

Student Protection Plan



Provider's name: Guildhall School of Music and Drama

Provider's UKPRN: 10007825

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Student protection plan for the period 2026/27 – 2028/29

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

1.1 Risk of institutional closure or unavailability of study locations

The School is an institutional department of the City of London Corporation, acting in its general corporate capacity, and our main campus buildings belong to them. Given the resources of the City of London Corporation, it is highly unlikely that the School would close without sufficient notice being given to registered students that would enable them to complete their degree programmes. The factors that we have taken into consideration when assessing this include the City of London Corporation's substantial historic endowment assets; diversified investment income; large property holdings; significant reserves; and multiple sources of funding. As the School is an integral institutional department of the City of London Corporation and not a distinct legal entity, it benefits from this robust financial position.

The School also has a business continuity plan in respect of a major disaster.

Therefore, we assess that the risk of the School as a whole no longer being able to operate or that teaching locations are no longer available is low.

1.2 Risk of loss or variation of degree awarding powers, or withdrawal of a validating partner

The School has had its own taught degree awarding powers for ten years. We were awarded Gold in the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework, and the quality of our provision is also recognised by receiving World Leading Specialist Provider Funding. Our research degree programmes are validated by City St George's, University of London. The School's relationship with City St George's is of long-standing, and for research degrees originated with a joint doctoral programme. When this finished in 2011, a new doctoral programme at the School was validated and has subsequently been successfully revalidated every five years. We are currently working with them for the next revalidation in 2026/27.

Therefore, we assess the risk of a loss or variation of degree awarding powers, or withdrawal of a validating partner as low.

1.3 Risk of programme closure or being unable to deliver material components of programmes

We have well-established programmes in research, acting, music and music therapy, and production arts. These programmes are reviewed regularly to ensure they stay up to date with the needs of the profession, there is a consistent strong demand for these programmes from applicants, and there are teams of academic staff in each area to deliver the core teaching, with the option to expand the teams in specific instrumental/discipline areas to meet individual student needs.

For these well-established programmes, we assess the risk of programme closure or being unable to deliver material components of these programmes as low.

We also have some newer programmes, that have, for example, been developed to meet a very specific industry need that given the nature of technological developments could change very quickly. New programmes generally carry a greater risk of closure, particularly as there is a higher risk that anticipated student numbers may not be met. However, the School will not advertise a programme until it has been fully validated.

We therefore assess the risk of closure or being unable to deliver material components of these programmes as moderate, and have reflected this in our planning below.

1.4 Risk of losing Student Visa Sponsorship

The School is very mindful of its Student Visa sponsorship duties, has processes in place to support students applying for a visa, and monitoring arrangements once students are enrolled. We have recently undergone an external audit to ensure that these processes are fit for purpose. To date we also have an excellent record in respect of visa refusal and completion rates.

We therefore assess the risk of loss of Student Visa sponsorship as low.

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

2.1 Institutional closure or unavailability of study locations

Due to being an integral institutional department of the City of London Corporation, the risk of institutional closure is exceptionally low. As set out above, the factors that we have taken into consideration when assessing this include the City of London Corporation's substantial historic endowment assets; diversified investment income; large property holdings; significant reserves; and multiple sources of funding. As the School is an integral institutional department of the City of London Corporation and not a distinct legal entity, it benefits from this robust financial position.

In the event of major disaster, the School has a business continuity plan in place but in any such event a specific plan for temporarily postponing teaching, or replacing it with an equivalent service would be devised depending on the extent of the disruption.

Options include, but are not limited to:

- moving classes online;
- moving suitable classes to alternative buildings within the School;
- keeping the School open longer hours thus extending the teaching hours available;
- utilising other sites within the Greater London area with similar equipment to the School.

The School also has a specific agreement with all Conservatoires UK (CUK) institutions to cooperate and provide support to a fellow conservatoire in the event that it was unable to deliver its teaching, performance and rehearsal activities due to a disaster.

2.2 Loss or variation of degree awarding powers, or withdrawal of a validating partner

In the unlikely event of the loss or variation of degree awarding powers took place, we would aim to enable students to transfer to a different provider (other conservatoires within CUK offer similar programmes which, if places were available, would provide a suitable equivalent).

We will take steps to consider how best student information, and/or credits could be transferred, and what exit awards could be available (where possible and appropriate).

In the unlikely event that students are not able to transfer, or in the event that the students' reasonable costs exceed their costs of study at the School, we would also compensate students as appropriate and in accordance with good practice.

2.3 Programme closure or being unable to deliver material components of programmes

As noted above, the risk of programme closure or being unable to deliver material components of our well-established programmes is highly unlikely.

For newer programmes, while the risk is higher, it is very unlikely that we would not be able to teach out the programme. The process for this is covered in our [Programme Suspension and Closure Policy](#).

In the unlikely event that a programme closed before students could be taught out, we would aim to enable students to transfer to a different provider (other conservatoires within CUK offer similar programmes which, if places were available, would provide a suitable equivalent). In the unlikely event that students are not able to transfer, or in the event that the students' reasonable costs exceed their costs of study at the School, we would also compensate students as appropriate and in accordance with good practice.

In relation to changes to the delivery of material components [of](#) programmes, this is detailed in [Section 1 of the Academic Regulations](#).

2.4 Loss of Student Visa Sponsorship

In the unlikely event that the School lost its ability to sponsor students on a Student Visa, the School would make every attempt to enable students affected by this to transfer to another London-based institution and cover any associated additional costs that this transfer incurs.

2.5 Diversity of Student Needs

As explained above, we consider that the likelihood of any of the risks crystallising to be low.

However, we acknowledge that, were the risks to crystallise, certain groups of students, including disabled and international students are more likely to be more significantly impacted, and the mitigations in terms of ensuring access to continued studies, and any financial consequences will need to consider this.

The School is committed to taking all reasonable steps to maintaining study opportunities, whilst taking account of these special circumstances, including relating to mobility and special educational needs. The School's plan accommodates this, taking into consideration the particular context of the way we deliver services to students (in central London, within the Barbican).

The options we have set out above in relation to mitigation will be of particular importance in relation to maintaining study for these cohorts, including:

- moving classes online, mindful of different needs;
- moving suitable classes to alternative buildings within the School, mindful of access needs;
- keeping the School open longer hours, mindful of the needs of disabled students; and
- utilising other sites within the Greater London area with similar equipment to the School, mindful of challenges relating to mobility.

We have set out information in relation to refunds and costs, and how these will be managed in accordance with School processes, including for these cohorts, in the section below.

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

The policy regarding refunds and compensation in the unlikely event that the School is unable to preserve continuation of study can be found within the [Tuition Fee Enrolment and Debt Collection Policy](#).

The School will fund these reimbursement and compensation arrangements through its normal budget and through the City of London Corporation.

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

The School's aim is to work collaboratively and co-operatively with the student body to find pragmatic yet sensitive solutions.

The Student Protection Plan is available on our website for prospective students and all stakeholders to view. Additionally, it is highlighted in offer documentation and on the Student Handbook intranet page, indicating where the full copy may be located for offer holders and current students.

As part of the School's quality assurance processes, Programme Leaders are required to state within validation and revalidation submissions the level of risk associated with programme closure and significant programme amendment and the measures in place, or to be undertaken, to minimise that risk. Programme Leaders will also need to indicate in their programme/module amendment documentation how amendments will be communicated to students and prospective students.

The Student Protection Plan will be reviewed regularly as a standing item by Academic Board and the Student Executive Committee to ensure that staff and students are involved and aware of the plan.

Should the student protection plan need to be implemented, we will communicate with students using the timescales and procedures as detailed in the [Programme Suspension and Closure Policy](#) and [Section 1 of the Academic Regulations](#).

If we need to implement the student protection plan, the SU President, on behalf of the student body, can approach a member of the Board of Governors for independent advice. If the Board member is unable to assist, they will inform the School Executive Committee of the need to fund independent advice for the student body.

The School has an extensive health and welfare service and will provide support and counselling to any student affected by actions taken under this plan.

As explained above, we are committed to offering students advice and support in the event that any of the identified risks do crystallise. We will do this in a timely way. The School's close-knit structure and specialised teaching environment is well-placed to provide support if it is required. This is particularly important for those students who may be more significantly impacted, including disabled students, and international students. The School is committed to engaging with all students, including these cohorts to provide advice, including in relation to financial consequence, as appropriate.