



Student Protection Plan 2020/21



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Section I: What is this document?

1. A Student Protection Plan is a document that outlines what the School will do if a situation arises that risks the continuation of students' studies. As LSHTM is a registered provider of higher education, we must have this document in place to explain to students how we will protect them.
2. If a situation arises which is likely to trigger the Student Protection Plan, we will:
 - be transparent about the likelihood of a trigger situation arising;
 - inform the Student Representative Council (SRC);
 - work with the SRC to consult with affected students in good time to gain a better understanding of how the proposed changes could affect them and what solutions are appropriate;
 - fully consider the impact on affected students before coming to any decision to make a significant change;
 - make every effort to ensure that students can continue their studies with us;
 - provide a refund or compensation if we are unable to provide a solution that allows students to complete their programme of study.



Section 2: How we mitigate against risk?

3. The School has established a risk management framework to support its Strategy. The framework includes a strategic risk register that identifies the high level “red” and “amber” risks linked to the Strategy, and provides a tool for evaluating and managing each risk. Strategic risks are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team, the Management Board and the Committees of Council. Risk is also a standing item at all meetings of Council. Risk registers are in place for all Faculties and for Central Services, which assess the likelihood and impact of operational risks. In addition, new COVID-19 risk register has been put in place to address circumstances surrounding the ongoing pandemic.
4. LSHTM also operates a business continuity plan, which outlines what we would do in potentially high-risk situations. In addition to our risk register and business continuity plan, LSHTM reports its financial performance to our regulatory body on an annual basis and have shown that we meet our regulatory requirement in this regard.
5. The strategic plan, risk register and business continuity plans are reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and issues which would adversely impact on the student experience are considered amongst these updates. This enables us to change a course of action to provide extra mitigation against specific issues where the likelihood or impact of the risk has grown.
6. Student representatives are amongst the elected members of our committee structure, and therefore central to our decision making.



Section 3: Type of risk covered by this document

What happens if the School closes or has its degree awarding powers revoked?

7. The risk of LSHTM closing is very low. The School has been in continuous operation since 1899 and has been at its present location since 1929. We manage our financial position to ensure continued solvency (we maintain strong cash balances, which are well in excess of our annual tuition fee income) and have always met legal requirements to publish annual audited financial statements. These clearly set out how we intend to continue to be financially sustainable, and manage and mitigate major financial risks in future years.
8. We continue to have strong student recruitment and attract significant funding for research. In addition to this, unlike most Higher Education Institutions, we have a large distance learning provision and a truly global student cohort, meaning we are more resilient to changes in local markets.
9. The School has business continuity plans in place to ensure that students can continue their studies following situations of fire, medical issues, terrorism, security issues, building related issues and natural events and has developed specific continuity plans related to the Covid-19 pandemic.
10. The risk that LSHTM will cease to be a Member Institution of the University of London, the body that officially award our degrees, is very low as our membership is unconditional.

What happens if a campus is closed or relocated?

11. We currently have no plans to close any campus permanently. If a natural disaster or a major event outside of our control occurs that results in us having to temporarily close a campus, we will make alternative arrangements to minimise disruption.
12. LSHTM buildings are in a single city centre site and we have arrangements with other HE providers in the immediate area to rent space when required. In situations where a student is affected by a change in location, their journey should not change significantly. Nevertheless, where students are materially disadvantaged by such a change, they may seek compensation by following the student complaints procedure.
13. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there is a moderate risk that LSHTM could be required to close buildings and suspend face to face teaching or, that a lockdown in London may prohibit students from attending classes. LSHTM have put measures in place to ensure that teaching can continue in the event of a campus closure or lockdown in London. Where face to face teaching is suspended teaching and assessments will be delivered online, enabling students to complete their programme of study in the original timeframe.
14. This is with the exception of lab based programmes where laboratory teaching is essential to achieve all intended learning outcomes. Consequently, should the School buildings become inaccessible, for example due to an escalation of current pandemic, laboratory elements of said programmes will need to be temporarily suspended.
15. There is a moderate risk that building work could affect the student learning experience. The risk is moderate as the School normally plans major building works in advance and makes appropriate arrangements to use alternative spaces either within the building or in the adjacent local area.

What if a programme, or a particular mode of delivery, is discontinued?

16. The risk that LSHTM will suspend one or multiple programmes is low. However, from time to time, we must decide if it is viable to continue to run a programme, or a particular mode of delivery. This could be due to low student numbers, poor outcomes or negative feedback.
17. There is currently an ongoing education review to assess the architecture and provision of LSHTM's academic portfolio. However, as the majority of our London-based students are on one-year taught master's programmes, any programmes highlighted by the review as being at risk of suspension can be closed the following academic year, enabling students to complete their studies as planned. Alternatively, an appropriate teach-out plan will be put in place.
18. Where such programme is a distance learning programme, we are required by the University of London to continue for a period of 5 years to enable students to complete within their maximum period of registration.

What happens if a programme changes substantially?

19. The risk that LSHTM will make major changes to content whilst students are enrolled on the programme is very low as programmes undergo a periodic quality review every 4 years. Where major changes are needed LSHTM has robust procedures for proposing and approving amendments with any approved changes having effect from the next academic year. As the majority of our students are on one-year taught master's programmes, we update and improve programmes between cohorts, rather than during a cohort's period of study.

What happens if the School loses its Tier 4 licence?

20. LSHTM has mechanisms in place to carefully monitor activities relating to our Tier 4 licence and we are therefore able to address any potential issues before they become significant concerns. While we do not foresee a situation where we would lose our Tier 4 licence, we do recognise that there is a small possibility that this could happen. This is predominantly due to the relatively small number of CASs that we issue and therefore, the small number of declines required to reach the threshold for revocation of our license. However, as LSHTM has successfully passed a recent UKVI audit, and has staff with relevant expertise, this risk is low.
21. If the School were to have its Tier 4 licence revoked, current students may be able to continue to study with us until the end of the academic year. If students are not able to complete their programme within this timeframe then we will discuss other options including transferring to a similar programme at an alternative provider. If this is not possible, we will refund tuition fees and where students are materially disadvantaged by such a change, they may seek compensation by following the student complaints procedure.

What happens if there is industrial action or staff absence?

22. The risk that teaching may be affected by industrial action is currently considered low. Whilst in most cases this may only result in a short term disruption, given the specialist nature of LSHTM, the fact that taught degree programmes typically last no more than one year and the reduced number of contact hours compared to typical undergraduate study, this risk has the potential to affect the continuation of study for our students.



23. If staff are unavailable due to industrial action or other reasons, we will make every effort to minimise the disruption to students and we will take reasonable steps to ensure learning opportunities are not missed. We will ensure that we provide suitable alternative learning opportunities for students to meet their programme learning outcomes.
24. Following conclusion of the industrial action, students will be able to make extenuating circumstances claims where assessments have been disrupted. In addition, LSHTM will assess the level of teaching received by students on each programme and make appropriate mitigation.
25. The risk that students will not be able to continue their studies due to a loss of key staff, with particular consideration to those studying in niche areas and requiring specialist supervisors, is low. This is because the School employs a large number of highly skilled research staff in a broad range of specialist areas, has developed strong links with similar institutions, such as the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and operates a variety of scientific groups and centres. As such, we are confident in our ability to find suitable replacements to ensure the continuity of study when key staff leave LSHTM or are not able to undertake their teaching duties for other reasons. It is also worth stressing that our turnover rates are low, given the high status and specialist nature of the institution.



Section 4: Student Support Services

26. We understand that students require a wide range of resources and support in order to study. These include library and learning resources, academic services, IT services and student support.
27. The Student Support Services team offer support, information and specialist services to help our students to make the most of their time at LSHTM, including:
 - disability & dyslexia support
 - accommodation advice
 - information about life in London
 - counselling & wellbeing
 - mindfulness & group workshops
 - financial hardship fund
 - chaplaincy
 - general welfare matters.

Prospective students who require further information should contact one of our student counsellors for queries related to mental health and wellbeing support (studentcounselling@lshtm.ac.uk), or one of our student advisers for queries related to disability support and general welfare matters (studentadvice@lshtm.ac.uk).

Current students who have any queries or would like to make an appointment, should visit Student Support pages on the LSHTM [Virtual Student Hub](#) (internal access only).

28. **Mental Health**

LSHTM recognises that mental health issues can affect a student's ability to continue their studies. We offer free of charge counselling services to all students, which include sessions with student counsellors, crisis support and other counselling related resources on our intranet and where concerns are more serious, referral to a Consultant Psychiatrist. In addition to this, LSHTM has undertaken a programme to train academic and professional service staff as mental health first aiders and has a policy in place to raise any causes for concern to ensure that students are appropriately supported and able to continue with their studies.

Where authorised by our students, counsellors can arrange a Case Meeting with faculty members to discuss and agree appropriate academic and psychological support to enable students to continue with their studies.

29. **Disability**

The Student Support team supports students with disabilities and prepares learning support agreements. These agreements outline the services and reasonable adjustments we will provide to individual students based on their particular needs and the requirements of their programme of study to ensure that they are properly supported and able to continue with their studies.

30. **Pregnancy**

LSHTM has a New and Expectant Mother's policy and our Student Support team can assist students who need support during or after pregnancy to help reduce the impact on student's ability to continue with their studies.

31. **Financial Hardship**

LSHTM recognises that financial hardship can affect student's ability to continue with their studies. We maintain a Hardship Fund that can award students who experience financial hardship with up to £1,500.

Section 5: Refunds and compensation

32. In the very unlikely event that a student is unable to complete study due to the closure of a programme or the School as a whole, the School has sufficient funds to meet any outstanding commitments for bursary payments and to provide reasonable compensation for tuition and maintenance cost. Refunds and compensation will be made in accordance with our [Tuition Fee Policy](#) and [Student Complaints Procedure](#).
33. As a postgraduate institution the Tuition Fee Policy does not include refunds for tuition fees to the Student Loans Company, as this would apply only to undergraduate students. Our policy is to refund to the payee of the fees, normally the student or a sponsoring organisation.
34. In the event of significant refunds and compensation we will call upon our cash reserves, which are materially greater than our total annual tuition fee income, giving us the financial scope to deal with even a major event where a high number of refunds and compensation became payable.
35. We have in place professional indemnity insurance, which would be called upon as financial recourse for any significant student compensation claims.



Section 6: Communicating with our students

How will students be notified about this plan?

36. The Student Protection Plan will be highlighted to students throughout their student journey via the following means:
 - as part of [Terms & Conditions of Admission](#);
 - as part of the enrolment and re-enrolment process;
 - on our [website](#).
37. If a trigger event happens or is likely to happen, affected students will be contacted either individually or as a group, depending on the nature of the trigger event. Where possible this will be done in advance of the students' enrolment. When changes occur whilst students are on a programme, they will be informed in writing and consulted wherever possible.
38. If we need to implement the measures in our Student Protection Plan we will provide extra support such as additional counselling sessions, Q&A sessions with senior staff, additional meetings with the Student Representative Council and a dedicated email address to support students collectively and individually.
39. We will review the Student Protection Plan annually and will include our students in the future development of the document.