

## **STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN**

### **1. Background**

1.1 Court Theatre Training Company (CTTC) currently runs one BA (Hons) degree course with 37 students. The course is an accelerated two-year degree programme validated by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) and as such is included under their Student Protection Plan (SPP) Policy<sup>1</sup>. CTTC also operates under the arrangements outlined in this plan to manage and mitigate our own levels of risk. This is also in compliance with the BNU Policy (section 15), requiring partners to operate their own SPP and the Office for Students (OfS).

### **2. Scope**

2.1 This Student Protection Plan (“the Plan”) covers all students currently enrolled on, or applying to, a programme of study at CTTC.

### **3. Responsibilities**

3.1 This Plan is compiled and approved by the CTTC Management Committee and reviewed annually by the Governing Body. The CTTC Management committee and Governing Body are responsible for all CTTC policies, regulations and procedures to assure the effective governance of the college and to meet statutory and other legal obligations.

### **4. Guiding Principles**

4.1 The development of this Plan is in accordance with the principles set out in the BNU Student Protection Plan policy and their published Terms and Conditions for Admission, which we are aligned with.

4.2 CTTC:

- Will make every effort to ensure that the programmes that it offers to students are delivered as validated
- Accepts that it may be necessary to make changes to its provision to maintain currency and validity
- Will seek to minimise disruption to students
- Will consider the specific impact of changes to its provision by assessing its impact on the student population, including any perceived differential impact on particular stakeholder groups, e.g. its widening participation population
- Will endeavour at all times to keep students appropriately informed with regard to changes that may be necessary and will bring these to their attention as soon as possible
- Will inform the OfS of events that require the implementation of the provisions of this Plan

## 5. Assessment of Risks

5.1 In developing this Plan, we have employed the BNU Risk Register methodology namely:

- Identification of a range of scenarios and their potential impact on students
- Analysis of the probability of a particular scenario occurring and its impact on a student or cohort of students to determine the level of risk
- Identification of mitigations either already in place or to be put in place to reduce the identified risk
- Identification of activities to help protect the student experience should the scenario occur, including refund and compensation where this is applicable and how this can be secured

5.2 Scenarios related to the preservation of the continuity of study have been identified in relation to the following categories:

1. Teaching staff and quality assurance
2. Principal and Management staff
3. Premises and physical resources
4. Validating body
5. Financial performance

## 6. Mitigation of Risks

### 6.1 Teaching Staff and Quality Assurance

6.1.1 CTTC has 4 permanent members of academic staff: the Principal, Director of Studies, Operations Manager and Administrator. In line with the size of our company and industry norms the tutors are all on freelance contracts, renewable yearly. A number have been with CTTC for many years, some even since the start of the training company nearly 30 years ago.

6.1.2 Given the nature of our industry we have a large pool of qualified and experienced tutors that we can draw on and our occasional teaching and directing staff adverts routinely have a large number of applicants and places are filled rapidly.

6.1.3 **Risk Assessment:** We assess the risk of loss of appropriate teaching staff as low.

6.1.4 **Mitigation:** Our small size means that loss of teaching staff is only ever likely to be limited to very small numbers at any given time. Most teaching staff are multidisciplinary and could be utilised to provide temporary teaching cover according to need, while new teaching staff and University tutor approval can be obtained relatively rapidly. In the event of any “teach out” teaching staff annual contracts would not be renewed.

6.1.5 CTTC has undergone a successful Higher Education Review (HER) with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in 2018 for which we received a commendable outcome. Under the oversight of its Quality Manager, CTTC operates an ongoing Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and in addition has met all Quality Assurance obligations with its partner University.

- 6.1.6 No major changes to CTTC procedures and protocols or methods of teaching and assessment are planned in the immediate future. There is an ongoing commitment to staff development and regular, proportionate and professional monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.

## **6.2 Principal, Management Staff and Governing Body**

- 6.2.1 Our organisational structure is based on a small management team, led by a Principal and overseen by the Governing Body. The risk scenario would involve temporary or permanent loss of staff or members of the Governing Body due to illness, accident or job mobility.
- 6.2.2 **Risk Assessment:** The risk of loss of appropriate management staff is seen as medium as most have worked for the company for many years and have great loyalty and passion for the work that they do, however job change, accident and illness is always a possibility. The Principal is the sole shareholder in the company and is committed to its development and growth.
- 6.2.3 **Mitigation:** The senior management team are trained and experienced in covering for each other in the event of absence. Insurance is in place to cover any financial loss due to extended absence. Our Governing Body operate in a voluntary capacity and so would not be affected by a “teach out” eventuality and meet twice a year so absence is not expected. The nature of the industry is such that there is a surfeit of experienced and qualified individuals who could be recruited to take on management staff roles if required.

## **6.3 Premises and Physical Resources**

- 6.3.1 CTTC is based in the professional The Courtyard Theatre, which has a theatre, studio, rehearsal spaces and offices. The premises are leased from The Courtyard Theatre. These facilities are required for the delivery of the degree programme and other courses.
- 6.3.2 **Risk Assessment:** The risk of non-availability of the premises and its facilities due to unforeseen circumstances is seen as low because of the following mitigating circumstances.
- 6.3.3 **Mitigation:** The rental of the premises has been fixed for the next four years, with a further 15 years from 2022, and business interruption and continuation insurance is in place and renewed on an annual basis. The insurance also covers terrorism and force majeure.
- 6.3.4 CTTC operates a flexible lease and management deal with its landlords. The flexible lease arrangement means that there are controls in place for the use of additional space on top of the initially timetabled space requirements and this also works the other way in allowing a ‘handback’ of booked space in the event it is not required by CTTC.
- 6.3.5 Teaching resources such as dance floors, PA systems, computers, lighting, ballet bars and the library are all maintained and enhanced annually and are considered company assets.

## 6.4 Validating Body

- 6.4.1 CTTC currently has a relationship with only one validating partner: Buckinghamshire New University.
- 6.4.2 **Risk Assessment:** The risk of discontinuation of function of our validating partner is considered low. The risk of our non-compliance with their requirements is also considered low.
- 6.4.3 **Mitigation:** CTTC has a very good, ongoing and close relationship with members of academic, registry and partnership staff at BNU. We adhere to their policies, such as admissions, and comply with all their requirement for approvals, quality assurance and annual monitoring. To date our annual reports have all been accepted and we have received positive feedback from the Link Tutor and External Examiner. We continue to regularly monitor and enhance our provision and create and follow action plans to enhance best practice.
- 6.4.4 BNU are also collaborating with us to expand our portfolio and to create a five year strategic plan to help guide our development as an organisation.
- 6.4.5 BNU has all the usual governance, policies and insurance protection in place to cover identified risks. There are also mechanisms relating to continuation of teaching for students in our contract with Bucks and this serves as a protection of students’ learning.

## 6.5 Financial Performance

- 6.5.1 CTTC is currently designated for student support by the Secretary of State. Approximately 75% of students utilise student support for tuition fees with some students also taking advantage of maintenance loans. Over the last year CTTC has satisfied financial sustainability checks with HEFCE, the Department of Education, and BNU.
- 6.5.2 **Risk Assessment:** The current risk of discontinuation of operation of CTTC due to financial elements is considered low.
- 6.5.3 **Mitigation:** CTTC currently operates a modest reserve fund to cover operating, or emergency, costs for a limited period of time. This is fund is being added to each year to strengthen financial foundations.
- 6.5.4 Our recruitment cycle over the last five years has seen an increase in applicants, with 20% being offered places. We see this as a strong application process with the risk of decreased applications being low. We are also seeking to expand and diversify our revenue stream with the addition of new undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and specialist short courses.
- 6.5.5 CTTC has full Commercial Combined and Terrorism insurance in place that includes business interruption (12 months gross revenue), material damage, public and employer’s liability and legal protection.

## **7. Refund of Tuition Fees and Compensation**

7.1 CTTC is expanding its financial reserves to provide refunds and/or compensation where appropriate and this is built into our budget and financial planning. In recognition of the changing higher education financial landscape CTTC are actively increasing our available cash reserves year on year (please also see our CTTC Refunds and Compensation Policy).

7.2 CTTC’s full Commercial Combined and Terrorism insurance covers compensation for loss of material goods, personal injury and other eventualities and we are actively investigating opportunities to also insure refund and compensation against relevant costs.

## **8. Communication**

8.1 A summary of this plan will be published on our website, on our Student Portal and in our Student Handbook. This means it can be accessed both internally and externally by current students and applicants as well as by all staff and other stakeholders.

8.2 The BNU SPP is referenced in their Terms and Conditions of Admission which we are also subject to and is published on their website. These Terms and Conditions are accepted by students at the start of their studies as part of the BNU formal enrolment process.

8.3 Development of this Plan has been undertaken in consultation with our Senior Management Team, Advisory Board, members of the new CTTC Governing Body and Student Representatives/Company Managers and submitted to BNU.

## **9. Annual Review**

9.1 This Plan will be subject to annual review by the CTTC Management Committee and the Governing Body, Student Representatives/Company Managers, BNU and any other relevant stakeholders. This will ensure that the Plan remains relevant to the changing needs of the college and its students, educational partners and stakeholders.

<sup>1</sup> [BNU Student Protection Plan Policy](#). Version Number: 1.1. Published Oct 2018 approved by Council/OfS.