

## Study Group Limited Student Protection Plan

**Provider's name:** Study Group Limited **UKPRN:** 10008098

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### Information

This Student Protection Plan sets out how continuation and quality of study will be preserved for current and potential Study Group students in the event of any identified potential risk arising. This policy applies to all Study Group students studying within the UK and EU.

This policy will be reviewed annually by Study Group staff in consultation with students through the network wide Student Council, and is referenced in individual staff/student liaison group meetings within each ISC. A copy of this policy is made available to all future students at the time of application and may be accessed via a link in the Terms and Conditions found on each ISC website. It is also made available to all ISC staff on the corporate website.

Student protection plan for the period 2022/23			
Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Assessment of Risk and Mitigation
<b>Study Group cease operating</b> Study Group as a company ceases to operate	Severe	Very low	<p>The risk that Study Group will cease to operate is very low because we have been committed to international education for over 25 years and operate in over 30 countries around the world. Our financial performance is sound, as evidenced by the <a href="#">reports available on our website</a>, and we continue to maintain excellent academic standards.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that Study Group ceases to operate, we will work closely with university partners to ensure that students can complete their studies. Where this is not possible, we will support students to transfer to another provider, including making arrangements for the transfer of credits (if appropriate) and information about academic progress.</p>

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<p><b>ISC permanent closure</b> Full closure of ISC due to contractual dispute, site availability or other event</p>	<p>Severe</p>	<p>Very low</p>	<p>The risk that an ISC will close without sufficient notice is low because we have long standing relationships with the partner universities and keep in close contact about any potential problems. We have strong governance in place to ensure that sufficient notice is given with regards to centre closures.</p> <p>Where possible, any ISC closure will be managed in such a way as to ensure that students can complete their studies. Contracts with our university partners contain provisions to enable the facilitation of student teach-out wherever possible.</p> <p>Should Study Group have no option other than to close an ISC before students have completed their studies, it will seek to support students with transferring to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an equivalent/appropriate course at another ISC, where possible;</li> <li>• a suitable course at the partner university or other educational institution operated by Study Group;</li> <li>• a course with an alternative provider, if necessary, including making arrangements for the transfer of credits (if appropriate) and information about academic progress.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ISC Partial Closure</b> Part of the ISC is rendered unusable for activities involving students (ahead of the start of term), for example due to restrictions on use of premises, staff shortages etc.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Should an ISC be rendered partially unusable, we will seek to ensure continuity of provision for our students. We have Business Continuity Plans in place with each of our ISCs which set out how activities will be maintained should there be an incident that interrupts normal operations (short or long term). We also have agreements in place with most of our partner universities such that suitable teaching and administration space must be provided, which includes the provision of equivalent alternative space should it be needed.</p> <p>Where part of the ISC is rendered unusable for an extended period of time for activities involving students, Study Group will typically consider remedies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relocating provision of teaching which may include hiring spaces for course delivery (where possible on the partner university campus or nearby) and/or installing temporary buildings (where available);</li> <li>• revising the timetable to enable the scheduled teaching to take place in the available facilities. This may include student contact sessions being held outside of normal office hours. Where such an approach is taken, appropriate consultation will normally be conducted with stakeholders who may be affected, and appropriate impact assessments will be undertaken (particularly where the impact would be disproportionate e.g. for those with a disability);</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delivering courses via alternative means, such as blended or distance learning. Where such an approach is taken, Study Group will consider whether this is appropriate for enrolled students who would be affected.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disruption to operation of an ISC during term-time</b> Unexpected disruption to the operation of the ISC, for example due to weather</p>	Low	Moderate	<p>There can sometimes be unforeseen events which result in disruption to the operation of an ISC and therefore affect the delivery of aspects of a course. These cannot always be predicted, but our Business Continuity Plans (in place with each of our ISCs) set out how activities will be maintained should there be an incident that interrupts normal operations (short or long term).</p> <p>Where events result in term-time course disruption, the ISC will normally consider whether it is practicable to make changes to course delivery, rather than closing or suspending an affected course. Actions to minimise disruption may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>temporary short-term suspension of course delivery (e.g. where it is not possible to access buildings due to weather), with appropriate actions to mitigate the impact on students;</li> <li>changing the course delivery location or method, which may include blended or distance learning;</li> <li>changing the staffing of a course, including recruitment of area specialists, where required and appropriate;</li> <li>offering students the opportunity to transfer to an alternative unaffected course at the ISC (if available).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Course no longer available or substantially amended</b> No longer viable to deliver a course(s), or substantial changes to material components of a course(s) within the ISC</p>	Moderate	Moderate	<p>Following periodic reviews of courses, it may sometimes be necessary to significantly alter the content of a course, and in some cases, withdraw them altogether. Such decisions are not taken lightly and will normally be planned ahead so that current students can complete their studies, and prospective students are given sufficient notice. It will be highly unusual to significantly alter or withdraw a course after term has started.</p> <p>In addition, we review the viability of courses in the lead up to the start of term to check that they have recruited the minimum number of students required. If a course cannot run due to low numbers, we will seek to notify students at least two months before the start of term (where possible). In these cases, we will offer students the option to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>transfer to an alternative course at their chosen ISC;</li> <li>transfer to an equivalent course at another ISC;</li> <li>defer their application to the next intake point;</li> <li>request a refund in line with our refunds policy (see below).</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Partner university withdraws or substantially changes any of its progression route courses</b></p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Following periodic reviews of courses, our partner universities may sometimes significantly alter the content of a course, and in some cases withdraw them altogether. We would normally expect to be notified of these changes in good time and for such changes to be agreed well in advance of students commencing their studies at an ISC.</p> <p>Where this affects the progression route of our students, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the original progression route is available. Where this is not possible, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our students are notified as soon as possible and will support them to find alternative courses to progress on to. Where possible these steps will include offering students the option to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transfer to an alternative course at their chosen ISC;</li> <li>• transfer to an equivalent course at another ISC;</li> <li>• request a refund in line with our refunds policy (see below).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Licence to Operate</b> Restrictions on or loss of Student visa Sponsor licences (including loss of educational oversight by Office for Students)</p>	<p>Severe</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Study Group is an international company, and as such is experienced in the requirements of visas and immigration. We have an established track record of immigration compliance with UKVI, and we closely monitor this area through our central compliance team.</p> <p>In the event of restrictions being placed on, or a loss of, Study Group's Student Route Sponsor status at an ISC, Study Group will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resultant disruption to those services and to affected students by, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working with UKVI/OfS to allow enrolled students to complete their studies/course (noting that students will only need to complete the remainder of the academic year to complete their studies);</li> <li>• allowing students already in receipt of a visa based on an allocated CAS from Study Group to enrol and commence their studies;</li> <li>• utilising any other ability to continue to teach affected students through Study Group's broader network;</li> <li>• offering students who have not commenced their travel to the ISC the opportunity to postpone their application pending the resolution of the suspension;</li> <li>• arranging for the partner university to issue a CAS (where appropriate);</li> <li>• providing assistance to affected students to switch to an alternative sponsor;</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivering courses via alternative means, such as distance learning. Where such an approach is taken, Study Group will consider whether this is appropriate for enrolled students who would be affected;</li> <li>• providing reasonable support to students to access a course run by another provider, including making arrangements for the transfer of credits (if appropriate) and information about academic progress.</li> </ul>
<b>Online provision</b> Failure of technology resulting in loss of ability to deliver online courses	Moderate	Low	Study Group's online courses are delivered through our secure and robust innovative platform, Insendi. The platform is supported constantly and delivers the highest level of uptime; it is designed to be highly available via our cloud provider AWS, with no single points of failure within an AWS region. In general, we have a Recovery Point Objective of under 4 hours and a Recovery Time Objective of under 6 hours. It is therefore extremely unlikely that we would be unable to deliver courses for an amount of time significant enough to impact on teaching and learning.

### General Provisions

- (1) ISCs shall refer to their individual Business Continuity Plan in implementing any mitigation strategy, as required
- (2) A link to University Partner websites for Study Group ISCs can be found on the main [Study Group website](#) under the 'our university partner websites' dropdown menu

### Implementation

In the unlikely event that any part of this plan should need to be implemented, we will ensure that information is communicated as quickly as possible, initially by email, to all affected ISC students and to relevant centre staff by the appropriate Head of Centre, and will work closely with those affected, as far as practicable to mitigate the impact on students, as outlined in the plan.

Study Group understands that some of the options for mitigation outlined in this plan will not be feasible for some students. As such, should the plan require implementation, we will endeavour to enter into more detailed discussions with students who may be disproportionately affected. This may include, for example, students who are pregnant or students who have a disability, which may make it difficult to work outside of standard hours, to engage with distance learning, or to accommodate a change in the physical location of teaching provision.

If any student is dissatisfied with the way in which the Student Protection Plan is implemented, they may submit a complaint. Details of the complaints process are embedded in the Terms and Condition section of individual ISC websites, and include information on how to escalate a complaint if they remain dissatisfied.

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### Refunds and Compensation

In the event Study Group is unable to complete the teaching of a paid for course of study, we will offer financial recompense to affected students in accordance with Study Group's refund and compensation policies. These policies can be found on the Terms and Conditions page of each of our ISC websites. In the event that mitigation results in a student relocating to an alternative centre without a reasonable period of notice (at least 28 days), Study Group will consider requests to reimburse reasonable costs incurred for relocation.

Study Group has appropriate measures in place to ensure its long term sustainability and has appropriate strategies for dealing with difficulties as and when they may arise. Our financial performance is sound, as evidenced by the [reports available on our website](#); we are therefore confident that we will be able to deliver on our financial commitments, including those detailed the refunds and compensations policy, if required.

### Document management

Version	Action	Date	Name(s)	Details
2	Date of next review	Aug 2023		
2	Revisions approved	19 Dec 2022		V2 of Student Protection Plan approved by Study Group Ltd Board
2	Student consultation	Nov 2022		Circulated for review by ISC Student Councils in November 2022
2	Document reviewed	Sept 2022	Emma Walkden	A full review of the policy against the OfS template, updated guidance and sector best practice. V2 to be with effect from 2022/23 academic year
1	Document approved	2018		Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (BESL) board
1	Document created	14/09/2018	Gordon Bull	V1 created for 2018/19 academic year