



Royal Academy of Music Student Protection Plan for the period 2018-19

For further information, please contact the Academy's Director of Finance, Judith Barber (Judith.barber@ram.ac.uk)

The Student Protection Plan comes into force in instances when it would not be possible to continue our educational delivery. It details the steps we would take to manage this and to protect students' interests. Our terms and conditions (Quality Assurance Procedures) set out how we manage smaller changes to programmes that are continuing (including how we consult students), and these terms and conditions apply to applicants who have accepted an offer as well as enrolled students.

The Academy is committed to informing the student body of any such changes, the reasons behind them and action to be taken as early as possible, and with relevant options, to allow them if necessary, to make an informed decision with regard to their studies.

We have identified the following main risks to the continuation of study for our students:

- **The risk that the Academy is unable to operate/decision to close the Academy**
The risk that the Academy as a whole is unable to operate owing to an unforeseen financial catastrophe is very low as our financial performance is strong and we have robust measures in place to monitor this.

- **Loss of access to campus facilities**
The risk that we can no longer provide educational delivery at our main site is low as we are on a long-term lease and our building is fit for purpose.

- **Loss or restriction of degree awarding powers**
The risk that we would lose the ability to award our own degrees is low as we enjoy stability in terms of our facilities and services to students and we have robust quality assurance procedures in place and embedded throughout our academic framework to monitor academic standards.

- **Decision to close a programme of study**
The risk that a programme of study would close is low as we operate a small range of programmes for which demand is high. We evaluate our programmes on a 5-year rolling basis to ensure that they remain appropriate to meet the demands of the student market and the profession.

- **Major changes to programme content**
The risk of there being major changes to programme content is low, as our programmes of study are very well established and reflect the needs of the profession and so are unlikely to require major revision in terms of content, structure or delivery.

- **Removal of the Tier 4 sponsor licence**

The risk of our losing our Tier 4 sponsor licence is low as we assure ourselves that we are compliant with UKVI legislation via regular attendance at sector briefings, staff training and internal audits of our controls.

- **Disruption to term time activity**

The risk of disruption to term time activity is low as our facilities are well-maintained and we have mechanisms in place to cover staff were they to become unavailable.

- **Unexpected departure of key members of Academy staff**

The risk of unexpected departure of key members of staff is low as we generally have a very low staff turnover. Our recruitment processes are swift and effective when we do need to replace members of staff.

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

The measures that we have in place to preserve continuation of study for our students in the event of any of the risks above taking place are as follows:

- **The risk that the Academy is unable to operate/decision to close the Academy**

We have sufficient financial reserves which would enable us to complete an academic year, thereby allowing us time to put in place any necessary mitigations. We also undertake rolling 5-year financial forecasts which provide us with an understanding of our expected financial position in sufficient time to take action to ensure financial stability.

If possible arrangements would be made to honour our commitment to existing students and teach out the remaining enrolled students if possible, or to transfer them to another institution and refund and compensate according to our terms and conditions.

- **Loss of access to campus facilities**

In the case of an unexpected disaster our business continuity plans would be implemented. We have a shared business continuity plan with other members of the Conservatoires UK network (available on request), and we would seek their support in these circumstances. We have other buildings that we occupy in the local vicinity and these would be part of the continuity arrangements.

Over the last two years a major building project has meant that parts of the estate have been under construction, which necessitated the securing of off-site space for both teaching and performances. Staff are now well-versed in seeking alternative venues and these relationships would be used to ensure both aspects of our work could continue.

- **Loss or restriction of degree awarding powers**

In the event that this took place we would look to transfer affected students to a different provider and compensate them for any fee differences as necessary. The UK Conservatoires' suite of programmes is very similar and in this respect it is highly likely that an equivalent programme of study could be found.

- **Decision to close a programme of study**

We would make arrangements to honour our commitment to existing students, teach out existing students and either transfer new students to an alternative programme within the

institution or to a similar programme at another institution. We would refund any tuition fees and compensate students where necessary according to our terms and conditions were this not possible.

In the event that this took place we would look to transfer affected students to a different provider and compensate them for any fee differences as necessary. The UK Conservatoires' suite of programmes is very similar and in this respect it is highly likely that an equivalent programme of study could be found.

- **Major changes to programme content**

We would seek the students' consent to the changes in good time and give sufficient time and information to allow the students to make a decision whether or not to accept them. In the event that they do not accept the changes and no longer wish to pursue study on the programme, we would offer a refund of any fees paid and consider reimbursement of any associated costs.

- **Removal of the Tier 4 sponsor licence**

In the event that this took place we would endeavour to temporarily relocate the affected students to an alternative provider, ideally within the network of London-based conservatoires and cover any additional costs incurred as a result of this change.

- **Changes to the regulatory framework affecting a specific programme**

We would seek the students' consent to the changes in good time, allowing sufficient time and providing clear information to allow the students to make a decision whether or not to accept them. In the event that they do not accept the changes and no longer wish to pursue study on the programme, we would offer a refund of any fees paid and consider reimbursement of any associated costs.

- **Disruption to term time activity**

In this instance we would ensure that students received any contact time owed to them, potentially by bespoke arrangements and with the consent of the students. Exceptionally we would offer a partial tuition fee refund to cover any missed contact time for which we were unable to make alternative arrangements. In the event that key department such as the Library was inaccessible, we would make arrangements to use the facilities of either one of the other London Conservatoires or the University of London.

- **Unexpected departure of key members of Academy staff**

As our teaching model is heavily weighted towards one-to-one tuition and small group classes there is, in all areas of programme delivery, significant overlap of teaching expertise. This ensures that expertise in particular specialist areas is protected against single points of failure were a member of staff to be unable to teach at short notice. We recognise that some students will have applied to and enrolled at the Academy in order to study with a particular instrumental teacher and in this regard we have a coherent and transparent system to transfer students to other teachers with close consultation and the consent of the student.

3. Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

The Academy has Tuition fee refund and compensation terms and conditions which can be found here https://www.ram.ac.uk/public/uploads/documents/533050_refund-and-compensation-terms-and-conditions.pdf

We consider there is a very small chance that the Academy will be unable to preserve continuation of study. If this did arise it is extremely unlikely that it would impact on a significant number of students. As a result we believe the Academy has sufficient cash reserves to provide refunds and compensation where necessary

4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan

We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students by linking it to our Student Charter, which is published on our website. We will make reference to the Student Protection Plan in our Quality Assurance Procedures, which set out the processes for approving changes to programmes of study, to ensure that due consideration is given to aspects of consumer protection law when proposing changes.

We will review the student protection plan annually by adding it as a standing item on the agenda for Standing Committee of Academic Board, which will also ensure that student representatives are involved in the review of this document.

In the event that any aspects of the student protection plan needed to be implemented, we would communicate with relevant students as soon as possible in order to inform them of the situation, any implications and available options, making clear reference to our terms and conditions. In the events that consent needed to be obtained from students we would give them due notice and a reasonable time frame in which to respond.