

Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: Study Group Limited **UKPRN:** 10008098

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Introduction

This Student Protection Plan sets out how continuation and quality of study will be preserved for current and potential Study Group students in the event of any identified potential risk arising. This policy applies to all Study Group students studying within the UK and EU.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the QAE office in consultation with relevant colleagues; students will be consulted about substantive changes through the network wide Student Advisory Board. The policy should be referenced in centres' Staff-Student Liaison Committee (or equivalent) meetings as necessary. A copy of this policy is made available to all future students at the time of application and may be accessed via a link in the Terms and Conditions found on each centre's website. It is also made available to all staff on the corporate website.

General Provisions

- (1) Centres should refer to their individual Business Continuity Plan in implementing any mitigation strategy, as required
- (2) A link to University Partner websites for Study Group delivery centres can be found at www.studygroup.com/partners

Potential Risks

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Assessment of Risk and Mitigation
Study Group ceases operating <i>Study Group as a company ceases to operate</i>	Severe	Low	The risk that Study Group will cease to operate is low because we have been committed to international education for over 25 years and work in partnership with over 50 universities around the world. Our overall financial performance is sound, as evidenced by the independently audited reports available on our website , and we continue to maintain excellent academic standards. In addition, we continue to review market trends and risks in relation to the recruitment of international students to ensure that our offering remains diverse and aligns with the needs of our potential students. The global and diverse nature of our business model means that we are able to manage potential financial challenges in particular areas of the business should this be necessary.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Assessment of Risk and Mitigation
			In the unlikely event that Study Group ceases to operate, we will work closely with university partners to ensure that students can complete their studies. Where this is not possible, we will seek to support students to apply to transfer to another provider, including making arrangements for the transfer of credit (if applicable) or demonstrating recognition of prior learning and providing information about academic progress.
A partner university ceases operating <i>A partner university to which Study Group students are due to progress ceases to operate</i>	Severe	Moderate	Study Group works closely with partner universities and our contractual agreements typically include provisions for those partner universities to provide resources, including premises for the delivery of our programmes. In addition, students have an expectation that they will be able to progress to a partner university on successful completion of their programme with us. We acknowledge that there are challenges currently present in the higher education sector which may impact the financial sustainability and viability of HE providers, for example the reduced recruitment of international students. This is an area in which we work closely to support our university partners by recruiting and preparing international students for successful transition to university study. The governance arrangements in place with our partner universities include regular joint partnership meetings, such as steering committees, to manage and oversee the contractual relationship and the strategic direction of each partnership. In the event that Study Group becomes aware of the unexpected closure of a partner university, we will support students with: • Transferring to an equivalent/appropriate programme at another Study Group delivery centre (at an appropriate point in the programme). • Applying to a suitable point of a programme at an alternative provider, if necessary, including making arrangements for the transfer of credits (if applicable) or demonstrating recognition of prior learning and providing information about academic progress.
Permanent closure of a delivery centre <i>Full and unplanned closure of a delivery centre due to contractual dispute, site availability or other event</i>	Severe	Very low	The risk that a delivery centre will close without sufficient notice is very low because we have long standing contractual relationships with partner universities and keep in close contact about any potential problems. We have strong governance arrangements in place to ensure that sufficient notice is given with regards to any delivery centre closures. Where possible, the closure of any delivery centre will be managed in such a way as to ensure that students can complete their studies. Contracts with our university partners contain provisions to enable the facilitation of student teach-out wherever possible.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Assessment of Risk and Mitigation
			Should Study Group have no option other than to close a delivery centre before students have completed their studies, we will seek to support students with: • Transferring to an equivalent/appropriate programme at another Study Group delivery centre, where possible. • Applying to a suitable point of a programme at the partner university or an alternative provider, if necessary, including making arrangements for the transfer of credits (if applicable) or demonstrating recognition of prior learning and providing information about academic progress.
Partial closure of a delivery centre <i>Part of the delivery centre is rendered unusable for activities involving students (before the start of term), for example due to health and safety concerns, restrictions on use of premises, staff shortages etc.</i>	Moderate	Low	Should a delivery centre be rendered partially unusable, we will seek to ensure continuity of provision for our students. We have Business Continuity Plans in place for each of our delivery centres which set out how activities will be maintained should there be an incident that interrupts normal operations (short or long term). We also have agreements in place with most of our partner universities such that suitable teaching and administration space must be provided, which includes the provision of equivalent alternative space should it be needed. Where part of a delivery centre is rendered unusable for an extended period of time for activities involving students, we will typically consider remedies such as: • Relocating provision of teaching, which may include hiring spaces for programme delivery (where possible on the partner university campus or nearby) and/or installing temporary buildings (where available). • Revising the timetable to enable the scheduled teaching to take place 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, and appropriate impact assessments will be undertaken (particularly where the impact would be disproportionate e.g. for those with a disability or childcare commitments). • Delivering programmes via alternative means, such as blended or online learning. Where such an approach is taken, we will consider whether this is appropriate for enrolled students who would be affected.
Disruption to the operation of a delivery centre during term-time	Low	Moderate	There can sometimes be unforeseen events which result in disruption to the operation of a delivery centre and therefore may affect the delivery of aspects of a programme. These cannot always be predicted, but our Business Continuity Plans (in place with each of our delivery centres) set out how activities will be maintained should there be an incident that interrupts normal operations (short or long term).

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<i>Unexpected disruption to the operation of the centre, for example due to weather or health and safety concerns</i>			Where events result in term-time programme disruption, the centre will normally consider whether it is practicable to make changes to programme delivery, rather than closing or suspending an affected programme. Actions to minimise disruption may include: • Temporary short-term suspension of programme delivery (e.g. where it is not possible to access buildings due to weather), with appropriate actions to mitigate the impact on students. • Changing the programme delivery location or method, which may include blended or online learning. • Changing the staffing of a programme, including recruitment of subject area specialists, where required and appropriate. • Offering students the opportunity to transfer to an alternative unaffected programme at the centre (if available and appropriate).
Programme no longer available or substantially amended <i>No longer viable to deliver a programme(s), or substantial changes to material components of a programme(s) within the delivery centre</i>	Moderate	Moderate	Following periodic reviews of programmes, it may sometimes be necessary to significantly alter the content of a programme, and in some cases, withdraw them altogether. Such decisions are not taken lightly and will normally be planned ahead so that current students can complete their studies, and prospective students are given sufficient notice of the changes coming into effect. It will be highly unusual for us to significantly alter or withdraw a programme after teaching has started; should this be the case, we would communicate clearly to enrolled students to explain the options available to them (as set out below). In addition, we review the viability of programmes in the lead up to the start of term to ensure that they have recruited the minimum number of students required to support a high quality student experience and are financially viable. We may take the decision that a programme cannot run due to low numbers. We will seek to notify applicants at least two months before the start of term (where possible) about any decision to withdraw or significantly alter a programme. In such cases, we will offer applicants the option to: • Accept the changes to the programme (where applicable) • Transfer to an alternative programme at their chosen delivery centre. • Transfer to an equivalent programme at another delivery centre. • Defer their application to the next intake point

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Assessment of Risk and Mitigation
			Request a refund in line with our refunds policy (see below).
University Partner withdraws or substantially changes any of its progression route programmes <i>Changes to the availability or content of degrees offered by the partner university to which Study Group students may progress</i>	Moderate	Low	Following periodic reviews of programmes, our partner universities may sometimes significantly alter the content of a programme, and in some cases withdraw them altogether. We would normally expect to be notified of these changes in good time and for such changes to be agreed well in advance of students commencing their studies with Study Group. Where such changes affect the progression route of our students, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that applicants/students are notified as soon as possible and will support them to find alternative programmes to progress on to. Where possible these steps will include offering students the option to: - Transfer to an alternative programme at their chosen delivery centre and/or university. - Transfer to an equivalent programme at another delivery centre and/or university. - Request a refund in line with our refunds policy (see below).
Licence to Operate <i>Restrictions on or loss of Student visa Sponsor licences (including loss of educational oversight by Office for Students)</i>	Severe	Low	Study Group is an international company with a primary focus on recruiting international students, and as such we are experienced in the requirements of visas and immigration. We have an established track record of immigration compliance with UKVI, and we closely monitor this area through our central compliance team. In addition, some of our students are issued an integrated Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (iCAS) by a partner university which covers their study with Study Group and the onward study undertaken at that partner university. As such, the potential impact from any loss or restrictions placed on our sponsor licence would be minimised for students in receipt of an iCAS. Should a partner university who typically issue an iCAS to our students lose or have restrictions placed on their visa sponsor licence, we would, where possible, issue a CAS to the students for the Study Group element of their studies. In the event of restrictions being placed on, or a loss of, Study Group's Student Route Sponsor status, either generally or for a particular delivery centre, we will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resultant disruption to those services and to affected students by, for example by: - Working with UKVI/OfS to allow enrolled students to complete their studies/programme (noting that students will normally only need to complete the remainder of the academic year to complete their studies). - Allowing students already in receipt of a visa based on an allocated CAS from Study Group to enrol and commence their studies.

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			- Utilising any other ability to continue to teach affected students through Study Group's broader network. - Offering students who have not commenced their travel to the delivery centre the opportunity to postpone their application pending the resolution of the suspension. - Arranging for the partner university to issue a CAS or an iCAS (where possible). - Providing assistance to affected students to switch to an alternative sponsor. - Delivering programmes via alternative means, such as online learning. Where such an approach is taken, we will consider whether this is appropriate for enrolled students who would be affected. - Providing reasonable support to students to access a programme run by another provider, including making arrangements for the transfer of credits (if applicable) or demonstrating recognition of prior learning and providing information about academic progress.
Online provision <i>Failure of technology resulting in loss of ability to deliver online programmes</i>	Moderate	Low	Study Group's online programmes are delivered through various fit for purpose, secure digital learning platforms. These platforms are a mixture of in-house managed and software as a Service (SaaS) platforms, each separated to ensure that in the event of any failure, that failure only impacts one system and subsequently has minimal impact on the delivery of digital programmes. All SaaS platform contracts provide business continuity and disaster recovery for the contracted services that ensure recovery within acceptable timeframes to minimise any impact to staff or students. Study Group hosted platforms are highly available with near real time replication to a secondary data centre location, allowing for a recovery time within 4 hours with no data loss. It is therefore extremely unlikely that we would be unable to deliver programmes for an amount of time significant enough to impact on teaching and learning.

Implementation

In the event that any part of this plan should need to be implemented, we will ensure that information is communicated as quickly as possible, initially by email, to all affected students and to relevant centre staff by the appropriate Centre Director, and will work closely with those affected to, as far as practicable, mitigate the impact on students, as outlined in the plan.

Study Group understands that some of the options for mitigation outlined in this plan will not be feasible for some students. As such, should the plan require implementation, we will endeavour to enter into more detailed discussions with students who may be disproportionately affected.

This may include, for example, students who are pregnant or students who have a disability, which may make it difficult to work outside of standard hours, to engage with online learning, or to accommodate a change in the physical location of teaching provision.

If any student is dissatisfied with the way in which the Student Protection Plan is implemented, they may submit a complaint. Details of the complaints process are embedded in the Terms and Conditions section of individual delivery centre websites.

Refunds

In the event Study Group is unable to complete the teaching of a paid for programme of study, we will offer refunds to affected students in accordance with Study Group's refund policy. These policies can be found on the Terms and Conditions page of each of our delivery centre websites. In the event that mitigation results in a student relocating to an alternative centre without a reasonable period of notice (at least 28 days), Study Group will consider requests to reimburse reasonable costs incurred for relocation.

Study Group has appropriate measures in place to ensure its long term sustainability and has appropriate strategies for dealing with difficulties as and when they may arise. Our financial performance is sound, as evidenced by the [reports available on our website](#); we are therefore confident that we will be able to deliver on our financial commitments, including those detailed the refund policy, if required.

Document management

Version	Action	Date	Name(s)	Details
3.1	Revisions approved	15/04/2026		Minor updates to V3 approved by Council
3.0	Revisions approved	03/12/2025		V3 of Student Protection Plan approved by Council
3.0	Student Consultation	17/11/2025		Reviewed by the Student Advisory Board
3.0	Document reviewed	05/09/2025	Emma Walkden	Full review. Formatting revised, additional risk added relating to potential partner university closure.
2.1	Document reviewed	20/11/2024	Emma Walkden	Minor updates to terminology, no substantial changes required.
2	Revisions approved	19/12/2022		V2 of Student Protection Plan approved by Study Group Ltd Board
2	Student consultation	Nov 2022		Circulated for review by ISC Student Councils in November 2022
2	Document reviewed	Sept 2022	Emma Walkden	A full review of the policy against the OfS template, updated guidance and sector best practice. V2 to be with effect from 2022/23 academic year
1	Document approved	2018		Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (BESL) board
1	Document created	14/09/2018	Gordon Bull	V1 created for 2018/19 academic year



Title	Student Protection Plan
Version	3.1
Date	April 2026
Authors	Emma Walkden – Deputy Registrar (Quality Assurance)
Owner	Quality Assurance & Enhancement Office/Council