



Norland Student Protection Plan

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Introduction of the Norland Student Protection Plan

Norland provides a single higher education degree in Early Childhood Education and Care entwined with the practical skills gained through the Norland Diploma. It operates from two separate and distinct sites in Bath. Please note that we are currently 'teaching out' the Early Years Development and Learning degree, with the last cohort completing their studies in 2024/25.

Norland was granted taught degree awarding powers from the Privy Council on 14 March 2019, enabling it to award its own degrees.

On 31 July 2019 Norland became a group company of The Norland Foundation, registered charity no. 1180292, whose objects in brief are the advancement of education and the promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit. The relationship between the two entities is governed by a comprehensive Governance Agreement and a Deed of Undertaking, whereby The Norland Foundation is legally bound to provide support and assistance to Norland in order for it to comply with this plan.

The purpose of this Student Protection Plan is to preserve the continuation and quality of study for all Norland students if ever a risk to their continued study crystallises. The plan will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that the assessed risks remain current and that any mitigating measures are practical, relevant and effective.

Norland Student Protection Principles

Our core principles to protect students are set out below:

- Norland will 'teach out' current students if we decide to leave the market or close a course
- Norland will be clear and transparent with our students regarding the risk to their course, and where we have to make decisions to enact this plan we will engage with students in those decisions, working with them to find the very best outcome
- Students in particular situations or needs will be protected, including students who have interrupted their study through mitigating circumstances, students with disabilities and students who have special needs

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.

In the following paragraphs, a number of risks and scenarios are identified. The inclusion of a particular scenario or risk should not be assumed to mean we consider it likely to occur.

This plan will be triggered if:

- We decide to discontinue our course.

Norland may make a strategic decision to close our course because insufficient enrolments render it non-viable, or it is no longer relevant and outdated.

Norland has been successfully training Early Years Practitioners for over 130 years and our raison d'être is Early Years training, and this is reflected in our 5 year strategy. In recent years it has expanded its Nanny Agency, Consultancy & Training and Research activities, but these, although complimentary, remain subservient to our core academic business. The course is kept up to date and relevant through ongoing minor or non-material improvements, and this has kept it in high demand. The development of the new Early Childhood Education and Care degree is testament to Norland's commitment to remain at the forefront of the discipline.

The risk that Norland will discontinue its delivery of early years degrees is considered low.

- We decide to cease operating altogether

As with all providers, an extreme set of events may lead to the prospect of Norland being closed or a decision taken to exit the market served by Norland. This may be triggered, for example, by Norland becoming insolvent or through falling student demand, withdrawal of degree awarding powers or other regulatory matters, a catastrophic loss of brand & reputation, or a major event rendering Norland's mission non-viable.

The Norland Foundation, as ultimate owner, will protect and support Norland for the long term, and it is legally bound through a Governance Agreement and a Deed of Undertaking to support and assist Norland in order to comply with this plan. Collectively Norland and The Norland Foundation, will ensure adequate reserves to enable Norland to 'teach out' the course and adopt a phased closure, ensuring all students are able to finish their course, should it be required.

Demand for student places remains high, as is the demand for our qualified Nannies. There are no regulatory matters that are causes for concern. Our brand and reputation remains enviable, actively protected by the Code of Professional Responsibilities that all students and Norlanders follow, trademark protection, awareness training for staff and students, access to PR professionals and over 130 years of history within the Early Years sector.

The risk of ceasing operation is considered low.

- We lose the right to provide the course and qualification

We gained degree awarding powers (DAPs) from the Privy Council on 14th March 2019 at our first attempt. This time limited power is initially granted for a six-year period. We expect to successfully gain indefinite powers, as permitted by our regulator the Office for Students. Our application for DAPs was relatively straightforward and the quality of and confidence in our academic standards and processes, as scrutinised by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), have continued. Although no absolute guarantees can ever be made, there are considered to be no reasons why we would lose these powers or not successfully gain indefinite powers.

The risk that we lose our degree awarding powers is considered low.

- De-designation for student support purposes

Since receiving designation in 2013, our renewal has been straightforward and the criteria with which small and specialist providers such as Norland have been judged, continue to be comfortably met. Registration with the Office for Students now ensures that designation for student support purposes continues. Norland has robust processes to support this ongoing compliance and it is confident of continued registration with the Office for Students and therefore access to this valuable student support.

The risk of de-designation for student support purposes is considered low.

- We decide to close a location where we deliver our course

Following the completion of a multi-million pound expansion to meet the needs of a growing student population, Norland now operates from two distinct sites in Bath, one owned on freehold and one on an affordable long lease, both situated within one mile of the city centre. Like all successful organisations Norland continuously reviews its estate to ensure its student and staff teaching facilities remain outstanding. Should its current facilities require updating, improvement or change then Norland will actively progress such plans in collaboration with students and staff, giving notice as required. Norland has identified the need for substantial renovations to its older site and is therefore investigating next steps in order to preserve the quality of teaching and learning spaces for students. Should a decision be made to dispose of the building, this plan will be invoked and the building will be replaced with suitable teaching and learning accommodation for students.

The risk of the closure of a location where we currently deliver our course is considered to be medium.

- We are permanently no longer able to deliver a material course component, or we permanently and materially change the way we deliver the course (not including temporarily teaching remotely)

Norland teaches a single degree programme with an intake of circa 100 students per year. Therefore, its entire teaching staff are all Early Years qualified and experienced, with a wide skill set, allowing teaching staff to teach various elements of the same course. The academic team is also well staffed, with strong lecturer to student ratios. These measures eliminate the vulnerability of a single key person dependency. In addition, Norland is reliant on suitable work placements to compliment classroom tuition. To date we have not had difficulties in

placing our students within these placements, as we have an effective dedicated Student Placement Team to manage and monitor the relationships, suitability and appropriateness of the placement. We also adopt formal agreements and request feedback to manage expectations, to ensure successful and productive placements.

Additionally, the majority of our degree programme is taught within a simple classroom environment, with access to our library for resources and private study. We do not teach using overly specialised methods and much of our library resources are online. Further, we do not rely on teaching any particular demographic of student, with our course taught to any student that has met our relatively non onerous admission criteria.

It follows that the risk that we are permanently no longer able to deliver a material course component, or permanently and materially change the way we deliver the course (not including temporarily teaching remotely) is considered low.

The measures that we have put in place to mitigate those risks

- We decide to discontinue our course

In such cases the Norland will:

- i) make arrangements to 'teach out' current students where we have voluntarily decided to leave the market or close a course. This means that we commit to ensuring the course of study can be completed by all currently enrolled students, even though the course is being discontinued and we will not take on new student cohorts. We will plan and maintain sufficient accessible reserves to fund this scenario.
- ii) In the unlikely event that a student cannot be 'taught out', we will make arrangements to find alternative suitable provision, enabling them to continue with their degree studies. All refund of fees will be in line with Norland's Fees, Refund and Compensation Policy. Norland, supported by The Norland Foundation, will plan and maintain sufficient accessible reserves to facilitate this.

- We decide to cease operating altogether

In such cases the following will apply:

- i) Where a decision to close is taken, Norland will work to 'teach out' or help students make arrangements to transfer to an alternative institution (as above).
- ii) In the unlikely event that a student cannot be 'taught out', we will make arrangements to find alternative suitable provision and/or arrange a refund in line with Norland's Fees, Refund and Compensation Policy (as above).

- We lose the right to provide the course and qualification

Norland is committed to ensuring students studying on its programme successfully complete their tuition with minimal student disruption. Norland is properly resourced to prioritise quality, compliance and regulatory aspects of its operations, and benefits from extensive committee oversight, scrutiny and challenge. In the unlikely event that Norland loses its degree awarding powers, Norland will seek to find a new validating partner as a matter of urgent priority. Sufficient financial reserves are maintained to cover this unlikely event.

Should a student not wish to continue their studies with the new partner, refunds will be offered in line with Norland's Fees, Refund and Compensation Policy.

- De-designation for student support purposes

If Norland's registration with the OfS is withdrawn, suspended or is not successfully renewed, and depending on the circumstances, Norland will promptly appeal the decision/make a new application for registration with a view to the restoration of this for the coming academic year.

Where appropriate, Norland will also apply for 'teach out designation', allowing eligible existing students continued access to student tuition and maintenance loans, including those making new loan applications, for the remainder of their studies while on their current course, which was designated up to that point.

In the event of 'teach out designation' not being granted, Norland will endeavour to transfer existing eligible students, in receipt of or seeking loans, to an alternative, approved and designated provider, should they so wish.

- We decide to close a location where we deliver our course

Should we decide to close one of our two locations as part of our planned accommodation strategy, we would provide at least three months' notice of this intention. We would either replace the accommodation or use our remaining location, having made all reasonable adjustments regarding layout, accessibility, staffing and resourcing.

We would promptly investigate and acquire good quality, appropriate, accessible and secure educational accommodation within 5 miles of Bath city centre to make up any necessary lost capacity. We will maintain effective relationships with potential accommodation providers to facilitate this.

This process would be carefully managed and reported on by a 'Move Team' that will include a member of the Norland Executive and student representation. The move will be carefully budgeted and properly planned, with a realistic timetable set.

We will maintain sufficient group cash balances to provide a travel contribution should it be necessary, in accordance with Norland's Fees, Refund and Compensation Policy.

- We are permanently no longer able to deliver a material course component, or we permanently and materially change the way we deliver the course (not including temporarily teaching remotely)



We rotate our staff within our curriculum, share good practices and recruit new staff with wide teaching experience. We ensure that the numbers of academic staff are sufficient to cover short- or long-term absences if necessary.

Our Student Placement Team actively monitor and assess the volume of suitable student placements held relative to our total student numbers, maintain strong relationships with each placement setting and can expand our placement footprint around Bath, with policies in place to fund student travel.

In addition, should one or more of our classrooms become unavailable, Norland will use excess capacity within its existing estate as required. It sets aside adequate financial budget to invest in and maintain our estate to a high standard, incorporating suitable maintenance plans and oversight via the Finance Committee including contingencies to address one off time pressured events. Furthermore, our investment in lecture capture facilities/online teaching and online library resource all continue, reducing our reliance on our physical estate.

To support continuation in the event of a further pandemic or outbreak, for example Covid-19, contingency plans are in place to teach remotely, with alternative timetables and methods for teaching and assessing placements, in place and ready. Additionally, schemes of work have been adapted, tested and are able to be initiated quickly should the need arise. On site, virus mitigation measures and documentation is ready as required, including social distancing, PPE, risk assessments and health and safety measures.

We will continue to properly resource and monitor student admissions and student recruitment, ensuring we remain able to successfully recruit and therefore properly fund, the teaching of all parts of our course.

For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure our course remains at the forefront of the Early Years sector, it should be recognised that Norland will review, programme and module content annually and periodically. This may result in minor changes to curriculum and content or a complete re-writing of the degree, as has happened this year. These measures update the course content and keep it current. . These in themselves do not warrant the triggering of the student protection measures. However, if you feel the course as delivered, varies significantly from what you expected, you may be able to seek recourse under consumer or contract law.

These student protection measures have been tested and we are confident that they are viable. Within them we will always take into consideration the needs of all students, including those with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

In addition, Norland gives an overarching commitment to offer all students advice and support in the event that any of the risks to the continuation of your study crystallises.

Advice and support will be offered in the first instance by a Deputy Vice Chancellor. If you are not content with the proposed outcomes, you may raise the issue through Norland's Student Complaints Policy.

If you remain dissatisfied once all internal complaints procedures are completed, you may also contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), which is designated as the operator of the Student Complaints Scheme in England and Wales under section 13 of the Higher Education Act 2004. Refer to www.oiahe.org.uk.

Additional independent advice and support is also available via the Office for Students (OfS). Refer to www.officeforstudents.org.uk

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

a) Refund policy in the event that Norland is no longer able to preserve a continuation of study

Should Norland be unable to continue to deliver your course of study, we will refund tuition fees paid for the part of the course (Norland Diploma and/or degree) which cannot be delivered in the academic year in line with Norland's Fees, Refund and Compensation Policy.

We will maintain access to group cash reserves and easily convertible assets (for example equities and investments) of at least £1.65m which would be sufficient to provide tuition fee refunds for the part of the course (Norland Diploma and/or degree) which cannot be delivered in the academic year.

b) Refund policy in the event that Norland changes the course location

Should Norland need to change the course location once the academic year has commenced (on grounds of emergency relocation, material improvement of facilities or planned closure) beyond our two sites, entitlement to a contribution towards travel costs may be available.

Contributions will be available for the excess travel cost by public transport over 5 miles, where a newly secured site is in excess of 5 miles from Bath City Centre, and will be payable for the remainder of the academic year. If the newly secured site is within 5 miles from Bath City Centre no contributions will be due, in line with Norland's Fees, Refund and Compensation Policy.

We will maintain group cash balances of least £100k which will be sufficient to provide a travel contribution should it be necessary.

Information about how we will communicate with students about our Student Protection Plan

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our Student Protection Plan when they propose course changes by:

- Introducing the plan at staff and lecturers' meetings
- Including the plan on the Norland staff intranet

- Reviewing the plan with staff that have responsibility for proposing changes to our course, and confirming understanding

We will publicise our Student Protection Plan to current and future students by:

- Including the plan on our website
- Including reference to it at student induction/welcome week
- It will be included within the student handbook
- It will be included on our student intranet

To ensure the views, interests and needs of our students are taken into account, we will work in collaboration with our current students in the development of our Student Protection Plan by reviewing the plan at Academic Board (which includes active and effective student representation).

We will arrange to communicate with affected students should our Student Protection Plan need to be implemented:

- By providing at least 3 months' notice prior to the intended dates of closure, material course change or site change/closure.
- in a constructive and consultative manner.
- through open conversations with our full student body and Set representatives, and confirmed by email with all students.

Arrangements regarding students who have Student visas with Norland as their sponsor will be made in accordance with the current Home Office Student sponsor guidance.

Document Control Information	
Policy title:	Student Protection Plan
Summary description:	The purpose of this Student Protection Plan is to preserve the continuation and quality of study for all Norland students if ever a risk to their continued study crystallises. The plan will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that the assessed risks remain current and that any mitigating measures are practical, relevant and effective.
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