

Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: Ballet West

Provider's UKPRN: 10042364

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Approved by Ballet West board 17/12/18

Review Date 17/12/19

Student protection plan for the period 2019-20

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students, how those risks may differ based on your students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

The risks to the continuation of study for students are described in detail on the attached Risk Register. They are broadly grouped into three categories –

1. Those that relate to external regulatory bodies approving either the institution or the courses
2. Those that relate to loss of teaching resources, either physical resources or staff
3. Those that relate to external businesses being able to provide ancillary services

External Regulatory Bodies

Continuation of study relies on the courses being validated by an awarding body. For the Foundation Degree and BA(Hons) degree in Dance the validating body is the Open University (OU). For the HND in Professional Dance Performance it is the Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA). Validation is reviewed on a regular basis, it can also be withdrawn between reviews in extreme circumstance. Loss of validation has a severe impact on the delivery of courses, but its likelihood is very low.

The designation of courses for student funding is necessary for students to receive state loans and grants to study at Ballet West. The loss of designation does not, in itself, prevent delivery of the courses. However, without assistance nearly all students would be unable to afford tuition fees and the living costs associated with study. Designation is provided by the governments in each of the devolved regions of the UK for students who are domiciled in that region. Designation for Scottish, Northern Irish and Welsh domiciled students to study at Ballet West is highly unlikely to be lost. The situation for English students is less certain. Recent changes in government policy and the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) 2017, have established the Office for Students as the new body for designating providers, but this is restricted to providers in England only. The regulatory framework has provision for a transition arrangement to be in place for 2019-20, but for 2020-21 onwards, new systems are required for providers in the devolved regions and these will be established in cross border agreements. Loss of designation for 2019-20 is unlikely, but possible for 2020-21.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) require submission of annual monitoring reports and undertakes review visits on a regular basis. Successful QAA review is a prerequisite for designation and tier 4 sponsor status, it is also an critical indicator of quality used in course validation. An unsuccessful review therefore has a severe impact on the continuation of studies for students. Ballet West had a successful review in December 2017 and following submission of annual monitoring in October 2018, is not

required to receive a review visit in 2018. The risk to the continuation of courses from the loss of QAA approval is very low.

Tier 4 sponsor status is held by Ballet West for overseas students. The number of overseas students is relatively low so loss of sponsor status and concomitant loss of overseas income would not significantly affect the financial sustainability of the company as a whole and home students would not lose course continuity. However, for overseas student it would obviously have a severe impact. Ballet West has met Basic Compliance requirements with the UKVI for several years, the last being in October 2018. The next Basic Compliance Assessment is due in September 2019 and the licence is due for renewal in September 2022. The risk to the continuation of courses for all students, both home and overseas, due to the loss of tier 4 sponsor status is very low.

Teaching and Administrative Resources

Loss of a significant amount of physical resources such as teaching spaces or office space would have a significant short-term impact on the delivery of courses. Teaching and office spaces are located in a number of separate buildings, so loss through fire or flood is unlikely to affect all the individual buildings. Risks to the continuation of delivery are mitigated through a combination of good practice in estate management, insurance and contingencies considered for short to medium term replacement of teaching space.

Loss of key individuals, from either teaching and administrative staff is a significant risk to the continuation to delivery of courses. Some key staff members have been with Ballet West for many years and they often hold portfolio roles in the institution. Loss of any of these staff members could seriously affect the delivery of courses and potentially lead on to loss of approval by external bodies (see above).

External Businesses

Ballet West does not own any student accommodation and students therefore rely on private accommodation businesses operated by senior Ballet West staff members. Given the rural location and limited availability to other rental accommodation within easy reach of the institution, without this accommodation students would find it difficult to attend the institution and the impact on being able to continue with their students would be severe.

While this arrangement works to the benefit of both parties, the failure of these businesses presents a significant risk to Ballet West over which the institution has no control. However, the likelihood of this occurring is judged as low.

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

External Regulatory Bodies

Loss of validation – provision exists in the agreements with validating bodies that in the event of the termination of the validation agreement, both the validating body and Ballet West will take all reasonable steps to ensure that students are able to complete the validated programmes or transfer to a suitable alternative programme to complete an award.

Ballet West currently has two programmes for QCF levels 4&5 (or Scottish equivalent) so loss of the Foundation Degree after year 1 can be mitigated by transfer to the HND year 2. It is considered as inconceivable that any validating body would not allow students to complete their current academic year due to their responsibility to the enrolled students under the Quality Code and potential reputational damage to the validating university. Therefore, those students in the final year of the Foundation degree and on the BA(Hons) course should always be able complete their current award.

Designation for Funding – This presents a significant risk to the continuation of delivery of courses at Ballet West. It relates to changes in UK Government Policy and the interaction between

the Department for Education in London and the Scottish Government Education Department in Edinburgh. The only mitigating steps that can be taken are ensuring that both bodies are reminded of the situation and are encouraged to reach a solution which enables English students to continue to attend courses in Scotland. Ballet West maintains links with both MPs and MSPs to ensure that the issue is considered.

QAA & Tier 4 sponsorship – These are seen as low risk to the continuation of delivery

Teaching and Administrative Resources

Loss of teaching / administrative space is mitigated by business insurance which has provision for the additional costs of providing alternative space for the continuation of business in addition to replacement expense. Several locations for studio space have been identified in Taynuilt and Oban. As noted above the campus has several buildings and the likelihood of all being damaged is extremely low.

Loss of key personnel is a greater risk. Ballet West is currently restructuring staffing to ensure that all staff have clearly defined and documented roles facilitating replacement of key personnel should it be necessary. The institution currently uses a pool of freelance teaching staff to support salaried staff and loss of key salaried staff can be mitigated by a short-term increase in use of freelancers, while longer term replacements are recruited.

External Businesses

The risk attached to the loss of locally available accommodation cannot be mitigated by Ballet West currently. The board are currently considering contingency plans for this eventuality.

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

New Terms and Conditions are coming into force for the 2019-20 academic year these can be viewed at the Ballet West Website. The clauses that relate to the refund of tuition fees in the event of cancellation, postponement or relocation to the course are as follows

- 5.3. Course details are not expected to change. However, subject to clause 5.4 below, we reserve the right to cancel, postpone and/or relocate a course. We will give as much notice and explanation of any such change as is reasonably possible and, where possible, we will try to mitigate any inconvenience (visa regulations permitting).
- 5.4. If any change we make pursuant to clause 1 adversely and significantly affects you and you do not wish to pursue the alternatives offered by us, you may withdraw from the Course and terminate our agreement immediately by written notice and
 - 5.4.1. if you withdraw prior to the Course start date, a refund of the Fees already paid to us less your Deposit; or
 - 5.4.2. If you withdraw on or after the Course start date, we will provide you with an appropriate refund taking into consideration the proportion of the Course completed at the time of termination of our agreement. The Deposit is non-refundable.

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

The Student Protection Plan will be available on the Ballet West Website and in the Student Handbook. We will ensure that programme development teams are aware of the implications of the Student protection plan by including a provision in the Programme development procedure (to be amended at Academic Board February 2019).

This draft Student Protection Plan will be discussed with student and staff representatives at academic board in February, with recommendations for amendments submitted to the Board of Trustees prior to approval. The student protection plan will be reviewed annually.

Informing students about implementation of the Student Protection Plan

We will inform our students if there are to be material changes to their course by email to their Ballet West email addresses.

We will give students at least 20 working days' notice when we need to make material changes to their course.

If we need to implement the measures in our student protection plan we will support students collectively and individually by –

- Providing detailed information to students concerning the circumstances of the change
- Providing individual counselling of options available

Ballet West Risk Register (Board) 2017-2020

					Risk Rating					
Category	Owner	Potential Risk	Potential Impact	Action req'd by	Impact	Likelihood	Score	Mitigating Actions Taken	Contingency	
1	Financial	Board	Loss of validation of courses	Loss of student income; current operation unsustainable	Board, CEO, Academic Board	5	1	5	Review operations regularly and monitor ongoing delivery; create timescale of required director input; ensure key role of quality assurance is understood and acted upon by directors; ensure that all agreed policies and procedures are implemented	Maintain approval by SQA and alternative courses. Only for SCQF level 7&8 (QCF level 4&5) courses.
2	Financial	Board	Loss of designation for funding	Loss of student income; threat to viability of current operation	Board, CEO, Academic Board	5	1	5	as above, plus external monitoring of political situation and lobby	Developing marketing strategy for students not eligible for student funding.
3	Financial	Academic board	Reduction in QAA rating	Loss of student income; threat to viability of current operation	Board, CEO, Academic Board	2	1	2	ensure compliance with QAA ; monitor developments and lobby	
4	Financial	Board	Loss of Tier 4 sponsor status	Loss of student income; threat to viability of current operation	Board, CEO, Academic Board	3	1	3	Ensure and monitor compliance; excellent record keeping and timely response to Home Office requests	
5	Reputational	Board	Reputational damage	Loss of student income; threat to viability of current operation	Board, CEO, Academic Board	4	1	4	Maintain high artistic and academic standard; robust HR policies; maintain good PR especially social media; PI insurance covers "crisis management" PR person; follow BW operations manual	
7	Operational	Board	Loss of key teaching personnel	Inability to deliver programmes to required standards	Academic board	2	1	2	Maintain contacts with wide pool of freelancers and wider teaching community. Ensure effective training for	

									new members of staff to expand skills base	
8	Operational	Board	Loss of key management or administrative personnel	Loss of knowledge and operational information, difficulty in operating business	Board	3	2	6	ensuring freelance staff share info appropriately; keeping handbooks up to date; robust HR policies	
9	Operational	Board	Loss of teaching spaces or offices e.g. from fire or flood	Inability for business to function	Board, CEO	4	1	4	Insurance policy in place. Business disaster recovery plan to be developed. Information collection and back up policy to be implemented	Local facilities identified for alternate teaching space in short /medium term. Taynuilt village hall, Pavillion, Oban High School
15	Operational	Board	Loss of access to student accommodation	Difficulty in recruiting students, loss of income; contraction of business	Board	6	1	6	Longer term contingency plans to be developed	