



TITLE: HE Closure of a programme	REF: HE004	VERSION:2
APPROVED: HE Academic Board	DATE: 21 st January 2019	REVIEW DATE: 21 st January 2020
LEAD PERSON: Bill Hunt – Director of Higher Education		
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:		
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: To protect the interests of students, applicants and Activate Learning		

Main points of policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate Learning is committed to protecting the interests of students and applicants in the event of a Higher Education programme closing for whatever reason
List of procedures for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining approval to withdraw a programme • Notification of decision to outside organisations • Notification of decision and arrangements for current students • Notification of decision and arrangements for prospective students
Related policies, documents and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Protection Plan • HE Information policy • Collaborative Agreements with University partners • QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education: chapter B8: <i>Programme Monitoring and Review</i> and chapter B10: <i>Managing Higher Education with others</i>

Equality and diversity statement

It is the policy of Activate Learning to recognise and encourage the valuable and enriching contribution from all who work and learn here and the rights of all individuals who come into contact with the organisation such as prospective students and job applicants.

We believe that people from a range of backgrounds and experiences can enhance the life and development of the institution and that all individuals should be treated on the basis of individual merit and without prejudice. Activate Learning will, therefore aim to provide an education service which actively promotes equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination on grounds of age, cultural background, economic status, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion/belief, marriage/civil partnership or sexual orientation in both education and employment. We will strive vigorously to remove conditions which place people at a disadvantage and will actively combat bigotry and discrimination. Activate Learning expects all employees, students, and associated partner organisations to adopt this policy.

Activate Learning is committed to carrying out Equality impact Assessments on its policies and procedures in order that some measurement is made of the contribution that the policy/procedure makes towards equality and diversity objectives.

1. Background to the policy

From time to time Activate Learning may be faced with considering the closure of a Higher Education programme of study.

This may be because:

(a) Notice has been given to Activate Learning by one of its University partners to close one or more programmes

(b) Notice has been given by Activate Learning to one of its University partners to close one or more programmes

Or

(c) Activate Learning has decided to withdraw one or more of its Higher National programmes (awarded by Edexcel)

The basis of proposals for programme closure may typically be one or more of the following:

(a) Decline in student demand over a period of time to the point where the programme's viability is threatened;

(b) Failure to recruit viable numbers to a new programme

(c) Documented concerns over quality which threaten the programme's integrity;

(d) A breach of either parties obligations under an agreement between Activate Learning and an awarding body

(e) A reduction in funding or funded numbers

(f) The introduction of a replacement programme

2. Definitions

Staff – everyone employed directly and indirectly by Activate Learning, including non-paid volunteer workers both in work and outside working hours.

Students – Any existing students enrolled on the programme and any potential applicant to the programme.

Applicants – Individuals who have applied, or are in the process of applying to study on a Higher Education programme at one or more of Activate Learning's Colleges

Higher Education programme – includes Higher National Diplomas and Certificates (awarded by Edexcel) including those offered as part of a Higher Apprenticeship, Foundation Degrees, Honours Degrees and PGCE (awarded by a partner university)

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy covers all Higher Education programmes provided by Activate Learning, including those which form part of a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship and all current and prospective students, both full and part time.

4. Policy Statement

Activate Learning is committed to protecting the interests of students, applicants and its own reputation in the event of the proposed closure of a Higher Education programme. These procedures have been established to provide a clear statement of the arrangements to secure both the quality of provision and the student experience following a decision to close a programme. The Student Protection Plan provides the main reference point for consideration of any potential impact on the student experience.

With the exception of Activate Learning being given notice to close a programme by one of its awarding bodies, the decision to close a programme will be made by the Group Higher Education Academic Board.

5. Procedures associated with policy

The programme closure procedure requires a clear statement of the rationale for closure and the arrangements to secure both the quality of provision and the student experience following the decision to withdraw the programme. The Group Higher Education Academic Board will expect to see evidence of how the outgoing programme is to be phased out and the support provided to any remaining students and applicants. The Student Protection Plan provides further guidance on actions to be taken in the event of programme closure.

5.1 Obtaining approval to withdraw a programme

Where a programme governed by a partnership agreement is suspended by the awarding body, the awarding body will notify the College in writing as detailed in the relevant institutional agreement. The Director of Higher Education will then work with the relevant Director of Delivery to ensure that arrangements for any current and prospective students are in place (see 5.3)

Where the proposal to close a Higher Education programme originates within the College, the recommendation should be submitted by the relevant Head of Learning to the Group Higher Education Academic Board.

In order to allow adequate time for discussion and consultation, the recommendation for closure should be submitted to the Group Higher Education Academic Board before the end of June in the year the programme is recommended for closure.

The minimum time between a proposal for closure being submitted to the Group Higher Education Academic Board and a decision being taken should normally be a minimum of three months prior to the commencement of the next academic year, or as required by the appropriate institutional agreement.

A template is provided for this purpose, and the Group Higher Education Academic Board will expect to receive the following information as a basis for its decision:

- a) A clear statement of the rationale for the programme's closure;
- b) A clearly defined phasing-out period which includes start and end dates;

- c) The arrangements for providing students enrolled on the programme and all staff with information on the proposed closure
- d) The arrangements for providing UCAS applicants with timely advice and guidance to enable them to apply to another institution
- e) A clearly defined list of options available to students to enable them to either complete their original programme of study or transfer with their agreement to an alternative programme or institution;
- f) The arrangements to ensure that the quality of the student learning experience will continue to meet awarding body and QAA expectations during the phasing-out period;
- g) The mechanism to ensure that any proposed reduction in overall staffing levels will not impact unreasonably on the student experience, particularly with regard to ensuring that the intended learning outcomes of the programme will still be achievable by current students;
- h) The mechanism to ensure that adequate resources continue to be provided to maintain the quality of the student experience during the phasing-out period;
- i) The assessment and re-assessment arrangements for any students, particularly part-time students, who will not have completed their intended programme by the closure date;
- j) Evidence of consultation internally and/or externally with key stakeholders

5.2 Notification of decision to outside organisations

Once a closure recommendation has been approved by the Group Higher Education Academic Board, the Director of Higher Education must ensure that all publications and websites are amended.

UCAS should be notified by the College's UCAS Correspondent when the closure recommendation has been accepted.

Partnership agreements: The College is required to notify the University partner of its intention to suspend a programme in writing, giving no less than six months' notice before the end of the academic year during which the notice is given.

5.3 Notification of decision and arrangements for current students

All communications with current students about the closure of their course must be undertaken by the appropriate Director of Delivery or delegate.

Current students must be allowed to complete their designated period of enrolment on the programme unless they give their explicit written consent to the contrary. Such consent must not be sought until a closure recommendation has been approved by the Group Higher Education Academic Board.

Where a programme is being closed to recruitment, the proposed arrangements for students currently enrolled on the programme (including those who have suspended studies), must include the following:

- Discussion about student options in regard to transferring to another programme within Activate Learning or to another institution, and arrangements for doing so

- Confirmation of the student timetable for the remaining period of the programme
- Arrangements for the staffing and resourcing of the programme for the remaining period
- Written confirmation to all students clarifying any amendments to the programme regulations regarding assessment and progression, with particular reference to:
 - a) Students who have temporarily withdrawn
 - b) Students who have failed modules and would normally be allowed to retake these the following year
 - c) Students under mitigating circumstances who have been granted an extension beyond the end of the academic year
 - d) Students planning to progress from a Foundation Degree to an Honours Degree

5.4 Notification of decision and arrangements for prospective students

All communications with applicants on the following matters must be undertaken by the Higher Education Admissions Coordinator, or delegate

Applicants who have accepted offers should not be contacted until a closure recommendation has been approved by the Group Higher Education Academic Board. These applicants should then be informed of their options in regard to transferring their application to another programme or institution.

All Public Information relating to the programme should be either removed or amended by the Higher Education Liaison Coordinator in line with the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance, to inform potential applicants that the programme has been withdrawn. The following list provides a reference as to where this information is currently published:

- College websites
- Higher Education Programme Guide
- Programme leaflets – web based and hard copy
- UCAS listing
- Awarding body website and prospectus
- Third party e.g. employers

5.5 Marketing

Once a closure recommendation has been approved by the Group Higher Education Academic Board, the Director of Marketing and Communications will, where appropriate, prepare and publish a press statement.