

POLICY/PROCEDURE: HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME CHANGES AND COURSE CLOSURE POLICY

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|-------------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Approval required by: | SLT | Y | Governing Body | Y |
| SMT Lead: | Vice Principal Quality | | | |
| Responsible Manager: | Director of HE Quality | | | |
| Date approved: | November 2024 | | | |
| Date to be reviewed: | November 2027 | | | |
| Relevant to: | Students | Y | Staff | Y |
| | Visitors | N | | |
| Relevant to: | All students | N | | |
| | 16-18 Vocational | N | Sixth Form | N |
| | Higher Education | Y | Adults | N |
| | Apprenticeships | N | 14-16 | N |
| | Other | N | | |
| Relevant to: | All staff | Y | | |
| | Board | Y | SPH | Y |
| | Managers | Y | | |
| | Teaching staff | Y | Support staff | Y |
| Accessible to | Students | Y | Staff | Y |
| Friendly version | Students | Y | Staff | Y |
| EQIA required | | Y | | |
| Significant changes to policy | | | | |
| None | | | | |
| Impact of changes | | | | |
| N/A | | | | |

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Barnsley College is committed to helping to ensure students achieve the best possible academic outcomes from their studies. In the unlikely event that unforeseen changes have to be made to modules or programmes, this policy ensures that students' interests are protected in the event of a programme change or closure. This policy applies to all undergraduate and professional programmes that are Level 4 or above at the College.

Beyond the normal academic practice of reviewing and updating modules and programmes, in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to close a programme or make changes for a specific group of students.

In such circumstances the College would ensure that existing or potential students would be fully informed, consulted and supported to protect their interests.

PROGRAMME CLOSURE AND SUSPENSION

Barnsley College may wish to close and remove a programme of study. Suspension of a programme may be requested for a fixed period of time.

The implications for the contractual relationship, whether for existing or potential students, will be at the centre of the process.

These decisions would be taken by the College Executive Leadership Team. Such decisions would always be taken as a last resort.

Evidence considered would include:

- Market rationale.
- Strategic and financial implications.
- The impact of the relationships with partner institutions.
- The impact on current and prospective students.
- The impact on any employer relationships.
- Arrangements for any replacement programme.

In the case of University partnerships, the formal processes and documentation of the relevant institution would be followed for approval through the appropriate deliberative structures.

Programme Changes Before and After Entry

In exceptional circumstances material changes may be required between the advanced published materials and enrolment.

The College would communicate these changes to applicants as soon as possible and advise them of their right to apply for entry to a suitably alternative programme, or to withdraw their application and seek entry to another institution.

Should the applicant have already accepted an offer for entry to the affected programme, comprehensive information, advice and guidance will be provided.

In highly exceptional circumstances, such as the loss of key staff, it may be unavoidable to have to make material changes to programmes after registration. In all cases, students would be consulted at the earliest opportunity and, where practicable, their views taken into account.

Should a student reasonably believe that a material change to the original programme would have an adverse impact, they may cancel their contract with the College. Advice and guidance, including the transfer of credit and academic progress, would be provided to assist the student(s) in seeking transfer to another institution. Further details on our Transfer Arrangements are published [here](#).

It is normal academic practice to make minor modifications and amendments to programmes during the enrolment term. Such changes are designed to improve the quality of learning opportunities, to meet the requirements of an external body or in response to student feedback. The College will consult with or inform students and their representatives of these changes, as appropriate, and in line with institutional quality assurance processes.

Barnsley College is committed to ensuring the continuity of studies as far as is reasonably practicable. In all cases, the College would work with the relevant awarding body in relation to the above.

Consideration and Protection of the Student/Applicant Interest

The College would always seek to present suitable alternative programmes for students to transfer into, and obtain the explicit written consent confirming the suitability of the new programme.

Current students would be fully informed of their options with respect to programme changes or course closure. Where practicably possible this would be conducted in person within 5 working days of a decision made in relation to programme changes by the Pathway Leader. In the rare case of course closure, by the Head of Department. This will be followed by formal letter to all students sent by the Director of HE Quality.

The College would ensure that academic standards and the student experience, as far as is reasonably practicable, be maintained throughout the remaining enrolment period. The original programme learning outcomes, as defined in the Programme Specification, would remain achievable for students who would be being 'taught out'.

Applicants will be communicated by formal letter sent by the Director of HE Quality. Applicants who have accepted offers would be informed of the options to either transfer their applications to another programme within the College or to another institution. Applicants who have been made offers but have not yet accepted them would be advised of the same options.

The College would always seek to ensure that significant material changes and closure of programmes would be a decision of last resort and be made in a timely manner. There are, however, rare unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. loss of specialist staff) which result in the decision to close or suspend a programme. The student interest is paramount and full consultation would be undertaken with all affected students.

The College recognises the requirement to ensure full compliance with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and observes the Higher Education course changes and closures: statement of good practice. The College also has in place a published [Student Protection Plan](#), which would be invoked. The Office for Students would be notified, if the event is classed as a [Reportable Event](#).

External References

This policy has been reviewed with consideration of the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Expectations for Quality Q1 and Q2)

This policy has been designed with consideration of the following guidance:
[Higher Education course changes and closures: statement of good practice](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority- [Higher Education Providers – Advice on Consumer Protection Law](#)

LINKED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Barnsley College Higher Education Terms and Conditions.
- Barnsley College Higher Education Admissions policy.
- Barnsley College Student Protection Plan.
- Barnsley College HE Student Transfer Arrangements.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Students can expect inclusive and supportive learning environment whatever their background.

LOCATION AND ACCESS TO THIS POLICY

This policy is available on the [website](#) and the Higher Education Virtual Learning Environment.