



Student Protection Plan for the period 2020-21

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Provider UKPRN	10000381
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1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, how those risks may differ based on our students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

When a student is accepted onto a course at ArtsEd, we are committed to delivering that course and supporting the student to successfully complete their studies. In the very unlikely event that something happens to prevent us from being able to deliver any of our courses, this student protection plan has been developed to identify any risks to continuation of study and the actions we would take should any of these risks become a reality¹.

The principal risk to continuation of study in 2020-21 is the **global Covid-19 pandemic**. However we consider this risk to be very low. We recognise the current and potential ongoing effects of the pandemic and have put in place a detailed plan to manage our operations, including our ability to support students and deliver teaching to them.

The following other factors have been identified as **very low risk**;

- ArtsEd is unable to operate as a result of weak financial performance
- Loss of validation or accreditation of any of our programmes
- Closure of our Acting and Musical Theatre degrees due to loss of key staff
- Change in location

¹ All references to 'continuation of study' or 'completion of courses' or similar wording is subject to the student complying with ArtsEd's Student Regulations and to passing the relevant requirements for their course as set out in the Student Handbook.

- Events beyond our control

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

Over the Spring and Summer we worked with our Health and Safety advisers to develop a detailed Covid-19 risk assessment and remobilisation plan. The plan set out a phased approach to returning to full operations, culminating in a return to face to face teaching from September, and detailed the control measures and systems that will be, or have been implemented by ArtsEd to ensure the safety of their staff, students, and visitors.

The body with ultimate decision-making powers at ArtsEd is the Board of Trustees, which delegates responsibility for day-to-day operations to the Senior Strategy Team, led by the Principal. We operate a risk register, which is updated whenever new risks are identified. The risk register is a standing item on the agenda at Board of Trustees meetings, which ensures that governors and senior managers are aware of any risks to operations and have formulated strategies to mitigate those risks.

Risks associated with the global Covid-19 pandemic

The risk that our students are unable to continue their studies is very low. We responded to outbreak and subsequent first lockdown in March 2020 by moving all teaching and learning online for the whole Summer term. This experience enabled us to develop new ways of working to ensure high quality education will be able to continue online if colleges and universities are required to close again.

Our approach has been to offer a blend of face to face and online learning, with students taught in small groups, in order to reduce the number of students and staff in the building at any one time, and to minimise contact between different groups. Our courses are very practical, and it is our aim to deliver as much face to face teaching as possible, following government guidance and our own detailed Covid-19 risk assessment and remobilisation plan.

Risks associated with weak financial performance

The risk that ArtsEd is unable to operate is very low because our financial performance has been secure for many years and is projected to remain so for the foreseeable future. In addition to private fee income, and some smaller income streams such as outside hires of ArtsEd studios when not in use for core courses, we currently receive income in excess of £1.25m in Dance and Drama award funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The Board of Trustees receive detailed financial reports every term and together with management are well positioned to take any corrective actions necessary well in advance of any financial problem arising. In short ArtsEd has very secure and robust finances which are open to challenge by suitably qualified Trustees.

Loss of designation, accreditation or validation

We consistently meet all external regulatory requirements. Since the last monitoring report we have successfully undergone revalidation by Trinity College London to provide the professional diplomas associated with Dance and Drama Award funding. In January 2020 we were re-accredited by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre; full accreditation is only awarded to those schools and colleges that have successfully undertaken a thorough and comprehensive, institutional level review of provision by a panel of CDMT nominated industry experts. In June 2020 we achieved validation of our CertHE Foundation courses in Acting and Musical Theatre and revalidation of our MA and BA (Hons) Acting degrees.

We underwent a successful monitoring visit by QAA in October 2018, which confirmed the quality and academic standards of our degrees. All indicators demonstrate the strength of the programmes and success of the students: retention, progression and achievement statistics are very high, our overall student satisfaction rating in the 2020 NSS survey was 81%, and our graduate destinations continue to demonstrate our students' success at gaining employment in their chosen fields.

We have a strong and long-standing relationship with our validating partner, City, University of London, going back to 2001, and our agreement with them, should there be any future change to validation arrangements, is to support our students to complete their studies, either by 'teaching out' or by helping us to find an alternative validating university. Furthermore, the government's higher education regulator the Office for Students can be called upon either to help broker a new agreement, or to become the 'validator of last resort.'

Closure of programmes due to loss of key staff

We have a proven track record as a small, specialist provider of conservatoire Acting and Musical Theatre training. The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes or material components of our courses, or that we may lose key staff (due to illness, bereavement etc) in these highly specialised areas is very low for the following reasons:

- the programmes are led and taught by an integrated team of academic staff comprising over 30 specialist technical tutors, enhanced by the involvement of approximately 150 freelance industry practitioners each year
- we have very strong industry links and appropriate HR policies and recruitment procedures in place, including succession planning, to enable us to replace staff as and when necessary

Change in location

The risk that we will no longer deliver courses at our Chiswick campus in the next three years is very low because we are committed to the continued redevelopment of the site.

Events beyond our control

Our Terms and Conditions set out events that are beyond our reasonable control (often known as 'Force Majeure'), and the reasonable steps that we would take to minimise disruption to your studies should such events arise.

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 in the event that you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

If we are unable to deliver a course for reasons within ArtsEd's control, our Terms and Conditions set out that a student may have an option to cancel the contract with us and be entitled to a full refund of tuition fees, and we will use reasonable endeavours to assist the student in finding an alternative comparable programme with another Higher Education provider in the UK. ArtsEd's refund policy sets out the processes that would enable fees to be refunded to students, sponsors, or the Student Loans Company, as appropriate, in the event of a programme ceasing. This information is provided to applicants and those who are already enrolled on our programmes.

If ArtsEd was unable to make arrangements for students to complete their studies, study on an alternative replacement programme, or if students suffered other loss or damage as a result of the discontinuation of the programme due to circumstances within ArtsEd's reasonable control, we would consider this impact and any associated compensation claims on a case-by-case basis at that time. Cases would be considered through our Student Complaints procedure. Our ability to offer appropriate compensation in those cases would be underpinned by our financial position and the insurance cover we have in place.

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

We have consulted with students in the development of this student protection plan, and will engage with them in an annual review to ensure that they understand the implications of the plan and the actions we will be able to take in the event that it needs to be implemented. Students will be involved in the annual review by taking part in a working group comprising student representatives and senior staff.

We will publicise our student protection plan to future students by providing a copy to every successful applicant and by publishing it on our website. The plan should be read alongside our Terms and Conditions and our Refund Policy, and forms part of the contract agreed to when an applicant accepts the offer of a place on a programme.

If the student protection plan is triggered for any reason, we would:

- Meet with affected students to provide an explanation for the situation
- Provide students with support depending on the specific needs of a student
- Make provision for further meetings, either individually or collectively

- Engage with student representatives to create a plan to support the affected students
- Write to the affected students to confirm the position and confirm the process for submitting any formal complaints
- Provide financial compensation arising from settlement of any complaint as awarded by our own Complaints Procedure, the Office for the Independent Adjudicator, or a UK court of law