

Annex D: Template for a student protection plan

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Student protection plan for the period 2022 onwards

Introduction

University Academy 92's (UA92) Student Protection Plan (SPP) is intended to provide assurance to our applicants and students and to the Office for Students (OfS) that we have a robust framework in place to protect and assure the quality of our provision and ensure continuation of study for all students on their chosen programme of study.

The degree awarding body for UA92's programmes is Lancaster University, meaning that some of the SPP may refer to arrangements that Lancaster University has in place to in order to safeguard continuation of study under all delivery arrangements. UA92 has a robust contractual arrangement via a franchise agreement in place with Lancaster University to ensure the protection of students' interests. Lancaster University operates rigorous and regular monitoring to ensure partners discharge their contractual responsibilities where required, and UA92 is committed to discharging those obligations with UA92 passing its most recent review in spring 2022.

UA92 is relatively new higher education institution that opened in September 2019 that brings together talents of academia, business, media, digital and sport. Its curriculum is inspired by the experience and connections of the Class of 92, developed by respected academic pioneers Lancaster University and supported by industry leaders including Microsoft, KPMG, TalkTalk and Manchester United. As a relatively new provider of higher education, there were several years of planning and preparation in anticipation of opening the institution. UA92 operates as a franchisee organisation of Lancaster University, a high-quality institution that has a longstanding track record of robust financial performance and strong management.

UA92 continues to grow through a period of rapid growth with student numbers increasing from under 100 in September 2019 to an expected 700 in 2022/23.

The UA92 Board is ultimately responsible for oversight of risk but much of this work is undertaken by the Risk and Audit Committee. The Chief Academic Officer as Accountable Officer working with the Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for the leadership and management of UA92 and, with support from the Leadership Team, ensures risks are effectively reported to the Audit and Risk Committee.

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

Category	Risk	Protection
<p>Financial</p>	<p>The risk that UA92 is not able to operate: Low</p> <p>The original UA92 business plan was developed by KPMG with subsequent due diligence by PwC. Following the launch of UA92, a new five-year business plan was approved by the Board. Financial performance is monitored through the project governance and by the Board and the annual accounts are externally audited. Considerable investment has been made in student recruitment and marketing to ensure student number targets are met with UA92 growing from under 100 students in 2019/20 to an expected 700 in 2022/23.</p> <p>UA92 successfully opened in 2019/20 to deliver to its first cohort of students and these students became the first graduating cohort in July 2022.</p>	<p>Whilst we believe the risk of not operating is low a number of measures shall be put in place to protect students in continuing their studies which are documented below.</p> <p>Strict cost control measures are in place to support financial management at UA92.</p> <p>Significant working capital contribution from the shareholders has been agreed to fund UA92 during its growth phase with further investment coming from Bruntwood in 2022.</p>
<p>Infrastructure</p>	<p>The risk that UA92 is unable to operate for a sustained period due to unexpected and exceptional circumstances (such as health epidemics, floods, cyber/terror attacks and other <i>force majeure</i>): Low</p> <p>UA92 has in place business continuity plans to deal with the kinds of exceptional circumstances listed above.</p> <p>The plans shall be reviewed annually by the Risk and Audit Committee, which in turn reports to the Board.</p> <p>In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UA92 successfully transitioned all students to on-line learning and support in 24 hours and fully taught and assessed all students. This is testament to the systems and processes UA92 put in place as part of its standard business operations.</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that UA92 was unable to continue to deliver teaching, supervision and services for a sustained period due to <i>force majeure</i> or other incidents, it would seek to adopt a range of continuity measures which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation to alternative venues for teaching, supervision and service provision, as close as possible to the UA92 Trafford campus; • Critical support services, such as disability support, mental health support and services for international students, relocated as appropriate. • Co-operation and partnership working with emergency services and other external authorities; • Academic and wellbeing advice would be made available to students; • Financial support where material additional costs to students are incurred; • Moving all academic delivery on-line and facilitating all assessments via on-line means.

<p>Academic</p>	<p>The risk that Lancaster University as the franchising body for UA92 loses its degree awarding powers: Low</p> <p>Lancaster University has been awarding degrees since 1964 and is regularly audited and monitored on the quality and standards of its teaching provision and awards by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), its last review was conducted in 2015.</p> <p>The University also operates a robust internal academic quality assurance framework which regularly reviews its provision, including its engagement with students, and engages with external reviewers and examiners as part of this framework.</p> <p>The University achieved the Gold standard in the 2017 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) assessment and was awarded University of the Year 2018, largely on account of its league table positioning driven by high levels of student satisfaction and graduate outcomes.</p> <p>UA92 underwent Quality Standards Review (QSR) by the QAA during the 2019/20 academic year and received a positive outcome.</p>	<p>In the very unlikely event that Lancaster University would lose its power to award degrees, a range of measures would be put in place, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options for students to transfer any credit achieved by means of an official interim transcript and transfer to a similar course at another institution; • Validation arrangements for another high-quality university to validate Lancaster’s degree programmes; • Options for students to receive tuition fee refund and/or cost reimbursement in line with the UA92’s Refund and Reimbursement Policy.
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<p>Academic</p>	<p>The risk that UA92 is no longer able to deliver key components of our programme due to unexpected or unavoidable changes, such as long-term absence of a member of staff:</p> <p>Low</p> <p>UA92 students play an active role in feeding back and shaping the future curriculum design. In line with CMA guidelines, students will be consulted if any changes are proposed to a programme whilst they are studying on it. Prospective applicants are provided with accurate and up to date information on available programmes.</p> <p>Lancaster University as the franchisor of degrees has a programme approval process that is organised such that there is sufficient time for new information to be published in prospectuses. UA92 would work with Lancaster to ensure that proper consultation takes places with students. Furthermore, student representatives will serve on key committees such as UA92's Academic Committee.</p> <p>Resource requirements are considered during the programme approval process to ensure sustainability, and the majority of modules are delivered by more than one member of staff with the appropriate subject specialism.</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that key components (i.e. modules) of a programme could not be delivered due to unexpected circumstances, continuation on your chosen programme of study would be safeguarded through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary staff recruitment (or transfer) to the required subject discipline; • Re-scheduling of the affected component/module, ensuring all pre-requisite learning is considered; • Use of alternative components/modules as appropriate to ensure programme learning outcomes can still be met; • Where the above options were not available, and programme learning outcomes could not be met, students would be supported to find alternative programmes at UA92, or would be provided with support to transfer to another institution with official confirmation of credit already achieved in the form of an interim transcript. Under these circumstances UA92 would offer options for tuition fee refunds and/or reimbursement of costs in line with UA92's Refund and Reimbursement Policy. <p>Further disability needs assessments/adjustments may be undertaken to allow students to take alternative modules where necessary.</p> <p>Academic and broader student support and well-being advice and guidance would be made available to students.</p>
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<p>Academic</p>	<p>The risk that specialist equipment and materials required for teaching and learning may be unavailable for a prolonged period: Low</p> <p>UA92 employs skilled technicians who support the maintenance and use of specialist equipment and materials and regular equipment maintenance schedules shall be in place. Business continuity plans are in place to address such eventualities.</p>	<p>In the very unlikely event that specialist equipment and materials would be unavailable for teaching for a prolonged period of time, we would ensure students could continue to study on their programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loaning relevant specialist equipment and materials as required; • Re-scheduling teaching to a time when the equipment is available; • Using alternative means to deliver the required content, provide equivalent learning experience and assess that students have met the required learning outcomes of the programme. <p>Further disability needs assessments/adjustments may be undertaken to allow students to use alternative equipment or materials where necessary.</p> <p>Academic and wellbeing advice and guidance would be made available to students.</p>
<p>Academic</p>	<p>The risk that Lancaster University, as the degree awarding body would lose its existing Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation such as for the degrees in Accounting and Finance: Low</p> <p>Lancaster University has robust systems in place to assess and monitor ongoing compliance with the various requirements of the professional bodies, as evidenced by a recent internal audit carried out by PwC and by recent re-accreditations by the professional bodies themselves, such as The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).</p> <p>UA92 has achieved accreditation from ACCA and CIMA for its Accounting and Finance programme. UA92 has robust systems in place to assess and monitor ongoing compliance with the various requirements of the professional bodies.</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that a professional programme loses its PSRB accreditation, students will be able to continue to study on the programme and the University will take the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek re-accreditation at the earliest opportunity; • Where permitted by the professional body, seek to apply professional accreditation retrospectively to any degree awarded during the period where accreditation had been suspended; • Offer students the opportunity to change programme if they so wish should accreditation no longer be possible, with options for tuition fee refund and/or cost reimbursement in line with the Refund and Reimbursement Policy. <p>Academic and wellbeing advice and guidance would be made available to students.</p>

<p>Compliance</p>	<p>The risk that UA92 is not able to recruit and continue to teach international students studying under a Student Route visa because Lancaster University's sponsor licence has been revoked: Low</p> <p>UA92 is investing in resources which will be under the strict management control of Lancaster as the license holder to ensure compliance with UKVI requirements.</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that Lancaster University lost its Student Route visa sponsor licence, UA92 would ensure that its current international students could complete their studies by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brokering with another HEI of equivalent standing and reputation to effect a transfer onto an equivalent programme, ensuring that any credit accrued would be confirmed in an official interim transcript. This would be done with our partner Navitas. • Under these circumstances UA92 would offer options for tuition fee refunds and/or cost reimbursement in line with the Refund and Reimbursement Policy; • Where there were no suitable places available at another university, UA92 would consider refund and reimbursement to students in line with the Refund and Reimbursement Policy. <p>Under these circumstances UA92 would provide academic, well-being and immigration advice support to affected students.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that Lancaster lost its Student Route visa sponsor licence, or UA92 failed to acquire a license as a campus we would consider reimbursement of reasonable non-refundable costs for applicants who had accepted an offer of a place to study at UA92.</p>
<p>Academic</p>	<p>The risk that UA92 will not be able to provide employer insight days, guest lectures and placements for students: Low</p> <p>UA92 has a team of staff in developing post corporate partnerships with major firms and has regularly monitored targets for the delivery of work placements. Insight days and guest lectures have been successfully delivered across all academic programmes during the first three years of operation.</p>	<p>In the very unlikely event that insight days and placements were not available to students UA92 would consider providing some compensation in line with its Refund and Reimbursement Policy.</p>

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

From a financial perspective, UA92 has strict cost control measures in place to support financial management at UA92 and significant working capital contribution from shareholders has been agreed to fund the start-up period.

If we are unable to deliver programmes in the next three years, our immediate response would be to seek to use those elements of our student protection measures that were most easily within our control (see below).

In the event that the risk materialises, we will take one or more of the following measures detailed in section 1 above to protect students' continuity of study. In summary they are as follows:

1. whenever possible, we will make arrangements to *'teach out'* our current students where we have voluntarily decided to close a programme. This means that we commit to ensuring programmes of study can be completed by all currently enrolled students within existing timeframes determined by programme and University regulations, even though the programme is being discontinued and we will not be taking on new student cohorts.
2. where this is not possible then we will offer an alternative programme at UA92 or support students to transfer to Lancaster University or in seeking another provider to enable students to continue their programme, utilising student transfer arrangements. This is provided for under the terms of the franchise agreement with Lancaster University.
3. where students are studying on programmes which are not readily available locally or nationally then we will investigate alternative options which may include internal or external programme transfer. These measures may be brought into play at any time, if, for example, doing so would reduce the impact or likelihood of any interruption to our students.

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

UA92 has in place a Refund and Reimbursement Policy. The policy is available on our website, under our Student Policies and Regulations pages <https://ua92.ac.uk/student-regulations-policies>.

This policy makes provision for the following:

- refunds for students in receipt of tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company.
- refunds for students who pay their own tuition fees.
- refunds for students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor.
- the payment of additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course.
- commitments to honour student bursaries.
- compensation for maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study.
- compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer courses or provider.

This addresses the potential need to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to its students in the unlikely event it is not able to preserve continuity of study.

UA92 will maintain rigorous risk management oversight to mitigate against the likelihood of discontinuation of study provision arising. As detailed in the previous section alternative provision and appropriate compensation arrangements will be in place should this occur.

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

UA92 publishes its SPP on its website. The SPP is easily accessible to students and prospective students on the terms and conditions section of UA92's website to which all applicants will be directed to as part of their offer of a place to study at UA92. Students will also be directed to this information at initial registration and re-registration.

All staff at UA92 will be made aware of the SPP and will pay due regard to the assurances provided to students in the SPP.

The SPP will be reviewed regularly (minimum annually) and will be formally considered by the Audit and Risk Committee and the Academic Committee. There are Student representative members on the Academic Committee and their views on the SPP will be sought on behalf of the wider student body.

We will inform students of any material changes which may affect their studies in a timely manner. Should UA92 need to invoke any aspect of the SPP, it will formulate a response drawing on its emergency and contingency planning procedures. Those procedures include:

- i. deploying multimedia communications (individual and group, digital and/or face-to-face as appropriate), to ensure students are updated on events as they unfold and are directed to relevant support services;
- ii. working with the student body to facilitate the provision of independent advice to students on their options;

- iii. providing information, advice and guidance on financial, welfare and academic matters through our student support services and programme team

5. Our assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for students who study as part of UA92 Global and arrangements in place to mitigate those risks and protect students

UA92 may form partnerships with other institutions and third-party commercial partners in the UK to deliver UA92 programmes of study leading to Lancaster University awards. When forming partnerships, UA92 undertakes a range of rigorous and comprehensive due diligence exercises which explore aspects of the prospective partner's reputation, governance, financial stability, quality and standard of provision, as well as evaluating the economic, political and environmental context of the potential location of the partner. In forming partnerships, UA92 also undertakes robust financial planning and modelling and market research, and commissions professional expert advice as required. We reference the QAA's Quality Code as it relates to partnerships and collaborations and we have adopted sector best practice in drawing up partnership agreements. Lancaster University, as the awarding institution, will always have responsibility for assuring the academic quality and standards of teaching delivery, postgraduate research supervision and the award. They have robust review and monitoring systems in place to discharge this responsibility for each partnership. Whilst our partnership agreements contain different business terms and comprise different responsibilities for each partner, each agreement describes the circumstances under which the partnership might be dissolved and provides details of the obligations of each party, including how the interests of students would be protected under such circumstances. Normally this means that every effort will be made to 'teach out' the remainder of a programme for all registered students.

Partnership

UA92 works in partnership with Lancaster University and Navitas for **UA92 Global**. UA92 Global is based at UA92's campus in Manchester and all students will study at this campus.

Students at UA92 global study for UA92 degrees awarded by Lancaster University. Lancaster University retains responsibility for assurance of academic quality and standards, using established systems and processes.

The risk that UA92 Global is unable to operate for a sustained period due to unexpected and exceptional circumstances, or that the teaching delivered and awards bestowed are of an unsatisfactory quality: Low.

Protection

Navitas has significant experience running embedded colleges based at UK and overseas HEIs and has its own emergency plans to manage potential issues which may arise.

In the event that the risk materialises, we will take one or more of the following measures detailed in section 1 above to protect students' continuity of study. In summary they are as follows:

1. whenever possible, we will make arrangements to *'teach out'* our current students where we have voluntarily decided to close a programme. This means that we commit to ensuring programmes of study can be completed by all currently enrolled students within existing timeframes determined by programme and University regulations, even though the programme is being discontinued and we will not be taking on new student cohorts.

2. where this is not possible then we will offer an alternative programme at UA92 or support students to transfer to Lancaster University or to another Navitas embedded college, utilising student transfer arrangements.