



Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: Conservatoire for Dance and Drama

Provider's UKPRN: 10001653

Legal address: Unit 3, The Energy Centre, Bowling Green Walk, London N1 6AL

Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan: Jill Leigh, Academic Registrar, (email jill.leigh@cdd.ac.uk)

Introduction

As a registered higher education provider, the Conservatoire is required by the Office for Students (OfS) to publish a Student Protection Plan (SPP) that sets out the steps that will be taken by the Conservatoire and its Member Schools to protect students in circumstances that might lead to the discontinuation of their programme of study. Possible scenarios that might result in the discontinuation of students' programmes of study, and the steps that would be taken in such situations, are set out below.

As an established higher education provider, the Conservatoire (and each of its Member Schools) has an established track record of delivering internationally recognised higher education programmes and professional training to students in all of its art forms, and supporting students to pursue careers in their chosen field. Building on that track record, this SPP is intended to provide reassurance to current and future students that the Conservatoire and its Member Schools have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the quality and continuation of their studies.

At present, awards offered through the Conservatoire delivered by its Member Schools are validated either by the University of Kent or the University of the West of England (referred to below as the 'validating institutions').

The provisions of this SPP apply to all students who are registered with the Conservatoire and one of its Member Schools.

The provisions of this SPP are in addition to students' statutory rights as consumers, which remain unaffected.

Commitments from the Conservatoire and its Member Schools to Students and Potential Students

The Conservatoire and its Member Schools commit to:

- be open and transparent with students should any risk to the continuity of their programme of study arise, and inform them in a timely manner;
- take all reasonable steps to protect students' studies should a decision be taken to discontinue a programme, or in the event of the closure of a Member School or of the Conservatoire;
- consult with students and consider students' views in a timely manner before deciding to implement any substantial changes to their programme of study or discontinuing it, or the closure of a Member School or the Conservatoire;
- take into consideration the needs of all students and the impact on them of any proposed changes and any steps taken to protect their interests;
- inform the OfS of any changes that may require a review of this SPP or any of its provisions.

If students have any general views, concerns or feedback in relation to this SPP, they should contact the Conservatoire's Academic Registrar, Jill Leigh (email jill.leigh@cdd.ac.uk).

Notification

Should the provisions contained in this SPP need to be implemented, the students concerned will be notified by the Conservatoire's Academic Registrar (or nominee) via email in the first instance.

Advice and support will be offered in the first instance by the Conservatoire's Academic Registrar (or nominee). Additional advice and support is available from the relevant programme management team within each Member School.

Complaints

Complaints regarding a programme of study should be raised via the Conservatoire's Student Complaints Procedure, which is published on the Conservatoire's website and conforms to the UK Quality Code and Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) recommended good practice. As agreed with the validating institutions and as set out in the Conservatoire's complaints procedures, students may also be able to raise a complaint regarding a programme of study with the validating institution for the award. The provision for refunds and compensation in this Student Protection Plan do not affect students' rights of complaint under the Student Complaints Procedure.

Complaints relating to this SPP should be referred to the Conservatoire's Academic Registrar, Jill Leigh (email jill.leigh@cdd.ac.uk) in the first instance.

Definitions of terms used in the SPP and the Conservatoire's Refunds and Compensation Policy.

- **'The Conservatoire'** – for the purposes of this policy, this term means the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama as the Higher Education Provider.
- **'Material Change'** – a change to the material information (please refer to the relevant Member School's Terms and Conditions for definition)
- **'Material Information'** – the information provided to students at the point of making an offer of a place to study on a programme of higher education with a Member School of the Conservatoire
- **'Member School'** – one of the 6 Schools that are members of the Conservatoire, which deliver programmes of higher education
- **'School/Student Fees Policy'** – the document for registered students of the Conservatoire that sets out their Member School's policy with regard to fees and finance
- **'School Terms and Conditions'** – the document for registered students of the Conservatoire that sets out the Terms and Conditions of the contract between the student and the Member School
- **'Student Complaints Procedure'** – the Conservatoire's procedure that students should follow to raise an issue of complaint
- **'Student Protection Plan' (SPP)** - the plan in place should one of the Member Schools need to close a course, close a site or close the School
- **'SPP event'** – an event that triggers the Student Protection Plan, as set out in clause 4.1 and Section 1 of the Student Protection Plan
- **'Teaching Out'** – the phased method by which the closure of a programme or School will operate, allowing affected students to complete their programme prior to the closure
- **'Transfer of Study'** - where arrangements are made for a student to complete their studies at another Member School or alternative institution.

Student protection plan for the period 2019-20

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

Risks to Continuation of Study and Likelihood of Those Risks Arising

1.1 The risks to the continuation of study for students registered with the Conservatoire and one of its Member Schools could arise from both internal events and/or external events which may be outside their control.

Internal events might include the following:

Planned closure of the Conservatoire or a Member School for Financial or Business Reasons

1.2 The Conservatoire was established as a higher education provider in 2001 and has been part of the regulated higher education sector since that time. The Conservatoire has been assessed as being “not at higher risk” by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the predecessor to the OfS. The Member Schools, which remain distinct legal entities with their own executives and boards of trustees, are all established institutions with long histories of delivering professional training in their respective art forms. All of the Member Schools predate the creation of the Conservatoire in 2001. The Conservatoire and each its Member Schools are registered charities and therefore subject to the Charity Commission regulation and oversight.

1.3 As long-standing organisations, the Conservatoire and its Member Schools have in place well established governance and management structures for managing their day-to-day operations, organisational resilience and longer-term sustainability. The Conservatoire and its Member Schools are overseen by governing bodies that include a majority of independent members. There is internal scrutiny provided by internal auditors and independent scrutiny provided by separate external auditors who assess the ‘going concern’ of the Conservatoire and its Member Schools.

1.4 The Conservatoire reported total income of £22,983,000 in 2018-19 and had total unrestricted reserves of £761,000 at 31 July 2019. The Conservatoire’s policy is that it should hold six months’ of shared operating expenses in free reserves. The Conservatoire does not ‘consolidate’ the accounts of the Member Schools. Each School publishes its own annual accounts.

1.5 Student demand for places at the Conservatoire Schools is very high, with applications for entry far in excess of the number of available first year places. In addition to their higher education programmes, each of the Schools has a mixed portfolio of activities, including continuing professional development (CPD), business support, short courses and summer schools. The Schools also have a range of funding streams, including tuition fees, public funding, gifts and philanthropy. As independent legal entities, each of the Member Schools also retains its own reserves. The Member Schools therefore have plans in place to ensure that they have a mix of income streams and are not solely dependent on one source of funding.

1.6 The risk of the Conservatoire or a Member School deciding to cease to operate for financial or business reasons is low. The Conservatoire and its Member Schools are committed to delivering higher education and professional training in the art forms of dance, drama, circus arts and technical theatre, and to making a wider contribution to the artistic and cultural life of the country.

Closure of a programme of study for strategic reasons

1.7 The Conservatoire is a small, specialist institution delivering professionally focussed higher education and training in the performing arts. Its portfolio of programmes of study is relatively small and settled (24 programmes across the six Member Schools), with curricular development taking place in an incremental and planned manner. Consequently, the risk that the Conservatoire or a Member School might decide to discontinue a specific programme of study on a timescale that directly affects students already on that programme is relatively low. The discontinuation of a programme of study would be planned in such a way to allow current students to complete their studies and would

require the formal approval of the Conservatoire's Senate, in consultation with the validating university. Where a programme is discontinued, the Conservatoire and the relevant Member School would plan to close the programme to new students and 'teach-out' current students (see below). The relevant validating institution would also need to agree to the programme closure under its procedures, under which further consideration would be given to the interests of any students affected.

Closure of a programme of study due to unviable student enrolment

1.8 The risk that the Conservatoire or one of its Member Schools would discontinue or not offer a programme due to insufficient student enrolments or continuation is relatively low. Demand for student places is high and we regularly review the suite of programmes we offer to ensure that they continue to keep pace with student, employer and industry needs.

Changes to programmes of study

1.9 The risk that the qualification students obtain is significantly different from that for which they enrolled is low, because of the Conservatoire's and Member Schools' approach to programme development, approval and review, as well as the formal process for seeking approval from the Conservatoire's Senate for the discontinuation of a programme of study.

1.10 The Conservatoire and its Member Schools retain the right to make minor adjustments and improvements to programmes and module content year on year, as part of standard quality enhancement processes and in response to student and employer feedback. Our review and quality enhancement processes are informed by student consultation and we endeavour to communicate planned changes in a timely and helpful manner. These minor amendments or improvements in themselves do not warrant the triggering of the provisions under this SPP. As set out under the arrangements for validation of awards, a range of adjustments and improvements to programmes are also subject to scrutiny and agreement by the relevant validating institution.

External events might include the following:

Ability to award validated degrees

1.11 The six Member Schools currently deliver programmes which are validated by either the University of Kent or the University of the West of England. Students therefore receive degrees awarded by one of those two institutions. The Member Schools each have long standing relationships with their validating university and have consistently met the necessary quality assurance and academic standards requirements set by their validator. The Conservatoire enjoys a close and constructive working relationship with the two validating universities. The risk of losing validation of one or more programmes of study on a timescale that directly affects students already on that programme is relatively low.

Unplanned Closure of the Conservatoire or a Member School for Financial or Business Reasons

1.12 The risk that the Conservatoire or a Member School finds itself unable to continue to operate due to changes in the external regulatory or funding environment is assessed as being relatively low. The Conservatoire and its Member Schools have risk management processes, disaster response, and business continuity plans in place; these are regularly reviewed. The Conservatoire and its Member Schools are overseen by governing bodies that include a majority of independent members. There is internal scrutiny provided by internal auditors and independent scrutiny provided by separate external auditors who assess the strength of internal control frameworks and risk management processes.

Unplanned Closure of the Conservatoire or a Member School due to Acts of God

1.13 The risk of the closure of the Conservatoire's central Shared Services Office due to fire, flood or other 'Act of God' having an impact on the quality or delivery of programmes of study is assessed as being low. Business continuity planning includes precautionary and contingency measures (eg offsite back up of computer records, relocation of staff to temporary offices, etc) which would enable the Conservatoire's central administrative functions to continue to operate.

1.14 Programmes of study are delivered in each of the separate sites of the six schools. The complete closure of a school's site due to fire, flood or other 'Act of God' could pose a risk to the continuation of students' studies, given the need for access to specialist facilities and equipment. Each of the Member

Schools has in place disaster response and business continuity plans setting out measures to be implemented in such an eventuality. Also, as a member of Conservatoires UK (CUK), the Conservatoire is party to a CUK Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan, which sets out a framework for cooperation and support between CUK members in the event of a major incident which may threaten the effective working of a CUK institution and its community, or severely disrupt its programmes and operations. It is possible that in such circumstances the impact on students' ability to continue their studies would be sufficient to trigger the measures set out in this SPP, although each situation would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

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

2.1 In the event of a decision being taken to discontinue a programme of study for strategic, academic or other reasons while students are pursuing that programme, one or more of the following steps would be taken by the Conservatoire and the relevant Member School to protect those students:

Teaching Out

2.2 Whenever possible, the Conservatoire and the Member School concerned will make arrangements to 'teach-out' current students where a decision has been taken by the Conservatoire and the Member School to phase out a programme of study. The programme will be closed for the purposes of the recruitment of new students. This means that we commit to ensuring programmes of study can be completed by all currently enrolled students within existing timeframes determined by programme and academic regulations. In the event that a decision is taken to discontinue a programme, the arrangements which are proposed for students affected will be considered by, and may be subject to the agreement of, the relevant validating institution.

Alternative programme

2.3 Where teaching-out is not possible, the Conservatoire and the relevant Member School will offer an alternative programme at the Member School or another Member School of the Conservatoire.

Transfer of Study

2.4 Where students are studying on a programme of study where there is not a comparable programme offered within their Member School or within another Member School of the Conservatoire, then the Conservatoire and the Member School concerned will investigate whether students can transfer to a similar programme offered by another higher education provider. If such a transfer of study is possible, then the Conservatoire and the Member School will take all possible steps to facilitate the transfer to the other higher education provider e.g. provision of a record of academic achievement to date.

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

Refunds and Compensation

3.1 Details of the Conservatoire's arrangements and policy concerning refunds and compensation under the Student Protection Plan is set out in the attached '**Refund and Compensation Policy**' which can be found on the Conservatoire website alongside the Student Protection Plan at <http://www.cdd.ac.uk/policies/student-related-policies/>.

3.2 The Conservatoire's structure is a formal collaboration amongst 6 member Schools and a central office. Details of the Member Schools can be found at <http://www.cdd.ac.uk/schools/>. In the Conservatoire's structure, the consumer contract is between the student, the Conservatoire and the relevant Member School, as set out in the Student Terms and Conditions. Student Fees Policies are determined by each of the Member Schools. Terms and Conditions and Student Fees Policies for students of Member Schools follow a common model with slight local School variation, therefore students should refer to the Terms and Conditions and Fees Policy published on their School website which they will have received in durable medium at the point of offer, or should contact their School for a copy.

The Student Protection Plan sets out possible situations where the Conservatoire will no longer be able to preserve continuation of study for one or more students, or where there has been disruption to a course of study. These are also set out in clause 3.1 of the Refunds and Compensation Policy. The Student Protection Plan identifies such situations as being of low risk. However, in the event of the Student Protection Plan being activated, the Conservatoire will work closely with the relevant school to implement this Policy. It is ultimately the Conservatoire's responsibility as part of its governance to ensure that the commitments set out in its Student Protection Plan are properly discharged. The final decision regarding the issuing of refunds and compensation under the Student Protection Plan to individual students will be made by the Principal of the relevant Member School and the CEO of the Conservatoire, or their delegates.

In the event that one of the situations / events identified in the SPP and clause 4.1 were to occur and the Student Protection Plan be activated, the Conservatoire and the relevant Member School will liaise as appropriate with the validating university of the relevant Member School to ensure a fair outcome for students in all circumstances with regard to refunds and compensation.

Notwithstanding that in such circumstances the Conservatoire will take proactive action without requiring students to lodge a formal complaint, students who wish to make a request for a refund or compensation under the Student Protection Plan may do so by contacting the Conservatoire at qualityoffice@cdd.ac.uk.

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

Communicating with Students about this SPP

4.1 The Conservatoire will publicise this SPP to current and future students by publishing it on the Conservatoire's website, ensuring that the Member Schools make sure that there is a link to the SPP from the relevant page on their own websites (including any student intranet pages), and by ensuring that the SPP is appropriately referenced in communications with potential students during recruitment, admission and registration.

4.2 The Conservatoire will ensure that staff are made aware of the implications of this SPP when they propose programme changes by including a reference to the SPP in its programme approval, review and amendment documentation. The SPP will be published on staff intranet pages and referenced in relevant staff induction and training activities.

4.3 The SPP will be reviewed annually by the Conservatoire Executive Committee, with reports being submitted to the Senate and the Board of Governors (both of which include student members). Views will also be sought on a regular basis from the Student Advisory Committee (a subcommittee of Senate) which includes representatives from each of the six Member Schools.

4.4 The Terms and Conditions for students set out circumstances under which the Conservatoire will consult students on significant changes to programmes. The Conservatoire will also inform affected students of any material changes which may affect their studies in a timely manner. Should the SPP need to be implemented, students will be notified by the Conservatoire's Academic Registrar (or nominee) via email. The Conservatoire commits to giving students maximum notice of any changes, but at least 12 weeks prior to the intended dates of programme change or closure where this is possible.