



Bolton College

**Student Protection Plan for Higher
Education Courses**

2022-2023

Provider's name: Bolton College

Provider's UKPRN: 10000794

Legal address: Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5BG

Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan: Karen Westsmith, Director of Curriculum and Quality, karen.westsmith@boltoncc.ac.uk

Student Protection Plan for the period 2022-2023

All documents related to OfS registration were prepared as part of a joint development planning group and in consultation with The University of Bolton. All Higher Education students taught at Bolton College are contracted to the University of Bolton with the exception of the Higher Level 4 /Non-Prescribed Higher Education students and Higher Apprentices who are registered at the college.

From 1st August 2018 Bolton College became a wholly owned subsidiary of the University of Bolton. <https://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/latest-news/merger-update/>

This plan contains 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.

All students who are enrolled with the University of Bolton (UoB) are covered by the University's Student Protection Plan and Bolton College's Terms and Conditions for Higher Education students taught at Bolton College campus. Those registered at the college are covered by this Student Protection Plan.

Our Higher Education Students

Our Higher Education provision at Bolton College is made up of students on undergraduate HNC, HND and Foundation degree programmes which are validated by the University of Bolton. The students encompass UK Home students studying in Bolton, UK. All of these students are registered with the University of Bolton.

Higher Level Non-Prescribed Higher Education (NPHE) and Higher Apprenticeships are also taught at the college and consist of delivery at Level 4 and Level 5. These students are registered with Bolton College.

Based on the above category of students, a broad range of risks are identified to their continuation of study which includes, but not limited to the following:

- i. Suspension or closure of courses: **LOW RISK**
- ii. Programme modifications: prior to enrolment and after enrolment: **LOW RISK**
- iii. Risks associated with the sustainability of the institution (e.g. closure): **LOW RISK**
- iv. Strategic changes by the College (e.g. closure of a building or campus): **LOW RISK**
- v. Changes in the nature and structure of the College (e.g. merger): **LOW RISK**
- vi. Major accidents and incidents causing disruption to Teaching and Learning: **LOW RISK**
- vii. Loss of staff and structural changes in staffing: **LOW RISK**

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

Students registered with University of Bolton

- i) **Policies and documents to protect students:** The University of Bolton has a robust set of policies and documents to ensure that the students have clear and detailed understanding of the measures put in place to mitigate various risks related to their programme of study. These include:
- a) Conditions of Enrolment 2022-23 https://bolton.ac.uk/assets/Student-Policy-Zone-2022-23/Enrolment-and-Admissions/Terms-and-Conditions-of-Enrolment-2022_23-Updated-August-21.pdf
 - b) Course Fees Policy 2022-23, and https://bolton.ac.uk/assets/Student-Policy-Zone-2022-23/Enrolment-and-Admissions/Course-Fees-Policy-2022_23-Updated-August-2021.pdf
 - c) The University of Bolton Student Admission Policy 2022/23. https://bolton.ac.uk/assets/Student-Policy-Zone-2022-23/Enrolment-and-Admissions/Student-Admissions-Policy-2022_23-Updated-August-2021.pdf

These policies, accessible through the College's and the University of Bolton's websites, provide information regarding course fees, refunds, advice, information and guidance for transferring to a different course, and transferring to another institution, process of changes to the course, communications etc.

Students registered with Bolton College

- i) **Policies and documents to protect students:** Bolton College has a set of policies and documents to ensure that the students have clear and detailed understanding of the measures put in place to mitigate various risks related to their programme of study. These include:
- a) Bolton College Regulations: <https://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/assets/Uploads/Bolton-College-Terms-and-Conditions-2022-24.pdf> ,
 - b) Refund Policy: <https://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/about-us/governance/key-policies/>
 - c) Higher Level 4 Student Admissions Policy 2022-23: <https://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/assets/Uploads/Higher-Level-4-5-Admissions-Policy-and-Procedures-2022-24.pdf>

These policies, accessible through the College website, provide information regarding course fees, refunds, advice, information and guidance for transferring to a different course, within BC, and transferring to another institution, process of changes to the course, communications etc.

They are communicated to students as part of the induction and tutorial process at the College.

Students are able to identify the arrangements for the continuation of study through discussions with curriculum teachers and managers and via support in Student Services.

Students registered with University of Bolton

- ii) **Suspension or closure of courses:** The University of Bolton has established systems to mitigate risks resulting from suspension and/or closure of courses. The University's Student Protection Plan specifies these in detail. The University has well tested teach out arrangements for students on courses that are earmarked for suspension or closure (i.e. for recruitment of new students). <https://bolton.ac.uk/assets/UoB-Student-Protection-Plan-2022-23.pdf>

LOW RISK

Students registered with Bolton College

- ii) **Suspension or closure of courses** BC has established systems to mitigate risks resulting from suspension and/or closure of courses. BC's "Procedure for closing or suspending a programme" specifies these in detail. BC has well tested teach out arrangements for students on courses that are earmarked for suspension or closure (i.e. for recruitment of new students). <https://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/assets/Uploads/Higher-Level-4-5-Procedure-for-Closing-or-Suspending-a-Programme-2022-24.pdf>

Where there is a possibility of material impact on the current students, the effect will be mitigated by:

- a) Consultation with current students and other stakeholders who may be affected.
- b) Communications with current students to provide assurance that their programme of study will not be adversely affected by the decision.
- c) Provide assurance regarding quality of their learning experience and that they are able to complete their studies at the Institution.
- d) Ensure appropriate academic and support staff (e.g. lab technician) capability and capacity to enable students to complete their programme of study.
- e) Ensure appropriate facilities and technological infrastructure to enable students to complete their programme of study.
- f) Any applicants (for future cohorts) will be notified, allowing sufficient time for students to apply for an alternative suitable programme (where relevant) at BC.

LOW RISK

In the highly unlikely event that the risks to the continuation of study mean that the course cannot continue, we will ensure that we:

- a) Signpost each student to an individualised advice and support session
- b) Contact high quality and local providers where the continuation of study can take place in order to make referrals for students to transfer
- c) Signpost each student to an individualised advice and support session, and further support sessions if requested.
- d) Give students full access to information, advice and guidance regarding alternative courses.
- e) Give students support if contacting alternative providers for possible transfer to a course.
- f) Contact high quality and local providers where the continuation of study can take place in order to make referrals for students to transfer.

Students registered with University of Bolton

- iii) **Modifications to programmes or course content (prior and after enrolment):** The College fully complies with the University of Bolton's clear systems and guidelines for making any modifications to validated modules or courses to endeavour to safeguard the students and that their learning experience is protected.

The College will use all reasonable endeavours to deliver the programme in accordance with the programme specification and course information presented in on the Collegeweb site and leaflets. However, to ensure currency and relevance of the courses from time to time, the College may need to implement minor or major in-year changes to course content.

There are processes at the university to deal with emergency modifications to course delivery, such as changes to delivery plans, which supported students in their continued study whilst complying the Covid-19 restrictions.

Material changes to courses arising from the pandemic will be communicated to students wherever possible, in person and via the course tutor or Curriculum Leader. This could be in class, or through a telephone conversation. Communication through channels such as email, texts, digital platforms and forums will also be used to ensure that the message is accessible, current and there to act as a backup if direct communication with students has not been possible.

LOW RISK

Students registered with Bolton College

- iii) **Modifications to programmes or course content (prior and after enrolment):** BC has clear systems and guidelines for making any modifications to validated modules or courses to endeavour to safeguard the students and that their learning experience is protected. The 'Higher Level 4/5 Course Guidelines for Modification to Programme': <https://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/assets/Uploads/Higher-Level-4-5-Course-Guidelines-for-Modification-to-Programme-2022-23.pdf> process sets out the process to be completed by the respective Head of Area. The Course Committee, HE Committee, and the HE Quality Assurance Committee assess any modifications to programme or modules and approve them where appropriate.

The College will use all reasonable endeavours to deliver the programme in accordance with the programme specification and course information presented in on the College web site and leaflets. However, to ensure currency and relevance of the courses from time to time, the College may need to implement minor or major in-year changes to course content. This may also occur in response to major incidents such as national or local lockdown/ Covid-19 restrictions. In such instances the College will ensure that:

- a) Changes are restricted to the minimum necessary levels to achieve the required knowledge and/or quality of learning experience
- b) Affected students and other stakeholders are consulted as appropriate
- c) Students are notified of the changes and how it will impact them

Material changes to courses arising from the pandemic will be communicated to students wherever possible, in person and via the course tutor or Curriculum Leader. This could be in class, or through a telephone conversation. Communication through channels such as email, texts, digital platforms and forums will also be used to ensure that the message is accessible, current and there to act as a backup if direct communication with students has not been possible.

In the instances where the modifications to courses affect students prior to their enrolment (e.g. after an offer is accepted), the College will communicate and work with such students to ensure the offer is still acceptable to them. Where necessary BC will allow students the opportunity to withdraw from the programme and offer reasonable support.

LOW RISK

Students registered with University of Bolton and Bolton College

- iv) **Major strategic changes (Infrastructure, Nature and Structure of the College):** The University of Bolton and Bolton College have robust governance mechanisms to ensure that any major strategic change proposals are appropriately consulted before decisions are made. These may include changes to infrastructure such as buildings, strategic associations etc. The UoB Board of Governors and BC Board of Directors work closely to ensure that the students and their learning experience are protected.

LOW RISK

Students registered with University of Bolton and Bolton College

- iv) **Major accidents and incidents causing disruption to Teaching and Learning:** The University of Bolton and Bolton College have contingency and business continuity plans which cover scenarios affecting business continuity, such as acts of terrorism, major fire accidents, and damage to buildings or equipment.
- a. The University of Bolton and Bolton College have contingency and business continuity plans which have been developed in response to the Covid-19

lockdowns and restrictions. At all times, continuity and quality of experience is at the forefront of planning and within the parameters of Health and Safety guidance and measures.

LOW RISK

Students registered with University of Bolton and Bolton College

- vi) **Loss of key staff or structural changes in staffing:** The University of Bolton and Bolton College have robust mechanisms to ensure that the institution maintains appropriate levels of academic and support staff to ensure effective and efficient delivery of courses and student learning experience. In the scenarios where the College loses keystaff:
- a) Where possible, allocate current members of staff with appropriate knowledge, skills, experience, and capacity to the courses where staff losses occurred.
 - b) Fill the vacancies as quickly as possible with new staff with appropriate knowledge, skills, experience i.e. recruiting externally to avoid disruption to the students' programme of study.

LOW RISK

Students registered with University of Bolton and Bolton College

- vii) **Institutional Closure:** The University of Bolton and Bolton College have well established systems, processes and governance arrangements to identify strategic risks (e.g. of closure) and implement measures to mitigate them. Institutional failure risks will be monitored through risk management processes in accordance with the regulatory bodies and any such scenarios will be managed accordingly. In the highly unlikely scenario of institutional failure, where the College has no option, other than to close, it will consider further measures to protect students, continuation of their programmes of study and their learning experience.

Bolton College is a 'Designated Institution' in relation to the parent institution, the University of Bolton.

LOW RISK

Information about how we will communicate with students about The University of Bolton and Bolton College's student protection plans:

1. We will ensure effective communication of SPP to prospective and current students as well as our graduates by publicising it in detail through various modes including the College website, Course Induction, Staff/Student Liaison Committees (SSLC)
2. We will coordinate with the Student Representatives and SSLC meetings to review and enhance SPP based on a systematic feedback mechanism
3. Staff development and training to familiarise both teaching and support staff with SPP, its implications and implementation through the College's staff development programme, the HE Committee, HE Quality Assurance Committee, the HE Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Group, and other fora. The University of Bolton's and Bolton College's SPPs will also be embedded in training by the HE Academic Quality Leader for staff who are new to delivering Higher Education.