Policies > Student Protection Policies >

Student Protection Plan

Policy Statement

Protecting students in case the School is unable to deliver its services, including teaching and learning, is fundamental to the School. The School has a robust Student Protection Plan, which it has submitted to the Office of Students (OfS), that sets out what the School will do if it is unable to deliver its services, or ceases operations.

This Plan complements the consumer protection measures that the School has already embedded under its Consumer Protection Policy and is supported by systems including the School's risk register, which sets out ways to monitor and mitigate risk. The Student Protection Plan adds to this by setting out what the School will do when confronted with substantial risks, such as the risk of campus and site closure and the inability to deliver programmes, and how student's rights will be protected, such as through timely and effective communication.

Principles

- Security: Ensuring students feel secure in their educational journey, knowing that there are robust protections in place.
- Continuity: Maintaining the continuity of learning opportunities and experiences for all students, regardless of challenges the School may face.
- Clarity: Providing clear information about the protections available and processes to follow in times of change or disruption.
- Responsiveness: Reacting thoughtfully and promptly to mitigate the impact of any significant changes affecting students.
- Risk Management: Proactively identifying and managing risks to minimise their impact on students' studies.
- Preventative Action: Taking early and decisive action to prevent potential adverse effects on student experiences.
- Transparency: Operating with openness in the development and execution of the Student Protection Plan.
- Equity: Offering equitable solutions that consider the varying needs and circumstances of student groups.
- Student Voice: Involving students in discussions and decisions regarding protective measures and changes affecting them.
- Communication: Ensuring timely and effective communication with students about any events that may impact their studies.
- Fairness: Delivering fair outcomes for students affected by significant changes.
- Safeguards: Establishing robust safeguards to protect the quality and value of students' education.

Regulatory Context

This Policy has been developed in line with the applicable laws, regulations, regulatory advice, and sector best practices, including the following:

Authority	Name	Url
UK Government	**Consumer Rights Act 2015** A UK law that consolidates consumer rights, covering contracts for goods, services, digital content, and providing remedies for faulty goods and services.	[↗]
UK Government	**Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA)** A UK legislation that reformed the higher education and research sector, particularly by establishing the Office for Students and UK Research and Innovation.	[↗]
Office for Students (OfS)	**Regulatory framework for higher education in England** This framework outlines OfS' primary aim to ensure positive outcomes for students, including access, success, and progress in higher education. It covers quality academic experience, progress into employment, and value for money.	[↗]

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	**Managing risks in the higher education sector** Guidance for higher education providers on their obligations under health and safety law.	↗
Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)	**Code of Practice for Higher Education** Guidance for higher education providers on their obligations under equality law.	↗
Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)	**The Good Practice Framework** Principles and operational guidance to support HE providers to develop and follow fair processes for complaints and appeals.	↗
Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)	**Student Complaints Scheme** The OIA is an independent body for student complaints in England and Wales, reviewing unresolved complaints and making recommendations for resolution.	↗
Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)	**Putting things Right** Guidelines and recommended procedures for addressing grievances, complaints, or disputes to achieve fair outcomes for existing and prospective students.	↗
Universities UK	**Compensation and refund policies – developing good practice** A briefing to aid consistency in how universities approach refund and compensation policies for students, offering principles for good practice.	↗
Universities UK	**Guidance on online harassment** A comprehensive guidance on tackling online harassment and promoting online welfare in the higher education sector.	↗

Purpose

Responsible	Title

| Students | **Introduction**
The School has submitted a full annual Student Protection Plan to the Office of Students (OfS) to offer its students protection should the School face significant risk.

This plan covers the risk of operations cease, campus and site closure, the loss of degree awarding powers, the risk of the inability to deliver programmes, loss of the Tier 4 Sponsorship license, and the loss of key staff, and what the School will do to minimise the impact on students. Strong mitigation measures are set out in the School's Plan.

The Plan lays out how the School will refund and compensate students where it can no longer continue to deliver studies, and also how it will communicate the plan to students.

The Board of Governors is responsible for the plan and minimising and addressing risk has ben incorporated into School operations.

The plan is set out below. |

Overview

Responsible	Title

Students

What is a Student Protection Plan

A Student Protection Plan is a document which aims to ensure that students can continue and complete their studies or can be compensated if this is not possible.

It sets out what students can expect to happen should a course, campus, or institution close.

The measures contained in this plan are not intended to replace the protection which you are guaranteed under consumer protection law. Instead, they are in addition to these rights and protection.

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students

Responsible	Title

Object

This section outlines an assessment of the risks that may trigger our Student Protection Plan.

Executive Committee

1.1. The Risk of Operation Cease

The likelihood that the School will cease to operate is very low due to its strong and well-considered business plan, market research results, strong partnerships, the successful track record of the founders and the execution team, and the financial strength of Geeks Ltd, our investing sponsor, which is also 100% owned by the School founders/shareholders. We have an absolute commitment to the success of both the School and our students. We have already put in place appropriate measures to secure and ensure such success, and we will continue to review and expand these measures as necessary.

Mitigation: The contract between the School and the financial sponsor, Geeks Ltd, obliges the sponsor to refund and compensate students in the event that the School ceases operations. Please see the Refunds and Compensation Policy.

Impact on students:

-Mature part-time students: Should the risk of operation cease materialise, mature part-time students could face significant disruption in their academic pursuits. These students often juggle their studies with other responsibilities such as work, family, or both. They have chosen a part-time study mode to align with their life's demands and commitments. Consequently, an abrupt discontinuation may not only waste the time and effort they've invested but could also affect their confidence and motivation to re-enter the educational scene. Moreover, the financial implications, even if the tuition is refunded, can be burdensome, given potential associated costs such as childcare, commuting, or study materials that these students might have already committed to.

-Mature full-time students: For mature full-time students, the cessation of School operations could be especially challenging. These individuals have likely taken significant time off from their careers or made considerable personal sacrifices to pursue their studies full-time. They have put their trust in Sutton School of Technology as the stepping stone for a major career shift or advancement. A sudden halt in operations would not only derail their academic progress but could also delay their professional trajectory, and add to the financial stress, considering the opportunity cost of leaving full-time employment or other engagements. They may also find it difficult to transition to another institution or resume their previous roles, especially if they've been out of the workforce for an extended period.

-International students: International students are particularly vulnerable if the School ceases to operate. Beyond the academic setback, they face unique challenges such as visa status complications, potential loss of their right to study or stay in the UK, and the financial burden of additional international travel and housing commitments. The emotional strain of uprooting from their home countries and then facing uncertainty in a foreign land can be considerable. They have chosen Sutton School of Technology not just for its academic promise but also for its global reputation and the prospect of studying in the UK. The impact of the School's discontinuation can have far-reaching consequences on their educational and life goals, possibly influencing their perception of overseas education.

1.2. The Risk of campus and site closure

The risks of site closure are very low since the School founders/shareholders own the campus building (100-year lease).

Mitigation: All operations, content and education provided by the School are delivered through a digital system, making it feasible to continue operations remotely in the event of disasters with minimal interruptions.

Impact on students:

-Mature part-time students: The closure of the campus or site may initially be a less pronounced concern for mature part-time students, as their limited time on-site aligns with their already flexible schedule. However, the loss of on-site resources, networking opportunities, or face-to-face interactions could hinder their academic progression and the value they derive from the programme. Many might have selected the School, in part, due to its proximity to their residence or workplace. Transitioning to a wholly remote mode might challenge those who rely on on-campus facilities for focused study, away from home distractions.

-Mature full-time students: The full-time mature students, having chosen a more immersive approach to their education, would likely feel the effects of a campus closure more acutely. Access to on-site resources, labs, workshops, and the campus environment plays a pivotal role in their learning experience. While the digital system offers continuity, the sudden switch to a completely remote learning mode might disrupt their rhythm, especially for those who thrive in a collaborative and physical learning environment. Furthermore, these students may miss out on networking events, seminars, or other on-campus activities crucial for their academic and career development.

-International students: The impact on international students would be multi-faceted. Many choose to study abroad for the cultural and immersive experience that goes beyond just the curriculum. A campus closure deprives them of this unique experience. The lack of a physical campus can also affect their accommodation decisions, especially if they reside in School-affiliated housing. There's also the emotional aspect; many international students seek a sense of community and belonging when they're so far from home. The campus often serves as a sanctuary and a place to forge bonds. Transitioning entirely online might lead to feelings of isolation or detachment from the institution and their peers.

Executive Committee

1.3. The Risk of Loss or Suspension of Registration

The loss of degree-awarding powers or School status is very unlikely. This is due to the School's state-of-the-art academic governance system (AGS) and the fact that the quality of education and governance is a primary business interest for the School (alignment of interest). This is due to the long-term business model and fee programme of the School and its investment in the outcomes. A full discussion of individual Conditions of Registration and associated mitigations follows.

Condition(s) and related risks	Mitigation(s)
B1: The School does not deliver well designed courses that provide a high quality academic experience	• Our School employs policies for program design that involve strict approval procedures for both modules and programmes. Additionally, we engage external academics who hold senior positions at other Higher Education Institutions. To ensure student involvement in the approval process, we will involve student representatives in our programme and module approval processes. • We will continually assess the quality of our teaching delivery and implement measures to maintain it. Our approach will include gathering feedback from students via programme and module feedback forms, ensuring that we consistently capture and consider their input. We will also respond and act upon this feedback.
B2: Students are not supported from admission through to completion	• Our policies and provision around student support aim to ensure appropriate end-to-end support for all students. • All students will have a named Personal Academic Tutor with whom they will have one-to-one meetings periodically throughout the academic year. • We will also provide additional ad hoc support to students we believe risk non-completion of their studies so that we can ensure the success of all students.
B3: The School does not deliver successful outcomes for all of its students which are recognised and valued by employers, and/or enable further study	• Our overarching career strategy involves working with employers to ensure that our students acquire the necessary skills, connections, and work experience to succeed in the workplace. • Our programme outcomes aim to equip students with essential knowledge, skills, and attributes that employers value and that can further enhance their educational pursuits. • We intend to offer extensive career development support that will include arranging optional work experience or internships (subject to any applicable immigration rules) for all students. • This is made possible through our existing as well as planned industry partnerships • We will also embed professional development within the curriculum, through dedicated career-focussed modules.
B4: The School does not ensure that qualifications hold their value in line with sector-recognised standards	• The School has robust policies and governance in place to uphold academic standards. This includes the engagement and use of external examiners. • All members of faculty will also receive training to enable them to participate effectively and critically in discussions about academic standards.

B5: The School does not deliver courses which meet the academic standards described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.	• Our Programme Approval Policy and Module Approval Policy collectively ensure that all educational outcomes are mapped against the FHEQ.
C1: School's policies do not give due regard to consumer protection law	• The School has implemented Consumer Protection policies and related governance, and all faculty and staff will undergo training to ensure compliance. • Our communications with students will be unambiguous and compliant, and all critical policies will be published on our website and discussed during student orientation.
C2: The School does not cooperate with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) or make students aware of the scheme	• Our cooperation with the independent adjudicator for Higher Education is protected within our policies and by external membership in our Board of Governors. • As we reach the threshold of 500 students, we will finance a Students Union which will provide additional advice, advocacy, and support of students where complaints or disputes may arise. • We will make students aware of the OIAHE scheme through our website, our Academic Governance System (AGS), student induction and meetings with Personal Academic Tutors.
C3: The School does not have in force a Student Protection plan, take reasonable steps to implement the plan or inform the OfS or events that require the implementation of the provisions of the plan	• The School has an effective and thorough Student Protection Plan. Our policies and processes will ensure the implementation and triggering of this plan if it becomes necessary. • Our policies and processes will also ensure that we inform the OfS as required.
D1: The School is not financially viable or sustainable	• The School is well-funded without reliance on external sources of funding. It has an unconditional, legally enforceable facility agreement from Geeks Ltd that can be enforced in court by the School or the OfS if necessary.
E1: The School's governing documents do not uphold public interest governance principles	• The Board of Governors, overseen by the independent Audit Committee and the Quality and Compliance Committee, will ensure that public interest principles are upheld. • As we reach the threshold of 500 students, Student Members will sit on the Board of Governors to make certain to further enhance our oversight of the public interest principles including Value for Money.
E2 & E3: The School does not have in place adequate and effective governance and management arrangements/does not accept responsibility for interactions with the OfS	• The School's governance policies ensure close compliance with conditions of registration. • Our President and Board of Governors will be responsible for maintaining communication with the OfS. • As we reach the threshold of 500 students, Student Members will sit on the Board of Governors to make certain to embed the student perspective persistently in our governance structures.

E4 & E5: The School does not notify the OfS of changes related to details in the Register or comply with guidance on the electoral registration of students.	• The School will establish reporting rules and procedures to ensure that it reports any changes to the Register • The School will ensure compliance with guidance on the electoral registration of students prior to commencing operations.
F1: The School does not provide the OfS with required transparency information	• The School will establish a clear reporting schedule with the OfS to ensure the timely return of all required data. • We will publish any necessary information widely, via our website and our AGS.

Impact on students:

-Mature part-time students: A loss or suspension of registration could seriously affect the perceived value of the qualification mature part-time students are working towards. These students, already managing various responsibilities, trust the institution's validity and its capacity to offer a recognized qualification that will enhance their professional prospects. They may have invested in the School, both financially and time-wise, expecting a smooth academic journey. The news of registration problems can be demotivating and may result in financial and academic setbacks. If students need to transfer to another institution, this process might not be straightforward, given the specific modules they might have taken, and the potential discrepancies in credit recognition.

-Mature full-time students: For mature full-time students, the repercussions of such a risk are even more profound. Having committed fully to their studies, expecting the School to deliver on its promises, the uncertainty surrounding the validity and recognition of their degrees could have a significant impact. Such students may have put other career opportunities on hold or made sacrifices in their personal lives to pursue this qualification. The potential fallout from a loss or suspension of registration could see them lose valuable time, money, and momentum in their academic and career trajectories.

-International students: For international students, a loss or suspension of registration could have implications beyond just academics. Their visas and right to study in the UK might be directly linked to their enrolment at the School. If the School's registration is compromised, their immigration status could be in jeopardy, leading to potential deportation or a forced change of institution. Additionally, they've made significant financial and emotional investments to study abroad, and such a setback could be mentally and financially taxing. The uncertainty and potential disruption to their studies might also affect their overall well-being and their trust in international education systems.

1.4. The Risk of Loss or Suspension of the School's Degree Awarding Powers

The loss of degree-awarding powers or School status is unlikely. This is due to the School's state-of-the-art academic governance system (AGS) and the fact that the quality of education and governance is a primary business interest for the School (alignment of interest). This is due to the long-term business model and fee programme of the School and its investment in the outcomes and success of its students.

Mitigation: The School will have strong quality assurance processes, procedures and technology in place, ensuring good governance, student protection, and strong value for money. The governance arrangements ensure quality assurance oversight and strong analytics capabilities for real-time inspection by the School's Board of Governors, senior academic authority as well as the authorities. Please see below for a full exploration of steps in mitigation regarding each criterion for Degree Awarding Powers.

DAPs Area / Related Risks	Action(s) in Mitigation
A: Academic Governance: the School's Academic Governance is not fit for purpose	• We have established comprehensive policies and monitoring protocols across all aspects of academic governance at our School. Specifically, we have begun to assemble a team of academics and professional services staff with UK Higher Education experience and the necessary expertise and leadership skills. • As we grow, we are also committed to giving students a significant role in our governance structures.
B: Academic standards and quality assurance: there is a failure to set and maintain standards and the quality of the academic experience	• Our academic standards are protected by the Academic Board. All members of staff on this Board will receive training to participate effectively in discussions regarding academic standards. • We will ensure that we develop and review all programmes reviewed in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in the United Kingdom. This guarantees that our students' degrees are easily comparable with other degrees across the country. • The School has established policies to ensure that assessments are both valid and reliable. • We will also gather feedback from our students to continuously improve our assessment methods. • We have a transparent and effective process for managing complaints and appeals that embeds good practice from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE). • We will introduce students to these policies during induction and will publish them through our website and AGS. We will also revisit these policies at key stages during the programme to ensure all students know their rights.
C: Scholarship and pedagogical effectiveness: the School's staff demonstrate insufficient scholarship and pedagogical effectiveness	• We have proactively established policies and procedures to guarantee that all School personnel will receive adequate induction, training, and professional growth opportunities throughout their employment. • We are dedicated to continuous development, as demonstrated by our Recruitment, Induction, and Staff Development Policy. • We have conducted a thorough assessment of the knowledge and skills necessary to build and teach our Programmes. We will continuously evaluate to ensure that we can continue to meet our desired teaching, learning, and employability outcomes.

D: Environment for supporting students: The School does not have an environment fit for supporting students	• We are entirely committed to ensuring the quality of the student experience through our comprehensive plans and effective governance. • Each student will be assigned a Personal Academic Tutor to support them during their academic journey and professional development. • We intend to provide a comprehensive and deep student support programme. We are backing this programme with thorough resource planning to ensure all students receive the assistance necessary to succeed during and after their study with us. • Our School is guided by principles of equity and inclusion, and our Equality and Diversity Committee and Education and Student Experience Committee will oversee all operational decisions to ensure that these align with our values.
E: Evaluation of performance: The School does not have mechanisms in place to evaluate performance	• We have policies and procedures to continuously monitor and enhance our performance. • These include yearly reviews of our programmes, module reviews, external audits, and regular student feedback touchpoints. • We believe our ongoing process of evaluation will enable us to maintain high standards across the School.

Impact on Students:

-Mature part-time students: A potential loss or suspension of the School's degree-awarding powers might lead to doubts and concerns about the integrity and validity of their ongoing education. For mature part-time students who are often balancing work and other life commitments with education, any uncertainty in the quality and legitimacy of their qualification can be especially distressing. They might have to reconsider their commitment to the programme, especially if they need the degree for career advancement or a switch in roles. The inability of the School to award a recognized degree would diminish the return on their investment of time, effort, and finances.

-Mature full-time students: For those who have devoted themselves to full-time study, the impact could be even more profound. These students might have left their jobs or taken sabbaticals to pursue the degree. The promise of a recognized and reputable qualification from the School could have been a significant motivation. The jeopardy of degree-awarding powers could result in a severe disruption to their academic and career timelines. They would have to scramble for alternative arrangements, such as transferring credits to another institution, which may not always be seamless.

-International students: International students often opt for overseas education after a thorough evaluation of the institution's reputation, the value of the degree in the global market, and its recognition in their home countries. Any challenge to the School's degree-awarding status can jeopardise their primary reason for studying in the UK. Furthermore, their visa statuses are often contingent on their enrollment at recognized institutions. Should the School lose its degree-awarding powers, it could lead to a cascade of challenges, including potential visa violations, additional costs in finding and transitioning to another institution, and the emotional distress of uncertainty in a foreign land.

1.5. The Risk of inability to deliver the programmes and components of the courses or change them

This is a very low risk. As we are a functional-based School in software engineering, we offer our courses based on the practical needs of employers and the UK labour market. Our programmes are specific in focus and designed based on a deep market understanding and professional expertise of the team at Geeks Ltd, our financial sponsor.

Mitigation: The School will have multiple suitable lecturers and module leaders available for each module in the curriculum, either as full-time employees of the School or as guest lecturers and module leaders, ensuring our capability to deliver programmes without interruption.

Impact on students:

-Mature part-time students: An inability to deliver programmes or key components can disrupt the scheduled learning pathway for mature part-time students. Given that they often have tailored their schedules to fit in their academic commitments amidst other responsibilities, any sudden changes can cause inconvenience. If modules or entire courses are altered or delayed, it might not align with their personal or professional timelines. Furthermore, part-time students often choose specific programmes because they offer specific skills or knowledge beneficial to their current or prospective roles. Any deviation from this can affect the value they derive from their education.

-Mature full-time students: Full-time mature students, who have taken significant breaks or shifts from their careers, will be deeply affected by any disruptions. They've committed to the programme expecting timely completion and a structured learning experience. Any changes to course content or delays can derail their academic progression and further delay their re-entry into the professional world. Moreover, if certain components are dropped or altered, it can also compromise the depth and breadth of their learning, affecting their preparedness for future opportunities.

-International students: For international students, any significant changes in the course structure or its components can be problematic. Firstly, they've committed to studying overseas based on the specific offerings of the School. Any deviation from this can be seen as a breach of their initial agreement. Moreover, their visa and immigration statuses are often tied to specific courses and their duration. Any substantial changes can lead to visa complications. They also face the added stress of explaining such changes to sponsors, parents, or prospective employers back home, which can lead to doubts about the credibility of their education journey.

Executive Committee

1.6. The Risk of Loss of UKVI Tier 4 Licence to Sponsor International Students

This is a very low risk. The School's management team has long and significant experience in compliance with UKVI sponsor licence conditions as employers. In multiple Home Office audits, our management systems and records have been identified as not only compliant but exemplary. We are implementing the same systematic approach and technology-driven mechanisms to ensure compliance with the School's Student visa sponsorship duties (once granted by the UKVI).

Mitigation: The quality and compliance team will take a self-critical approach to UKVI compliance including detailed scrutiny and periodic mock audits to identify and minimise any potential risks.

Impact on students:

-Mature part-time students: If they are domestic students, this risk may not directly impact them. However, they might experience indirect effects, such as a decrease in the diversity of their classes or the potential financial impact on the institution if a significant portion of the student population is international and affected by this risk. This could lead to changes in resources, faculty, or course offerings that indirectly affect their educational experience.

-Mature full-time students: Similarly to part-time mature students, if they are domestic, they won't face direct implications. Yet, they might feel the broader institutional effects more acutely, given their greater immersion in the School environment. The absence or decrease of international perspectives in the classroom can affect the richness of class discussions and collaborative projects. Also, any financial repercussions the School faces might lead to changes in tuition, availability of resources, or other aspects of their education.

-International students: The impact on international students is direct and profound. The loss of a Tier 4 Licence means that the School can no longer sponsor new international students or extend the visas of current ones. This could lead to an abrupt halt in their studies, forcing them to transfer to another institution, return to their home countries, or face potential immigration violations. The financial, academic, and emotional toll can be significant. Not only do they face the uncertainty of their academic futures, but they also have to navigate the complexities of visa regulations, potential loss of tuition and housing costs, and the emotional distress of an unexpected disruption in their academic journey. The reputational damage to the School can also make their qualifications less recognised or valued in the job market, both in the UK and in their home countries.

Executive Committee

1.7. The Risk of Loss of Key Staff

The risk of disruption or incapacitation due to loss of key staff is very low. Our operations run on the School AGS system as we have outlined in the business plan. This system ensures that all actions and decisions are systematic with a clear audit trail. It also ensures smooth handover processes. No particular staff member of the School is currently irreplaceable, and we intend to continue to ensure that there is no single member of staff whose departure would cause significant disruption to School operations.

Mitigation: More than one person will be competent and responsible for each key area of responsibility. While we will make all reasonable efforts to keep all key personnel, in the case of unwanted loss of key staff, other members will be able to cover their responsibilities. Substantial use of the AGS system for key systems and processes also helps with consistency and handover in case of staff turnover.

Impact on students:

-Mature part-time students: Loss of key staff can lead to potential disruptions in the delivery of specific modules or even the overall direction of their courses. Given their limited engagement hours, even minor disruptions can disproportionately affect their learning journey. The departure of faculty with whom they've established a rapport can also affect their motivation and engagement levels. However, since their interactions with the School are comparatively fewer, the overall impact might be relatively contained.

-Mature full-time students: These students, being more deeply immersed in the School environment, might feel the effects more profoundly. The loss of a faculty member who has been integral to their course can disrupt their academic momentum, especially if they've established mentoring relationships or were engaged in specific projects with the faculty member. Additionally, changes in administrative or leadership positions can bring shifts in academic priorities or policies, which could indirectly impact their experience.

-International students: Beyond the academic implications, international students might also face administrative challenges with the loss of key staff, especially those involved in international student services or visa-related matters. Building trust and understanding with staff members who are attuned to their unique challenges is essential for these students. A sudden departure can bring feelings of instability or uncertainty, especially if they're in the midst of addressing visa, accommodation, or other critical issues. They rely on consistent and knowledgeable guidance, and the loss of familiar faces can be unsettling.

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

Responsible	Title

Object

This section outlines the student protection measures that we will put in place to protect the continuation of your studies at the School in response to a risk being triggered.

Executive Committee

● We consider all of these risks unlikely to crystallise. Nevertheless, as a responsible provider of Higher Education, we have implemented measures to mitigate them.

● In particular, we have ensured substantial and adequate credit facilities and a legally binding obligation of financial support from our sponsor, Geeks Ltd.

● This obligation is an unqualified undertaking enforceable by court action (by either the School or the OfS, independently or jointly) to meet the financial obligations of the School as they fall due, or to put the School in funds so that it may itself meet those obligations, if unable to do so.

● This financial obligation will extend throughout the entirety of the initial grant of Degree Awarding Powers. If the OfS deems it necessary, we will continue to periodically renew this obligation upon renewal of our Degree Awarding Powers until the School has a financial position adequate to assure the protection of all students in its own right. We will make any changes the OfS deems necessary to ensure this binding obligation to the satisfaction of the OfS throughout the relevant grant of Degree Awarding Powers.

In the areas where we consider the risk to be increased, we will put in place the following measures to preserve study continuation for our students.

Measures to Preserve Study Continuation for Our Students

2.1. The agreement between the School and the financial sponsor, Geeks Ltd, obliges the sponsor to refund and compensate the students in the event that the School ceases to operate. This obligation will extend throughout the initial grant of Degree Awarding Powers (to be renewed, as necessary, upon re-application). It is enforceable by the School directly or by the OfS, as required to ensure complete student protection.

2.2. All operations, content and education provided by the School are delivered through an accessible digital system, making remote operations feasible and accessible in the event of a disruption.

2.3. The School has strong quality assurance processes, procedures and technology in place, which collectively ensure adherence to the **Association of Schools Code of Good Governance**. The governance arrangements ensure quality assurance oversight and strong analytics capabilities for real-time oversight by the School's Board of Governors, senior academic authority, and (as necessary) regulatory authorities.

2.4. The School will ensure access to multiple potential lecturers and module leaders for each module in the curriculum, ensuring the School's capability to deliver the programmes without interruption.

2.5. The Quality and Compliance Team will take a self-critical approach to UKVI compliance with detailed scrutiny and proactive mock audits to minimise risks in this regard.

2.6. We will train more than one person for each key area of responsibility. While we will make all reasonable efforts to keep our key personnel, multiple members of staff will be able to cover all responsibilities, facilitated by the AGS system.

3. Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your students and to provide compensation

Responsible	Title
Executive Committee	**Object** This section sets out our policy on refunding tuition fees and other relevant costs.

3.1 Refund and Compensation

<table>
<tr><td>Executive Committee</td><td>

- The School is committed to ensuring that if it makes any changes to the portfolio of courses it delivers it will ensure that arrangements are in place to teach our students progressing normally through those courses. The School does not foresee at this time the likelihood of any circumstances where this would not be the case.
- As part of our Admission/Enrolment process, students will see and confirm an understanding of our Tuition Fees Policy as well as the Refunds and Compensation Policy.
- All the relevant stakeholders will be aware of the implications of the mentioned policies and their changes to ensure student protection.
- If there is any unforeseen circumstance leading to the School not being able to preserve the continuation of study, then the School would consider such a case on its individual merits and look to offer ways of mitigating the situation through, for example, the alternative provision within the School or provision at another provider.
- Where such mitigation caused any additional cost for students in terms of travel, fees, additional years of study or any other demonstrable additional expenses, then the School would ensure such additional expenses did not result in loss to students.
- In cases in which a refund of the fee to students is required (almost in cases where there is no alternative mitigating way), the fee will be refunded based on the School's Refunds and Compensation Policy.

</td></tr>
</table>

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

Responsible	Title
Executive Committee	**Object** This section sets out how we will let our students know about our student protection plan
Executive Committee	**4.1 Communicating the plan to our students** • We link to our Student Contracts section of our website, where our Student Protection Plan will be published, from all of our course pages. • We will publish the link to the plan on the website and AGS for current and future students. • We will send our Student Protection Plan to the course leaders of all programmes. We will also include our Student Protection Plan in the documentation that we provide to staff proposing new courses and amendments to courses.
Executive Committee	**4.2. Student consultation on the plan** • The Student Protection Plan will be reviewed by the Board of Governors which (after Approval by the OfS and reaching 500 enrolled students) will include student representatives. • We will engage student representatives in any changes or further development/expansion of our consumer protection arrangements.
Executive Committee	**4.3. Notifying our students if the plan is triggered** • In the event that we need to implement our student protection plan, we will write to affected students within 10 working days of becoming aware of this need. • This communication will normally be to initiate discussion on the best possible outcome for students on an individual basis. • In the unlikely event of our being unable to preserve the continuity of study for a whole cohort, the communication will set out our proposed approach for agreeing on a solution, normally in conjunction with our student representatives. • In the event that we need to make material changes to any course, we will write to students within 10 working days of the decision to make material changes. • Except in the most exceptional circumstances, such changes will have already been discussed through our normal mechanisms for liaison with students at the course and departmental levels.

Executive Committee

4.4. Policy in the event of mid-degree closure

At our School, we prioritise the education and success of our students and understand the concerns that may arise in the unlikely event of mid-degree closure. We consider the likelihood of mid-degree closure to be very low due to our significant resource commitments, non-reliance on public funds, and measured student recruitment numbers.

However, To address these concerns, we have established a policy of "teach-out," which involves the provision of ongoing academic instruction and support to students to ensure that they successfully complete their degree program, achieve their academic goals, and receive their intended award.

In the event that our School is entirely unable to continue providing education to enrolled students due to unforeseeable circumstances, such as financial challenges, unforeseen natural disasters, or if mandated by the Office For Students or another authority, we will activate our transfer plan. This plan entails collaborating with relevant stakeholders, including other institutions and regulatory bodies, to facilitate the transfer of affected students to other institutions where they can continue and complete their studies.

We understand that the prospect of transferring to another institution mid-degree can be unsettling for students. Therefore, if such an unlikely situation were to transpire, we would work closely with our students to ensure that the transfer process is as smooth and seamless as possible. This includes providing guidance and support throughout the transfer process, including assistance with course equivalencies and credit transfers, to ensure that students can easily transition to another institution with minimal loss of academic progress or completed credits.

In the event that a student chooses not to transfer to another institution or cannot do so due to extenuating circumstances, we have established a Refunds and Compensation Policy as set out in Sections 1.1 and 3 above. This policy ensures that students can obtain a refund for tuition and fees paid for the remaining portion of their degree program.

At our School, we are committed to ensuring the success of all our students, even in the unlikely event of mid-degree closure. We believe that our robust "teach-out" plan, combined with our commitment to supporting students through the transfer process or providing refunds, provides students with the necessary assurance and protection to pursue their academic goals with confidence.

Metrics and KPIs

The following metrics will be measured and regularly reviewed as key performance indicators for the School to ensure the effectiveness of this policy and associated operations.

Title

Alternative Provision Rate

The Alternative Provision Rate measures the percentage of affected students for whom the School has successfully arranged alternative study arrangements. This includes transfer to equivalent courses at the School or at other institutions.
Tracking this metric supports the School's commitment to Student protection, demonstrating its ability to minimise academic disruption and uphold the quality and continuity of education.

Communication Timeliness

Communication Timeliness metric assesses the School's adherence to promised timeframes for notifying students about the activation of the Student Protection Plan and any material changes to courses or operational status.
Timely communication is vital for maintaining student trust and ensuring that students are well-informed of their rights and options in the face of potential disruptions to their education.

Complaints and Appeals Volume

This metric tracks the volume of complaints and appeals lodged by students relating to breaches or failures within the Student Protection Plan framework. It provides insight into the satisfaction and experiences of students with the measures taken by the School.
Understanding the quantity and nature of complaints and appeals helps the School identify areas for improvement within the Student Protection Plan. It aids in maintaining transparency and showcases the School's responsiveness to student concerns.

Plan Activation Instances

Plan Activation Instances metric counts the number of times the Student Protection Plan has been activated. This includes any situation where the School has had to implement protective measures due to risks such as campus closure, loss of UKVI sponsorship, or operational discontinuation.
Monitoring this metric is crucial as it reflects the School's exposure to and management of substantial risks. It informs the School on the effectiveness of risk mitigation strategies and the robustness of operational planning.

Policy Awareness Level

Policy Awareness Level gauges the understanding of the Student Protection Plan among students. This metric considers the spread and accessibility of the policy information and how well students grasp their rights and the School's obligations under the Plan.

Promoting widespread awareness of the Student Protection Plan is critical to ensure that students are informed and can advocate for their protections. Understanding the level of awareness helps the School target its communication efforts to improve engagement and transparency.

Refund Policy Adherence

Refund Policy Adherence measures the percentage of instances where the School has adhered to its Tuition Fee and Refund Policy under the Student Protection Plan. It indicates compliance with predefined policies when refunds or compensations are warranted.

This metric is fundamental in maintaining the School's accountability and trust with students, ensuring that financial rights are respected, and consumer protection measures are effectively implemented.

Risk Mitigation Effectiveness

The Risk Mitigation Effectiveness metric evaluates how well the School's mitigation measures prevent disruptions to the delivery of IT programmes. It assesses the School's anticipation of possible risks and its proactive measures to safeguard student interests in line with the Student Protection Plan.

This metric is important as it gauges the School's strategic risk management competence. Successful risk mitigation ensures continuity of education and safeguards student rights.

Student Compensation Instances

Student Compensation Instances metric counts the occasions where the School has provided financial compensation to students due to a failure to deliver the promised services or an inability to uphold the Student Protection Plan.

This metric signifies the School's commitment to upholding student rights and reflects the effectiveness of the Student Protection Plan in compensating students when their education is adversely affected.

Student Continuity Rate

The Student Continuity Rate measures the percentage of students who are able to continue and complete their studies without interruption due to School-related issues. This includes transitions in case of operational shifts or when alternative provisions are put in place following a trigger event within the Student Protection Plan.

Tracking this metric is essential for ensuring the effectiveness of the Student Protection Plan. It is indicative of the School's ability to provide a stable learning environment and uphold its commitment to student protection and curriculum delivery.

Student Satisfaction Index

The Student Satisfaction Index is a composite indicator that measures students' overall satisfaction with the School's proactive and reactive measures under the Student Protection Plan. This includes satisfaction with communication, mitigation efforts, and resolution of issues.

This metric is a holistic measure of the School's performance in student protection and risk management, reflecting the quality of student experience in relation to the School's policies and their execution.