

**BIMM
UNIVERSITY**

A university
for the creative
industries

Course and Campus Closure Policy and Procedure



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the University's procedures for closing or suspending further education and higher education undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses, as well as the closure of BIMM University Campuses or those of its academic partners.
- 1.2 The main principles underpinning this Policy are:
- The continuity and quality of the educational experience to course completion for students on teach-out of BIMM University awards is maintained.
 - Students are given the opportunity to discuss all available options individually so they can make fully informed choices.
 - Students will be encouraged not to intermit during teach-out, but where they do, they will be offered a transfer to another campus.
 - Students who have not met the requirements for an award after their final year (after resit opportunities and where module-level compensation or condonement is unavailable) will be offered resits without attendance, with the marks ratified by an extraordinary meeting of the assessment board.
 - Confirmation of the associated applicant numbers and continuing student experience (current students and applicants) will be considered, alongside the timeliness of the request. This provision recognises that applicants will have made decisions based on the existing published information. Therefore, the risks associated with a change must be carefully considered.
- 1.3 The proposal to close or suspend a course or to close a campus may be due to a number of reasons, for example:
- Poor student recruitment, making the course financially unviable, which would result in a poor experience for students.
 - Key staff leaving the University (for example on a highly specialised course).
 - Changing requirements within the subject discipline or target industry leading to the introduction of a new replacement course.
 - Change in strategic priorities.
 - Poor course performance in terms of the student experience, academic achievement and student continuation and achievement.
 - Closure (termination of Memorandum of Agreement, termination for another reason) of a collaborative provision arrangement that also results in the closure of a course.
 - Significant quality assurance risks or actions by the regulator or a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory professional body.
 - As a result of an academic portfolio review.
- 1.4 The criteria will be applied on a case-by-case basis and therefore may vary.
- 1.5 The procedure below shows the full process for those courses that have students registered and/or applicants and therefore must engage with governance points.

2 Definitions

2.1 **Closure:** A course is closed when it ceases to be one for which a student may apply. For the purposes of this policy, “course” may mean the course in its entirety.

A campus is closed when it ceases to be one which a student may apply to study at.

2.2 **Suspension:** A course is suspended when a decision is taken not to recruit to the course or to deliver the course for a defined period.

3 Scope of the Policy

3.1 The policy is applicable to:

- **on-campus provision** - i.e., courses which are delivered and supported entirely by BIMM University staff, and which lead to an award of BIMM University.
- **offsite delivery** - i.e., courses which are delivered and supported entirely by BIMM University staff irrespective of the location of delivery and which lead to an award of the BIMM University. Where the course also exists in an on-campus delivery mode and only one of the versions is closing, this should nonetheless be put through the course closure process in order to safeguard the experience of students on that particular iteration of the course.
- **courses delivered under a collaborative partnership arrangement** - i.e. Where, for a course delivered under a collaborative partnership arrangement, the intention is also to close the partnership, the procedures of the partner should also be followed.

3.2 This policy also applies to the closure of specialisations (pathways / disciplines).

3.3 Modifications of minor and major modules and courses (e.g., change of titles) are dealt with under our [Course Approval and Modification Procedures](#) however due consideration should still be given to the reference points in section 4 below.

4 Internal and External Reference Points

4.1 The policy is aligned with the following reference points:

- [Office for Students – Student Protection](#)
- [Competition and Markets Authority Consumer Protection Law](#)
- [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)

4.2.1 The following internal documents are also referred to in this Policy:

- [Student Protection Plan](#)
- [Higher Education Course Transfer Policy](#)
- [Higher Education Campus Transfer Policy](#)

5 Course Closure Procedure

5.1 The approval route for the closure or suspension of courses and the approval body varies depending on a number of criteria.

5.2 If a course has students registered on it and / or offers have been accepted:

- the case for closure will be considered by the Commercial and Academic Planning Committee (CAPC) which undertakes a rigorous scrutiny of the decision.
- CAPC makes a recommendation to Academic Board to consider the closure.
- Academic Board makes the final recommendation to BIMM University Limited Board (BULB).
- BULB can make the decision to close the course.

5.2 If the course does not have any registered students or any about to enrol on the course, the case for closure can be submitted for approval by Academic Board (on recommendation from CAPC) and reported to BULB.

5.3 If a new course does not recruit enough students for a viable cohort, then CAPC can approve a proposal to pause recruitment,

6 Timing

6.1 A course should not normally be closed or suspended once there are confirmed offer holders unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example, recruitment does not meet the minimal viable student numbers or there is no longer appropriate staffing in place to support the course). In such cases, the relevant Pro-Vice Chancellor Student Experience must consult the Director of Admissions and refer to the statements made in the Student Protection Plan before any steps are taken to close or suspend the course.

7 Student Protection Plan

7.1 The Student Protection Plan sets out what students can expect to happen should a course or campus close. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that students can continue and complete their studies or can be compensated if this is not possible.

7.2 The University's decision to close a course must take full account of the needs of existing students, applicants to the course and offer holders, including deferred applicants and deferred offer holders and, as far as possible, should aim to support these students through to the completion of their intended study or put in place appropriate arrangements. These arrangements should ensure that the course continues to address the requirements of any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body or other body which accredits the course.

7.3 Existing students on a course will normally, except under extreme circumstances, be able to continue the taught-out version of the course at their chosen campus. However, where this is not possible (for example where low student numbers would make continuation of the course unviable, significantly impacting the student experience).

7.4 For more advice, please see the Student Protection Plan which is available on our website.

7.5 A course which has registered students, and/or applications from students must be presented to Academic Board for recommendation to BULB, after the consultation and evidence has been considered by CAPC. No course in this position can be closed without the approval of BULB.

8 Implications for Staff

- 8.1 The Human Resource impacts of a course closure are the responsibility of the affected Campus(es) to take forward directly with the People team in line with normal management-led HR processes.

9 Authority to recommend closure or suspension of a course.

- 9.1 The relevant Executive Director (or relevant Subject Lead) has authority to recommend closure or suspension of a course.

10 Stage 1: Rationale

- a. This stage of the process collects the information necessary for Academic Board to endorse and for BULB to approve the proposal to close or suspend a Course.
 - b. The relevant Executive Director (normally the Executive Principal) will usually be nominated to complete this stage of the process.
 - c. This stage requires consultation with colleagues outside of the course.
 - d. The external examiner(s) should also be invited to comment on the proposal to close or suspend a course.
- 10.1 The Business Case for closing or suspending a course should be prepared by the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor: Business Development and contain the following details (not exhaustive):
- Information about the number of students registered on the course.
 - Information about the number of applicants, offer holders or deferred offer holders who would be affected by the proposal.
 - Rationale for suspending or closing the course.
 - Evidence / information that consultation has taken place with affected course teams / campuses and, where appropriate, students.
- 10.2 For collaborative partnership arrangements, the Provost should take care to take advice on the termination clauses in the Partnership Agreement before communicating with the partner institution, students, and other stakeholders. This is to ensure that the course closure is conducted in accordance with the partnership agreement and to identify whether the agreement will need to be renegotiated, varied or terminated.
- 10.3 The Pro Vice-Chancellor: Business Development will submit the Business case to CAPC for consideration.

11 Stage 2: Approval

- 11.1 CAPC will consider the closure / suspension form and make one of the following recommendations.
- a) endorse the closure or suspension of the course.
 - b) request further information before coming to a decision as to whether to endorse the closure or suspension of the course.
 - c) reject the closure or suspension the course.

- 11.2 The recommendation of CAPC will be submitted (via the CAPC Servicing Officer) to Academic Board for consideration.
- 11.3 Academic Board will receive the recommendation from CAPC and make one of the following decisions:
- recommend the closure or suspension of the course to BULB.
 - request further information before coming to a decision as to whether to recommend the closure or suspension of the course.
 - Reject the closure or suspension of the course.
- 11.4 The servicing Officer to CAPC will be responsible for sharing the recommendation from 11.3a to BULB. BULB will receive the recommendation from Academic Board and make one of the following decisions:
- approve the closure or suspension of the course.
 - request further information before coming to a decision as to whether to approve the closure or suspension of the course.
 - Reject the closure or suspension of the course.
- 11.5 BULB will receive the recommendation from Academic Board and make one of the following decisions:
- approve the closure or suspension of the course.
 - request further information before coming to a decision as to whether to approve the closure or suspension of the course.
 - Reject the closure or suspension of the course.
- 11.6 The closure of the course can formally commence upon approval by BULB.

12 Post-approval Actions

- 12.1 The decision to suspend or close a course will be recorded on the Academic Portfolio (retained by Academic Services) and shared with:
- Chair of Academic Board
 - Chair of the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (LTEC)
 - Campus Deans
 - Director of Recruitment and Admissions
 - Director of Marketing
 - The Executive Management Group

Communication with Stakeholders

- 12.2 Where appropriate the University may be required to inform the Office for Students (OfS) of the course closure, following the process of a Reportable Event. For course closures, this will depend on the nature of the closure and BULB will make this decision based on OfS regulatory advice.

Communication to affected students

- 12.3 Affected students will be informed by the relevant Campus Dean in person in the first instance (where this is possible) that their course is going to be closed. This will then be followed up in writing. The letter will include details of the way in which they will be supported to complete the course, in line with our Student Protection Plan. The Servicing Officer to BULB can provide letter templates.

Communication to applicants

- 12.4 The Admissions team must inform applicants must that the course will be closed or suspended and provide them with information about other courses of study available at the University. If the applicant subsequently wishes to withdraw their application this should be permitted. If the student has applied through UCAS, the Admissions Team must also advise UCAS in order to let the applicant make a substitute choice.
- 12.5 The marketing team should update webpages and promotional material to ensure that the closed course(s) are removed from the website.
- 12.6 The Quality Assurance and Regulatory Compliance team will refer to the updated Academic Portfolio to update Applicant Course Overviews (ACOs), ensuring that suspended / closed courses are removed.

University-wide communication

- 12.7 Following communication to students, the Vice Chancellor will communicate the course closure to all staff and students.
- 12.8 The minutes of BULB which will include a list of all courses presented to it under the remit of this Policy which will be made publicly available at the appropriate time.

Communication with Applicants

- 12.9 The Admissions Team should consult the UCAS Admissions Guide for specific information relating to UCAS applicants.
- 12.10 The Admissions Team should identify any applicants who will be affected by the decision and notify them. If the applicant does not reply within the timescale requested in the initial letter the Admissions Team should issue a reminder letter advising the applicant that their application will be withdrawn if no response is received within a specified timescale.
- 12.11 For taught postgraduate courses, in some specialist areas (e.g., PGCert), there may be additional procedures dictated by the relevant application scheme or Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body and the Postgraduate School should ensure that they adhere to these as well as to this Policy.

Ongoing Monitoring

- 12.12 The course should continue to be actively managed and subject to the University's Quality Assurance requirements of module / course surveys, Course Review and Enhancement (CRE) (including module review) and external examining.
- 12.13 Ongoing monitoring must ensure that the equity of experience for students on the course is maintained. If the course is due for review during the teach-out phase the subject lead can apply to LTEC with a request for an extension to the period of review to cover the teach-out phase (e.g., in cases where few students remain on the course and who are either undertaking referral or repeat arrangements).

13 Suspended Courses

- 13.1 If a course is suspended using this process and a decision is taken at a later date to close it, there is no need to repeat the process. CAPC should revisit the original form together with an updated rationale and any further consultation, making a recommendation to Academic Board.

14 Exceptional Circumstances

- 14.1 In highly exceptional circumstances, the University may decide to close a course for either all or some continuing cohorts. This decision will only be made where significant concerns over quality or viability are raised, or the course's expected duration cannot be met. In such cases, the University will ensure all efforts are made to find students alternative providers on a case-by-case basis, provide prompt communication of the decision, make support available and offer financial compensation.
- 14.2 It is recognised that unforeseen circumstances often beyond the University's control may result in significant changes to the University's ability to meet its obligations, known as "Force Majeure," e.g., a severe fire or flood. In such highly exceptional cases, the University will work with its senior managers and / or academic partners to ensure clear, timely communication of alternative arrangements to students and, where necessary, will work with other providers to seek alternative student transfers. The University will also, where possible, assist other providers facing similar issues.

15 Procedure for Closing a Campus

- 15.1 The decision to close a campus may be for several reasons, including, for example, poor recruitment. The Pro Vice-Chancellor: Student Experience and the Provost will draw on appropriate evidence to formulate a rationale for campus closure in the form of a business case. The following procedure for closure will apply:
- All campus closures are subject to consideration by CAPC.
 - CAPC will make a recommendation to Executive Management Group (EMG) to consider the closure.
 - EMG will then make a recommendation to BULB.
 - BULB will make the final decision to close a course.
- 15.2 As in section 11, at any point CAPC, EMG or BULB may decide to seek further information or reject the proposal before being recommended / approved.

- 15.3 The post-approval actions will largely follow those for a course closure (see section 13).
- 15.4 The permanent closure of a campus involves ceasing recruitment for a campus alongside the teach-out for existing student cohorts. In some cases, a campus may be closed prior to the remaining teach-out period – for example if the student numbers are small and this would lead to a poor student experience.
- 15.5 In respect of an immediate campus closure BIMM University makes the following commitments in line with our Student Protection Plan:
- The opportunity for students to transfer to another BIMM University or partner Campus delivering the same course.
 - To work with those students who do not wish to transfer to another campus to assist them in completing their studies (for example, where possible, this may be online, or via blended learning and to be considered on a case-by-case basis).
 - Or to transfer to a partner institution or another OfS-registered Higher Education Institution.
- 15.6 The procedure for communicating a campus-closure to current students as well as applicants are the same as outlined in section 12.

Communication with Stakeholders

- 15.7 The University must inform the Office for Students (OfS) of all campus closures, following the process of a Reportable Event, as soon as possible after the decision is made, and before the decision is communicated to students.