



**HE COURSE CLOSURE, SUSPENSION AND SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE: POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

<b>Process Area</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>
<b>Reference Number</b>	<b>CUR 013</b>
<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>

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001	Feb 2018	First issue	CD/KK	Governing Body
002	Jan 2021	Policy reviewed – no changes to procedure	CD/KK	Governing Body
003	Nov 2023	Policy reviewed and minor amendments made to reflect current practice	CD/LS	Governing Body

If requested, the College will make the policy available in alternative formats to accommodate visual impairments. The policy can also be downloaded from the College website and made available in alternative languages upon request.

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this document is to set out the criteria for course closure, suspension and substantial change(s) to higher education courses offered by Southern Regional College.

This policy is linked to College Policy on Admissions, which is available on the College web site ([www.src.ac.uk](http://www.src.ac.uk)) and the College's Course Approval policy available on VLE.

## 2. SCOPE

All courses at Level 4 and above.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

QAA	Quality Assurance Agency, the independent body responsible for overseeing academic standards and quality in Higher Education
PSRB	Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies
Course Closure	No further intakes to the course and it will no longer be offered by the College
Course Suspension	No intake to the course for a specified period
Substantial Change	Alterations to a course that could potentially affect the decision of an applicant to take up their place and/or significantly vary the information provided to applicants or to students regarding the nature of the course
Awarding Organisations	Higher Education Institutions, Awarding Bodies and PSRBs
QPU	The unit responsible for overseeing Quality and Pedagogy within the College
HEAB	Higher Education Advisory Board responsible for overseeing the internal management of higher education in SRC

## 4. INTRODUCTION

The policy aligns with Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education and is informed by the Competitions and Markets Authority guidance on consumer law for UK HE providers (2023).

There are a number of reasons why a course may need to be closed or changed. These may include:

- Strategic realignment of College policy.
- Realignment of the curriculum policy and development of course offer.
- Development in vocational skills or external body (including Awarding Organisation/Body and PSRB) requirement.
- Decrease in demand.
- Outcome of a periodic review or re-approval process.
- Staff skills required are temporarily/permanently unavailable and it is impossible to substitute them.
- Change in funding.

- Unforeseen changes imposed to entry criteria by an Awarding Organisation/Body.

## **5. CONTEXT**

Southern Regional College regularly reviews and updates its courses to ensure that its curriculum is relevant and to reflect best practice, taking account of the views of students and external stakeholders including employers. In exceptional circumstances, a course may be closed by the College or its Awarding Organisation/Body or, the College may no longer be able to teach a course or an aspect of a course to a specific group of students, or the College or Awarding Organisation/Body may introduce a substantial change which will impact on applicants and/or current students.

When courses are closed or changed the following precepts will underpin the process.

- Students currently on courses will be supported to complete the course of study on which they are enrolled. This includes provision made for those with extenuating circumstances and leave of absence which may require completion beyond the normal period.
- Course closures and changes will normally be planned in the previous academic year for closure and before the recruitment process begins.
- Where it is impossible to make alterations or closures prior to recruitment as far as is possible, those who are prospective students (in receipt of course information or have entered the admission process) the College will engage with affected students to ensure a mutually acceptable outcome.
- External partners including Awarding Organisation/Bodies and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies will be fully informed of plans.

## **6. DEFINITIONS**

### **Course Closure**

The College may, when deemed necessary, close a course meaning that there will be no further intakes to the course, and it will no longer be offered by the College. Those students already enrolled on the course will continue to progress and complete the course. Where students have broken study due to extenuating circumstances or leave of absence the College will provide support for completion and this may include with an alternative course or transfer to another provider.

### **Course Suspension**

The College may, where deemed necessary, suspend a course meaning that there will be no intake to the course for a specified period (normally the following academic year). Students currently registered on the course will continue to progress and complete the course.

### **Substantial Change**

Substantial changes constitute alternations to a course that could potentially affect the decision of an applicant to take up their place and/or significantly vary the information provided to applicants or to students regarding the nature of the course and its component parts.

Substantial changes could include:

- Change of course location (to another Campus)
- Change to the title of a course
- Change to the accreditation of a course
- Change to the mode of delivery (e.g. from full to part time)

- Substantial changes to the curriculum, assessment or modules

Substantial changes must be notified (and approved) in a timely fashion and should normally be agreed one year in advance of the next intake. Where substantial changes are intended to impact on current students and/or represent changes to the information already provided for applicants, these will be exceptional, must involve consultation and agreement with students, and/or applicants. The College will endeavour to engage with all students at the earliest opportunity.

## **7. PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

### **PLANNING FOR COURSE CLOSURE, SUSPENSION OR SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE**

#### **STAGE ONE**

The Curriculum Directorate through the curriculum planning process will propose courses for closure, suspension or substantial change.

#### **Securing Approval to Close, Suspend or Substantially Change a Course**

The Faculty must in the first instance assess the rationale for, and impact of, a proposed course closure, suspension or substantial change, and ensure discussion with relevant parties as indicated in this document. This includes other College curriculum and support departments including Finance, Quality and Pedagogy Unit, Admissions, Marketing, MIS, Examinations, Campus Services and awarding organisations.

The Head of Faculty will formally report into the Higher Education Advisory Board(HEAB) to notify of course closure, suspension or substantial change of an HE programme.

Once agreement has been reached by at the HEAB , the Head of Faculty will formally notify the appropriate functional sections to ensure that the course is removed from the College's course information promotional materials by Marketing and the Awarding Organisation/Body to ensure removal from UCAS if appropriate. The status of the course should be reflected in College records as "course closed".

#### **STAGE 2**

The Head of Faculty will carry out the following:

- Notify internal departments including Finance, MIS, Examinations, Admissions, Marketing Student Finance and Quality.
- Liaise with Quality and Pedagogy Unit to notify awarding organisation and current External Examiner/Verifier.
- Notify and communicate with current students in writing (durable medium).
- Notify and communicate with prospective students in writing (durable medium).

**COMMUNICATION IN THE EVENT OF COURSE CLOSURE, SUSPENSION OR SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Communication with current students	Arrangements for students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the course.</li> <li>• Extenuating circumstances.</li> <li>• Leave of Absence.</li> <li>• Limit to registration.</li> <li>• Written communication.</li> </ul>	Head of Faculty
Communication with prospective students	Arrangements for students who have been interviewed or requested information, to provide options including signposting and details of change / closure including timescale. Written communication.	Head of Faculty / Head of Campus Services
Notification of Awarding Organisation/Body	Liaise with QPU to discuss plan to change or close course with Awarding Organisation (AO) / Awarding Body (AB) and External Examiner (EE) where applicable.  Complete and process Awarding Organisation / Body administration procedures.	Head of Faculty / Head of Examinations
Management of recruitment and publicity materials	Course descriptor removed from college intranet and awarding organisation if applicable.  Reference in College marketing materials to be removed.	Head of Faculty / Head of Marketing
Head of Faculty/Head of Marketing/MIS/ Finance/Quality	Admissions: request to remove course from the admission process.  MIS: Removal/suspension of course from QL.  Examinations: Cleansing of data and student registrations issues.  Finance: student financial issues/awarding organisation financial implications.  Quality: Examination Board and quality assurance processes.	Head of Faculty

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

Written communication (durable medium) is required to update current and where possible, prospective students. The College website and other usual forms of communication will be used to support the process.

**MONITORING AND REVIEW AND STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT**

Course changes and closures will be monitored through the yearly curriculum planning process.

Strategic oversight will be provided through the HEAB and outcomes forwarded to the Senior Curriculum Management Team and the Education Committee of the Governing Body.

## **8. DISTRIBUTION**

CANVAS

SRC Policy Centre on SharePoint

## **9. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Admissions Policy
- Course Approval Policy
- Course Planner
- Awarding Organisation Schedule of Approvals
- Awarding Organisation Regulations

**10. FLOW CHART FOR COURSE CLOSURE, SUSPENSION AND SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE**

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