



# Student Protection Plan

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## 1. Purpose

Under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 Trent Education Centre ('TEC') is required to have a Student Protection Plan to ensure that students are protected if TEC is forced to make significant changes or to close. TEC intends to uphold the consumer rights of students making sure they are aware of their options well in advance of any possible changes to their advertised course.

## 2. Scope

The Student Protection Plan provides an assessment of a range of risks that may prevent students from being able to continue their studies. These risks are based upon an assessment of the needs, characteristics and circumstances of the students TEC has and expects to have in future. The Student Protection Plan considers the impact of the risk and its likelihood of crystallising. It also considers what measures we should put in place to mitigate the risks identified and how this information will be communicated to students.

Between 2022 and 2023 there have been 456 students. More than half of them studied Level 2 English and the remaining students studied Level 3 Business and Management or Health and Social Care courses. TEC has plans to run HND in Business courses over two years starting in 2024. It is expected that many of the students in L2 and L3 courses will be able to progress to the HND. This student protection plan will consider the risks to those students being able to continue for two years.

## 3. Student Collaboration

TEC is committed to collaborating closely with students in the development and approval of the Student Protection Plan (SPP). TEC consults students in order to take account of their views, interests and requirements when developing, updating and amending the SPP through the following processes:

- 3.1. The Student Council, which consists of class representatives at TEC, are consulted on their views about the draft SPP, including any amendments, additions or updates they wish to recommend.
- 3.2. The Student Council will be invited to draft or redraft parts of the SPP and submit their draft with recommendations to the Board of Governors for discussion and approval.
- 3.3. Student representatives from the Student Council, including the Student President and Vice-President are automatically appointed as full members of the Board of Governors, which is responsible for giving final approval for the SPP.
- 3.4. When approved by the BoG, the SPP will be published on the TEC website.
- 3.5. Student representatives from the Student Council will be encouraged to discuss the SPP with other students in their classes, asking them to read it and give their views.
- 3.6. TEC will conduct a student survey on the SPP three months after the SPP has been published on the website. The purpose of the survey will be to ensure that student views, interests and needs are accounted for adequately in the SPP.
- 3.7. After compiling student views on the SPP through the student survey, the SPP may be amended if required and sent to the SMT and Student Council for consideration, before being passed to the BoG for final approval.

## 4. SPP Production Process

- 4.1. The first draft of the Student Protection Plan (SPP) has been produced by TEC Head of Quality and submitted to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Student Council for discussion, amendments and recommendations.
- 4.2. The Student Council is invited to submit their own draft of the SPP if they wish.
- 4.3. The second draft of the SPP, incorporating all the amendments and recommendations of the SMT and Student Council will be passed to the Board of Governors (BoG) for final approval.
- 4.4. The final version of the SPP is published on the TEC website.
- 4.5. A student survey is conducted about the SPP.
- 4.6. The SPP may be amended, following discussion by the SMT and the Student Council, and submitted to the BoG for approval.
- 4.7. The Audit & Risk Committee (AR) monitors the SPP, three times per year and reports on mitigations for each risk to the BoG.
- 4.8. The SPP is reviewed and updated annually by the SMT, and the Student Council with final approval by the BoG.

## 5. Risk to the Continuation of Study

The risk of students being unable to continue their studies for the next two years is based upon how likely the risk will crystallize multiplied by the impact that the risk will have. A Likert scale of 1-5 is used to measure both risk factors, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high. After multiplying both factors together, the overall risk is scored as followed:

Very Low	1-5
Low	6-10
Medium	11-15
High	16-20
Very High	21-25

### **(1) TEC having to close down due to lack of funds (Very Low)**

TEC has been operating since 2012 and has grown from one study centre in Nottingham to having two more in Leicester and Birmingham. Having a study centre in three cities in the UK helps TEC to spread its risk. TEC proved to be resilient during the pandemic, after which it experienced growth in staff and student numbers. TEC has multiple income streams to ensure it remains solvent, good staff and satisfied students showing it is sustainable. TEC has plans in place to run HND in Business, which will provide further revenues to sustain TEC, especially if TEC's application for registration with the Office for Students is successful. The owner of TEC is investing in a second study centre in Nottingham, which allows for increased capacity. TEC marketing team have received many enquiries showing an increased demand for College provision in all three of its Study Centre locations.

## **(2) Loss of an awarding organisation (NCFE, ATHE or BIIAB) (Very Low)**

TEC has received very good External Quality Assurance (EQA) reports and Annual Monitoring Reviews (AMRs) from ATHE, NCFE and BIIAB<sup>1</sup> awarding organisations and there is very little risk that TEC will lose an awarding organisation. TEC is about to apply to Pearson in order to run the HND in Business. Given the careful preparations it is making for this the risk of not being successful or having Pearson approval withdrawn is very low.

## **(3) Loss of facilities (Very Low)**

TEC has three Study Centres and is opening a new one in Nottingham. Two Study Centres are owned by Trent Property Group Limited, a company wholly owned by the Managing Director (ZA), and there is a five-year lease on all another TEC properties. TEC has a Study Centre Manager at each location who report to directly to the Managing Director.

## **(4) Changes to course content (Low)**

Course curriculum and assessment materials will be set by awarding organisations, who are responsible for ensuring that qualifications are aligned with the Framework for Higher Education and consistent with threshold standards. The risk that TEC will face challenges with course content is low, but not very low as TEC will be delivering higher education for the first time, including the ATHE Level 4 Extended Diploma in Business Management and HND in Business. TEC has recently established a robust governance and academic management framework (GAMF) that will ensure proper monitoring of all course content before and during delivery. The Academic Board, in particular, will oversee the setting up of all new higher education programmes with full reports from the Head of Higher Education and Higher Education Programme Leader(s).

## **(5) Key staff members leaving (Medium)**

TEC has a very good team of staff and many have worked at TEC for more than two years, whilst some have worked there since it was established in 2012. However, TEC plans to recruit 3,616 FE and HE students over the next three years as follows: 871 in 2024/25; 1,206 in 2025/26; and 1,539 in 2026/27. This means many new academic staff will need to be recruited. This could pose a risk to TEC if a large number of the newly recruited staff were to leave at one time leaving TEC unable to run its courses effectively. This could force TEC to close courses until new staff have been replaced. As TEC has not recruited students at this scale before and has not delivered higher education, this risk is considered medium.

# **6. Measures to Mitigate Risks**

## **(1) TEC having to close down due to lack of funds (Very Low)**

The risk that TEC would be unable to operate due to a lack of revenue is very low. However, to mitigate this, TEC has a surplus fund to maintain all provision at its current scale for one academic year. In the event of a critical incident, all students and staff would be able to complete one academic year before closure.

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<sup>1</sup> BIIAB is due to start up again in January 2024

## **(2) Loss of an awarding organisation (NCFE, ATHE or BIIAB) (Very Low)**

The risk that TEC will lose an awarding organisation is very low. However, TEC will create a Teach Out Plan if this situation arises to mitigate the impact on students. TEC will make the plan in consultation with students and include options for students to transfer to other providers if they wish. TEC will inform students of any changes as soon as possible and provide full guidance and support about alternative providers. TEC Study Centres are located close to other providers if students should even need or wish to transfer for any reason.

## **(3) Loss of facilities (Very low)**

If a section of College facilities become unusable for students, TEC will relocate provision or revise the timetable so that scheduled classes can take place at different times. If TEC were still unable to accommodate students, TEC will compensate them (see the TEC Tuition Fees, Refunds and Compensation Policy). There are other providers close to all TEC Study Centres, with ample rooms that TEC can rent in an emergency.

## **(4) Changes to course content (Low)**

All courses will be reviewed and agreed by the Academic Board before teaching begins. TEC will plan the course carefully to ensure that few if any changes to scheduled classes will be required throughout the ATHE Level 4 and two years of the HND. Course Committee will monitor progress regularly and report to the Academic Board.

## **(5) Key staff members leaving (Medium)**

TEC has recently appointed an experienced and fully qualified Head of Human Resources who is tasked with developing, with the SMT, a robust human resource and talent management system in order to ensure the recruitment, training and retention of good quality staff. TEC will create a resource plan to ensure that there are adequate staff numbers in place to accommodate the planned growth in student numbers. The TEC Academic Staff-Student Ratio for all Higher Education provision, including teaching faculty and academic support staff, will be no greater than 1:30 at any one time or location. TEC will make sure that it continuously advertises for academic staff so that it does not find itself short of staff if many should decide to leave at any one time. TEC will aim to offer a competitive rate to staff alongside training opportunities and membership of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) such as Advance HE. This will improve service level and teaching quality and help to incentivise and retain staff at TEC. TEC will require Senior Staff to sign contracts with three-month notice periods to ensure there is adequate time for a thorough hand-over of responsibilities to replacement staff. Key staff will be on extended contracts with the standard academic one term notice if they wish to leave.

## **7. Informing and Protecting Students**

TEC develops the Student Protection Plan (SPP) in collaboration with the Student Council (see Student Collaboration above). The SPP is explained to every class by staff and student representatives. If an incident occurs and elements of this SPP have to be actioned, any impacts on students will be communicated to students as soon as possible and students will be informed about all their options. In order to mitigate disruption, TEC will offer students the opportunity to join another TEC course or go to another provider if they wish.

## 8. Refunds and Compensation

If a student transfers to another course or provider, the student may claim a refund of tuition fees as explained in the TEC Tuition Fees, Refunds and Compensation Policy. Students may also refer to this policy if they feel that they have been put at a disadvantage due to the change(s) and wish to claim compensation.

## 9. Communication Feedback and Review

TEC will make the Student Protection Plan and Tuition Fees, Refunds and Compensation Policy available on TEC website.

Students will be kept informed about the plan if it is needed through the Student Council, visiting classes, emails and announcements.

Students will be invited to give feedback on the plan in College surveys, during meetings and by sending emails. Students can complain to TEC about the plan or its implementation using the Complaints Policy.

The Student Protection Plan will be reviewed every year as a minimum. However, it may be reviewed and revised any time there is significant change at TEC.

## 10. Results

No.	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Risk
1	TEC having to close down due to lack of funds	1	5	5	Very Low
2	Loss of an awarding organisation (NCFE or ATHE) BIIAB Open Awards	1	3	3	Very Low
3	Loss of facilities	2	2	4	Very Low
4	Changes to course content	2	3	6	Low
5	Key staff members leaving	3	4	12	Medium

Key

Likelihood: 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high, 5 = very high

Impact 1 = 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high, 5 = very high

Total = Likelihood multiplied by Impact.