

<Slough Borough Council>

<Creative Academy>

<Student Protection Plan>

Providers name: Slough Borough Council (Creative Academy)

Providers UKPRN: 10005916

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Context

A student protection plan sets out what students can expect to happen should a course, campus or institution close. The purpose of the Creative Academy producing this plan is to ensure students can continue and complete their studies, or can be compensated if this is not possible.

The Creative Academy categorises itself as a provider with low risk of significant changes or closure which in general means a lighter touch plan should be produced. However, the Creative Academy endeavour to cover all possibilities to ensure the student is fully protected and has confidence in both the institute and its programmes. The student remains at the forefront of every decision that the Creative Academy makes. This plan will be updated in collaboration with students to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose. **[See Action plan area 11]**

Any significant changes or indeed risk of change will be discussed with students at the earliest convenience, ensuring reasonable amount of notice. All changes will be implemented immediately with an action plan that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. The Creative Academy will act in a professional manner to ensure a fair and practical solution is made. The plan will be made available to both prospective and current students via the Creative Academy website and can be viewed at [Creative Academy](#).

Introduction

As a provider of Higher Education, Slough Borough Council (Creative Academy) have chosen to publish a Student Protection Plan. The plan will set out how the Creative Academy will ensure continuation of studies should the need to implement it arise and aims to meet CMA student protection plan requirements. The Creative Academy currently operates from one registered campus and delivered 2 designated courses, so runs a very low risk of major changes happening.

The Creative Academy, as part of Slough Borough Council, is a long established organisation that has a wealth of resources, experienced staff, protocols and procedures to ensure that provision is effective, efficient and sustainable. To date, the Creative Academy have not ceased or closed any programmes, courses or institutes in its existence of running Higher Education validated by the University of West London which started in 2006. The Creative Academy moved from its main site in 2016, which was managed through the correct processes and channels, with the new site signed off by the appropriate bodies (see closure of site later in this document as an example of how the Creative Academy will act if something similar did occur).

The Creative Academy has always placed the student needs at the forefront of all decisions that have an impact on the programme, whether this directly or indirectly affects them. It is the priority of the Creative Academy to ensure that the student experience is one of high quality and a seamless experience with no surprises. The Creative Academy remains determined to be one of the top schools in the UK underlined by accreditation by CDMT (Council for Dance, Drama & Musical Theatre). The student protection plan is to formalise procedures should the unlikely need to implement it occur due to a course, campus or

institution closure and outlines realistic measures ensuring students are able to complete their course, continue to access student finance or transfer to other providers. The plan aims to provide adequate and appropriate protection to students, and any implementation will be underpinned by OfS intervention to ensure that the student's interests continue to be protected.

Risks, scenarios and action

The Creative Academy outlines the types of risks that students could face from high impact to low impact and from minor changes to major changes.

Each risk will be given a rating of:

- High / Very Likely
- Medium / Likely
- Low / Very Unlikely to show the likeliness of this happening.

Each risk will also state whether the effect of the changes to the student as rate these on impact as:

- High / Major
- Medium / Moderate
- Low / Minor.

The plan will address specific risks to the continuation of study for students at Creative Academy in a proportionate manner.

1: Closure of HE provision and exit of Higher Education market.

- Risk of this happening - Low - Very Unlikely
- Impact on current student - High - Major
- Impact on prospective student - High - Major

This is the biggest and most catastrophic scenario facing a student; however it is also the 'least likely to happen' scenario facing the Creative Academy at present and for the foreseeable future. The Creative Academy has no plans for institution closure or market exit and is firmly in the future plans of Slough Borough Council. The result of closure decision at this present time would be through scenarios such as below:

- Bankruptcy by the local authority, Slough Borough Council.
- Major restructure and/or major change of Slough Borough Council priorities.
- Withdrawal of validation and no other option available for validation with another institution.
- Failure to gain re-designation from regulatory bodies due to non-compliance or quality assurance failure.
- Student demand for the programmes falls so low that the course cannot run.
- Major / catastrophic event such as an act of terror leaving little / no resources such as premises.

The Creative Academy rates all the above scenarios as low / very unlikely due to having excellent management and governance and strategic procedures and policies within Slough

Borough Council and the University of West London. Slough Borough Council governance and sound operational systems with appropriate measures help to minimise this risk.

Action: - In the event of closure, this plan will be triggered and all parties notified as soon as practically possible by email, post and updates on the website. The Creative Academy will honour all existing student commitments and enter a 'continuation of study period' to ensure continuity is preserved. Any continuation of study period will be for the duration of each programme to its end, not each academic year. All prospective students will be notified of the change and staff will work with students to find alternative provision that is deemed as suitable. In the event that the closure is catastrophic and no continuity can be offered, then students will all be helped to find alternative provision that is deemed as suitable; such as a CDMT accredited school. The refund and compensation policy will apply.

2. Validation agreements - non-renewal and/or withdrawal by validating partner.

- Risk of this happening - Low - Very Unlikely
- Impact on current student - High - Major
- Impact on prospective student - High - Major

There is no plans or signs that the successful long standing validation relationship between Slough Borough Council and the University of West London will result in a withdrawal or non-renewal. The Creative Academy will position itself as below should this happen. The result of a non-renewal or withdrawal at this present time would be through scenarios such as:

- University of West London change of priority / direction.
- University of West London decision based on unknown reasons.
- Breach of contract by Creative Academy.
- Failure in Quality Assurance practices, periodic reviews or annual reviews.
- Failure to gain confidence in gaining new validation agreement.
- Slough Borough Council decides to opt for a new validation partner.

The Creative Academy rates all the above sceneries as low / very unlikely due to the excellent relationship of Slough Borough Council (Creative Academy) and the University of West London (London School of Music). The relationship is open, clear and honest. The relationship is governed through a collaborative agreement.

Action: - In the event of non validation this plan will be triggered and all parties notified as soon as practically possible by email, post and updates on the website. Should this scenario arise the Creative Academy are confident it would be a planned event that offers the opportunity to find an alternative validating partner rather than a short notice spontaneous decision. Where possible the Creative Academy will always attempt to find a new validation partner to minimise impact on prospective students. Current students will enter a phase of 'continuation of study period' as in scenario 1 (above) as per our contractual agreements. Where the changes are so severe that the validation is withdrawn with immediate effect, the Creative Academy will work with the University of West London to complete the academic year and students will all be helped to find alternative provision that is deemed as suitable. All prospective students will be notified of the change and staff will work with students to find alternative provision that is deemed as suitable; such as a CDMT accredited school. The

refund and compensation policy will apply.

3. Re-designation for Student Support not renewed by the Secretary of State.

- Risk of this happening - Low - Very Unlikely
- Impact on current student - High - Major
- Impact on prospective student - High - Major

As an alternative provider the Creative Academy is required to report to a number of regulatory bodies each and every year to ensure things such quality assurance, financial stability, data quality and compliance are all being met. To date the Creative Academy has not been denied re-designation, however the Creative Academy is working hard to make sure the increasing demand from regulatory bodies is being met. The result of a non-renewal or withdrawal at this present time would be through scenarios such as:

- Non compliance by the Creative Academy to one of the reporting regulatory bodies.
- Failure or no confidence assured by a regulatory body for a review, return or reporting duty.
- Failure to meet a condition / criteria set by one of the regulatory bodies for designation.
- Any form of breach of contract / agreement with one of the regulatory bodies.

The Creative Academy rates all the above sceneries as low / very unlikely due to being a very small provider with only two programmes. To meet the increasing demand of re-designation duties the team has grown to ensure that this is achieved each year. The Creative Academy, through thoughtful resourcing and management, will ensure designation continues to be renewed and students can access support such as tuition fee and loans from the Student Loans Company.

Action - In the event that re-designation is not granted this plan will be triggered and all parties notified as soon as practically possible by email, post and updates on the website. Where re-designation effecting student support for tuition fees and loans is not granted for whatever reason the Creative Academy will endeavour to work with all relevant bodies and appeal any decision to gain this from the Secretary of State. The Creative Academy will enter a 'continuation of study period'. We will endeavour to work with all current students to gain teach out designation to ensure they can continue their studies until the end by receiving student support. The Creative Academy will also explore the possibility of creating a franchise agreement with the University of West London where students can receive student support; all contractual changes will be provided to the student to make this happen. Where this is not possible current students, like prospective students, will be notified of the change and staff will work with students to find alternative provision that is deemed as suitable; such as a CDMT accredited school. The refund and compensation policy will apply.

4. Closure of designated site or campus

- Risk of this happening - Low - Very Unlikely
- Impact on current student - High - Major
- Impact on prospective student - High - Major

There are no plans in the foreseeable future for Creative Academy to close any specific site

including its main campus. The Creative Academy will explore alternative options in case this happens for reasons out of our control. The Creative Academy moved premises in 2015 after the Department for Education, working with Slough Borough Council, earmarked the Creative Academy's main campus a potential site for a school. Working closely with the DfE, Slough Borough Council and students, the transition of this move went smoothly even though it was under very tight deadlines and a quick turnaround. The Creative Academy was able to deliver all of its programmes in a temporary building whilst the new current site was being developed. The move of accommodation was approved by the relevant bodies including its resources, keeping the student learning experience at the forefront of all decisions. The result of a closure or move from the current site at this present time would be through scenarios such as:

- Slough Borough Council accommodation strategy identifies site for other purposes.
- Slough Borough Council sells the site for commercial reasons.
- The Creative Academy expand provision making site not fit for purpose.
- Major / catastrophic event such as an act of terror, arson, fire, natural disaster.
- Major health and safety concern or breach closing site for unspecified period.

The Creative Academy rates all the above sceneries as low / very unlikely due to having already moved to newer, purpose-built premises within the last few years. The Creative Academy and Slough Borough Council have invested largely in these premises and building resources to make them fit for purpose.

Action: - In the event of the main campus closing or not being able to operate this plan will be triggered and all parties notified as soon as practically possible by email, post and updates on the website. The Creative Academy are in a very strong position when assets are concerned as Slough Borough Council have a huge portfolio of buildings that can be used if needed for either long term or short term purposes. In any event such as a permanent closure, the Creative Academy will firstly work with Slough Borough Council asset management team and any subsequent moves will be handled by the Facilities Management team, ensuring a smooth transition with students being kept informed at all times. The Creative Academy will seek assurances from the University to ensure quality assurance and resources. In the event of closure of its main site, the Creative Academy endeavour to keep interruptions out of the academic time period to ensure students are still able to complete the year and a location change does not prevent them from achieving. Potential moves will always be done as close as possible to the current location (like the previous move which was less than a mile away). The Creative Academy will work with both current and prospective students to ensure accommodation is available and students are not left with unreasonable journeys to attend their programme. Any short term moves due to unforeseen circumstances will be aimed in other Slough Borough Council buildings and will be agreed with all relevant bodies such as the university. Student's views will be paramount in any decisions made. In the extreme case that no other sites can be found then current students, like prospective students, will be notified of the change and staff will work with students to find alternative provision that is deemed as suitable- such as a CDMT accredited school.

5. Closure of course or programme.

Risk of this happening - Low - Very Unlikely
Impact on current student - Low - Minor

Impact on prospective student - Medium - Moderate

The Creative Academy has been running the foundation degree dance since 2006 and the BA (Hons) dance since 2009, both validated by the University of West London. The Creative Academy has not closed any programmes or added new ones to its portfolio since these two courses were validated and has a desire to remain a small provider to enhance the student experience. The Creative Academy is committed to delivering what it knows best (dance), which is why there has been little or no changes to the programme. The result of a closure of a course or programme at this present time would be through scenarios such as:

- University of West London make a decision not to validate the courses.
- Breach of a contract condition and the university suspend the course.
- Quality assurance issues over a programme not meeting the expectations set.
- Change of strategic aims and objectives and decision to close a course.
- Insufficient student numbers making it not viable to run the course.

The Creative Academy rates all the above sceneries as low / very unlikely due to having a good relationship with the University of West London and adequate quality assurance processes not only with UWL but Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre and the Quality Assurance Agency. The Creative Academy will ensure programmes are delivered as per all contractual agreements.

Action: - In the unlikely event that a programme or course is closed, firstly the Creative Academy will always endeavour to do this at an appropriate time such as end of an academic year, and if it is the decision of Creative Academy, the current students will be seen through the programme before any such changes occur. In unforeseen circumstances, where a programme is closed during an academic year (not in our control), the Creative Academy will work with the university to ensure all current students progress and continue study to complete that level. The Creative Academy will appeal over any closure of programmes that are enforced on us. Any strategic changes made by the Creative Academy to close a programme will be done so with student consultation and implemented at a time where it will not affect prospective students. In situations where current and prospective students are affected to an extent no provision can be provided, they will be notified of the change and staff will work with students to find alternative provision that is deemed as suitable; such as a CDMT accredited school. The refund and compensation policy will apply.

6. Changes to a programme or course before student enrolment.

- Risk of this happening - Medium / Likely (for enhancement purposes)
- Impact on current student - Low - Minor
- Impact on prospective student - Low - Minor

There may be occasions where the Creative Academy make changes to a programme or course that effects both returning and prospective students. Sometimes changes could be made between audition and enrolment, between a printed prospectus and enrolment or after completion of a level and continuation to the next level, although we endeavour not to make changes at these times. The change of elements to a course or programme is something that could be quite common however it will always be timed to try and not effect prospective students. However, sometimes change may be unavoidable in scenarios such as:

- Addition / removal of modules or content approved at a untimely junction due to uncontrollable circumstances.
- Material changes such as resources, delivery methods that impact the learning experience.
- Loss of specialised staff to deliver a module that cannot be covered by someone else.
- Error by providing incorrect information either verbally or in writing.
- Updating course modules for enhancement purposes.

The Creative Academy rates all the above sceneries as medium / likely as any changes will usually be planned in advance to minimise any impact on students and their expectations and learning experience. Changes made to programmes would always have to be approved by the academic quality office at the University of West London following processes and protocol so planning the changes at convenient times is manageable.

Action: - Where changes are made to a programme or course that are significantly different to the information supplied to prospective students, the Creative Academy will inform these students of changes and, if they wish to withdraw, no penalty will apply. Staff will always work with prospective students if they wish to find another institution due to the changes being significant enough. The Creative Academy will ensure that all students have the opportunity to assess changes and agree to them. The Creative Academy will always offer advice, information and guidance to any queries as to why these changes have been necessary and the timing of them. Returning students will all receive the same information if the change affects them. Students can exercise their rights to complaints and terms and conditions with the refund and compensation policy if desired.

7. Changes during the delivery of a programme or course.

- Risk of this happening - Low - Very Unlikely
- Impact on current student - Medium - Moderate
- Impact on prospective student - Medium - Moderate

On very rare occasions it may be necessary to make changes to a programme or course after a student enrolls to a course. These changes will more than likely be made due to unforeseen or uncontrollable circumstances as programme changes will usually follow procedures. The Creative Academy will always endeavour timing is at the end of an academic year. Information to prospective students will be updated to ensure students are aware of the changes and have time to assess them. The result of a change to a programme or course during the delivery would be through scenarios such as:

- Loss of key staff member with specialist skills
- Loss of resources due to unforeseen circumstances
- Major unexpected changes in industry making a current module non relevant.

The Creative Academy rates all the above sceneries as low / very unlikely as changes will always be planned ahead of an academic year. If changes were unavoidable due to unforeseen circumstances, then all current students that have a direct impact of change will be consulted with and if the change was significant enough to cause a student wanting to withdraw as it adversely effects them, then the student will be guided with information and advice and staff would work with students to find alternative provision that is deemed as

suitable; such as a CDMT accredited school. The refund and compensation policy will apply.

The Creative Academy has a duty to ensure all course content is up to date and relevant so in some circumstances changes will be made to enhance the course and minor amendments may be made to programmes and courses in line with quality assurance procedures. Changes can be driven from student feedback, enhancement of quality identified during a review or other factors. Students will be consulted in changes and involved in the process to ensure the learning experience is enhanced and not adversely affected.

8. Changes and updating of policies and regulations.

- Risk of this happening - High - Very Likely
- Impact on current student - Medium - Moderate
- Impact on prospective student - Low / Very Unlikely

The Creative Academy and the University of West London are committed in making the student experience a positive one. In order to ensure that this is possible, the updating of policies and procedures is key to ensure consistency, fairness and clarity. There are times that policies and regulations have to be updated and they include:

- Annually to ensure they are correct, up to date and fit for purpose.
- After a quality assurance review with the university or regulatory body.
- After an audit both internal or external
- When changes have been agreed whether by Creative Academy, the university or a regulatory body.
- When an enhancement to a policy or regulation is required.
- If part of a policy is no longer relevant or out of date.

The Creative Academy rates all the above sceneries are high / very likely. This is due to our commitment to make regular quality assurance and enhancement reviews for the student.

Action: - Changes to any policy and/or regulations will be updated in the student handbook, student contract or student terms and conditions as necessary. Students will receive confirmation of the changes and, where possible, they will be involved in these changes. Prospective students should not be affected as some policies will not be available until after enrolment. If a policy is deemed to have an impact on the students choice for studying HE at our institution the student will receive information as necessary. Where impact is severe enough to adversely effect a prospective student's decision to want to pursue Higher Education at Creative Academy, staff will work with students to find alternative provision that is deemed as suitable; such as a CDMT accredited school.

9. A poor financial situation leads to course, programme or institution closure.

- Risk of this happening - Low - Very Unlikely
- Impact on current student - High - Major
- Impact on prospective student - High - Major

The Creative Academy require income to meet the committed expenditure such as premises

rent, staff salaries, validation fees, memberships, student resources to ensure courses and programmes are delivered. All income and expenditure is forecast to ensure good financial stability. The Creative Academy has an excellent track record of managing its financial responsibilities. The result of a poor financial situation arising that effects the delivery of a programme or course would be through scenarios such as:

- Failing to manage departmental expenditure due to poor financial management.
- Slough Borough Council files for bankruptcy due to financial situation.
- Catastrophic unforeseen expenditure cannot be met by income.
- Main source of income from Student Loans Company is suspended or withdrawn.

The Creative Academy rates all the above sceneries as low / very unlikely as we are confident of having sound financial polices and procedures in place to mitigate any risks. Slough Borough Council ensures financial stability through monthly finance meetings and good financial management when forecasting income and expenditure. Delays in receiving income will not impact the student as Slough Borough Council has excellent cash reserves that allow departments to bank-roll during the operating period. Any over spend or under spend is carried to the following year, however to date the Creative Academy financial stability has always been healthy.

Action: - In the unlikely event that the Creative Academy is unable to deliver part of a course or the whole programme; the Creative Academy will work with the university to ensure all current students progress and continue study to complete that level. In situations where current and prospective students are affected to an extent no provision can be provided they will be notified of the change and staff will work with students to find alternative provision that is deemed as suitable; such as a CDMT accredited school. The refund and compensation policy will apply.

The Creative Academy is committed to regularly review risks and scenarios that could impact the students Higher Education journey and put in measures to mitigate these risks. **[See Action plan area 12]**

Student Commitment and Protection

The Creative Academy has written this plan with the student in mind to ensure that all prospective and current students are protected and have confidence in our commitment to their Higher Education journey.

We will endeavour to -

- Ensure current students can complete studies where possible in the event that this plan needs to be triggered.
- Ensure prospective students are kept up to date with any changes that affect them at the earliest convenience and gain assurances from these students by opting in to the changes.
- Include student representation and consultation on all decisions to ensure that the student voice is heard and their interests are represented fairly.
- Offer advice, information and guidance at all points of all processes and changes to avoid miscommunication and enhance the student experience.
- Ensure the student experience and academic provision is maintained throughout changes

and quality assurance is upheld to the expected standards.

- Where provision to continue study cannot be met alternative options will be thoroughly explored to ensure the best outcome for the student.
- Ensure that all changes to programmes and courses are made in a timely manner (avoiding changes during an academic year) to ensure a smooth transition and minimise disruption caused to academic provision.
- Ensure that if the 'continuation of study period' is exercised that timescales are realistic and processes are clear and ensure the student experience is upheld in every decision.
- Ensure prospective students can access information so they are able to make the best choice for them with no hidden surprises.
- Ensure that all students understand what they can expect from Creative Academy in terms of teaching and support available.
- Ensure students have access to information that is clear, accurate and received in a timely manner at all stages of the education experience including course content, structure and costs.
- Ensure that prospective and current students have access to contracts that are understandable, fair and transparent with a clear complaints handling process should they wish to exercise this.
- Ensure that all relevant bodies are notified of change to aid the process of implementing this plan.
- Ensure all staff are fully aware of any potential changes or this plan being triggered to enhance the student experience and provide information to queries.

Refund and compensation policy

The student protection plan plays an important part of the Creative Academy refund and compensation policy which can be found on our website. The policy outlines in what circumstances a current student or prospective student can claim a refund on tuition fees and other associated costs if we are not able to offer higher education provision. The Creative Academy will ensure that funds are available through cash reserves should the need arise, however we will always endeavour to keep continuation of provision for each programme and course up to completion. The Creative Academy is a small part of Slough Borough Council who has a budget of £97 million a year and any cash reserves will be committed from the organisations overall budget. This policy can be viewed at [Creative Academy](#)

Reviewing and communicating this plan

The Creative Academy Student Protection plan will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose, up to date and effective. Student representation will be part of the process to ensure that it is fair and clear. The students will be involved in the process by ensuring they have the opportunity to comment proposed changes in any review of this plan via open discussions and formal changes agreed by the governing body which includes student representation.

Any changes to the plan will be uploaded to the website ensuring that it is accessible to prospective and current students and any changes that are significant, information provided to students in the form of a bulletin sent by email to both current and future students. In the case that the student plan needs to be implemented the Creative Academy will write to both

current and future students who are affected and send by both email and post. Any material changes will be communicated in the same way.

The Creative Academy will give students a minimum of one months notice for minor changes (described as low impact) and three months notice for major changes (described as high impact) however we will always endeavour to keep the student engaged and informed to ensure nothing comes as a surprise to them.

If the Creative Academy need to implement measures in the student protection plan we will ensure the well being team are involved to support students individually and the staff team support the student board collectively. The Creative Academy working with Slough Borough Council, the University of West London and the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre will ensure appropriate support measures such as access to independent advice and counselling is accessible. The Creative Academy will do this by ensuring personnel with appropriate experience are available at all times.

The Creative Academy will publicise our student protection plan on the Creative Academy website and references of this will be sent in communications sent to current and future students. Links to this document will be included in invite to audition letter, audition confirmation letter, offer letter and starter pack to ensure the student can make an informed decision before applying.

The Creative Academy will ensure staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan by ensuring this is reviewed at staff meetings and that any proposals to course changes are carried out understanding the implications of this plan.

For general enquiries and/or complaints regarding this plan please contact the Creative Academy using the information below:

- By phone - 01753 875400
- By email - info@creativeacademy.ac.uk
- By post - Creative Academy, 73a Stoke Poges Lane, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 3NY
- By website - using the contact us page
- Complaints - please see the complaints process on the website.