MORLEY COLLEGE LONDON

Higher Education Course
Suspension and Closure Policy

POLICY OWNER:	Chair of HE Subcommittee
FINAL APPROVAL BY:	Policy Committee
Policy Category:	Student
Approved by Policy Committee:	July 2021
Approved by Governing Body:	N/A
Review Date:	July 2025

1. Introduction, Purpose and Scope of Policy:

Morley College London 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 suspend or close 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 Suspension and Closure Policy has been informed by Office for Students (OfS) guidance and with the QAA Advice and Guidance on Course Development and Design published in November 2018.

2. Equality and Diversity Analysis Screening:

In accordance with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy, the development of this policy complies with the Equality Act 2010 in ensuring due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations (see section 4 of the Equality and Diversity Policy).

An equality analysis will be completed if there is a risk the policy may affect different groups protected from discrimination. Consultation will be carried out with staff. If an equality analysis is required, the Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator (Head of Quality and Standards) will advise on completion and the analysis is to be included as an appendix to the policy.

3. Applicability:

This policy applies to students which have applied to study on a Higher Education course at the College. Other interested parties include College staff and partner organisation's such as validating Higher Education Institutions or Pearson.

4. Definitions:

Course Suspension: this means that admissions will be suspended for a set period Course Closure. This means that a course will be withdrawn and closed indefinitely to applications or enrolments

Course Closure: This means that a course will be withdrawn and closed indefinitely to applications or enrolments

5. Statutory and regulatory requirements:

This policy is a requirement of the College's Office of Students registration and sits alongside the published Student Protection Plan.

6. Policy Objectives:

The Policy aims to set out examples of possible reasons for course suspensions and closures including and how in practice decisions should be made around these, including setting out the communication plan for all interested parties. Maintaining a good student experience and level of customer service is at the heart of the policy.

7. Policy statement:

Programmes may be suspended or closed for educational, practical or business reasons, e.g. where student numbers are expected to be so low that the student experience will be harmed, where the College is unable to resource a programme or where a programme will not be economically viable.

Where the College decides to suspend or 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 suspension or closure, including potential or actual impact on other programmes;
- The impact of any suspension or closure on students and staff;
- How the quality of the student experience will be maintained until the completion of the suspension or closure, 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 closed;
- Progression of students who may need to repeat units.

8. Implementation of Policy:

The College is responsible for ensuring that appropriate procedures and measures are in place where a programme has to be suspended or, and it is the duty of the College to ensure that, where a decision to suspend or close a programme has been made, it takes all reasonable measures to notify and protect the interests of affected students and other parties. All decisions to suspend or close programmes should be student-focused, transparent and time sensitive

Programme suspension or closure 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
- Specialist resources no longer being available
- 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

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

The College shall provide help and advice to those enrolled on the suspended or closed programme to find an alternative programme within the College, whether they are newly enrolled or existing students. If a programme is suspended, the College will advise

students when it will be rescheduled. Equally, if the College decides that a course is closed, students will be supported to find alternative programme within the College if possible. Should an alternative programme not be available in the College, help and advice will be provided to find an alternative programme with another London institution.

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.

A panel to consider viability of all HE courses in the light of recruitment for the forthcoming academic year is built into the College curriculum planning process at a time before the four week cut off for informing students. The panel will consider recruited students compared to the target required to successfully run the course.

The panel must include:

- Centre Principal
- The Head of Quality and Standards or Quality Enhancement Manager (QEM) (Access to HE and HE) to support SLT

The panel will consider:

- The strategic reasons for suspension or closure, including any external factors
- Relevant developments within the subject/curriculum area
- The potential impact on currently incoming students and/or students who have accepted an offer to commence studies and how any negative impact will be mitigated

Following this panel a proposal to suspend or closure a programme should be discussed with the Head of School/Head of Curriculum at the earliest opportunity. They should be included in the panel when available.

Once SLT have decided to suspend or close the appropriate Centre Principal (CP) should formulate measures to manage the closure or closure of the programme. The CP should liaise with the QEM and/or Head of Quality and Standards in facilitating this process as the QEM must notify the validating body of the decision to close or close a programme, including proposed dates and any other relevant considerations. The QEM should also confirm the course suspension or closure with the relevant External Examiner.

The Admissions team should write to all affected students as soon as possible after the decision is made to inform them when a course is suspended or closed.

Once a SLT decision to suspend or close has been obtained, the CP should notify the following internal and external stakeholders of the suspension or closure, including proposed dates and any other relevant considerations:

- MIS including exams
- Finance
- Marketing and Communications
- Student Services
- Library, IT and other support services
- HR for possible staffing implications

9. Communication and training:

The policy should be published on the College Intranet and the website. Staff involved in HE delivery and the above professional service departments should aware of the policy

and inducted on the policy when they start work at the College or on the Higher Education provision. The policy will be discussed at least annually within the Higher Education subcommittee when communicating the summer review date on course viability.

10. Monitoring and Reporting:

This policy and the procedures therein will be subject to an bi-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.

A list of closed or suspended courses will be reported to the Academic Board and the Governing Body, and updated annually.

11. Related References, Policies, Procedures, Forms and other Appendices:

- HE Complaints Policy
- Finance Policy (Refunds)
- HE Admissions Policy
- Student Protection Plan (HE)