

Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: Havant and South Downs College

Provider's UKPRN: 10005979

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Student protection plan for the period 2023-2025

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

The risk that the college is no longer able to operate is very low. The College has no long-term borrowings and has strong cash solvency. The latest financial health grade of South Downs, pre-merger to 31 July 2017 was 'Outstanding' moderated to 'Good', and the merged College (HSDC) has received substantial investment for the Government for T-Levels, the South Coast IoT and with future cash injection options as part of an emerging merger Property Strategy including an £11.5 million pounds fund for estates improvements from the DfE. The College was incorporated under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and has a vision 'to be a leading provider for professional and technical excellence'.

The risk that the college may lose validation for one or more of its courses is low. The college has a rigorous internal quality assurance process to ensure teaching, learning and assessment meet the expectations of validating organisations. The college works with two partner universities (University of Chichester and University of Portsmouth) and are externally quality assured by them with respect to the awarding of Foundation and Bachelors Degrees. Higher National Diplomas and Certificates are validated by Pearsons & UAL awarding body, whose external quality assurance processes are followed, against which the College is assessed annually. The College is regulated by the Office for Students for its Higher Education provision.

The risk that the College will not be able to deliver its activity at the current location is very low. The College delivers all its Higher Education provision at the South Downs Campus, that is also one of the largest college sites for delivery of Further Education courses for adults and young people. The South Downs Campus is still continuing each year with redevelopment projects as a technical and professional centre of excellence, which will underpin expansion of Higher Education provision at the College with the launch of the South Coast IoT in September 2024.

The risk that the college is unable to deliver courses in a subject area is low. Curriculum provision is developed in line with regional priorities and market demand, as determined by the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The risk that the college may not be able to deliver some individual courses is moderate, particularly on courses where student numbers are low. Courses are reviewed on an annual basis with respect to their financial viability and the quality of the student experience. If a course does not meet these standards, it might be the case that provision is closed for future applicants.

The risk that some components are unavailable to be delivered is moderate, typically due to the unavailability of specialised staff members either through long-term sickness or through difficulties in recruitment due to a lack of suitable candidates.

The risk that the college is unable to deliver a particular mode of study is low. Typically, courses are offered either on a part-time or full-time basis, based on subject and the local employment market. All courses have supporting material delivered via Google Classroom. There are no HE courses delivered wholly through distance learning platforms.

The risk that the college is unable to recruit a particular type of student is low. The college does not currently recruit international students and has no plans to start to do so. The college currently participates in activities to increase HE participation in South Hampshire and through the Southern Universities Network and will continue to actively recruit and support students to participate in Higher Education through the IoT.

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

If the college is not able to offer an individual course, the College will actively support the learners to complete their programme of study. In circumstances where a course is deemed at risk due to financial viability, the college may stop recruitment onto that course, but will continue to teach existing students until the end of their qualification. If a course was deemed at risk due to the quality of the student experience, intervention would take place in year and future to improve the quality to an acceptable standard.

In order to mitigate against the College being unable to deliver elements of a course, it seeks to develop staff skills and specialism in order to teach on a wider range of provision. A Training Needs Analysis is carried out annually, and staff development budgets are set to allow existing staff to upskill. The college maintains a database of staff qualifications and subject specialisms in order to be able to fill short term gaps in staffing. All HE Courses have resources and materials available on Google classroom.

If the College is unable to deliver elements of a programme due to specialised staff not being available, the college would seek to secure specialist provision from a validating partner, or another provider offering similar courses where appropriate. If this gap cannot be met, the college would seek to secure students a place on appropriate provision at an alternative local provider.

The SPP can also be sent to the carers of students with specific needs in case they are not able to fully access the information. The SPP will be published to all students regardless of background and appropriate methods will be put in place on a case by case basis to ensure all are able to access this. For example, if students do struggle with their English the Student Protection Plan could, on request, be published in another language.

The college has a Back on Track process, we use this process to ensure any student with identified disabilities/health concerns including mental health are supported adequately. This could involve agreements to flexibility in their study programme to ensure they can complete their chosen course. We can even consider breaks in study if appropriate. This would be applied on a case by case basis and allows for individualised support for students in the event of the SPP being triggered.

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 if you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

Refunds policy (included in Fees Policy): Updated HE section Jan 19
<https://hsdc-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2018/04/Fees-Policy.pdf>

Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints Policy:
<https://hsdc-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2018/04/Suggestions-Compliments-and-Complaints-Policy.pdf>

If the college needed to refund fees to an individual or group of students, the College currently has annual HE income of approximately £1m. Likely costs of refunds are anticipated to be minimal, and unlikely to exceed 5% of the total budget.

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

We will publicise our provision to current and future students through the College's website. New students will also receive a copy of the Student Protection Plan as part of the Induction materials on the course.

As part of the College's annual curriculum planning process, Heads of Faculty will be reminded of obligations to existing students with respect to HE provision, and any changes to provision will be planned accordingly.

We will review our Student Protection Plan annually through the HE Advisory Group which contains student representatives.

We will inform students of planned changes to their course by May 31st in the academic year preceding the change. Where courses are closed to new recruitment, provision will be supported through to the end of a course, students will be informed as a group and written-to, outlining the ongoing support available to students. Where circumstances mean that students will be unable to complete a course and an alternative provider is sought, the college will work with affected individuals to identify and secure a place at an appropriate local provider.

We have a team of staff (Careers, HE Course leads) who are available to advise learners. We have independent careers advice and have the Southern Universities Network staff who advise students on all HE options.

If our Student Protection Plan needs to be implemented, we will:

1. Give students at least 14 days' notice if we need to make changes to their course.
2. Meet with student representatives from the courses affected, and record minutes of these meetings which will be circulated within 48 hours via the College email system to these students.
3. Signpost students to independent organisations and sources of information (e.g. UCAS, SUN, OfS)