



**UCQ**  
UNIVERSITY  
CENTRE QUAYSIDE

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# Student Protection Plan and Exit Strategy

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## Student Protection Plan: effective from 1 August 2019

University Centre Quayside (UCQ) is committed to helping ensure the protection of student interest and the continuity of adult learning and apprenticeship studies for all students in the event of unforeseen material change. UCQ is committed to communicating any changes to students as early as possible, with clear information and options.

### 1. Risk assessment

The following risk assessment is underpinned by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding and performance-management rules for training providers.

#### 1.1 Changes to UCQ

##### **All Provision (Applicable to AEB and Apprenticeships)**

**Scenario 1:** Physical building closure due to natural disaster or other unforeseen circumstances

**Likelihood:** Currently high risk (see below Covid-19 risk mitigation)

**Risk mitigation:** 1) Where a UCQ training location (e.g. Stockton, Newcastle, Leeds) requires closure due to natural disasters or other unforeseen circumstances, the following measures will be taken:

- The UCQ Disaster Recovery Plan will be followed and action plan created to minimise disruption as much as possible
- All provision currently using the location for training purposes will be relocated to an alternative location;
- Where required, timetabling will be revised for all affected provision to allow for the change of location and any disruption to the student's studies;
- Where appropriate, UCQ may utilise alternative means of delivery (for example, temporary online delivery)

**Covid-19****Likelihood:** Currently unfolding

**Risk mitigation:** 1) UCQ are mitigating against the impacts to work schedules and travel restrictions relating to Covid-19 by delivering all AEB and Apprenticeship provision remotely until further notice. This will be done as follows:

- The overall module and programme structure will be adhered to as far as possible by continuing remote delivering activity as per programme schedules. This includes lectures 1 and 2 for apprenticeship provision, supporting tutorials and Professional Development Assessor (PDA) sessions.
- Remote activities will be scheduled for the designated delivery days, supplemented with additional online resources. The basic framework of a scheduled delivery day will be sent to students by their Tutor for each module or unit of study.
- For AEB provision, the use of e-learning platform Aptem will be utilised to ensure robust onboarding, compliance, engagement and learning activities. Tablets will be made available to students where the need arises.
- For Apprenticeship provision, Ecordia based resources will be available at all times. In addition, the Ecordia messaging function will be used as a discussion board to facilitate peer to peer interaction with Tutor and PDA involvement.
- For those students who are unable to attend the online delivery sessions, all live GoToMeeting or Teams sessions will be recorded and download links and teaching videos will be made available to students.
- Online meeting invitations will be sent as Outlook Calendar meetings, allowing individual meetings to be accepted or declined as appropriate (this will also permit swift commencement and conclusion of sessions once all likely attendees are known).
- In-module remote interaction with Tutors and PDAs will follow the same process as previous modules, though there will be flexible provision for additional support via email, Aptem and Ecordia as required.

2) Where required, the UCQ Extenuating Circumstances Policy will be utilised in relation to the submission of assessment.

3) These arrangements will be regularly reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure the quality and effectiveness of provision remains high. Once the situation improves, face-to-face delivery will be resumed at the earliest opportunity.

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<b>Scenario 2:</b>	Institutional or programme closure
<b>Likelihood:</b>	Low risk due to continuous risk management monitoring and financially robust standing
<b>Risk mitigation:</b>	<p>1) In partnership with higher and further education regulatory bodies, UCQ conduct regular risk management exercises and monitoring to ensure the Centre remains financially stable and continues to meet its quality benchmarks.</p> <p>Where an extreme set of events leads to the closure of UCQ or their Adult Education Budget or Apprenticeship programmes, the following measures will be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Where possible, UCQ provision will close gradually over a period of time that would allow current enrolled students to complete their studies;</li><li>- Where gradual closure is not possible, UCQ will support their students and employers (if applicable) to find an appropriate alternative provider of their programme;</li></ul> <p>2) For the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) <b>only</b>, UCQ's validating body, The Open University, also offer this award nationally. In the event of institutional or programme closure, a CMDA student could be transferred on to a relevant Open University programme if appropriate.</p>
<b>Scenario 3:</b>	Loss of key staff
<b>Likelihood:</b>	Moderate risk
<b>Risk mitigation:</b>	<p>1) UCQ have business development plans in place to recruit additional staff at certain points in the business' growth.</p> <p>2) In addition to this business development plan, UCQ have access to a range of highly qualified academic and administrative staff during points of unexpected growth or loss of key staff.</p> <p>Should a loss of key staff occur, UCQ will seek to fill gaps as quickly as possible, by moving other current members of staff with appropriate skills and experience, into the vacant position(s) or recruit externally, to avoid disruption.</p>
<b>Scenario 4:</b>	Changes to programme content, regulations and policies
<b>Likelihood:</b>	Moderate risk due to an ongoing commitment to programme quality and enhancement
<b>Risk mitigation:</b>	<p>1) UCQ are committed to ongoing quality assurance, enhancement and listening and acting on feedback from students, external stakeholders, employers and staff. For this reason, programme content, regulations and policies will be updated from time to time.</p> <p>2) All changes to programme content, regulations and assessment must undergo a formal approval process. Within UCQ, this process involves robust consultation and discussion at an internal committee level, before seeking</p>

approval by UCQ's Academic Council. The student and employer representation on the Academic Council also form part of the internal consultation and approval process.

These updates will be made in partnership with the awarding body and all students will be notified of any programme or policy amendments that have a direct impact on their studies. No student will be treated disadvantageously during the implementation of these types of amendments. It is not possible to change regulations for students once they have embarked upon their programme of study, unless it is petitioned and agreed. However, any changes which have been deemed as advantageous can be implemented. Any alternative changes would only be implemented for new students at the beginning of their programme.

**For the CMDA programme only**, the Open University, as validator, would need to approve all major changes to the programme, regulations and policies.

**Scenario 5:** Loss of registration to the Register of Training Organisations (ROTO)

**Likelihood:** Low risk due to the regular review of robust quality systems operating within UCQ

**Risk mitigation:** 1) In partnership with higher and further education regulatory bodies, UCQ conduct regular risk management exercises and monitoring to ensure the Centre continues to meet its quality benchmarks.

In the unlikely event that loss of registration occurs, UCQ will follow the same measures in place following institutional and/or programme closure (scenario 1).

#### **Adult Education Budget (AEB) Provision Only**

**Scenario 6:** Loss of funding from issuing body (TVCA or ESFA)

**Likelihood:** Low risk due to the regular review of robust quality systems operating within UCQ

**Risk mitigation:** 1) In partnership with further education regulatory bodies, UCQ conduct regular risk management exercises and monitoring to ensure the Centre continues to meet its quality benchmarks.

In the unlikely event that loss of funding occurs, UCQ will follow the same measures in place following institutional and/or programme closure (scenario 1).

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**Apprenticeship Provision Only****Scenario 7:****CMDA Programme Only:**

Loss of institutional approval and/or programme validation by The Open University

**Likelihood:**

Low risk due to regular monitoring exercises with the validating body

**Risk mitigation:**

1) Offering by the validator, The Open University, to provide 'teach out' to students in the event of loss of validation. Where this is not possible and if, for whatever reason in line with the validation agreement, The Open University determines that a withdrawal or non-renewal of validation is necessary, UCQ will work to identify an alternate validating partner. UCQ will work to put an alternative validating arrangement in place as soon as possible so as to minimise any disruption to students. Students will be advised and supported by UCQ with regards to their study options throughout this process.

2) Annual monitoring overseen by the validating body and the implementation of any changes deemed necessary to continue to meet our quality benchmarks

3) Formal and informal engagement with the validating body's Academic Reviewer

4) Regular advice and guidance sought from The Open University's Senior Quality and Partnerships Manager

**Scenario 8:**

Loss of registration to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (ROAPT)

**Likelihood:**

Low risk due to the regular review of robust quality systems operating within UCQ

**Risk mitigation:**

1) In partnership with higher and further education regulatory bodies, UCQ conduct regular risk management exercises and monitoring to ensure the Centre continues to meet its quality benchmarks.

In the unlikely event that loss of registration occurs, UCQ will follow the same measures in place following institutional and/or programme closure (scenario 1). The CMDA academic award can also be delivered without the apprenticeship as a stand-alone degree.

## 1.2 Changes to the apprenticeship status

<b><u>Scenario 1:</u></b>	The employer wishes to negotiate a revised training or assessment cost.
<b>Likelihood:</b>	Low risk due to all costs being agreed prior to the start of the programme
<b>Risk mitigation:</b>	1) A detailed written agreement is drawn up and agreed upon by both the employer and UCQ prior to any training taking place. All negotiations shall take place prior to enrolment so as to minimise the risk of disruption to the student.
<b><u>Scenario 2:</u></b>	An apprentice requires a break in their apprenticeship, for example due to illness, maternity or another personal reason.
<b>Likelihood:</b>	Moderate risk due to unforeseen student circumstances
<b>Risk mitigation:</b>	1) UCQ will make students aware of a wide range of support services available to them, from the beginning and throughout their programme of study. Counselling and welfare support will also be made available to students where appropriate.  2) UCQ have allowed a maximum 6-year period over which the apprentice can complete their BA (Hons) in Professional Management programme. A maximum 12 month 'break in learning' can be put in place; all payments will cease during this time. Any break in learning will be agreed upon between the student, employer and UCQ.
<b><u>Scenario 3:</u></b>	The apprentice wishes to withdraw from the apprenticeship where they are no longer employed by the employer or whereby they choose to withdraw prior to completion but remain with the same employer.
<b>Likelihood:</b>	Moderate risk due to unforeseen student circumstances
<b>Risk mitigation:</b>	1) Robust programme recruitment exercises are carried out in close consultation with employers to ensure that the candidate has a demonstrable interest in, and commitment to, the subject area and that the programme is appropriate to their interests, aspirations, work and academic ability.  2) UCQ will make students aware of a wide range of support services available to them, from the beginning and throughout their programme of study.  3) Students can receive exit qualifications and a transcript of their academic study if they choose to leave the programme.
<b><u>Scenario 4:</u></b>	The employer would like to select a different provider where the course remains the same.
<b>Likelihood:</b>	Low risk due to UCQ's focus on employer satisfaction
<b>Risk mitigation:</b>	1) UCQ operate a robust complaints and appeals procedure to ensure the rectification and mutual satisfaction of all issues.

2) Continuous feedback is gathered from both employers and students to ensure the smooth running of the programme. This ongoing feedback and open communication ensures minor issues are ironed out as soon as possible.

3) UCQ utilise customer relationship management tools to nurture and support their relationships with employers, increasing the likelihood of retention and return business.

4) Exit qualifications and a transcript of academic study can be provided which may enable the student to move more smoothly to another provider and potentially prevent them from having to duplicate study.

**Scenario 5:** The apprentice changes employer but wishes to continue the same apprenticeship with UCQ.

**Likelihood:** Low risk due to UCQ's robust programme recruitment exercises

**Risk mitigation:** 1) Robust programme recruitment exercises are carried out in close consultation with employers to ensure that the candidate is expected to have longevity with the employer. Where this does not occur, UCQ will contact and work with new employers to discuss the training needs of the apprentice and how their programme of study can continue with minimal disruption to both the student and new employer.

**Scenario 6:** The apprentice is made redundant.

**Likelihood:** Moderate risk due to unforeseen employer circumstances

**Risk mitigation:**

- 1) UCQ will support employers through business engagement; providing knowledge, skills, ideas and experience to assist in company resilience and growth.
- 2) UCQ will support the student to find new employment with a suitable employer where they can continue their programme of study with minimal disruption.
- 3) The academic award can be delivered without the apprenticeship as a stand-alone degree (this would be at cost to the student and subject to a formal approval process).
- 4) Apprentices who have been made redundant less than six months before the final day of their apprenticeship do not need to be employed under an apprenticeship agreement and can continue completion of their programme.
- 5) Exit qualifications and a transcript of academic study would be issued.

## 2. Employer apprenticeship service account, refund and compensation policy

As an apprentice of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, the student is **not** permitted to contribute to tuition fees or end-point assessment in any way. All training and associated costs of the apprenticeship are paid for by the employer. These costs are agreed between UCQ and the employer prior to the start of the apprenticeship and detailed in a written agreement. To use funds in an employer's apprenticeship service account for the apprenticeship, UCQ must:

- Retain evidence of the apprentice's employment
- Be satisfied that the apprenticeship is the most appropriate learning programme and have evidence that it is either:
  - A new job role that requires new knowledge and skills; or
  - An existing job role, where the individual needs significant new knowledge and skills to be occupationally competent
- Have evidence that the apprentice will spend at least 20% of their time on off-the-job training, recognising that apprentices may need more than 20% off-the-job training
- Have evidence that the job allows the apprentice to gain wider employment experience as part of the apprenticeship
- Only use funds from an employer's apprenticeship service account for activity directly related to the apprenticeship, including:
  - Off-the-job training through UCQ
  - Registration and examination costs associated with mandatory qualifications
  - Regular planned on-programme assessments to discuss progress to date
  - Distance, online or blended learning relating to the off-the-job training element of an apprenticeship
  - Materials used in the delivery of the apprenticeship
  - Any administration directly linked to training and assessment, including end-point assessment
  - Costs to re-sit an exam linked to a mandatory qualification
  - Additional learning required to retake a mandatory qualification or an end-point assessment
  - Accommodation costs for training delivered through residential modules (in the case of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship this is not applicable)
  - Costs of an apprentice taking part in a skills competition if the employer and provider have agreed that participation in the competition directly contributes to helping the individual achieve the apprenticeship

UCQ is **not** allowed to:

- Use funds from an employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment for any part of any apprentice's programme where either UCQ or another party claim funding from another government department or agency for the same purpose.
- Claim funding for any part of any apprentice's programme that duplicates training or assessment they have received from any other source.
- Use funds from an employer's apprenticeship service account to pay for the following:
  - Enrolment, induction, prior assessment, initial diagnostic testing, or a similar activity
  - Travel costs for apprentices under any circumstances
  - Apprentice wages

- Personal protective clothing and safety equipment required by the apprentice to carry out their day-to-day work
- Off-the-job training delivered only by distance learning, although UCQ can include online and other blended learning activity as part of the delivery of the apprenticeship
- Any training, optional modules, educational trips or trips to professional events in excess of those required to achieve the apprenticeship or meet the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard
- Registration and examination costs for non-mandatory qualifications
- End point assessment costs incurred by UCQ but not included in the price negotiated between the employer and the end-point assessment organisation.
- English and maths up to level two (this is funded separately)
- Repeating the same regulated qualification where the apprentice has previously achieved it
- Accommodation costs where the apprentice is resident away from their home base, because of the requirements of their day-to-day work or because this is convenient for the employer or provider
- Capital purchases including lease agreements
- Maintenance of capital purchases
- Time spent by employees/managers supporting or mentoring apprentices, except where this is directly linked to the training and assessment of the apprenticeship
- Specific services not related to the delivery and administration of the apprenticeship

#### Recovery of funds

The ESFA will review and monitor whether the training UCQ provides represents good value for money. If the ESFA consider that the funds in an employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment they have provided is significantly more than the cost of the education and training, they may reduce the amount of funding they pay UCQ after consultation with us.

ESFA apprenticeship payments (levy and non-levy) are paid to UCQ monthly in arrears. The ESFA have determined this payment schedule to minimise the risk to themselves and their funding.

The ESFA may take action including the recovery of all or part of the government funding from UCQ if they are satisfied that there has been a breach of the funding rules. This includes where claims are made for funding through the employer's apprenticeship service account, government co-investment or additional payments to which UCQ and/or the employer is not entitled.

If a student is required to transfer to an alternative provider, the funding for the programme would also immediately transfer. Therefore, the requirement of loss of time/maintenance compensation is unlikely. There could be additional travel costs if an alternative provider is not able to be secured in the same location. UCQ have cash reserves of over £1,000,000 which would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for all of our students where applicable.

### 3. Publication of this Student Protection Plan and Exit Strategy

UCQ will publish this Student Protection Plan and Exit Strategy on our website so that it is available to current and future students. This document will also be disseminated to all members of staff so that they can be made aware of the implications associated with course changes and other risks associated with the delivery of education programmes.

We will review this Student Protection Plan and Exit Strategy on an annual basis in consultation with the Academic Council (with input from the Student Representative).

Should this Student Protection Plan and Exit Strategy need to be implemented we will inform all affected students as early as possible via our Virtual Learning Environment, email or telephone, with clear information and options regarding any material changes to their programme.

Students are encouraged to contact the Apprenticeship helpline (0800 015 0400; [nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk](mailto:nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk)), for independent advice and guidance on their apprenticeship and their rights as an apprentice.