

## **SOAS Student Protection Plan - 2018-19**

### **Background**

As part of our registration with Office for Students we submitted a Student Protection Plan. We developed a more detailed plan (below) which provides students with clarity on the processes for supporting them if any of a wider range of risks arose - these risks would be significantly less likely than those presented to Office for Students and therefore would not need to be included in our registration form. However they would aim to give our Students the reassurance that we have thought about the whole School and student experience and have contingency plans if any of these risks were to occur.

The risks we have included on the student protection plan for 2018-19 are those that we have assessed to be sufficiently likely for the next academic year, this does not mean that we believe that they will occur but if they do we have concrete plans in place to support students. The student protection plan review meeting will be built into every academic year, included on the School's Almanac and agreed with the Students Union. The plan will be developed following the agreement of the departmental plans and budgets for the next academic year, it is likely to be in the Summer term. The predominant driving factors behind the risks are our objectives to secure a long term sustainable business model, whilst maintain the unique SOAS provision.

The plan has been reviewed and input provided from the Associate Directors; SU representative; Student & Academic Experience representatives; planning representatives; registry representatives; finance representatives and governance representatives.

The risks are arranged in the order of the impact to students if the risks arose. (NB 1; 5 is high)

Risk	Likelihood of risk	Impact of risk	Overall risk	Mitigation of risks arising	Processes for monitoring increased or decreased likelihood	Specific timeframes for communication with students	Actions to support students if risks crystalize and continuation of study is not possible
<b>Learning and Teaching risks (8 risks)</b>							
Loss or restriction of university status.	1	5	5	Governance, Quality Assurance and other teams ensure compliance with regulatory framework.	Monitored through quality assurance and risk management procedures in accordance with governance framework.	Within 24 hours	Exit awards and certification of credit for studies completed; support for students to transfer to another provider.
Withdrawal of designation	1	5	5	Governance, Quality Assurance and other teams ensure compliance with regulatory framework.	Monitored through quality assurance and risk management procedures in accordance with governance framework.	Within 24 hours	Exit awards and certification of credit for studies completed; support for students to transfer to another provider.
Inappropriate conduct of staff or students	3	4	12	The School code of conduct, values and disciplinary procedures for both staff and students.  The Respect@SOAS policy and well promoted support and welfare services available to staff and students.	Ongoing welfare monitoring through Student Academic and Experience reports, widen participation teams and Students Union.	As required depending on the circumstances.	Students would be supported through the student welfare services and would be supported with mitigating circumstances procedures.  Inclusive assessment and curriculum work would be

				<p>Widening Participation Plan in place.</p> <p>Inclusive assessment and curriculum work is in place and ongoing.</p> <p>BME mentoring scheme is in place.</p>	<p>Annual reports produced.</p> <p>Collation and review of number of complaints and disciplinaries.</p>		<p>amended to support the needs of the student.</p> <p>If students were unable to continue studying at the School, they would be supported to identify an alternative institution that would produce the same outcomes.</p>
Suspension of programme, in particular endangered languages	3	3	9	<p>Deadlines are in place to ensure programme withdrawals are made well before the period affected. Policies ensure that if these deadlines are not met, programmes are 'taught out' for those students already enrolled/holding offers.</p>	<p>Annual and Periodic Programme Review; departmental planning processes.</p>	<p>Current students or their representatives would usually be involved in consideration of withdrawal. Applicants would be informed within ten days of approval.</p>	<p>Students offered the opportunity to transfer to another programme, possibly with adaptation made to accommodate them. If no appropriate programme available, credit certificated for transfer to another institution.</p> <p>If endangered languages programmes were suspended all existing students would be taught out.</p>
Loss of specialist academic staff and therefore the School no longer has the specialist knowledge to continue teaching specific	4	4	16	<p>The School would seek to identify another member of staff with the appropriate skills and experience to fill the vacancy through alternative staffing arrangements.</p> <p>The department would review the programme and module requirements to identify whether the same</p>	<p>Policies in place to support consistent workload, career development and secondment opportunities.</p> <p>Engagement with staff to identify</p>	<p>Students not usually informed specifically of staff changes: communications re programme/module changes as above.</p>	<p>Where an effective staffing replacement cannot be found and a programme cannot continue, the School would implement the same procedures if a programme was suspended.</p> <p>Students offered the opportunity to transfer to another</p>

modules.				outcomes could be delivered through an alternative route.	potential future staff changes and approve module accordingly.		<p>programme, possibly with adaptation made to accommodate them.</p> <p>Where it is a language course and there is a year abroad, we would utilise existing staff to support the delivery of the course or would support students to identify alternative modules that supported the same educational outcomes and maintain the year abroad.</p> <p>If no appropriate programme was available, the School would support students to transfer to another institution and record the amount of credit/academic progress achieved.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the School would compensate students because of disruption to their studies and they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss.</p> <p><i>All compensation claims will be reviewed and agreed through the compensation procedure outlined within this plan.</i></p>
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Loss of specialist professional service staff and therefore the School are unable to provide support services.	4	3	12	The School would seek to identify another member of staff with the appropriate skills and experience to fill the vacancy through alternative staffing arrangements.	Engagement with staff to identify potential future staff changes and approve module accordingly.		Where an effective staffing replacement cannot be found, then the Student Academic and Experience team would identify an alternative provider to deliver the required support. The team would look to a partner institution in the Bloomsbury Learning Group to provide the required support.
Major changes in year to programme content for subsequent year of study.	4	2	8	Deadlines are in place to ensure major programme changes are made well before the period affected. Policies ensure that if these deadlines are not met, programmes are 'taught out' for those students already enrolled/holding offers.	Annual and Periodic Programme Review; departmental planning processes.	Current students would usually be involved in consideration of major amendments. Applicants would be informed within ten days of approval of change to programme.	Students offered the opportunity to transfer to another programme, possibly with adaptation made to accommodate them. If no appropriate programme available, credit certificated for transfer to another institution.
International institutional risks resulting in students being insufficiently supported or unsafe during their year abroad. This includes the location of the	3	5	15	Governance, robust and effective due diligence with all international partners, ongoing communications and quality assurance with partnerships	Monitored by programme convener and contextual understanding of locations.	If this risk arose, the School would react within a reasonable timeframe however the communication timeframe would be dependent on the circumstances that resulted in the risk.  Students would	A new arrangement would be brokered within a nearby or contextually similar institution that could provide the same intended outcomes.  If context meant that the country of choice was not an option, an alternative location would be identified that could provide the same or similar educational

institution and consideration of its context.						receive, at least, weekly communications with their department.	<p>outcomes. Alternatively students would be given the options to return to the UK and move to a 3 year degree and additional amendments would be made by the departments to support this transition.</p> <p>Where teaching cannot be completed and there are no alternative options, we would support the student[s] to return to UK and continue their study at SOAS, with their credit/academic progress recorded.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the School would compensate students because of disruption to their studies and they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss.</p> <p><i>All compensation claims will be reviewed and agreed through the compensation procedure outlined within this plan.</i></p>
<b>Regulatory risks (3 risks)</b>							
Suspension of Tier 4 Sponsor Licence	1	5	5	Compliance with regulatory standards and requirements.	Internal monitoring and co-operation with external audit.	Within 24 hours	Exit awards and certification of credit for studies completed; support for students to transfer to another provider.

Revocation of Tier 4 Sponsor Licence	1	5	5	Compliance with regulatory standards and requirements.	Internal monitoring and co-operation with external audit.	Within 24 hours	Exit awards and certification of credit for studies completed; support for students to transfer to another provider.
Loss of accreditation.	1	5	5	Compliance with regulatory standards and requirements.	Internal audits and quality assurances processes.	Within 24 hours	Supporting students to identify an alternative course that met their needs.  Provide students with guidance and support to enrol with an alternative provider who holds the relevant accreditation.
<b>Infrastructure risks (4 risks)</b>							
External events resulting in building or institutional closure	3	5	15	Business continuity plans in place.  Engagement with local external agencies (including police, fire brigade etc)	The School's management engage with local external agencies to monitor and identify any potential increase in likelihood of risk.  Monitoring processes are integrated into the School's Business Continuity Plans are monitored through review processes and quality assured by the committee structure.		The School's incident management group would convene and the Business Continuity plans would be implemented. The actions to protect and support students would depend on the external circumstances that had resulted in the closure. The process for identifying the appropriate response is outlined in the School's Incident Management Plan.  If the impact of the incident continued then Students would be supported to find different institutions in a safe location.  Digital and online resources

							<p>would be used, where possible, to continue to deliver teaching and advice.</p> <p>The School has robust and comprehensive insurance policies in place.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the School would compensate students because of disruption to their studies and they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss.</p> <p><i>All compensation claims will be reviewed and agreed through the compensation procedure outlined within this plan.</i></p>
Institutional closure.	1	5	5	<p>Financial management structures are in place to monitor finances, agree strategies for cost savings, growth and investments</p> <p>Whole school and departmental financial plans in place to support the viability and growth of the school</p>	<p>Monitored through risk management procedures in accordance with governance framework.</p>	Within 24 hours	<p>Where possible, the School would close in a gradual way, over a period that would allow current enrolled students to complete their programme</p> <p>The School would support students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers and, where appropriate, by compensating students because of disruption to their studies they suffer</p>

							<p>demonstrable, material financial loss.</p> <p><i>All compensation claims will be reviewed and agreed through the compensation procedure outlined within this plan.</i></p>
Permanent building closure.	2	4	8	<p>Financial management structures are in place to monitor finances, agree strategies for cost savings, growth and investments</p> <p>Estates and IT Governance Committee develop, monitor and implement the School's strategic planning and policy development in relation to the School's estate. The Committees make recommendations to Resources &amp; Planning Committee, Executive Board and other committees as appropriate. Full terms of reference of the Committee can be found in Annex VII of the School's Standing Orders.</p>	Monitored through risk management procedures in accordance with governance framework.		<p>The School's estate would be reconfigured to enable teaching to continue in alternative spaces.</p> <p>Online resources and facilities would be utilised to support students to continue study from home, if on campus study was not possible.</p>

Industrial action.	4	2	8	<p>Policies establish the School's position and procedures for consultation and negotiation with the recognised trade unions.</p> <p>Policies outline the School's position on industrial action, procedures and response.</p>	Ongoing HR relationships with the recognised unions.		<p>Support and welfare services would be maintained, as much as possible. If feasible, support would be increased.</p> <p>Alternative services and resources would be extended to support students, for example extending library hours.</p> <p>Where possible, teaching would be rearranged or online platforms or resources would be utilised.</p>
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## **Financial Implications**

We do not consider that the School has any students for whom an increased risk of non-continuation of study has been identified. Should any successful claim be made, the School has adequate financial reserves or insurances in place to meet its obligations.

The School has additional cover under its professional indemnity policy if there were problems relating to bad teaching or lack of facilities and a legal claim were made. Where claims are successful, the fee refunds would be returned to the person, organisation or body that paid them originally. The School would provide additional support to students who are being supported via a sponsor to ensure that their circumstances are not adversely affected by inability to continue study at the School.

## **Compensation**

All compensation claims would be processed through the same procedure regardless of the circumstances that have resulted in the claim being made. All claims would be considered against the same framework to ensure consistency and fairness of outcomes.

The School have developed their procedures in line with UUK recommendations.

## **Refunds**

The SOAS refunds policy is as follows where a student pays their own fees or they are paid by a sponsor:

Fees for the academic year are payable in full at enrolment and/or in two equal instalments. If a student withdraws from an academic programme or takes a leave of absence the enrolment record will be amended according to the date on which the Withdrawal or Leave of Absence Form is received in the Registry. Any change in tuition fee liability will be calculated from the amended enrolment end date for the academic year. Fees up to the withdrawal or leave of absence date will be charged.

The School calculates fee liability per half term pro rata for the first two terms:

<b>Stage of Withdrawal or Leave of Absence</b>	<b>Charge</b>
Term 1: before reading week	1/6 annual fees
Term 1: during or after reading week	2/6 annual fees
Term 2: before reading week	3/6 annual fees
Term 2: during or after reading week	4/6 annual fees
Term 3	Full year's fees due

**Refunds are made to the original payee.**

Where students are funded by student finance the policy is as follows:

<b>Stage of Interruption or Withdrawal</b>	<b>Effective Charge</b>
Before the first day of Term 2	25% annual fees
Before the first day of Term 3	50% annual fees
Term 3	100% annual fees

Details can be found at:

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/fees/refundpolicy>

### **Compensation or additional payments**

Where student seeks compensation or additional payments in respect of:

- The payment of additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course.
- Compensation for maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study.
- Compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer courses or provider.

the School will consider each claim on a case by case basis. Where bursaries have been awarded, and a change of location or provider is required, then the School would continue to fund the student for the period to the end of the agreed term.