

Protection of the quality of the student experience

We seek to maintain and enhance the quality of the learning experience for all our students. In light of this, we are committed to ensuring that there are appropriate arrangements in place to protect the quality of the students' experience and its continuation in circumstances where these could otherwise be adversely affected. The table below indicates the possible circumstances which could arise to cast doubt on our ability to follow through on our commitments (risks), the likelihood of such circumstances occurring (level of risk), and the measures we have put in place or will put in place to protect the students' interests (mitigation of risk).

For the most part, the time horizon in which these kinds of concerns are considered is between three and six years, the maximum length of time an individual student may require to complete a course of study, whether full-time or part-time.

<i>Risks to continuation of study</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Mitigation of risk</i>
Closure of college for financial reasons.	Low	Our financial performance plans anticipate the college continuing to operate at its current level. In the event of a dramatic and sudden down-turn in financial performance, the college has substantial assets which can be turned into cash to sustain activity.
Closure of college for reasons of severe damage to the college buildings and facilities.	Low	The college has clear and regularly tested fire protection policy and procedures, together with business interruption insurance. In the event of certain parts of the college site being inaccessible, we will make use of available space at nearby churches and at our partner college, Bristol Baptist College, as well as through the use of temporary structures on the college's site.
Decision by the trustees to close the college's operations.	Low	The trustees are committed to the college's long term calling to provide theological education in support of the church's mission and ministry.
Cessation of teaching in Christian theology.	Low	As above.
Loss of validation by either or both of our validating universities.	Low	The agreements we have with our two validating universities, Durham and Aberdeen, provide for the orderly 'teaching out' of existing students, in the event of the agreements being terminated.
Closure of particular modes of training.	Low	The college is committed to its different modes of training: gathered learning (there are plans further to upgrade facilities for full-time residential students) and dispersed learning (which is at the early stages of development). In the event of, for example, the early discontinuation of the dispersed learning track, those students to whom we are already committed will be taught out in ways that will be negotiated with them.
Closure or suspension of programmes of study.	Low	Closure of a programme for reasons, for example, of low recruitment would only affect future student registration and can only occur where the college has considered its contractual obligations to prospective students. Suspension is only likely to occur in the case of new programmes of study which have yet to register students.

Discontinuation of particular modules of study.	Low	The college has just completed a curriculum review to ensure the coherence and sustainability of all course offerings. In view of the structure of the Common Awards suite of programmes validated by Durham University, it is possible for individual students to take up course options in partner institutions within Common Awards.
Temporary discontinuation of modules due to teacher ill health.	Low	The college has access to a range of specialists who can be brought in as associate teachers.
Loss of support for students with DSA.	Low	The college currently has a specialist member of staff who supports DSA students. The college is committed to continuing this provision or to linking students to alternative support.
Loss of UKVI Tier 4 licence.	Low	The college takes seriously its responsibilities to international students requiring Tier 4 sponsorship. In the unlikely event of our losing our Tier 4 licence, the college will support and advise students affected in transferring to another institution.
Loss of Church of England recognition for training.	Low	The college has a long-standing partnership with the Church of England to provide training for its ordinands. In the remote event of such recognition being withdrawn, the college will negotiate with the Church the teaching out of current students or their transfer to another accredited institution.

In the event of a circumstance causing a cohort of students to be affected by a disruption to their studies, the college will discuss with the affected students individually as well as corporately in order to follow the best and most suitable course of action in each individual case. The suitability of the course of action may depend on the student's educational background, their current personal circumstances, their vocational objectives, etc. The student's own wishes will always be paramount in the decisions made.

In general, where there are changes to course content, whether material or minor, the changes are processed through committee structures on which student representatives sit. Their perspective is actively sought. The committee may decide to set up a working group to consider the issues in more depth and students will be invited to participate. Material changes will not in normal practice be made to programmes after registration.

In the case of postgraduate research students, from time to time it may be necessary to arrange for a different supervisor due to staff changes, retirement, ill health or some other reason. The college will make every effort in such circumstances to match the student to another suitable supervisor in order that they may successfully complete their studies. This may include supporting the continued relationship with the existing supervisor, transferring to another supervisor on the staff of the college, or securing supervision from a partner college or university.

Refund of fees and compensation for discontinuation of studies

In respect of full-time students, it is the college's general policy to charge fees up to the end of the term in which a student ceases their programme. For part-time students, fees are charged for those modules which a student has started to attend. We do not insist on fees being paid for the whole of the year for which the student is registered, except for validation fees or similar such fees incurred by the college on the student's behalf. Full refunds are made within the normal statutory cancellation period of 14 days from enrolment at the beginning of the academic session.

Refunds will be made in British Pounds Sterling by means of the original source of payment, apart from cash transactions which will be refunded electronically. The college will inform the Student Loans Company about any student in receipt of a student loan who is due a refund of fees and

follow the procedures laid down by the SLC. Students who have paid their own fees will be refunded directly. Where a sponsoring church or other body has paid the fees, the refund will be made direct to that body in accordance with their procedures.

If it is not possible to preserve continuation of studies, the students affected will be refunded their fees and other relevant costs or expenses relating to the academic year not completed, both where a student chooses not to continue a programme elsewhere and where a suitable replacement programme cannot be found. Where a student transfers to a suitable replacement programme, a refund will be made for any modules that are not counted as accredited prior learning. Fees relating to accommodation provided by the college will be charged up to the point that the student ceases to be resident, subject to any agreed notice period. Bursary commitments made by the college will be honoured up to the point of discontinuation of studies.

Where a student is not able to complete their programme because of the discontinuation of the programme or a material part of it, additional reasonable costs or expenses necessarily incurred as a result of transferring to another location will be met by the college. These could include necessary additional travel costs or, for example, additional child care costs. All situations will be considered by the college in consultation with the students affected.

Consultation and communication

The college works in close partnership with the student body through its elected and appointed representatives on the Student Executive Committee and academic committees. The student executive meets with the Senior Management Team once per term and the student president meets with the principal in most weeks during term-time. Any issues that arise concerning student protection will be discussed as a matter of urgency with the Student Executive Committee through at least one of these channels.

The student protection plan will be published on the college website and VLE. Reference will be made to it in offer letters along with general terms and conditions. All relevant staff will be made aware of the provisions of the plan.

The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis at the Quality Assurance Steering Group, on which both staff and student representatives sit. Any significant concerns arising from these reviews will be brought to the attention of the Senior Management Team and the Student Executive Committee.

In the event of the plan needing to be implemented, those students affected will be informed within ten working days of a decision being taken. The students concerned will have the opportunity to discuss the implications with their personal tutor, the relevant course leader or the academic dean, as well as with student representatives on relevant academic committees. In the event of the student not being satisfied with the arrangements being envisaged or made, they will have recourse to the college's standard complaints procedures, which are published on the VLE and in the college handbooks.

Any questions about the plan and suggestions for improvement or review should be made to the Executive Director's office.