



Missio Dei
Leadership & Theological College

Student Protection and Continuation of Studies Plan

Missio Dei Leadership and Theological College is committed to the welfare of those students who enrol on programmes of study with us. We recognise that students invest a great deal of time and effort, as well as money in choosing and enrolling on a programme. Consequently, we will endeavour to ensure the continuation of programmes, in a form as close as possible to that for which students enrolled. This is set out more fully in the 'Our Commitment' statement.

1) Risks to the continuation of provision

We have identified the following areas of risk in relation to the continuation of provision.

- A strategic decision by Assemblies of God Inc. to discontinue the academic provision at Missio Dei College
- The unanticipated departure of key staff
- Low enrolment numbers, affecting the financial viability of Missio Dei College
- The loss of University validation, affecting recruitment, financial viability and the possibility of applying for designation student support
- Failure to meet UK expectations following a QAA Higher Education Review, affecting credibility and recruitment, our relationship with the validating University and the possibility of applying for designation for student support
- The loss of designation for student support
- A major disaster affecting the use of the premises.

2) Informing students

In accordance with commitments made to students (e.g. in the Admissions Policy and Our Commitment statement), we will communicate any changes to students as early as possible, and give clear information and possible options. Where possible, students will be involved in discussions about ways forward, through Student Representatives.

3) Mitigation/management of risk

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the HE provision continues. Where there are disruptions, we will take all reasonable steps to minimise the effect on services.

Action taken to manage or mitigate risk is as follows:

3.1. *A strategic decision by Assemblies of God Inc. to discontinue the academic provision at Missio Dei College*

Assemblies of God Inc. has repeatedly expressed its commitment to maintain the academic provision of Missio Dei College and therefore we deem this risk to be low. The primary risk factor here will be the ongoing financial viability of Missio Dei College (see also below).

Details relating to the closure of Missio Dei College as an HE Provider are set out below: 4. Action in the event of non-continuation of some or all of our provision.

3.2. *The unanticipated departure of key staff*

Missio Dei College has a small, dedicated staff, who are committed to the College and to its student body. Because of the close working relationship of staff, and their familiarity with one another's roles, it is possible for existing staff to step into the roles of key staff members who may leave.

There is sufficient expertise among faculty to offer cover for most taught modules. Where necessary we will bring in visiting lecturers to cover other areas of specialist study, until new staff appointments can be made

The risk to the continuation of provision is therefore very low.

3.3. *Low enrolment numbers, affecting the financial viability of Missio Dei College*

Missio Dei College depends to a significant level on student fees, and low enrolment has a significant effect on finances. Action taken to increase recruitment includes:

- Raising awareness of Missio Dei College through advertising and by personal contact and promotional talks and videos within our main constituencies
- Increasing the advertising budget as necessary

We are also aware of the strategic possibility of linking with other similar institutions with a view to sharing resources and minimising financial risk.

Assuming the continuation of the present cohorts, Assemblies of God Inc. has sufficient funds in reserve to ensure that the academic provision can be maintained for at least three years following low student intakes, allowing measures to be put in place to improve recruitment, and with it the College's financial position, without affecting students currently enrolled.

The risk to the continuation of provision is therefore low.

Details relating to the closure of Missio Dei College as an HE Provider are set out below: 4. Action in the event of non-continuation of some or all of our provision.

3.4. *Loss of University validation*

In order to mitigate the risk of losing University validation we have taken the following steps:

- The maintenance of a strong working relationship with the validating University (University of Chester), including regular contact with University

staff, attendance at Partnership days, conferences, workshops and other events organised by the University.

- Regular reports to the University, including responses to External Examiner reports.
- Compliance with the terms and conditions set out in the Organisational Agreement, Partnership Agreement, Validation Agreement and appropriate University of Chester Handbooks setting out the responsibilities of partner institutions.

The most recent review of the Partnership Agreement, and revalidation of programmes was in June 2020 and our validation was renewed for the next five years. The new BA programme, the BA in Theology and Christian Leadership, was approved and validated. Therefore, the risk for this low. It was also agreed that our we would no longer accept any new students for the BA in Biblical Studies and Theology, so this course is now being taught out.

In the event of the withdrawal of the validation agreement, and the failure to set in place a validation agreement with another partner, the relevant provision below (4. Action in the event of non-continuation of some or all of our provision) will apply.

3.5. *Failure to meet UK expectations following a QAA Quality and Standards Review*

In order to mitigate this risk of failing to meet UK expectations when the need for a QSR arises, we have taken the following steps:

- The production of an action plan to ensure compliance with the recommendations and requirements from previous inspections
- Continuing familiarity with all aspects of the Quality Code, and compliance with all relevant expectations.
- Effective academic governance, primarily through the Board of Studies and Senior Leadership team.

The most recent HER(AP) took place in December 2017 and concluded that we met UK expectations in all areas. We anticipate ongoing compliance. Where there are shortcomings we have systems in place to respond to requirements and submit an action plan in order to secure a positive judgement before the start of the next academic year.

The risk to the continuation of provision is therefore low.

3.6. *The loss of designation for student support*

Most of our students rely on student support, and we anticipate that the loss of student support would have a significant effect on the financial viability of the Missio Dei College.

In order to mitigate risk, we take the following steps:

- Ensure that Assemblies of God Inc. remains financially viable, with appropriate reserves to ensure the continuation of HE provision through Missio Dei College, for at least three years.
- Ensure that we satisfy all regulatory requirements placed on us by the Office for Students for redesignation of programmes.

We believe that the action taken makes the risk to the continuation of provision fairly low.

3.7. *A major situation affecting the use of the premises.*

Where some or all of the campus becomes unusable, we will look at the following possibilities to minimise disruption:

- Relocating provision to another location, possibly hiring rooms in local churches or hotels. This will be done in conjunction with the University of Chester, and we will carry out appropriate impact assessments to ensure the suitability of alternative premises, and that disruption to students is minimised.
- Revising the timetable to allow for teaching to take place in alternative venues.

We consider the risk to the loss of provision to be low.

4) Action in the event of non-continuation of some or all of our provision

4.1. Whilst we assess the risk to the continuation of academic provision to be fairly low, and we are taking appropriate action to mitigate those risks, the following measures are in place in the event that the continuation of some or all of our academic provision is no longer possible.

4.2. In the event that Missio Dei College can no longer offer the current level of academic provision, we will take all reasonable steps to minimise the disruption to students. In particular, we undertake the following:

4.2.1. Where possible, we will reduce the provision gradually, enabling all students currently enrolled, to complete their chosen programme of study at Missio Dei College. This will take place under the oversight of the University of Chester.

- In the event that University validation is withdrawn, our Organisational Agreement with the University of Chester allows that the terms of the agreement will remain in force for students already on the programme. As part of those conditions, no new students will be recruited to the validated programmes. During the teach-out we will look into the possibility of validation with another institution.
- In the event that Missio Dei College programmes lose designation for student support, we will work with relevant funding bodies to allow students already in receipt of funding to complete their studies.

4.2.2. Where appropriate, we will consider merging with another, similar, institution, in order to maintain all, or part of our current provision.

4.2.3. Where students choose not to accept the teach-out of their programme, Missio Dei College, under the oversight of the University of Chester, will:

- Facilitate the transfer of students to an alternative, equivalent, programme, with a different provider.

- Ensure that all credits obtained by students are recorded, and facilitate the transfer of credits to another institution so that students do not need to start a new programme from scratch.

4.3. Where Missio Dei College ceases to operate as a HE provider, the students become the responsibility of the University of Chester, who may consider re-locating students to other institutions or to the University of Chester to complete their degrees. In such circumstances, Missio Dei College will co-operate with the University in facilitating the transfer of students to other institutions.

- 5) In such cases, Missio Dei College will offer financial compensation to students where they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss as a direct result of the disruption of their studies. For more details, see the Refunds and Compensation Policy, on the College website (<https://www.missiodei.ac.uk/student-life/policies/>)

6) Review and monitoring of the Student Protection and Continuation of Studies Plan

This plan will be monitored and reviewed as part of the Enhancement Action Plan at the February/March Extended Board of Studies. This will include Student Representatives, who will give feedback on behalf of the student body.

Any amendments will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team for ratification.