



**MORLEY COLLEGE LONDON**

**Higher Education Programme Closure and Cancellation Policy**

**POLICY OWNER: DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

**APPROVAL: POLICY COMMITTEE June 2018**

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## 1. Policy Statement

Morley College London (“the College”) is committed to providing a range of high quality courses serving the needs both of its local community and of a wide range of communities of practice. A decision to close or cancel any programme is not taken lightly, and will only be taken when all reasonable efforts have been made to avoid such an outcome.

Please note this policy only applies to Higher Education programmes that have been approved for delivery and are being marketed by the College.

The College’s Programme Closure and Cancellation Policy has been informed by the Quality Assurance Agency’s Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B8).

- 1.1 This policy sets out the expectations, key aims, principles and procedural approach in relation to closure or cancellation of a Higher Education programme by the College.
- 1.2 Programmes may be closed or cancelled for educational, practical or business reasons, e.g. where student numbers are expected to be so low that the student learning experience will be harmed, or where the College is unable to resource a programme or where a programme will not be economically viable.
- 1.3 Programme closure or cancellation includes a number of specific definitions and provisos as outlined in Section 2 - Definitions and Scope.
- 1.4 Where the College decides to close or cancel a programme, implications of the closure will have been carefully considered from a number of perspectives. Factors considered include:
  - The strategic consequences of any closure or cancellation, including potential or actual impact on other programmes
  - The impact of any closure or cancellation on students and staff
  - How the quality of the student experience will be maintained until the completion of the closure or cancellation, including a strategy for ongoing delivery and support during the phasing-out period
  - The process of consultation with, or notification of, students where the delivery of the programme will materially change, close or be cancelled
  - Progression of students who may need to repeat units

## 2. Definitions and Scope

For the purposes of this policy:

- 2.1 Programme closure is defined as:

The decision not to run a programme on a permanent basis, i.e. a specific mode of a programme from a specific start date in a specific location:

- a) After it has been advertised as available to prospective students, e.g. in the prospectus or on the website.
- b) After it has been advertised as available to existing students and whether or not the preceding level of study has been delivered.

**2.2** Programme **closure** includes circumstances where:

**2.2.1** A programme is permanently closed at the College but the College continues to deliver other programmes (which may provide an alternative programme of study for Higher Education students).

**2.2.2** A School or Programme Area of the College is closed in its current location and is relocating to an alternative site.

**2.2.3** The College is discontinuing Higher Education operations and the programmes delivered at any of its locations are being withdrawn.

**2.2.4** The College is experiencing a total closure and will not be relocating elsewhere.

**2.2.5** There are significant changes to the content and/or character of a programme planned, and such changes may lead to the revalidation of a programme or involve a fundamental change to the nature of a programme or its structure (possibly including a title change for the programme).

**2.3** Programme **cancellation** is defined as:

**2.3.1** The decision to temporarily not to run a programme, i.e. a specific mode of a programme from a specific start date in a specific location:

- a) After it has been advertised as available to prospective students, e.g. in the prospectus or on the website.
- b) After it has been advertised as available to existing students and whether or not the preceding level of study has been delivered.

**2.4** Programme cancellation does not include a decision to run a programme for either prospective or existing students from a different site in close proximity to the original location.

**2.5** Programme cancellation does not include the withdrawal, amendment or replacement of a specific unit or units within a programme, as this is classed as a minor programme amendment. In circumstances where units are withdrawn, the College will make every effort to ensure the student learning

experience is not diminished by offering alternative units or combinations of units.

### **3. Procedure**

The College has a framework for ensuring that appropriate procedures and measures are in place where a programme has to be closed or cancelled, and it is the duty of the College to ensure that, where a decision to close or cancel a programme has been made, it takes all reasonable measures to notify and protect the interests of affected students. The College has a series of protocols governing programme closure or cancellation as defined later in this section. All decisions to close or cancel programmes are taken in accordance with these protocols, which may be amended from time to time (see point 4).

- 3.1** Programme closure or cancellation protocols are student-focused, transparent and time sensitive
- 3.2** Programme closure or cancellation protocols aim to minimise the inconvenience and cost to students of programme closure or cancellations, including but not limited to the payment of fees, travel arrangements and additional support costs
- 3.3** Programme closure or cancellation protocols seek to enable and support students to source and attend suitable alternative programmes, either at the College or with a similar provider
- 3.4** Programme closure or cancellation protocols may be triggered by the following situations (this list is not exhaustive):
  - Minimum enrolment numbers are not met by a specified start date (including subsequent stages of study in an extended programme)
  - Changes by the validating body to the programme or withdrawal by the validating body
  - Circumstances outside the reasonable control of the College, such as a key member of staff leaving the College or being unable to teach
  - Unexpected lack of funding; industrial action; prolonged severe weather; loss or damage to facilities through fire, flood or other unforeseen damage; civil disorder; political unrest; government restriction or serious concern about the transmission of serious illness making a programme unsafe to deliver
- 3.5** In order to minimise the inconvenience and expense of programme closure or cancellation to students, depending on the nature of the situation, the following protocols will be initiated:
  - 3.5.1** Students will be warned that a programme is at risk of closure or cancellation as soon as is practicably possible.

- 3.5.2** In circumstances where potential closure or cancellation is linked to a failure to achieve critical student numbers, the College will endeavour to recruit sufficient numbers as far as is practicably possible.
- 3.5.3** Where it is clear the best efforts of the College are unlikely to recruit critical numbers, all students enrolled or yet to enrol on the programme will be notified of closure or cancellation not less than four weeks before scheduled commencement (subject to circumstances beyond the College's control).
- 3.5.4** The College shall provide help and advice to those enrolled on the closed or cancelled programme to find an alternative programme within the College, whether they are newly enrolled or existing students. If a programme is cancelled, the College will advise students when it will be rescheduled. Equally, if the College decides that a cancelled course will be closed before the date it is due to commence, students will be supported to find alternative programme within the College.
- 3.5.5** Should an alternative programme not be available in the College, help and advice will be provided to find an alternative programme with a local organisation.
- 3.5.6** Where a student decides to withdraw from the programme and not transfer to an alternative within the College, the College will initiate communication with the funding body for any refund of fees that may be payable.
- 3.6** In order to maintain strategic objectives and minimise any operational or financial impact on the College, depending on the nature of the situation, the following protocols will be initiated:
- 3.6.1** A proposal to close or cancel a programme should be proposed by the relevant Head of School/Centre to the Deputy Principal as early as possible in the academic year. As a member of the Senior Management Team, the Deputy Principal will consider:
- Relevant recruitment/retention information
  - The staffing of the programme and the potential impact of closure or cancellation
  - The strategic reasons for closure or cancellation, including any external factors
  - Relevant developments within the subject/curriculum area
  - The potential impact on currently enrolled students and/or students who have accepted an offer to commence studies and how any negative impact will be mitigated (including procedures set out in the HE Admissions Policy).

- 3.6.2** Once the Senior Management Team have endorsed the decision of the Deputy Principal, the decision will be communicated by the Deputy Principal to the relevant Head of School/Centre (HoS/C), the Higher Education Development Coordinator (HEDC), the Quality and Standards Manager and Head of Marketing and Communications.
- 3.6.3** Once SMT approval of a request for course closure or cancellation has been obtained, the HoS/C should formulate measures to manage the closure or cancellation of the programme in accordance with point 3.5 (above). The HoS/C should liaise with the HEDC and Quality and Standards Manager in facilitating this process as the HEDC must notify the validating body of the decision to close or cancel a programme, including proposed dates and any other relevant considerations. The HEDC should also confirm the course closure or cancellation with the relevant External Examiner.
- 3.6.5** Once SMT approval of a request for course closure or cancellation has been obtained, the HoS/C should notify the following internal and external stakeholders of the closure or cancellation, including proposed dates and any other relevant considerations:
- MIS
  - Finance
  - Marketing and Communications
  - Student Services
  - Library, IT and other support services
  - HR for possible staffing implications
- 3.6.6** The HoS/C should work with the relevant programme manager to inform current and potential students within the timeframe stipulated in point 3.5.3.

#### **4. Monitoring**

This policy and the procedures therein will be subject to an annual review for the purposes of continuous quality improvement. Any changes to the content of this policy and any procedures shall be communicated to all relevant stakeholders as soon as is practicably possible with all changes clearly specified from previous versions of this policy.

- 4.1** A list of closed or cancelled courses will be reported to the Academic Board and the Governing Body, and updated annually.
- 4.2** Any withdrawal, amendment or replacement of a specific unit or units within a programme will be managed through the Higher Education Sub-Committee reporting to the Academic Board.