and 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.

## **11. Loss of accreditation**

- 11.1 Some of Ravensbourne's higher education courses are subject to accreditation by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB). All are subject to the quality assurance processes of those bodies. The likelihood of loss of accreditation is low because we attend to the requirements of these bodies in the validation, monitoring and review of these courses internally.

- 11.2 In the event of the institution losing PSRB accreditation for one or more courses, it would impact on students on affected courses as well as potentially on prospective students considering studying at Ravensbourne University. Current students will be informed immediately and measures to protect student experience will be considered, such as those listed below:
- 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 who holds the relevant accreditation;
  - we also take care that our marketing and advertising material for potential applicants is accurate, with programme specifications being reviewed on at least an annual basis.

## **12. Disruption to Institutional Activity**

- 12.1 Like other organisations, internal or external events may impact on the ability of the University to physically deliver its degree programmes. These range from damage to our buildings or equipment to acts of terrorism. A Business Continuity Plan is in place and includes a co-ordinated plan for responding to such an event. This plan is monitored and actively tested as part of our institutional risk management process, to ensure it remains robust and up-to-date. A set of Emergency Regulations sit within the General Academic Regulations that may be activated by the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) if a University-wide or centre specific emergency arises (e.g. a pandemic). As the campus is located next to the O2 and the uncertainty of the pandemic impacting on delivery in the future, we consider the likelihood of this risk to be medium.
- 12.2 Ravensbourne University has two state of the art campuses for its discipline areas equipped with up to date safety features. It is therefore unlikely that part or all of the campuses would be rendered unusable for activities involving students. However should this happen, students will be informed as quickly as possible and normally within 10 working days of the decision and the proposed remedy.
- 12.3 Where events result in term-time programme disruption, the institution will normally consider whether it is practicable to make changes to programme delivery, rather than closing or suspending an affected programme.
- 12.4 Actions to minimise the impact of 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.

## **13. Termination of Collaborative Partners**

### 13.1 Introduction

13.1.1 Ravensbourne University, London has approved a limited number of selected institutions to act as the infrastructure and delivery providers of Ravensbourne University courses in England, under a sub-contractual relationship (franchise). Students studying at our associate partners are covered by the Ravensbourne Student Protection Plan.

13.1.2 In general, our partnerships remain stable. We maintain good relationships with our partners and undertake robust monitoring and assessment of student experience. Our quality assurance processes refresh the due diligence that takes place at the start of a partnership relationship and continuously monitor ongoing arrangements through robust link tutoring procedures, with a focus on partnerships embedded into our academic committee governance structure. Furthermore, each partnership involves development of contractual terms that cover this, and there is a fair process to explore the options of teach out based on the circumstances of the possible termination or closure of a partner or specific course(s). We therefore assess the risk of partnership failure as low.

15.1.3 Ravensbourne University, London also acts as the validating partner for a small number of institutions who do not have their own awarding powers but are registered with the Office for Students (OfS) and have their own Student Protection Plan. In these cases, you will be taught and registered at the partner provider and will be covered by their Student Protection Plan in the first instance, should the partnership be terminated, however as Annex A demonstrates, any student studying for a Ravensbourne qualification at a partner institution is ultimately covered by Ravensbourne's Student Protection Plan.

### 13.2. Risk Assessment and Communication

13.2.1 The University will continuously monitor the financial and operational health of its partner institutions to identify potential risks early.

13.2.2 An early warning system will be established through the university's partnership strategy, to detect signs of instability in partner institutions.

13.2.3 A clear communication plan will be in place to inform students, staff, and stakeholders in a timely manner regarding any potential or actual termination or closure of a partner, and the proposed plans to protect student interests.

### 13.3. Continuation of Studies



13.3.1 Where possible, the University will implement teach-out arrangements, allowing students to complete their studies as planned with the relevant partner.

13.3.2 If teach-out is not feasible due to closure of a partner for instance, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to similar courses, either within the University or at other institutions. This will include:

- Providing students with transcripts and records of their academic achievements.
- Assisting with the application and transfer process to other institutions.
- Ensuring that any credits earned are recognised clearly by the receiving institution.

#### 13.4. Financial Support and Compensation

13.4.1 The University will have a clear policy for compensation where required, ensuring that students are not financially disadvantaged by the termination or closure. This may include compensation for additional costs incurred due to the transfer or teach-out process.

#### 13.5. Support Services

13.5.1 Academic advisors will be available to assist students in understanding their options and making informed decisions regarding their academic outcomes.

#### 13.6. Stakeholder Engagement

13.6.1 The University will work closely with partner institutions to ensure a smooth transition and minimise disruption to students' studies.

#### 13.7. Review and Improvement

13.7.1 The University will regularly review and update its policies and procedures related to franchise and validated partnerships.

13.7.2 A feedback mechanism will be established to gather input from students and staff on the effectiveness of the measures implemented.

13.8 The following table gives information to the student about which Student Protection Plan (SPP) will apply:

<b>Associate Partner Name</b>	<b>Applicable Student Protection Plan</b>
Oxford Business School (London, Slough and Nottingham campuses)	RUL SPP applies to all courses
Victoria College of Art and Design (London and Manchester campuses)	RUL SPP applies to all courses
Fairfield School of Business (Croydon, Leicester and Sheffield campuses)	RUL SPP applies to all courses (Partner is OfS registered and therefore

	consideration of their own SPP can be taken into account)
London School of Science and Technology (London, Birmingham, Luton campuses)	RUL SPP applies to all courses (Partner is OfS registered and therefore consideration of their own SPP can be taken into account)
UK College of Business and Computing (London campuses)	RUL SPP applies to all courses
Morley College (London campuses)	Partner SPP and RUL SPP applies to all courses
City and Guilds College of Art (London)	Partner SPP and RUL SPP applies to all courses

## 14. Refund and Compensation Policy

- 14.1 Ravensbourne University has a Refund and Compensation Policy which may apply in the event of failure of service under the circumstances described above. The University aims to offer practical remedies to students who are affected by actions covered by our Student Protection Plan or raise complaints which are upheld, in order to allow them to continue their studies. Compensation and refunds are considered as remedies of the last resort and will only be offered where there are no practical remedies available. This guidance should be read alongside [Ravensbourne's Student Complaints Procedure](#) and Student Terms and Conditions, which remains the definitive source for information on student refund and compensation.
- 14.2 This guidance is designed to comply with guidance issued by the Office for Students and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) as well as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's (OIA) approach to remedies and redress.
- 14.3 For the purposes of this guidance the following definitions are used:
- Refund – repayment of money paid by you to Ravensbourne University. This can also include discounts of future costs you may have to pay, such as tuition fees.
  - Compensation – money paid to you in recognition of a loss encountered as a result of our actions, or lack of action. This includes compensation for out of pocket expenses.
- 14.4 Section 7 of the Student Terms and Conditions detail expectations around changes to courses or discontinuing courses, specifically significant changes to/or closure of a course with notice in excess of three months of the proposed start date of the course, and substantial changes to/or closure of a course within three months of or after the proposed start date of the course, with regard to financial entitlements.

## 15. Cycle of Review

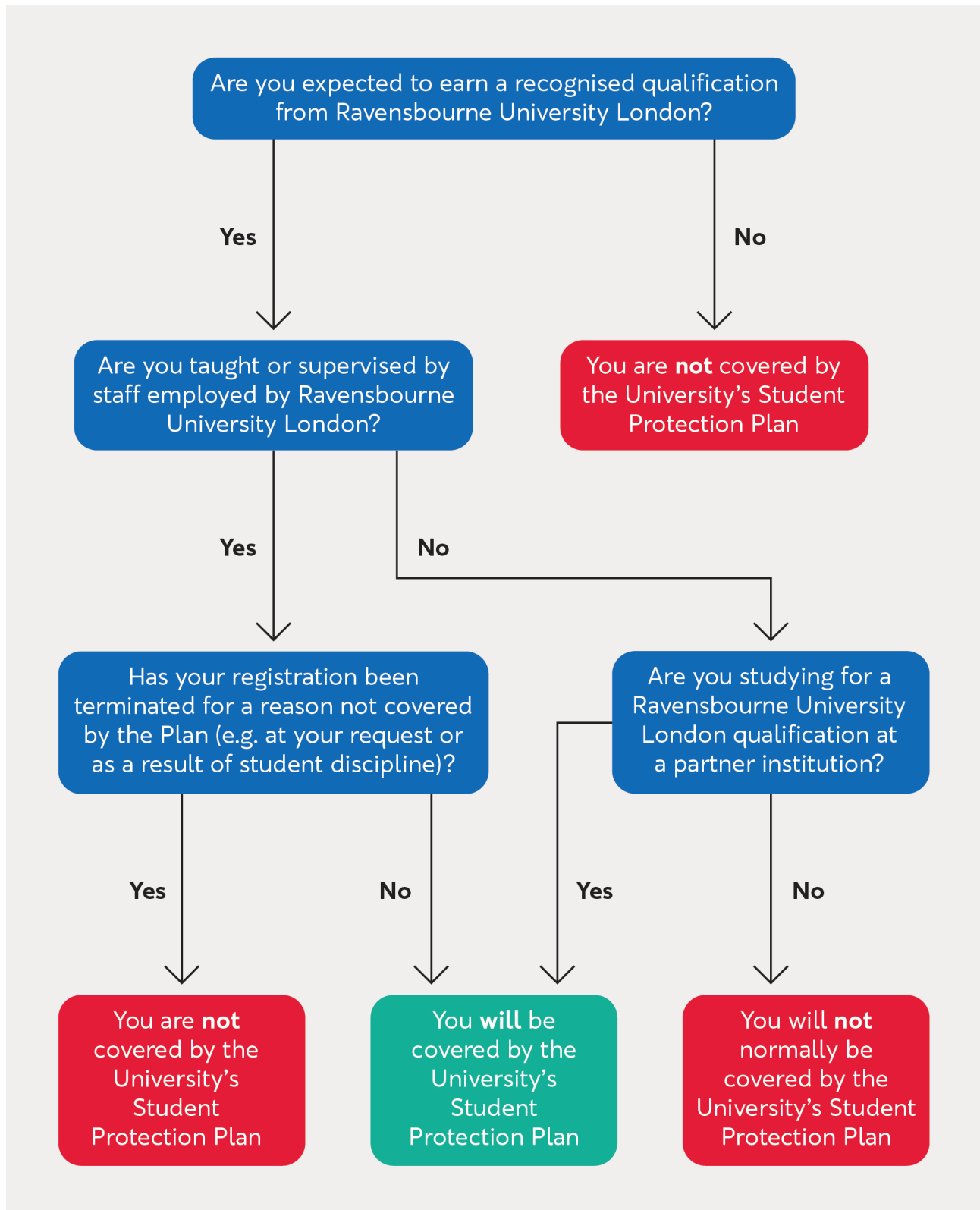
- 15.1 Ravensbourne University will review the Student Protection Plan on an annual basis, usually in the autumn term, and otherwise “by exception”, to the joint meeting of the Academic Board and Board of Governors. At all times we will have regard to the latest Office for Students conditions of registration. Review

will include consultation with Ravensbourne Student Union through their membership of the Academic Board.

**16. Publication**

- 16.1 This plan will be brought to the attention of applicants and students by being published, together with the Student Contract and Refunds and Compensation Policy, on the Ravensbourne website: [Staff and student policies | Ravensbourne University London, on the Intranet and within the Student Welcome Pack.](#)

## Annex A: Who is covered by this plan?



This version of the Student Protection Plan was approved by the Academic Board and Board of Governors on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024