
THE OXFORD CENTRE FOR RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE

C3 STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN

1. Purpose

This Student Protection Plan explains how OCRPL seeks to protect students if an event creates a material risk to the continuation, delivery or completion of their studies. The Plan identifies the principal risks, the measures OCRPL may use, how students will be informed and supported, and how responsibilities are coordinated with partner and awarding institutions.

2. Scope

The Plan applies, so far as OCRPL is responsible, to:

- a. current students enrolled on OCRPL-delivered or OCRPL-supported programmes;
- b. applicants and offer-holders where a material change affects advertised or contracted provision;
- c. certificate, diploma, bachelor's, master's and doctoral-level provision delivered online or virtually by OCRPL;
- d. programmes delivered collaboratively with partner or awarding universities; and
- e. student-facing services, academic support and digital systems where their loss could materially affect continuation of study.

Where a partner or awarding university has responsibility for registration, assessment, progression, award, academic appeals, records or continuity, those responsibilities remain with that institution under the applicable agreement and regulations.

3. Student protection principles

- a. Continuity first: where reasonably possible, OCRPL will seek to preserve students' ability to continue and complete their studies.
- b. No unsupported guarantees: OCRPL will not guarantee teach-out, transfer, advanced standing, partner continuation or supervision where delivery depends on another organisation or on circumstances outside OCRPL's control.
- c. Early and clear communication: affected students will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable when a material risk becomes sufficiently clear.
- d. Individual support: OCRPL will consider academic stage, disability or support needs, location, digital access, financial consequences, research supervision and other relevant circumstances.
- e. Fair remedies: where continuation cannot reasonably be secured, OCRPL will consider appropriate withdrawal, transfer, refund, compensation or other remedies under applicable terms and policies.
- f. Evidence and accountability: material decisions and actions will be documented and reviewed.

4. Governance and responsibility

The Trustees have ultimate oversight of student-protection arrangements. Operational responsibility may be delegated to a Responsible Officer, Programme Heads, Finance, Student Administration, IT or other appropriate functions.

- a. The Responsible Officer coordinates assessment and response to a material student-protection event.

- b. Programme Heads assess academic impact, continuation options and partner dependencies.
- c. Finance assesses refund, compensation and funding implications.
- d. Student Administration supports student communication, records and case coordination.
- e. IT/Operations supports continuity of online systems, records and communications.
- f. Material events, significant financial exposure or major partner disruption are escalated to the Trustees or authorised governance body.

5. Main student-protection risks

OCRPL periodically considers risks that could materially affect continuation of study, including:

- a. closure or suspension of OCRPL or a particular programme;
- b. termination, suspension or material change of a university partnership, validation, accreditation or delivery arrangement;
- c. loss of key academic staff, supervisors or specialist capacity;
- d. major financial, contractual, legal or operational disruption;
- e. failure or prolonged unavailability of the LMS, digital learning systems, communications or academic records;
- f. cyber incident, data loss or failure of a critical technology or service provider;
- g. major incident affecting staff, systems or premises used to support virtual delivery; and
- h. a material programme change that significantly affects what students were told or contracted to receive.

6. When the Plan may be activated

The Plan may be activated when OCRPL identifies a material event or credible risk that could significantly affect students' ability to continue or complete their studies as originally arranged.

Activation will be proportionate to the event. OCRPL may activate individual measures without declaring a full institutional emergency where a programme, cohort, supervisor, partner or system is affected.

7. Measures to protect continuation of study

Depending on the circumstances, OCRPL may consider one or more of the following:

- a. continuing delivery or supervision under existing arrangements;
- b. teach-out of an affected programme where academically, financially and operationally viable;
- c. temporary or alternative online delivery arrangements;
- d. replacement supervisors or teaching staff, subject to appropriate qualifications and approvals;
- e. working with a partner or another suitable provider to explore continuation or transfer options;
- f. recognition or transfer of completed study where the receiving institution agrees and its regulations permit;
- g. continued or alternative access to essential learning resources and digital systems;
- h. preservation and access to available academic records and evidence of achievement;
- i. refunds, compensation or other financial remedies under C6 and the applicable student terms; and

- j. individual academic, practical and administrative support.

8. University partnerships and awarding responsibility

Partnerships are central to OCRPL's model. Student-protection responsibility must therefore be determined programme by programme rather than assumed.

OCRPL will seek to ensure that current agreements and programme information identify, where applicable, responsibility for student registration, award, teaching, supervision, assessment, progression, academic records, complaints, academic appeals, fees, refunds, termination and continuity.

OCRPL will not state that a partner will continue registration, supervision, validation, transfer or advanced standing unless that position is supported by the applicable agreement or confirmed by the partner.

9. Programme closure and material change

OCRPL will seek to avoid closing or materially changing an advertised or active programme without considering the effect on students and applicants.

- a. identify the students, applicants and offer-holders affected;
- b. assess academic, contractual, financial and partner implications;
- c. consider teach-out and less detrimental alternatives;
- d. consult affected students where appropriate and practicable;
- e. give meaningful notice where OCRPL controls the timing of the change;
- f. provide clear information about available options; and
- g. offer applicable withdrawal, transfer, refund or compensation arrangements under the relevant terms and policies.

10. Research students and supervision

For research programmes, OCRPL will seek to maintain contingency arrangements for loss or prolonged unavailability of a supervisor. Any minimum supervision model, partner involvement or replacement arrangement will be determined by the relevant programme and partner requirements rather than assumed to apply universally.

11. Online learning, systems and academic records

Because OCRPL operates primarily through virtual and online delivery, continuity of digital learning systems and academic records is a significant student-protection consideration.

- a. backup and restoration arrangements for essential academic and student records;
- b. alternative communication routes where normal systems are unavailable;
- c. continuity and export arrangements for LMS or key third-party systems where practicable;
- d. appropriate information-security and incident-response arrangements;
- e. periodic testing or review of critical continuity controls; and
- f. arrangements to preserve evidence of study or achievement where OCRPL holds relevant records.

12. Refunds, compensation and financial capacity

Refund and compensation entitlements are governed by the applicable Student Terms and Conditions, C6 Refund and Compensation Policy, partner arrangements and applicable law. This Plan does not create a separate restrictive claim deadline.

OCRPL will periodically consider the financial resources reasonably required for student-protection measures. OCRPL will not make an absolute public statement that it has sufficient reserves to meet every possible student-protection liability unless that statement is supported by current evidence.

13. Equality, accessibility and individual needs

OCRPL will consider the individual circumstances of affected students when designing and implementing student-protection measures. This may include disability and reasonable adjustments, protected characteristics, caring or employment responsibilities, geographic location, digital access, financial impact, research stage, sponsorship or bursary status and other relevant needs.

14. Communication and student involvement

OCRPL will communicate material student-protection events clearly and as early as reasonably practicable. Where OCRPL controls the timing of a planned material change, it will seek to provide appropriate advance notice and consultation.

- a. communications should explain what has happened, the likely effect, available options, key dates and support contacts;
- b. updates should continue while significant uncertainty remains;
- c. students should be given a reasonable opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns;
- d. student feedback should inform periodic review of the Plan and, where practicable, the implementation of measures that directly affect them.

15. Complaints and external routes

A student who is dissatisfied with OCRPL's handling of a student-protection matter may use the current OCRPL Student Complaints Procedure where the matter falls within OCRPL's responsibility.

Where a matter belongs to a partner or awarding university, the student will be directed to the applicable partner route. Any independent external review or Alternative Dispute Resolution route will be stated only where it genuinely applies. OCRPL is not an OIA member.

16. Publication, review and approval

The current Trustees-approved Student Protection Plan will be published clearly on OCRPL's website and made available to students and applicants where relevant.

- a. The Plan will be reviewed periodically and sooner after a material event or change in programmes, partners, finances, systems or legal responsibilities.
- b. Review will consider whether the identified risks and protective measures remain credible and workable.
- c. Material amendments will be approved by the Trustees before publication.
- d. Superseded versions and approval records will be retained through OCRPL's records-management arrangements.

17. Related OCRPL documents and arrangements

- a. C1 Consumer Protection and Student Fairness Policy;

- b. C2 Student Complaints Procedure;
- c. C5 / current Student Terms and Conditions;
- d. C6 Refund and Compensation Policy;
- e. current Privacy Notice and approved data/records-management arrangements;
- f. business continuity, information-security and risk-management arrangements where adopted;
- g. current partner and awarding-university agreements; and
- h. Programme/Partner Responsibility Matrix or equivalent internal responsibility record.

18. Approval

This Student Protection Plan is approved by the Trustees and forms part of OCRPL's public student-protection framework.