

## **Student protection plan**

### **Introduction**

This Student Protection Plan (SPP) provides assurance to you (our current and future students) that we have in place appropriate arrangements to protect the quality and continuation of study for you. This plan sets out our approach to protect your interests in a transparent and clear way.

IBCM is committed to helping to ensure students achieve the best possible academic outcomes from their studies and will make every effort to protect the student interest and assure continuity of study in the event of course or college change or closure. We are aware that occasionally events may occur which mean that unforeseen changes will have to be made to modules or courses.

#### **1. College closure**

The risk of IBCM closing as an institution and no longer offering any programmes of study is low. The organisation reviews its performance, including its financial performance, on a regular basis and financial guarantees are provided by member companies within the Berlitz Manchester group.

In the unlikely event of the full college closure, IBCM would ensure students were consulted at the earliest opportunity and all options discussed with them. Liaison would also take place with other college providers so as to enable a viable alternative study option can be offered/arranged. Appropriate refunds of tuition fees would be made in these circumstances.

#### **2. Buildings location/facilities**

The risk of programmes being unable to run due to unavailability of classroom/facilities is low. Numbers of students and availability of classrooms (including those within Berlitz) ensures that sufficient teaching spaces are constantly assured. However, should the situation arise where part of the building was unavailable (for example, due to safety concerns, essential repair or maintenance work etc) students would be accommodated in other areas such as staff areas and offices, or other locations (organised through property agents). If these were also not available arrangements would be made for students to continue to receive essential teaching via the online platform with regular telephone and electronic contact with their tutor/assessor for such a time as the room was not available.

In these events amendments to the timetable and to submission deadlines would also be considered to ensure that no student was disadvantaged due to the disruption.

#### **3. Programme not running**

- a) Insufficient interest: Whilst it is the desire and intention of IBCM that all advertised programmes take place at the dates indicated, it is recognised that sometimes insufficient interest in a programme will mean that it is not viable to run the course at a particular time. The risk of this happening is medium to high because of the nature of the small numbers of students. Potential

students who enquire or apply will be advised of any minimum requirement and of any questions as to whether programmes will be running or not. Once an offer letter has been issued/acceptance received the college will guarantee to run the programme even without the desired minimum number. Monitoring of enquiries and bookings enables early anticipation of any programmes which may not be running.

- b) **Staff availability:** If a programme is not able to run due to lack of suitably qualified staff being available/recruited, potential applicants will be advised prior to an offer letter being issued. This is unlikely as IBCM has a bank of versatile and qualified staff to cover the number of anticipated programmes. The Business Development Manager also liaises with recruitment agencies who are able to recommend suitable personnel for vacancies that arise.
- c) **Awarding Body accreditation:** IBCM participates in all required verification visits and academic reviews with the awarding bodies. Any areas for attention are addressed and the risk of approval being withdrawn is regarded as low. In the event of any accreditation being withdrawn from any Awarding or Regulatory body, IBCM would consider measures to protect the student, such as
  - Offering the student the chance to move to another programme
  - Offering a modified version of the same programme
  - Providing assistance to switch to a different provider who has the relevant accreditation

In **any** instance where IBCM is not able to run a programme, students will be offered a full refund of any monies paid.

#### **4. Major changes to programmes**

It is the policy of IBCM that all programmes and modules will run in accordance with published information. However, it is recognised that there may be instances when changes have to be made and in these cases, applicants and students will be informed at the earliest opportunity. IBCM will plan the programme timetable, including term times, modules of study, resources and staffing, taking into account all awarding body requirements, organisational demands, staffing expertise and resources available at IBCM. The planning is designed to minimise risk of change to the programme.

**Non material changes:** IBCM policy to programme and module changes is that these will only be made if:

- i) They do not result in a changed to published material
- ii) They are regulatory/Awarding body changes that are outside IBCM's control and could not be planned for
- iii) They are demonstrably beneficial to students
- iv) All students who will be affected will be consulted and informed consent to the changes will be obtained

Examples of these changes could include minor timetable changes, amendments to submission arrangements and dates, minor changes to module content or assessment arrangements (that do not affect the overall assessment balance and learning outcomes);

changes in staffing responsibilities/personnel and teaching arrangements (that do not affect required contact time)

**Material changes:** As above, IBCM policy is that programmes and modules will run in accordance with all published material information. In the rare instances where material changes may have to be made, applicants and students will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

Examples of these changes could include a change of optional unit to one advertised, changes to the length of the programme, major timetable changes, major changes to assessment of the programme, changes to entry requirements and any changes that could be seen to disadvantage students, for instance, reduction in contact hours. In these circumstances:

- i) Applicants will be given sufficient information to enable them to decide whether the programme remains suitable or whether they wish to change to an alternative programme or withdraw their application. If the applicant chooses to withdraw, any fees paid will be refunded.
- ii) For students already on a programme, notification will be given where a material change to a programme is proposed. The views of the student will be sought on any potential changes before a decision is made as to whether to proceed with the proposal, to modify the proposal or to withdraw the proposal.
- iii) When material changes to existing programmes are unavoidable, students dissatisfied with the changes will, wherever possible, be offered suitable alternative programmes. Should a student remain dissatisfied and choose to withdraw from the programme, an appropriate refund of course fees will be made.
- iv)

## **5. Suspension of Tier 4 licence**

IBCM regularly reviews the requirements for the Tier 4 licence to ensure full compliance. In the event that the college's Tier 4 sponsor status is suspended, we will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students by working with UKVI to, for example, allow an existing student to complete the year of study or programme and offering potential students the opportunity to postpone an application pending resolution of the suspension.

If the College's Tier 4 sponsor status is revoked, we will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to the student by, for example, assisting the student to switch to an alternative sponsor.