

# **DN COLLEGES GROUP**

## **Suspension or Closure of Higher Education Programmes Policy**

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that DN Colleges Group (DNCG) principles and procedures for the suspension and closure of programmes, specifically Higher Education programmes of study.
- 1.2 This policy aims to provide a transparent, fair, and accessible framework for the suspension and closure of programmes, and prioritises the interests of current students, applicants, staff and external stakeholders.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Higher Education programmes and qualifications including higher apprenticeships.
- 2.2 The term student includes apprentices.

## 3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 The **Curriculum Leader** (of the area where a programme is to be suspended or closed) initiates the suspension or closure process, in conjunction with the Programme Leader based upon recruitment profiles, market need and outcomes of Programme Viability Committee meetings. The Curriculum Leader coordinates the suspension or closure of the programme, including reporting proposals to the Director of School and ensuring updated information in the public domain is accurate.
- 3.2 The **Director of School** presents proposals for programme suspension and/or closure to the Programme Viability Committee, in a timely manner so as to limit any impact on current or prospective students.
- 3.3 **Programme Viability Committee** (PVC) receives and fully considers proposals for programme suspension and/or closure and makes recommendations to the Vice Principal: Higher Education.
- 3.4 The **Vice Principal: Higher Education** supports or rejects the recommendations made by the PVC for programme suspension and/or closure and makes a recommendation to the Executive Team for final ratification.
- 3.5 The **DNCG Executive Team** receive recommendation relating to programme suspensions or closures that have a HR or Financial impact on the College and make final ratification.
- 3.6 The **DNCG Admissions team** communicates with all affected applicants and offer holders with regard to programme suspensions and closures.
- 3.7 The **Director of Marketing** ensures ongoing accuracy of all programme information in the public domain and will make changes in response to programme suspension and/or closure.
- 3.8 The **Director of Human Resources** has responsibility for any associated HR processes to support staff following closure or suspension of programmes.
- 3.9 The **Director of Student Services** has responsibility for ensuring impact on current student wellbeing is mitigated with support from/referral to other internal or external agencies.

## 4 Definitions and/or Relevant Legislation

- 4.1 *Programme Suspension* – there will be no intake to the programme for a specified period (normally one academic year in the first instance). Students currently enrolled on a suspended programme will continue to progress and complete their programme.
- 4.2 *Programme Closure* – there will be no further intakes to the programme, and it will no longer be offered by the DN Colleges Group. Existing students will, other than in the most exceptional circumstance, complete their studies on the programme for which they are enrolled.
- 4.3 Programme suspensions and closures are considered a significant change and, in line with consumer legislation and best practice (Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) and the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 (CCR)), all students and applicants will be given the fullest information, advice and guidance to enable them to make well-informed decisions in the event of programme suspension or closure.
- 4.4 This policy is written in the context of:
- The current College Strategic Plan 2023-2028
  - All current legislation that is relative to Diversity, Safeguarding and Health, Safety & Welfare
  - Where appropriate the College policies for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Safeguarding and Health and Safety
  - Education Act 2002 as amended by the Keeping Children Safe in Education
  - The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023
  - General Data Protection Regulation 2018
  - All relevant HR policies including redundancy, redeployment and pay protection.

## 5 The Policy

- 5.1 Every effort should be made to consider a programme suspension or closure before the start of an application cycle. Where this is not possible all programme suspension or closure proposals should be made as soon as possible and in good time to allow applicants to find a suitable alternative programme of study.
- 5.2 As outlined in 6.6, programme suspension or closure may be prompted by concerns relating to academic standards and quality. Where this is the case, it is expected that the concerns will be considered and overseen by the PVC, with all relevant information and justification relating to the programme suspension or closure being provided by the Director of School, including identification of potential alternative programmes of study.
- 5.3 Where a justification for programme suspension or closure has been made, the PVC will take full account of the needs of existing students (including those who are on an intercalation), applicants to the programme and offer holders, including those who have deferred applications or offers. As far as is reasonably possible, existing students must be supported through to the completion of their intended study or have suitable alternative arrangements made with another institution.
- 5.4 These arrangements must ensure that the course continues to address the requirements of any Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) which accredits the course or any educational partnerships. It is the Curriculum Lead's responsibility to ensure this is the case.
- 5.5 In considering closure of a course the Director of School should liaise with all relevant

stakeholders, including members of the course team, Marketing, Registry, Finance, other Schools (for example, where units on the course to be closed are used on other courses) and Educational Partners (where applicable)

- 5.6 Programme suspension or closure, in exceptional circumstances, may be appropriate for a number of reasons, for example (but not limited to):
- Declining student numbers, which may compromise the students' educational experience
  - Lack of recruitment
  - Financial viability
  - Changing strategic priorities
  - External funding changes
  - Recommendations from regulatory and external bodies

## **6 Relevant Policies and Procedures**

- 6.1 DN Colleges Group Term and Conditions  
DN Colleges Group Student Protection Plan  
DN Colleges Group Access and Participation Plan  
HE Student Transfer Policy  
All relevant HR policies

## **7 Who to Contact with Queries**

- 7.1 Assistant Principal: Higher Education

Adherence to and compliance with this policy will be monitored through the internal quality assurance process.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Assistant Principal Higher Education.

## **8 Communication**

- 8.1 This policy will be communicated via management meetings and located on the Staff Intranet.

## **9 Authorisation**

Policy Holder:	Assistant Principal Higher Education
Union Approval & Date:	(if applicable)
SLT Approval & Date:	9 July 2025
Governor Committee/ Board Approval:	(if applicable)
Next Review Date:	July 2028

\*Policies will be reviewed every 3 years unless there is a specific requirement to undertake a review more frequently. If for any reason a review does not take place in the planned period, the policy will remain current until a review takes place.

The Equality Impact has been considered on this policy and procedure.