

STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN

Key Information

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This policy will be reviewed and ratified at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local legislation and/or guidance.

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Introduction

Circomedia is required to publish a Student Protection Plan (SPP) that sets out the steps that will be taken by Circomedia to protect students in circumstances that might lead to significant changes, or the discontinuation of their programme of study. Possible scenarios that might

result in the discontinuation of students' programmes of study, and the steps that would be taken in such situations, are set out below.

Circomedia has an established track record of delivering nationally recognised higher education programmes and professional training to students and supporting students to pursue careers in circus arts. This SPP is intended to provide reassurance to current and future students that Circomedia has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the quality and continuation of their studies.

Circomedia's awards are validated by Bath Spa University. Our relationship with Bath Spa University is such that all students will also be protected by their student protection plan. .

The provisions of this SPP are in addition to students' statutory rights as consumers, which remain unaffected.

Circomedia commitments

- Be open and transparent with students should any risk to the continuity of their programme of study arise, and inform them in a timely manner;
- Take all reasonable steps to protect students' studies should a decision be taken to discontinue a programme, or in the event of the closure of Circomedia;
- Consult with students and consider students' views in a timely manner before deciding to implement any substantial changes to their programme of study or discontinuing it, or the closure of Circomedia;
- Take into consideration the needs of all students and the impact on them of any proposed changes and any steps taken to protect their interests;
- Inform the OfS of any changes that may require a review of this SPP or any of its provisions.

Notification

Should the provisions contained in this SPP need to be implemented, the students concerned will in the first instance be notified by email.

Advice and support will be offered in the first instance by the programme lead.

Complaints

Complaints regarding a programme of study should be raised via Circomedia's Complaints procedure, which is published on our website.

Students may also be able to raise a complaint regarding a programme of study with Bath Spa University if they are not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint from Circomedia. The provision for refunds and compensation in this Student Protection Plan do not affect students' rights of complaint under the Student Complaints Procedure.

Complaints relating to this SPP should be referred to complaints@circomedia.com in the first instance.

The risks to the continuation of study for students registered with Circomedia could arise from both internal events and/or external events which may be outside our control.

Internal events might include the following:

Planned closure of Circomedia for Financial or Business Reasons

Circomedia is an established institution with a long history of delivering training in the circus arts. It is a registered charity and therefore subject to the Charity Commission regulation and oversight. It is also a company limited by guarantee and subject to Companies House regulations. Circomedia has in place well established governance and management structures for managing its day-to-day operations, organisational resilience and longer-term sustainability. It is overseen by a Board of Trustees, all of whom are independent. There is internal scrutiny provided by our board and independent scrutiny provided by separate external auditors who assess its 'going concern'. It provides a range of services in addition to higher education, and this diversity of income minimises risk.

The risk of Circomedia deciding to cease to operate for financial or business reasons is low. Circomedia is committed to delivering higher education and professional training in circus arts and to making a wider contribution to the artistic and cultural life of the country.

Closure of a programme of study for strategic reasons

Circomedia is a small, specialist institution delivering professionally focussed higher education and training in circus arts, with curriculum development taking place in an incremental and planned manner. It offers two well-established undergraduate programmes and one postgraduate programme. Consequently, the risk that Circomedia might decide to discontinue a specific programme of study on a timescale that directly affects students already on that programme is very low. In the unlikely event of the discontinuation of a programme of study, it would be planned in such a way to allow current students to complete their studies and would require the formal approval of Circomedia's Board of Trustees.

Where a programme is discontinued, Circomedia would plan to close the programme to new students and 'teach-out' current students (see below). Bath Spa University as validator would also oversee the process of programme closure, giving further consideration to the interests of any students affected.

Closure of a programme of study due to low student enrolment

The risk that Circomedia would discontinue or not offer a programme due to insufficient student enrolments or continuation is relatively low. Demand for student places is variable and we regularly review the programmes we offer to ensure that they continue to keep pace with student, employer and industry needs.

Significant changes to programmes of study

The risk that the qualification students obtain is significantly different from that for which they enrolled is low, because of Circomedia's approach to programme development, approval and review. Circomedia retains the right to make minor adjustments and improvements to programmes and module content year on year, as part of standard quality enhancement processes and in response to student and employer feedback. Our review and quality enhancement processes are informed by student consultation, and we endeavour to communicate planned changes in a timely and helpful manner. These minor amendments or improvements in themselves do not warrant the triggering of the provisions under this SPP. In line with the arrangements for validation of awards, a range of adjustments and improvements to programmes are also subject to scrutiny and agreement by Bath Spa University.

External events might include the following:

Ability to award validated degrees

Students at Circomedia receive degrees awarded by Bath Spa University under a franchise arrangement. Circomedia has a long-standing relationship with Bath Spa University and has consistently met the necessary quality assurance and academic standards requirements set by the University. The risk of losing validation of one or more programmes of study on a timescale that directly affects students already on that programme is low.

Unplanned Closure for Financial or Business Reasons

The risk that Circomedia finds itself unable to continue to operate due to changes in the external regulatory or funding environment is assessed as being relatively low. Circomedia has a risk management process, disaster response, and business continuity plans in place; these are regularly reviewed. Circomedia is overseen by a governing body comprised entirely of independent members. There is independent scrutiny provided by separate external auditors who assess the strength of internal control frameworks and risk management processes.

Unplanned Closure of Circomedia due to Acts of God or force majeure

The risk of the complete closure of Circomedia due to fire, flood or other ‘Act of God’ or force majeure having an impact on the quality or delivery of programmes of study is assessed as low. This is because our London location and our positive and close working relationship with other performing arts schools gives us a range of options to mitigate the risk that our building is unusable, for example through fire or damage.

Mitigating Steps in the Event Course Closure or Discontinuation

In the event of a decision being taken to discontinue a programme of study for strategic, academic or other reasons while students are pursuing that programme, one or more of the following steps would be taken by Circomedia to protect those students:

Teaching Out

Whenever possible, Circomedia will decide to ‘teach- out’ current students where a decision has been taken to phase out a programme of study. The programme will be closed for the purposes of the recruitment of new students. This means that we commit to ensuring programmes of study can be completed by all currently enrolled students within existing timeframes determined by programme and academic regulations. If a decision is taken to discontinue a programme, the arrangements which are proposed for students affected will be considered by, and may be subject to the agreement of, Bath Spa University as our validating institution.

Transfer of Study

Where teaching out is not possible, Circomedia will investigate whether students can transfer to a similar programme offered by another higher education provider. (Our unique status means that this might be in another country via our membership of the international federation of professional circus schools, FEDEC.) If such a transfer of study is possible, then

Circomedia will take all possible steps to facilitate the transfer to the other higher education provider, including for example the provision of a record of academic achievement to date.

Refunds and Compensation

Details of Circomedia's arrangements and policy concerning refunds and compensation under this Student Protection Plan are set out in the attached ' Fees and Refund Policy'

Conclusion

This Student Protection Plan sets out possible situations where Circomedia will no longer be able to preserve continuation of study for one or more students, or where there has been disruption to a course of study. The Student Protection Plan identifies such situations as being of low risk. However, in the event of the Student Protection Plan being activated, Circomedia will implement its Fees and Refunds Policy.

In the event that one of the situations / events identified in the SPP were to occur and the Student Protection Plan be activated, Circomedia will liaise as appropriate with Bath Spa University as franchisor to ensure a fair outcome for students in all circumstances with regard to refunds and compensation.

Notwithstanding that Circomedia will take proactive action without requiring students to lodge a formal complaint, students who wish to make a request for a refund or compensation under the Student Protection Plan may do so by contacting info@circomedia.com

We will publicise our Student Protection Plan through our website and publicity materials for student

recruitment and through our programme handbooks. We will make sure that relevant staff are aware of its provisions through one-to-one briefings.

We will annually review the Student Protection Plan in conjunction with our course representatives at staff student liaison committee meetings.

Should we need to implement our Student Protection Plan, we would inform all students by email and discuss this with them in their course groups.