

Student protection plan 2024-2026

Provider's name: Wigan and Leigh College

Provider's UKPRN: 10007500

Legal address:

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Risks to the continuation of study

The risk that Wigan and Leigh College as a whole is unable to operate is very low because our financial performance is designated as 'good' by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and we have breadth of provision across various income streams. We have business continuity plans to deal with IT failure, major incidents and temporary estate closure.

The risk that we will no longer deliver courses in the next three years is low because we continually review the curriculum plans to meet the needs of the community and the majority of our programmes are mapped to level 3 provision to aid progression to HE.

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes in highly specialised areas in the next three years is low to moderate as we regularly review staffing resource and investment in specialised equipment.

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver material components of our courses is low because we design our modules to be taught by integrated teams of academic staff. In some provision where we are dependent on staff recruitment in a highly competitive labour market, the risk is moderate. In this case we will recruit staff from the relevant industry sector and provide relevant training for staff including teacher training. We also have a graduate teaching scheme in place for specialist teachers and we provide a market premium in particular circumstances.

The risk that we no longer deliver a course because of low recruitment numbers is moderate because there are high levels of competition in certain course markets. We do typically run courses with smaller numbers and maintain smaller group sizes in continuing years of courses. In addition, we combine classes where the contact is similar to enable provision to operate. Closing local provision poses a particular risk to students with caring responsibilities, as the local offer enables them to successfully access HE.

The risk that we can no longer deliver provision due to a termination in our relationship with our awarding bodies (Pearson and University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)) is low as we have contractual agreements to ensure that course continuity is maintained.

The contractual relationships under the levy pose a moderate risk to continuity of study whereby an employer might move to another educational provider mid-programme. This is a particular risk to part-time students.

Measures in place to mitigate risks that may be reasonably likely to crystallise

If we were no longer able to deliver programmes in highly specialised areas due to lack of specialised equipment we would work with UCLan and their large partnership network to provide access to the relevant equipment. Similarly for certain courses if we were unable to recruit in a highly competitive labour market then we would work in partnership with local HE providers to deliver continuity of programmes. In addition, we work with a large number of employers and would use their networks to support in the recruitment of suitable staff.

If we are no longer deliver a course because of low recruitment numbers we would offer at College a similar course or if that was not suitable work with UCLan and their large partnership network to provide the same or a similar course offer.

If an employer moves their higher level and degree level apprentices to another educational provider mid-programme we would work with the new provider to ensure, where possible, that a transfer-in to a suitable HE course is facilitated.

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 College has in place a fees policy section 9 of which cover refunds. Our fees policy is available on our web-site <https://www.wigan-leigh.ac.uk/about/reports-and-policies>. The 'learning agreement' contains our summary of terms and is also available on the web-site. It sets out the fees and refunds for students in receipt of tuitions fee loan from the Student Loans Company, students who pay their own tuition fees, and students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor. An induction programme is provided at the beginning of a course and this gives students an overview of their learning agreement, academic regulations and other policies that apply to students.

The College has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals, which are accessible to all applicants with and offer and students. In our 'learning agreement' students and their sponsors are advised to use these procedures in respect to any tuition fee refund or where an event affects continuity of study.

Our financial performance is designated as 'good' by the ESFA and this means we can provide refunds for any student if there was non-continuity of study.

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 on our website and we will publicise it at induction.

We will ensure that managers and course leaders are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by introducing relevant training.

We will work with our current students in the development of our student protection plan and in future reviews through our HE Student Voice Strategy.

We will make arrangements to communicate with affected students should our student protection plan need to be implemented. For example: we will inform our students if there are to be material changes to their course by discussing the changes in tutorials via their personal tutor and through e-mail communication; and we will give students 10 days' notice when we need to make material changes to their course.