

**Policy/Procedure Name:** Higher Education Course  
Closure, Change or  
Suspension Policy & Procedure

**Policy/Procedure Number:** HE001

**Date of Approval:** November 2024

**Review Date:** November 2027

**Role Responsible:** HE Coordinator

**Approved by:** Executive Team



## **1. Introduction**

Course changes and closures are considered to be a significant change according to consumer legislation. To ensure full compliance with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 our students will be supplied with information, advice and guidance to enable them to make well-informed decisions in the event of a major change to a course. This policy conforms to the Higher education course changes and closure: statement of good practice, endorsed by HEFCE, AoC, UUK, Guild HE and the NUS in 2015.

The College is committed to ensuring the quality of learning opportunities for its students. Beyond the normal academic practice of reviewing and updating courses and modules, in exceptional circumstances it may become necessary to close a course or make changes to a specific cohort of students.

## **2. Scope**

The principle underpinning the policy is that in all cases the experience of those who are affected by the course closure or suspension should be assured and monitored. This includes: those students who have accepted an offer but not yet enrolled, those students who have deferred their offer and those students who are currently enrolled on a course.

## **3. Principles**

Before commencing the formal procedures to close or suspend a course the Executive Team must ensure that current students who are on the course are consulted (including those who have suspended their studies for a period of time or are referred). They must also take full account of the needs of prospective students i.e. applicants, those who are holding an offer and those who have deferred their enrolment. The point at which a student accepts an offer from the College, the initial contract between the College and the student is made, therefore the decision to close or suspend a course is breaching the terms of the contract.

The Executive Team's decision to recommend closure or suspension of a course must take full account of how current students are to be supported through to the completion of their intended course of study or put in place appropriate transitional arrangements in consultation with the students. These arrangements should ensure that the course continues to address the requirement of any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) that accredits the course.

A decision to recommend closure or suspension of a course must also take full account of how Prospective Students are to be supported in making a decision about an alternative course or releasing themselves from their place and their contract to the College.

The Head of Quality & Digital Innovation will contact the awarding partner organisation, to advise of the decision and work with them in relation to the above.

## **4. Rationale**

### **4.1 Course Closure**

The College may wish to close or suspend a course, the implications for the contractual relationship, whether for existing or potential students will be at the centre of the process.

These decisions would be recommended by Executive Team to the Curriculum Planning Group or Course Approval and authorised by the Executive Team. Such decisions would always be taken as a last resort.

Evidence required would include:

- changing strategic priorities and financial implications
- declining student numbers
- the impact of the relationships with awarding partner institutions and/or PSRBs
- the impact on current and prospective students
- arrangements for any replacement programme
- key staff leaving the College
- concerns about the quality and academic standards on the programme

The formal processes and documentation of the relevant awarding partner would be followed for approval through the appropriate deliberative structures.

#### **4.2 Changes before and after entry**

In exceptional circumstances material changes may be required between the advanced published materials and enrolment. These changes would be communicated to applicants as soon as possible, advising them of their right to apply for entry to a suitably alternative course or to withdraw their application and seek entry to another institution.

In highly exceptional circumstances, such as the loss of key staff, it may be unavoidable to have to make material changes to course after enrolment. In all cases, students would be consulted at the earliest opportunity and, where practicable, their views taken into account.

Should a student reasonably believe that a material change to the original course would have an adverse impact, they may cancel the contract with the College. Advice and guidance, including the transfer of credit and academic progress, would be provided to assist the student(s) in seeking transfer to another institution.

It is normal academic practice to make minor modifications and amendments to the course, which would be implemented during the next academic year. Such changes are designed to improve the quality of learning opportunities, to meet the requirements of an awarding partner or in response to student feedback. The College will consult with or inform students of these changes, as appropriate, and in line with College quality assurance processes.

The College is committed to ensuring the continuity of studies as far as is reasonably practicable. In all cases, the College would work with the relevant awarding partner in relation to the above.

#### **5. Procedure**

The full procedure is described in the document Course Closure Procedure.

## **6. Timing of Course Major Changes or Closures**

The College will always seek to ensure that major changes or course closure would be a decision of last resort and would be made in a timely manner. Current students would be informed of their options and offered advice and guidance should they wish to transfer their academic credit to another institution. Academic standards, learning outcomes defined in the Programme Specification, and the student experience, as far as reasonably practicable, would be maintained throughout any teach-out period.

## **7. Related Documents**

Course Closure Procedure  
Course Closure Form  
HE Terms and Conditions

## **Appendix 1.0 Higher Education Course Closure, Change or Suspension Procedure**

### **1. Purpose**

This document sets out the College procedure, in accordance with Brooklands Technical College HE Policy for Course Closure, Change or Suspension, of HE courses.

### **2. Responsibilities**

- 2.1 Advice regarding the operation of this procedure can be sought from Quality & Standards or the Assistant Principal of Curriculum (HE).
- 2.2 The relevant Curriculum Programme Managers initiates and ensures coordination of the course closure process including communication with current students.
- 2.3 The HE Coordinator communicates with applicants and offers holders about course closures.
- 2.4 The Executive Team recommends approval of course closures, considering the effectiveness of the arrangements for closing the course and recommends changes to current policy to the College Principal/CEO, via the HE Panel.
- 2.5 The Policy & Standards Group approves new policies or amendments to existing policies relating to course closures.

### **3. Procedures for closing courses**

- 3.1 A decision to close a course may be appropriate for a number of reasons, for example:
  - changing strategic priorities and financial implications
  - declining student numbers
  - the impact of the relationships with awarding partner institutions and/or Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)
  - the impact on current and prospective students
  - arrangements for any replacement course
  - key staff leaving the College
  - concerns about the quality and academic standards on the course.
- 3.2 In considering a decision to close a course, the College must take full account of the needs of existing students (including suspended students), applicants to the course and offer holders, including deferred applicants and deferred offer holders. It should, as far as possible, aim to support these students through to the completion of their intended study or put in place appropriate arrangements. These arrangements must ensure that the course continues to address the requirements of any Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) which accredits the programme.

- 3.3 A course must not be closed once there are confirmed offer holders unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where applications have been received but offers not yet made, a decision to close a course must be made early enough in the cycle so as not to disadvantage applicants. If a decision to close a course is taken late in the admissions cycle, the availability of suitable alternatives at other institutions may be extremely limited and the applicant might be able to pursue a complaint or financial claim against the College as a result.

### **Arrangements for enrolled students**

- 3.4 Other than in the most exceptional circumstance (see section 4) enrolled students (including those who are currently suspended) must be allowed to complete their studies on the course for which they are enrolled (subject to normal progression requirements).
- 3.5 The Director of Faculty and Programme Manager must inform students enrolled on the course about the proposed closure and where possible the awarding partner institution Link Tutor should be invited to participate in meetings with students. The Programme Manager should explain the reasons for the proposal, and discuss the implications for the students at the earliest opportunity. Students should be informed of plans for teaching-out the course and provided with details of how the College will maintain the quality of the student learning experience during the teach-out phase. This must include consideration of arrangements for students who have suspended their studies or need to refer or those who have deferred entry.
- 3.6 In instances where a course is closed and a replacement introduced, students who wish to do so may be permitted to transfer to the new course if appropriate arrangements for transfer have been agreed as part of the course approval process. Programme Managers must obtain written agreement from students confirming their agreement to a transfer.
- 3.7 The proposed arrangements for students currently registered on the course (including those whose registration is suspended but have not yet completed the course) must encompass the following:
- Confirmation that the standard of provision to current students will be maintained throughout their period of registration.
  - Confirmation that the previously stated learning outcomes of the course, as detailed in the Programme Specification, will still be achievable by current students.

### **Arrangements for prospective students**

- 3.8 All communications with applicants and offer holders on these matters must be undertaken by the HE Coordinator, and the Programme Manager must ensure that the Quality Department is fully informed and involved in all discussions which have potential implications for applicants.
- 3.9 The HE Coordinator must inform applicants at this stage that the course is being considered for closure and provide them with information about their options. If the student has applied through UCAS, the HE Coordinator must advise UCAS.

- 3.10 If, exceptionally, a course is to be closed and applicants have accepted offers, those who have accepted offers should not be contacted until a proposal for closure has been approved by the Executive Team. Once approval has been given, these applicants should then be informed, in a timely manner, of their options in regard to transferring their application to another institution. If the student has applied through UCAS, the HE Coordinator must advise UCAS.
- 3.11 Applicants who have been made offers but have not yet accepted them may however be contacted at an earlier stage to be informed that a course is being considered for closure and provide them with information about their options. Such applicants should be told that the offer of a place is suspended until a decision has been made and will be withdrawn if the proposal for closure is approved by the Principal/CEO.

### **Obtaining approval from Executive Team**

- 3.12 The Director of Faculty must complete the course closure form for submission to Executive Team.
- 3.13 Where there are no students registered on the course being closed, there are no applicants who have accepted offers on the course, and there is no impact from the closure on other courses, the proposal to close a course will be recommended by Executive Team during curriculum planning and, if agreed at curriculum planning, approved by Executive Team
- 3.14 In all other cases, the Executive Team will consider the proposal on the basis of the information provided on the course closure form, taking into account:
- the rationale for closure
  - the proposed arrangements for students currently registered on the course
  - the proposed arrangements for applicants
  - the proposed arrangements for any courses sharing modules with the course it is proposed to close.
- 3.15 The Executive team will recommend approval of the proposal if the rationale is sufficiently strong to justify the potential disruption to students and applicants, and if the arrangements for students and applicants satisfy the requirements set out above.
- 3.16 Once approval to close a course has been granted by the Executive Team, the Quality & Standards Team will report the decision to the relevant Director of Faculty, Programme Manager, HE Coordinator and Head of Marketing.
- 3.17 The Quality Team will ensure that, where applicable, relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB's) are informed.
- 3.18 The Programme Manager should advise students on the course formally that the course is going to be closed and provide confirmation of the way in which they will be supported to complete the course. Where applicable, the awarding partner institution Link Tutor should attend any meetings with the students.

## **4. Circumstances beyond the College's control**



- 4.1 In very exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for a course or courses to close which are beyond the College's control, and for teaching-out within the institution to be impossible.
- 4.2 In these circumstances the Director of Faculty and the Executive Team will discuss the arrangements to identify:
- whether the College can offer alternative courses within the institution
  - how the College will help students to transfer to other institutions, including support for transfer of credit/recognition of prior learning
  - any financial recompense as appropriate.

## **5. Amending College publications/marketing material**

- 5.1 Once a course closure proposal has been approved it is the responsibility of the Programme Manager, in liaison with Head of Marketing, to ensure all necessary amendments are made to all College publications and the website, and that any external references to the course (e.g. publicity through external websites) are amended.

## **6. Ongoing Monitoring**

- 6.1 The course must continue to be actively managed and the quality assurance framework should continue to be followed, with regard to student surveys, annual evaluation, course and module evaluation and external examining for the duration of the teach-out phase. Ongoing monitoring must ensure that the equity of experience for students on the course is maintained.

## **7. Linked Policies**

HE Course Closure, Change or Suspension Policy Course closure form  
HE Terms and Conditions