



Course Changes and Closures Policy

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1. Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out the framework through which Watney College manages significant course changes and course closures in a manner that safeguards students' academic interests, maintains academic standards, and ensures compliance with the regulatory requirements of the Office for Students. The policy incorporates student protection measures and should be read as the College's formal mechanism for protecting continuity of study in the event of material change.

2. Principles

2.1 Watney College is committed to safeguarding students from unfair disadvantage arising from institutional decisions that may affect their programme of study. In considering course changes or closure, the College will act in a transparent, proportionate and timely manner. Academic standards will be upheld at all times, and the academic interests and welfare of enrolled students will take precedence over strategic or commercial considerations.

2.2 The College will avoid closing a course with enrolled students wherever reasonably practicable.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all validated, accredited or internally approved higher education programmes delivered by the College and covers decisions made before and after student enrolment.

4. Categories of Course Change

Course changes are classified as either minor or major.

4.1 Minor changes are those which do not materially affect the learning outcomes, mode of delivery, award, or overall student experience. Such changes may include updates to reading materials, minor assessment refinements, or timetable adjustments. Minor changes are approved through normal academic governance processes.

4.2 Major changes are those which may materially affect students. These include significant amendments to learning outcomes, changes to assessment strategy, change of awarding or validating body, substantial changes to mode of delivery, relocation of delivery site, or structural curriculum redesign. Major changes require formal approval by the Academic Board and must be reported to the Board of Governors.

5. Course Closure

5.1 Course closure may arise due to low recruitment, financial sustainability concerns, termination or non-renewal of validation arrangements, regulatory intervention, quality concerns, or strategic realignment.

5.2 A formal impact assessment must be conducted prior to any closure decision. The assessment will consider academic standards, financial sustainability, student numbers, equality implications, reputational risk and regulatory compliance.

5.3 Closure of a course with enrolled students requires approval by the Board of Governors.

6. Student Protection Measures

- 6.1** Where a major course change or closure is approved, the College will implement appropriate student protection measures.
- 6.2** Where reasonably practicable, the College will implement a structured teach-out arrangement to enable enrolled students to complete their programme within the originally agreed timeframe. Teach-out arrangements will ensure continued access to teaching, supervision, assessment and learning resources sufficient to maintain academic standards.
- 6.3** If teach-out is not feasible due to exceptional circumstances, the College will offer students the opportunity to transfer to a suitable alternative programme within the College. Where no appropriate internal alternative exists, the College will seek to facilitate transfer to a comparable programme at another higher education provider.
- 6.4** Students will receive individual academic guidance to support informed decision-making. Academic records and transcripts will be issued promptly where transfer is required.
- 6.5** Students will not be required to incur additional tuition fee costs as a direct consequence of a course closure or major change arising from institutional decisions. Where unavoidable additional costs arise directly from such changes, the College will consider appropriate mitigation measures.

7. Validation Changes

- 7.1** In the event of termination or non-renewal of a validation agreement, the College will seek alternative validation arrangements to enable enrolled students to complete their qualification. If this cannot be secured within a reasonable timeframe, the student protection measures set out above, including teach-out or transfer arrangements, will apply.

8. Communication and Consultation

- 8.1** The College will communicate promptly and transparently with affected students. Written notification will explain the nature of the change or closure, the reasons for the decision, available options, timelines, and support mechanisms.
- 8.2** Where appropriate, students will be given the opportunity to raise concerns and seek clarification before final arrangements are implemented.

9. Governance and Oversight

- 9.1** The Academic Board is responsible for overseeing academic aspects of course changes and ensuring academic standards are maintained. The Board of Governors retains ultimate oversight and approval authority for major changes and course closure decisions.
- 9.2** All decisions taken under this policy will be formally documented, including impact assessments, approval records and implementation plans.

10. Monitoring

- 10.1** Where teach-out arrangements are implemented, the Academic Board will monitor student progression, retention and achievement to ensure that academic standards and student experience remain appropriate throughout the closure period.

11. Publication and Review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Director to ensure alignment with regulatory expectations and institutional development. The policy will be published and made accessible to students and staff.

11.2 Watney College affirms its commitment to managing course changes and closures responsibly, ensuring fairness, transparency and protection of students' academic interests at all times.

11.3 This policy aligned with the Student Protection Plan

“End of Policy”