



**Royal College of Art**

Postgraduate Art & Design

## **Student Protection Plan**

### **Provider's name**

Royal College of Art

### **Provider's UKPRN**

10007777

### **Legal address**

Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2EU

### **Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan**

Trevor Pearce, Registrar

### **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**

The risk that the College as a whole is unable to operate is very low. The College celebrated its 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017, and – as demonstrated by its most recent annual report and accounts – is in a sound financial position. The key risks facing the College are summarised on page 22 of the annual accounts, and are reflected in the strategic risk register. The risk register documents the actions that the College will take to manage and/or mitigate each risk and the indicators that are used to monitor any change in risk levels. The status of each risk – and progress made in implementing agreed actions - is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the College's Senior Management Team, Audit & Risk Committee, and its governing Council.

The College's programmes are delivered across its three sites in London (at Kensington, Battersea and White City). The College provides shuttle buses for students between sites, to supplement existing public transport links. Studio and IT facilities are available at all three sites, with more specialist technical and workshop facilities split between Kensington and Battersea.

We are in the process of extending the existing campus in Battersea, with a new building due to be completed in the autumn of 2020. In this context, the College undertook a major review during 2016/17, to ensure that all taught programmes have sufficient, good quality space and facilities to support students over the next two to three years until the new Battersea campus is complete. The opening of the campus at White City formed part of this planning. Once the Battersea development is complete, the College plans to consolidate all of its teaching in Kensington and Battersea. The lease for White City has been structured to provide contingency, and ensure that teaching can continue in our existing buildings with minimal disruption to students should there be any delay in completing the development at Battersea.

The risk that the College is unable to deliver a particular programme because of the closure of any one of its sites is therefore low.

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes in highly specialised areas, or highly specialised components of programmes, in the next three years is also considered low. The quality of the College's teaching and research, specialist focus and London location mean that it is able to attract appropriate expertise to maintain provision in the event of the departure of key staff. In the short-term, any loss of staff could be covered by the College's existing group of specialist Visiting Lecturers. Recent permanent appointments have attracted staff from other leading institutions in London, other parts of the UK and from Europe.

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

We consider there to be a low risk that we are unable to deliver individual programmes, or components of programmes. However, we have put in place a Student Refund Policy (appendix 1) outlining our approach should we have to withdraw a programme at short notice.

## **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**

Our refund policy (Appendix 1) contains provision for:

- Refunds for students who pay their own tuition fees.
- Refunds for students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor.
- Commitments to honour student bursaries.
- Compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer courses or provider.
- The College does not offer undergraduate programmes and so does not offer tuition fee loans from Student Finance England, although we do support postgraduate SFE loans for living costs.
- We do not have provision for payment of travel costs for programmes that move sites, as travel is provided across all sites of the College. The College commits to honouring all scholarships and bursaries that would be discontinued as a result of a College decision to withdraw a programme.

We believe that we would only need to invoke our refund policy in exceptional circumstances; in this event we would use cash reserves to honour any commitment. The College considers its cash position to be secure; we use a number of financial KPIs to assess our financial sustainability which aligns with HEFCE's risk assessment process. Our cash policy is to maintain a minimum balance of £5m or 40 liquidity days (whichever is higher) to fund short-term working capital needs.

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

We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students by placing it on our intranet and referring students to it by email. Students will be invited to supply any comments which will be incorporated into an annual review.

Staff are already briefed on processes for implementing course changes; changes may only be made to a programme that students are registered to if all students on that programme approve and so the Student Protection Plan should not apply.

If we need to implement the measures in our Student Refund Policy we would normally seek to communicate those changes by email and via all-student meetings with the relevant Dean. Students will be invited to discuss any specific issues with our Student Support team, who can provide financial advice as well as pastoral support. Students would also be referred to the Students' Union for independent support, and would be guided to our Complaints Policy should they wish to challenge any decision.