

## **Guidance on the Procedure for Programme Interruption and / or Closure**

### **1. Definitions**

- 1.1. Programme interruption is the temporary closure of a programme to new recruitment.
- 1.2. Programme closure is the complete withdrawal of an academic programme. Programme closure will normally be preceded by a period of zero intake following a formal interruption of student recruitment.
- 1.3. Consultation in the context of this procedure is the process of seeking and considering the views of stakeholders prior to making a final decision to start the formal procedure.

### **2. Stakeholders**

- 2.1. Programme management academic staff (Programme Director / Programme Lead, Programme Directors / Programme Leads of any other affected programmes, Director of Institute / Dean of Faculty).
- 2.2. Programme delivery staff (lecturers, senior lecturers, technicians, administrators).
- 2.3. Students (only required if current students are affected by the closure of their programme of study).
- 2.4. Representatives from a partner institution (only required if the programme is part of agreed collaborative provision. If this leads to withdrawal from the entire partnership agreement with an institution, due consideration must be given to the terms of withdrawal articulated in the contract).
- 2.5. Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and other accrediting authorities (only required if the programme has professional accreditation or recognition).
- 2.6. External examiners (the external examiner should be notified of the intention to close or interrupt a programme, and notified once the formal process has been completed).

- 2.7. Representatives from the HR Department (normally the HR Partner)
- 2.8. Representatives from the local UCU branch (details outlined in Appendix 1)
- 2.9. Representative from Recruitment and Admissions
- 2.10. Representative from Marketing
- 2.11. Head of Quality & Standards

### **3. Key Information about the Procedure**

- 3.1. The consultation period should run as soon as possible once a decision to commence the procedure has been taken, and be no later than May of the year preceding that from which the programme is to be interrupted or closed (e.g. consultation in May of a given year for a programme due to recruit from September of the following year). Proposals for interruption or closure should be considered by the Faculty Academic Development Committee (FADC) in the year prior to proposed closure or interruption, to enable an undergraduate programme to be removed from UCAS. This should then be reported to the Academic Development Committee (ADC) for recommendation to the Academic Board. Programmes should not be removed from any marketing material until they have been reported to ADC.
- 3.2. Typical reasons for programme closure are one or more of the following:
  - 3.2.1. Decline in student demand such that the programme's viability is threatened.
  - 3.2.2. Documented concerns over aspects of quality and standards such that the programme's integrity, and the student experience, are threatened.
  - 3.2.3. Loss of currency or congruence of the programme with the University's portfolio, corporate plan or forward strategy.
  - 3.2.4. External factors such as reduction of funding or student numbers; or sufficiently significant changes in the discipline nationally/internationally such that the programme no longer meets the demands of the sector, and cannot be adequately modified in order to do so.
  - 3.2.5. NB: If a programme that has completed the formal closure procedure is proposed for re- commencement, it will be subject to the full validation process for new programmes, following advice and guidance from the Quality & Standards Office.

### **4. Brief Outline of Process**

- 4.1. Any action taken to formally interrupt or close a programme of study must follow a period of consultation with relevant stakeholders at programme, faculty and institutional level.
- 4.2. The consultation process is key to the efficient coordination of a programme

closure or interruption. It is recommended that separate meetings are held for student consultation to ensure that the discussion focusses on the student experience.

4.3. All stakeholders relevant to the programme(s) under discussion must be consulted with, in line with Section 2 above. This should normally take the form of at least one face to face meeting prior to the Programme Interruption and / or Closure Form being completed and submitted to FADC. This ensures that all parties are kept informed and can contribute departmental perspectives which may impact on decisions made.

4.4. Detailed guidance on the consultation with the UCU local branch is outlined in Appendix 1.

## **5. Summary of procedure (please use the form appended to this guidance)**

5.1. The Programme Team, Director of Institute / Dean of Faculty and Pro Vice Chancellor Academic Strategy outline the basis for proposed withdrawal or interruption of the programme, in documented consultation with the stakeholders as listed in Section 2 above, and which are relevant for the programme(s) under consideration.

5.2. Analysis of staff implications. The programme team will work with the HR Partner to determine any potential implications for staff members teaching on the programme. The following information will need to be supplied to assist with this:

- details of affected staff members
- total hours currently worked by affected staff members
- breakdown of hours worked by affected staff members
- confirmation as to whether the affected staff could be re-deployed to other programmes and/or activities
- whether dismissals are proposed.

5.3. If the analysis identifies that staff members are potentially 'at risk' of redundancy, individual formal consultation will commence within a reasonable timescale, in line with good employment practice. For clarity, in the case of staff members being identified as 'at risk' this does not trigger the requirement for redundancy consultation with campus trade unions. The

exception to this is where it becomes apparent that proposals places twenty or more staff members 'at risk'. In the event that twenty or more employees are considered to be at risk of redundancy, the University will engage with campus trade unions via collective consultation. Where there are less than 20 staff at risk, the collective consultation process does not apply. Full advice will be provided by the HR Partner on this point.

- 5.4. Once the staff implications have been identified, Section 2 of the form must be fully completed and then signed and dated by the Director of Institute / Dean of Faculty and Head of HR.
- 5.5. Programme Interruption and / or Closure Form completed and submitted to FADC.
- 5.6. FADC considers the proposal including relevant appendices and recommends proceeding to the programme interruption/closure process. The outcomes of this meeting are notified to Programme Directors / Programme Leads of all programmes that combine, or share modules with, the programme proposed for closure, and to any affected students via the Programme Board.
- 5.7. NB: If closure has been proposed centrally i.e. from outside the Faculty / Institute, full consultation must take place with the Faculty / Institute and agreement reached; unresolved issues to be considered and resolved by ADC.
- 5.8. Proposal submitted to ADC.
- 5.9. The outcome of the ADC meeting is sufficient to allow recruitment to be formally halted and the programme(s) removed from UCAS and any marketing material as required.
- 5.10. The recommendation of ADC is submitted to Academic Board for formal approval and institutional sign off.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Guidance on Consultation with UCU local Branch**

In a situation where a potential programme closure or suspension is being considered, regardless of staff impact, the local UCU branch should be considered as one of the stakeholder groups. We value the contribution that our recognised unions can make to the University and appreciate that this can aid the University's decision making process.

Following engagement with the relevant programme team, the following steps would be undertaken.

1. UCU should be invited to a meeting with the relevant Faculty representatives (this could be the Faculty leadership team or Programme team depending on proposer). This invitation will be made to the local branch and two local branch members would be invited to attend. The invitation will outline the programme that is being discussed and whether interruption or closure is being considered and a short overview of the rationale for this as per section 3.2 of the guidance.
2. A standard invite template is available from HR. This should be completed by the Faculty representative within the faculty and sent to the Head of HR who will issue the invitation to the local UCU branch executive team.
3. The meeting will take place within a reasonable timeframe and not longer than 10 working days from when the invitation is sent to UCU. A member of HR may attend the meeting at the request of either party.
4. It will be noted by both sides that at this stage the formal identification of the implications for staff members teaching on the programme has yet to be fully assessed and therefore should not form part of the discussion.
5. The meeting will commence with the Faculty representative outlining their proposed course of action and the rationale for this. In the meeting UCU may ask questions or comment on the rationale, alternatives and/or consequences. The Faculty may answer some of these concerns or comments in the meeting or may take these points away for further consideration prior to making their decision on whether to proceed. UCU may wish to reflect on the rationale provided by the Faculty and should they wish to add further comment, post the meeting, they may do so in writing up to 3 working days after the meeting. For clarity while this information, and that supplied in the meeting, will be given due consideration a written response will not be given.
6. After this point the Faculty leadership team will make its decision on whether or not they wish to continue this process and will action accordingly in line with the procedure and decision making frameworks of the University.
7. If the decision is to continue with the process, the Faculty leadership team will undertake an analysis of the risk of redundancy in conjunction with HR:

- a. Should this analysis result in the outcome that no staff member is at risk of redundancy this will be noted on the Procedure form and the Procedure will continue with no requirement for formal staff consultation (albeit that discussion from an academic perspective will continue at the various committees).
- b. If the analysis identifies that a staff member is 'at risk' of redundancy, individual formal consultation will commence within a reasonable timescale, in line with good employment practice. For clarity, in the case of staff members being identified as 'at risk' this does not trigger the requirement for consultation with campus trade unions. The exception to this is where it becomes apparent that proposals places twenty or more staff members 'at risk'. In the event that twenty or more employees are considered to be at risk of redundancy, the University will engage with campus trade unions via collective consultation. Where there are less than 20 staff at risk, the collective consultation process does not apply.
- c. As per the University's current process any staff member who is identified as being at risk of redundancy is actively reminded of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague to support them. This is an entitlement that the University actively supports and advocates and is outlined in any communication to staff in such circumstances. In addition the ability to seek confidential support from our external Employee Assistance Programme is highlighted.



## Programme Interruption and / or Closure Form

Please append any relevant paperwork, such as records of discussions, consultations etc.

### Section 1: Basic Programme Details

Faculty / Institute:	Title and all awards of programme:
JACS code:	HESA cost centre:
Start date of current validation:	Proposed start date of <b>interruption</b> of recruitment or <b>closure</b> of programme:
	Interruption:
	Closure:
	Date of submission to FADC:
Current student numbers:	Name of external collaborator(s) & nature of collaboration (if the programme is a collaborative provision):
Details of any external stakeholders such as professional and statutory regulatory bodies, accrediting authorities, etc. Please include nature of relationship and any aspect of the University's links that are affected by the proposal.	

## Section 2: Human Resources Implications

Names of staff members who are affected by the programme closure or interruption proposed. Please provide details as to whether their employment will be affected: <i>[if no staff are affected, please state N/A for this section, but obtain the signatures of the Director of Institute / Dean of Faculty and Head of HR to indicate that the analysis has been undertaken]</i>
Details of hours worked by affected staff members on other programmes and/or activities:
Provide details of how staff could be re-deployed to other programmes and/or activities (and if this is not possible, explain why) :
Confirm which staff members do not work on other programmes and could not be re-deployed to other programmes and are therefore potentially at risk:
<b>For completion by HR department only</b>
Required information obtained and HR Implications discussed and agreed
Signed ..... Date .....
(Director of Institute / Dean of Faculty)
Signed ..... Date .....
(Director of Human Resources)
Date consultation commenced (if dismissals proposed) .....

## Section 3: Details of Proposed Interruption to Student Recruitment

Is interruption to student recruitment temporary or indefinite? <i>If indefinite as a precursor to programme closure please proceed to section 4</i>
Rationale for temporary interruption to student recruitment (or indefinite and <i>not</i> as a precursor to programme closure):
Anticipated date of resumption of intake:



#### Section 4: Details of Proposed Programme Closure

Rationale for programme closure:
Detail any specific arrangements for teaching-out of remaining cohorts
If collaborative, give details of closure arrangements for collaboration
What impact will closure have on the University Mission and Corporate Plan?
<b>Cross-validations from the programme:</b> <i>List all programmes and the modules adopted by them</i>
Are all cross-validated modules to be taught until the above closure date?
List any cross-validated modules that will continue to be offered after closure
<b>Honours combinations:</b> <i>List all programmes that currently combine with the programme proposed for closure</i>

#### Section 5: Authorisation Signatories

Signature of Director of Institute / Dean of Faculty:
Date:
Signature of Lead or Senior Representative of Collaborative Partner: <i>Confirmation from collaborative party can be attached as email printout</i>
Date:

## Section 6: Signatories for Notification

Signature of Programme Director / Programme Lead :

Date:

Signature of External Examiner:

*Confirmation from external examiner can be attached as email printout*

Date: