TITLE	REF	VERSION
Procedure For The Closure Of A Higher Education Programme	HEPRO003	5

DEPARTMENT	Higher Education		
DATE	18 August 2026	**REVIEW DATE**	30 August 2027

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME CLOSURE OR SUSPENSION PROCEDURE

1. Procedure Statement

1.1. Activate Learning is committed to protecting the interests of students, applicants and its own reputation in the event of the closure or suspension of a Higher Education programme[1] to new entrants. 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 or suspend a programme.

1.2. Activate Learning's Student Protection Plan and Terms and Conditions for Higher Education students provide the main reference points when considering the closure or suspension of a programme.

1.3. Except for Activate Learning being given notice to close or suspend a programme by one of its awarding bodies, the decision will be made by the Faculty Director responsible for the programme in consultation with the Director of Higher Education.

2. Background

2.1. From time to time Activate Learning may be faced with considering the closure or suspension of a Higher Education programme of study. This may be due to:

- Notice being given **to** Activate Learning by one of its university partners to close or suspend one or more programmes.
- Notice being given **by** Activate Learning to one of its university partners to close one or more programmes; or
- Activate Learning has decided to withdraw one or more of its Higher National programmes (awarded by Pearson).

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

[1] Higher National Certificate, Higher Nations Diploma, Foundation Degree, BA/BSc (Hons) top-up Degree or modular provision

a) Decline in student demand over time, to the point where the programme's viability is threatened.
b) The programme ceases to meet the needs of employers and/or professional bodies.
c) Documented concerns over quality which threaten the programme's integrity and/or the quality of students' experience.
d) A breach of either party obligations under an agreement between Activate Learning and a delivery partner (under a subcontracting arrangement) and/or an awarding body.
e) A reduction in funding or funded numbers.
f) The introduction of a replacement programme.

3. Definitions

- **Suspension** – the temporary closure of a programme to applicants with the intention of re-opening the programme to future applicants.
- **Closure** – the permanent closure of a programme with no intention to reopen the programme to future applicants.
- **Staff** – everyone employed directly and indirectly by Activate Learning with responsibility for the delivery, management and/or administration of a programme of study.
- **Students** – Any students actively enrolled on 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 Pearson) including those offered as part of a Higher Apprenticeship or as standalone modules, Foundation Degrees, and Honours Degrees (awarded by a partner university)

4. Scope

4.1. This policy covers all Higher Education programmes, including modular provision, 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.

5. Additional processes

5.1. The relevant Faculty Director will need to provide a plan to show how the outgoing programme is to be phased out and support provided to any remaining students and applicants. The Student Protection Plan and Terms and Conditions for higher education students provides further guidance on actions to be taken in the event of programme closure or suspension.

6. Obtaining approval to suspend or close a programme

6.1. Where a programme governed by a partnership agreement is suspended or closed by the awarding body, the awarding body will notify Activate Learning in writing as detailed in the relevant institutional agreement. The Director of Higher Education will then work with the relevant Faculty Director to ensure that arrangements for any current and prospective students are in place.

6.2. Where the proposal to suspend or close a Higher Education programme originates from within Activate Learning, the recommendation should initially be submitted by the relevant Faculty Director to the Group Director of Quality and Consistency and Director of Higher Education.

6.3. To allow adequate time for discussion and consultation, the recommendation for closure or suspension should be submitted **at least 3 months prior to the commencement of a course.**

6.4. The time between a proposal being submitted and a decision being taken should normally be a **maximum of two weeks** to allow time to notify and advise any applicant who holds, or has accepted, an offer of a place.

6.5. The Group's Director of Quality and Consistency and Director of Higher Education will need to be provided with the following information:

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 and/or institution.
f) The arrangements to ensure that the quality of the student learning experience will continue to meet Activate Learning's, 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 including the student body.

7. Notification

Notification of decision to outside organisations

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

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

7.3. Partnership agreements: The College is required to notify the University partner of its intention to suspend or close a programme in writing, giving no less than six months' notice or whatever time period is set out in the relevant institutional agreement, before the end of the academic year during which the notice is given.

Notification of decision internally within Activate Learning

7.4. The relevant Faculty Director will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant parties, such as admissions and marketing, in Activate Learning are notified of any decision to close a course. This will include but not be limited to ensuring that the appropriate documentation is raised and authorised to update Activate Learning's student and course record systems i.e. ProSolutions

Notification of decision and arrangements for current students

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

7.6. 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.

7.7. 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:

- 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.

7.8. Written confirmation to all students clarifying any amendments to the programme regulations regarding assessment and progression, with particular reference to:

- Students who have temporarily withdrawn
- Students who have failed modules and would normally be allowed to retake these the following year.
- Students under extenuating circumstances who have been granted an extension beyond the end of the academic year.
- Students planning to progress from a Foundation Degree to an Honours Degree.

Notification of decision and arrangements for prospective students

7.9. All communications with applicants on the following matters must be undertaken by the Advice and Admissions team.

7.10. Applicants who have accepted offers should not be contacted until a closure or suspension recommendation has been approved. These applicants should then be informed of their options in regard to transferring their application to another programme or institution.

7.11. All Public Information relating to the programme should be either removed or amended by the Marketing Business Partner for higher education 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:

a) College websites
b) Higher Education Programme Guide
c) Programme leaflets – web based and hard copy
d) UCAS listing
e) Awarding body website and prospectus
f) Third party e.g., employers

8. Marketing

8.1. Once a closure recommendation has been approved the Director of Marketing and Communications will, where appropriate, prepare and publish a press statement.

References

- Student Fees Policy
- HE Terms and Conditions
- Student Protection Plan