

William Booth College: Student Protection Plan 2019-20

Provider's name: The Salvation Army t/a William Booth College

Provider's UKPRN: 10021256

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1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, how those risks may differ based on our students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

William Booth College is the sole UK provider of initial training for Salvation Army Officers (Ministers of Religion). The Salvation Army is therefore committed to maintaining operations and to providing the necessary resources that are required to support student learning. The risk of the organisation ceasing operations is therefore negligible.

The college campus underwent significant refurbishment from 2009-2011, representing a significant investment in the future. The Salvation Army has received planning permission to relocate its national administrative headquarters to an unused section of the campus, which further demonstrates an ongoing commitment to operations at the Champion Park site. In the event that the campus site became unusable, operations could be relocated to other Salvation Army sites. The risk relating to property loss is therefore considered to be minimal.

Teaching staff are drawn from officers currently serving in The Salvation Army, with appropriate qualifications; ministry experience is valued as highly as specialist knowledge. The risk that we are no longer able to deliver the specialised programmes required is considered to be minimal due to current staffing levels and readily available sources to replace outgoing staff.

All modules are currently taught by integrated teams of academic staff. The risk of disruption to delivery caused by staff absence is therefore minimal.

The vast majority of each cohort consists of mature students, with many possessing equivalent level qualifications; a significant proportion of students are therefore already ineligible for student support. Tuition fees are waived for all students, resulting in applications for maintenance support only. Bursary support is currently available from The Salvation Army to assist with maintenance costs for students without recourse to other funds. The risk to student continuance due to loss of access to student support funding (e.g. due to loss of designation/registration) is therefore considered to be minimal.

Students apply primarily to undertake training as Salvation Army Officers, rather than making direct application to a higher education course. In the event that HE designation or validated status was withdrawn, the programme would endure as a non-HE course that would continue to prepare students for employment as Salvation Army Officers. The risk of cessation due to loss of HE status is therefore considered to be minimal.

William Booth College has recently obtained approval as a Tier 4 Sponsor, currently offering a single international student (drawn from The Salvation Army internationally) the opportunity to train as a Salvation Army Officer in the UK. Suspension or removal of the Tier 4 licence would require that student to return home. The complex nature of recording/reporting in connection with Tier 4 obligations represents a moderate level of risk, but the decision to initially grant a single CAS is intended to reduce the risk level to low.

2. The measures that are in place to mitigate those risks that we consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

Changes to programme content or regulatory frameworks

William Booth College is committed to quality enhancement and to regularly review programme content and policies. Changes to regulatory frameworks may also be made as required by our validating partners.

Programme changes impacting upon areas such as content or assessment activities follow clearly established procedures, included proposal via the academic board, which includes student representatives. Proposals need to be founded on a clear rationale and to have considered the impact upon students with diverse needs. Such changes will only come into force at the beginning of a new academic year.

Changes to academic regulations initiated by our validating partner also come into force at the beginning of a new academic year. Where continuing students would be disadvantaged by amended regulations, those in force at their initial enrolment continue to be valid.

3. Information about the policy we have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to our students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that we are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

The Salvation Army does not charge tuition fees for courses delivered by William Booth College, and as previously indicated it would require a catastrophic failure for the organisation to withdraw from delivery of the current programme.

In the extremely unlikely scenario that The Salvation Army was no longer able to preserve continuation of study at William Booth College then commitments to student bursaries would be kept and appropriate relocation costs would be addressed. Financial reserves of The Salvation Army would be sufficient to meet the necessary costs.

4. Information about how we will communicate with students about our student protection plan

We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students by including it within appropriate documentation provided and making it accessible via the intranet.

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose course changes by including reference to the plan within established procedural frameworks.

We will review our student protection plan annually via appropriate committee procedures that include student representatives.

We will inform our students if there are to be material changes to their course at least one month in advance of the commencement of a new academic year.

If we need to implement measures in our student protection plan we will utilise our existing strong pastoral structures to support students collectively and individually, including signposting to external sources of support or complaints procedures.