



Procedure for Programme Suspension or Closure

Policy owner:	Collaborations Department
Implementation date:	November 2023
Review date:	April 2024
Related policy:	N/A

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Version History

Version	Approved	Revisions made	Date
1	David Holliman	Chris Maskell	15/11/2023

1. Purpose

1.1 This procedure sets out the process for the closure of programmes.

2. Scope

2.1 In considering types of programme closure, it is clear that they may be temporary or permanent. The following definitions apply to types of closure:

2.2 Suspension

The temporary closure of a programme for a maximum of three years. Any programme suspended for more than three years shall be subject to permanent closure. The period of approval determined by the previous validation would still be valid and if the period of suspension exceeded the period of approval the programme would need to be re-validated in order to recruit.

Where the agreed minimum recruitment of students has not been achieved a programme should be suspended.

2.3 Permanent Closure

The final and permanent closure of a programme.

The University seeks to protect the interests of students and applicants, as well as the University itself. A recommendation to close or suspend a programme can be made by the Collaborations Department, the collaborative partner, a Faculty and exceptionally by the University.

Where a programme has not had a student registered upon it for three years and where there are no outstanding applications of viable candidates the programme should be formally closed.

2.4 Notification

Where a programme is suspended or permanently closed, notice must be given in writing and the needs of any current students and arrangements as detailed by the contract and contingency plan must be taken into consideration.

3. Procedure

3.1 Criteria for Closure

Recommendations for the suspension or permanent closure of a programme may be based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Viability of the programme.
- Poor student recruitment.
- Inadequate resources.
- Financial non-viability.
- Changing market.
- Changing requirements within the subject discipline.
- The introduction of a replacement programme.
- Concerns over the collaborative partner.
 - Quality Assurance Issues.



- 3.2 Recommendation for suspension or permanent closure of a programme may be made where serious concerns are identified and evidenced formally:
- By an External Examiner.
 - By a professional or statutory body.
 - By the OfS.
 - By an Academic Link Tutor for a collaborative programme.
 - As part of the annual monitoring processes.
 - Concerns over a partner institution in respect of a collaborative programme.
- 3.3 The University may recommend suspension or permanent closure of a collaborative programme where serious concerns are expressed formally over the capacity or commitment of a collaborative partner institution to deliver the programme in accordance with University of Buckingham quality assurance and enhancement procedures and/or the validated programme handbook.
- 3.4 It is expected that potential programme closures would normally be identified through the annual monitoring process and would be initiated, wherever possible, in advance of any recruitment activities for a new cohort of students.
- 3.5 A recommendation for the suspension or closure of a programme should be submitted to the Portfolio Development Group including details of:
- Discussion between the University and the collaborative partner about the proposed recommendation.
 - The basis on which the recommendation has been reached.
 - Any risk assessment of the impact of any closure and evidence of consultation with the collaborative partner, relevant Faculty and other bodies/organisations.
 - The proposed arrangements for current students, including evidence that the students have been consulted on these proposals where appropriate, and proposed arrangements for applicants to the programme(s) – see Arrangements for Students.
- These details should be given in the Section 11.2 Programme Suspension and Closure Form and submitted to the Portfolio Development Group along with:
- The RADP
 - A costing of teach out arrangements (if applicable).
- 3.6 In the case of programmes which have Academic Link Tutors from more than one school, agreement must be reached by all on the recommendation to close.
- 3.7 The recommendation will normally be considered by the relevant Faculty.
- 3.8 The recommendation for suspension or closure will then be reported to the Portfolio Development Group, and the Collaborative Partner will be informed of the decision.
- 3.9 Following the approval of the arrangements for programme suspension or closure, formal notice will be served on the collaborative partner institution in accordance with the terms set down in the Agreement.



Arrangements for Students

3.10 Current Students

Current students will normally be allowed to complete their designated period of registration. Current students include students who have suspended their studies but not yet completed the programme. Where a programme is being closed to new entrants, the arrangements should normally include the following:

- The academic standard of the provision to students throughout their period of registration must be maintained.
- The previously stated learning outcomes for the programme must still be achievable by the current students even if the range of modules available has been reduced.

3.11 Prospective Students

- All communications with prospective students must be undertaken in consultation with the Collaborations Department to ensure compliance with CMA guidelines.
- Applicants who have accepted offers should be contacted after the recommendation for suspension or closure has been approved by the Portfolio Development Group. Applicants should be informed of their options in respect of transferring their application to another course within the collaborative partner institution, to the University of Buckingham or to another institution.
- Applicants who have not yet accepted offers may be contacted to be advised that a suspension or closure recommendation has been approved and that as such the offer of a place has been suspended or withdrawn. It may be possible to advise applicants of the proposed recommendation for closure in advance of its formal approval to provide applicants with every opportunity to make alternative applications elsewhere.

3.12 Monitoring of the Student Experience and Quality Assurance

3.12.1 The Collaborations Department will monitor arrangements for managing closed provision until such time as the last students have completed. In order to do this, the Collaborations Department will give consideration to the following while maintaining regular contact with the partner institution:

- Reports from the student feedback and any programme committee meetings.
- External examiners' reports and the responses to them.
- External agency reports, including professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (where applicable).
- Annual monitoring reports.
- Operational issues associated with learning resources and library provision.
- Any other matters of relevance.

3.13 The Collaborations Department will report to the relevant Faculty and Portfolio Development Group until the partnership is closed.