

Course Closure and Suspension Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The University's policy for closing or suspending entry to a course takes into account the interests of students, applicants and the University and its collaborative academic partners. It applies to on-campus provision and that offered with or by collaborative academic partners.

1.2 When a course is **closed** it will be removed from the University's portfolio. A closed course will no longer be available to new applicants, but students already on the course will be supported to complete their studies on the course wherever possible. A closed course cannot be reintroduced unless new course approval is sought through the normal course approval procedures. Course closures can however be restricted by location – please see section 1.4 below.

1.3 In **suspending entry** to a course, the University agrees that recruitment to the course for new students will not take place for a period of up to three years. The precise period of suspension will be determined at the point of strategic approval but this should be for no more than three years. Existing students on the course are not affected by this decision and will be supported to complete their studies. After a three-year period of suspension a course must either recommence recruitment or be formally closed. Courses suspended for a period of more than two years should be revalidated before new students enrol.

1.4 In making the decision as to whether a course can be closed or entry to a course suspended, consideration will be given to the impact of any such decision on collaborative academic partners delivering the curriculum. Whilst it is possible to restrict a course closure to its on-campus delivery only, in doing so the University must assure itself that the appropriate structures remain in place to monitor and as required develop the course at partners.

1.5 The following policy does not cover the administrative closure of course codes that need to be replaced by new codes as a result of a course revalidation or amendment. The recording of these changes will be dealt with as part of the revalidation or amendment processes as appropriate. The suspension of entry to courses for admissions because all places have been filled is also not covered by this policy.

2. Obtaining Strategic Approval for a Course Closure or Suspension

2.1 The Strategic Number Planning Meetings consider the University's course portfolio and make decisions on which courses should be closed and suspended. These decisions will be influenced by recruitment patterns as well as student outcome metrics. Where collaborative academic partnership provision is to be closed, the Head of International Development/Head of Post 16 Partnerships as appropriate will be involved in the discussions. It is expected that the majority of course closures and suspensions will be dealt with through this exercise.

2.2 Further requests and proposals for course closure/suspension falling outside the Strategic Number Planning meeting cycle can be made to the Chair of the Student Number Planning Meeting where required, and where an urgent decision to close or suspend entry to a course is needed, Chair's action may be taken. The Dean of School or nominee should approve all course closure and suspension requests before their submission to the Chair.

3. Supporting Students and Applicants when Courses are Closed/Suspended

3.1 Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC) and School Academic Committees (SACs) will be notified of course closures/suspensions agreed at the Student Number Planning Meetings. University Partnerships Committee (UPC) will also be notified of course closures/suspensions at collaborative academic partners.

3.2 As noted above, existing students on a course for which entry has been suspended are not affected by this decision. The expectation is that the course will continue to run as validated.

3.3 Where courses are to be closed SACs will be responsible for approving teach out plans (including for courses closed at collaborative academic partners) and monitoring their ongoing implementation. QEC will oversee the development and monitoring of teach out plans by the SACs. A template for the teach out plan is available from the Academic Quality Service.

3.4 Where the University has approved the termination of a collaborative academic partnership, the partnership-level teach out arrangements will be monitored by Partnerships Committee, however individual course teach out plans are still required in line with this procedure.

3.5 Heads of Department will be responsible for the implementation of teach out plans in their Departments, including those relating to collaborative academic partners. These will be monitored through course monitoring. Any specific issues of concern relating to collaborative academic partners should also be raised by the Head of Department with the Head of Post-16 Partnerships or Head of International Partnerships (as appropriate).

3.6 SACs will confirm when the teach out period on a course has ended and that all students have either withdrawn or completed their award. This will be reported to QEC and for collaborative academic partnership provision UPC.

3.7 There may be very exceptional circumstances in which a course is closed and it is not possible to support students registered on the course to complete their studies. Students in this situation would be subject to a change in the terms and conditions upon which they entered into a contract with the University. Therefore, in these circumstances, a course team would be required to consult with all students on the course and obtain express permission to transfer them to an alternative. Such situations must be highlighted at the Strategic Number Planning Meeting where initial consideration of the course closure takes place with student consultation only taking place following strategic approval and evidenced to the SAC. Any students not wishing to be transferred to an alternative course must be supported to seek alternative provision elsewhere. Where such a situation relates to a collaborative academic partner, the University and partner will agree as part of the teach out

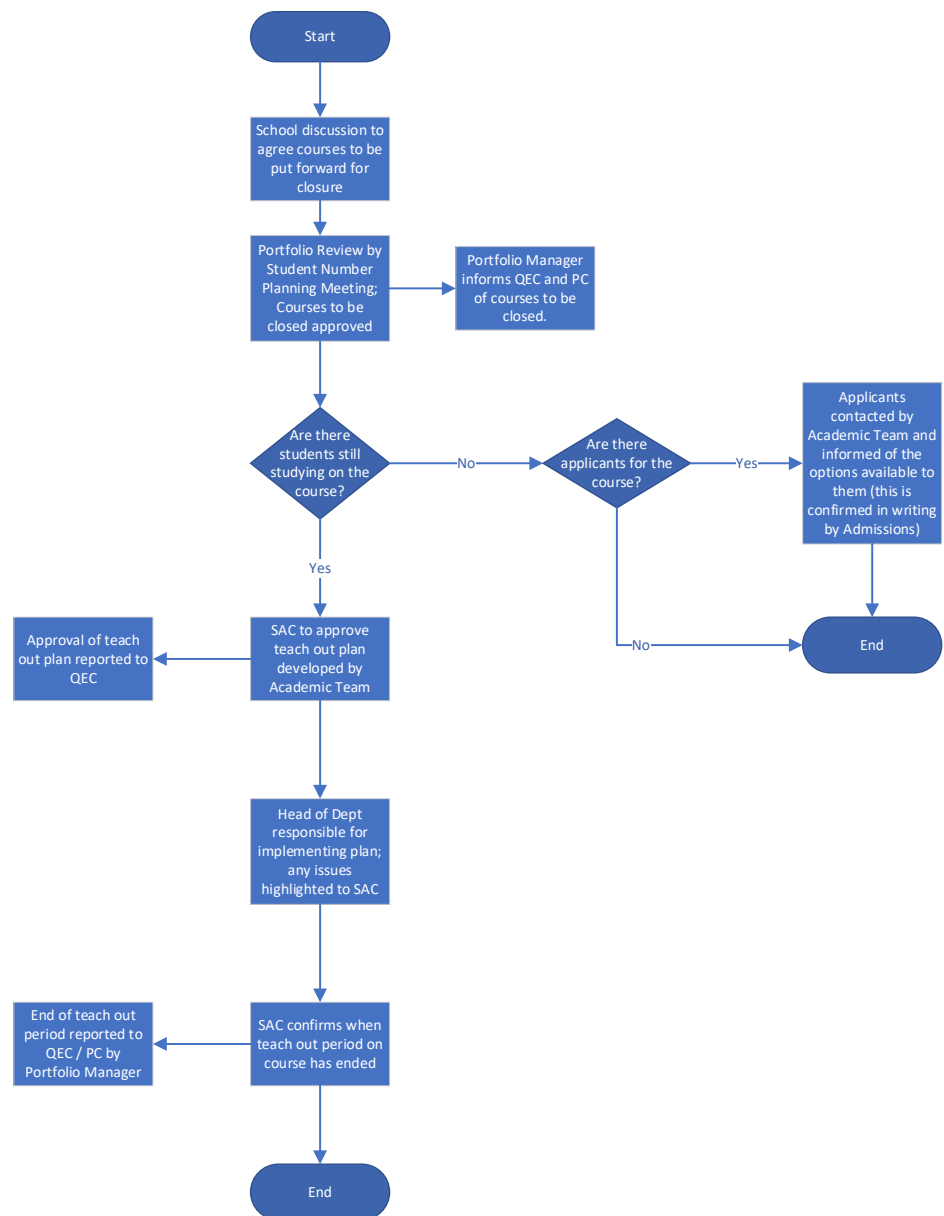
plan who will liaise with students, in line with the broad parameters articulated in the collaborative agreement.

3.8 Applicants who have accepted offers on a course which is subsequently closed/suspended must be informed as soon as possible following the formal closure/suspension of the course. Where possible a relevant academic member of staff should make contact with the applicants before an official communication is sent. Such applicants will be informed of the options available to them in light of this decision.

3.9 Schools are also responsible for informing Marketing and Communications of any decisions to close/suspend entry to a course (including collaborative academic partner provision) so that the relevant amendments can be made to all marketing information and the University's website. Where the decision relates to partner provision, checks will also be made by the Head of Post-16 Partnerships or Head of International Partnerships to ensure that partner marketing material has been updated.

3.10 Flow charts outlining the key steps in this process are attached at **Appendices A and B**.

Appendix A – Course Closure



* The administrative closure of course codes required as the result of a course change (i.e. a change to a course that means that a new course code in SITS is required/the previous course code is closed) will be noted and approved as part of the course amendment/revalidation procedure and not dealt with as part of the process above.

Appendix B – Course Suspension

