



MORLEY COLLEGE LONDON

HE Programme Closure Policy

**POLICY OWNER: PRINCIPAL
APPROVAL: POLICY COMMITTEE OCT 2017**

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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 of its local community. Taking the decision to cancel any programme is not taken lightly, and will only be undertaken when all other reasonable efforts have been made to mitigate against this action. It should be noted this policy does not cover the cancellation of a programme for new applicants awaiting commencement of their studies having been offered a place on said programme.

Please note this policy only applies to Higher Education programmes.

The College’s Programme Closure Policy has been informed by the Quality Assurance Agency’s Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B8). The QAA’s Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all UK institutions that provide Higher Education delivery, and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities are assured and enhanced.

1.1 This policy sets out the expectations, key aims, principles and procedural approach in relation to cancellation of a Higher Education programme by the College.

1.2 Programmes may be 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 course or where a course will not be economically viable.

1.3 Programme closure includes a number of specific definitions and provisos as outlined in Section 3 - Definitions and Scope.

1.4 Where the College decides to close 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, including potential or actual impact on other courses
- The impact of any closure on students and staff
- How the quality of the student experience will be maintained until the completion of any termination process, 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 or be terminated
- Progression of students who may need to repeat units

2. Policy implementation

This policy deals with situations relating to the closure of Higher Education programmes. The College has a framework for ensuring that appropriate procedures and measures are in place where a course has to be cancelled, and it is the duty of the College to ensure that, where a decision to close a programme has been made, that it takes all

reasonable measures to notify and protect the interests of affected students. The College has a series of protocols governing programme closure as defined later in this section. All decisions to cancel a programme are taken in accordance with these protocols, which may be amended from time to time (see point 4).

2.1 Programme closure protocols are student-focused, transparent and time sensitive.

2.2 Programme closure protocols aim to minimise the inconvenience and cost to students of course cancellations, including but not limited to the payment of fees, travel arrangements and additional support costs.

2.3 Programme closure protocols seek to enable and support students to source and attend a suitable alternative course, either at the College or a similar provider.

2.4 Programme closure protocols may be triggered by the following situations (this list is neither inclusive nor 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 course unsafe to deliver

2.5 In order to minimise the inconvenience and expense of programme closure to students, depending on the nature of the situation, the following protocols will be initiated:

2.5.1 Students will be warned that a programme is at risk of cancellation as soon as is practicably possible.

2.5.2 In circumstances where potential cancellation is linked to a failure to achieve critical numbers, the College will endeavour to recruit sufficient numbers as far as is practicably possible.

2.5.3 Where it is clear the best efforts of the College have or are likely to fail to recruit critical numbers, all students enrolled or yet to enrol on the programme will be notified of closure not less than four weeks before scheduled commencement (subject to circumstances beyond the College's control).

2.5.4 The College shall provide help and advice to those enrolled on the cancelled programme to find an alternative programme within the College, whether they are newly enrolled or existing students.

2.5.5 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.

2.6 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:

2.6.1 A proposal to terminate a programme (either permanently or temporarily) should be submitted to SMT by the Head of School (HoS) as early as possible in the academic year. SMT will consider:

- Relevant recruitment/retention information
- The staffing of the programme and the potential impact of closure
- The strategic reasons for 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)

2.6.2 Once a decision has been reached, it will be communicated to the relevant HoS, Higher Education Development Coordinator (HEDC), Quality and Standards Manager and Head of Marketing and Communications.

2.6.3 Once strategic approval for closure has been obtained, the HoS should formulate measures to manage the withdrawal of the programme in accordance with point 2.5 and gain approval for these actions. The HoS may wish to liaise with the HEDC and/or Quality and Standards Manager in facilitating this process.

2.6.4 Once approval has been granted by SMT for the management of course withdrawal, the HEDC must notify the validating body of the decision to close a course, including proposed dates and any other relevant considerations.

2.6.5 Once approval has been granted by SMT for the management of course withdrawal, the HoS should notify the following departments of the closure, 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
- External Examiners

2.6.6 The Head of School should work with the Programme Manager to inform current and potential students within the timeframe stipulated in point 2.5.3.

3. Definitions and Scope

For the purposes of this policy:

3.1 Programme closure is defined in two ways:

3.1.1 The decision not to run a programme, i.e. a specific mode of a programme from a specific start date in a specific location, after it has been advertised as available to prospective students, e.g. in the prospectus or on the website.

3.1.2 The decision not to run a programme, i.e. a specific mode or level of a programme from a specific start date in a specific location, after it has been advertised as available to existing students and whether or not the preceding level of study has been delivered or not.

3.2 A decision to run a programme for either prospective or existing students from a different site in close proximity to the original location is not a course cancellation but a programme variation, and is governed by a separate policy.

This includes circumstances where:

3.3.1 A programme is permanently withdrawn at the College but the College continues to deliver other programmes.

3.3.2 A School or department of the College is closed in its current location and is relocating elsewhere.

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

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

3.3.5 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).

3.4 The withdrawal, amendment or replacement of a specific unit or units within a programme is not a course closure. It is classed as a minor course 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.

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 terminated courses will be reported to the Academic Board and Board of Governors and updated annually.

4.2 Termination of units will be managed by the appropriate Sub-Committee to Academic Board.