

Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: AAP Education Limited trading as Escape Studios

Provider's UKPRN: 10042570

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Student protection plan for the period 2026-27

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students, how those risks may differ based on your students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

Our assessment of the range and level of risks to the continuation of study for our students is set out below. Our assessment of the identified risks below has been carried out with close consideration to and in conjunction with our internal strategic Risk Register, approved by our Governing Body.

Risk of ceasing operation

1. The risk to continuation of study for students due to us ceasing operation is **low** because we have a guarantee in the form of a legally binding collaborative partnership agreement between AAP Education Ltd (Escape Studios) and Coventry University as our validating partner. The terms of this agreement guarantee that, in the event of cease of operations or termination of said agreement, Coventry University shall either permit continuation of existing obligations, or make alternative suitable arrangements, to enable student(s) to complete their programme(s). This guarantees to ensure that all students enrolled on a programme, or who have accepted an offer for enrolment on a programme and subsequently meet the entry requirements, have the opportunity to progress to completion of their study; and to do so in accordance with the applicable academic regulations, in accordance with the terms and conditions of their programme of study and in compliance with the Office for Students (OfS) expectations for quality and standards in place of the existing Designated Quality Body (DQB) for Higher Education.
2. The risk to continuation of study for our students, who are currently on teach-out of the University of Kent partnership, due to us ceasing operation is **low** as we have a teach-out agreement with the University of Kent setting out the University of Kent's obligations to existing students and a commitment by Coventry University to ensure sufficient space be made available in the current premises for the purposes of teach-out.

Risk of losing validation partner

3. The risk that we will no longer continue to be validated by Coventry University (CU) is **low**. The collaboration with CU is a strategic partnership which goes beyond a validation agreement, as CU holds part ownership of Escape Studios' parent group entity and therefore continuation, collaboration and success of the partnership is with the benefit of both parties in mind. As noted above, commitment to ensuring that all students and eligible offer holders have opportunity to progress to completion of their study on their programme, even in the case of cease of partnership, is guaranteed within the collaborative partnership agreement with CU.

We are currently teaching out the existing University of Kent (UoK) validation partnership, through stringent teach-out mechanisms to support each student to completion of their programme whilst maintaining a quality experience for those students. It is anticipated that the period of teach-out for the University of Kent programmes will last until such time as all applicable students have completed or withdrawn from their courses, and those students will continue to access all facilities and quality of experience as an Escape Studios student until they complete their studies. The strength of the partnership, through close collaboration and co-operation of leadership to support the teach-out period, continues.

Risk of Moving Location

4. There is a **low risk** that we will move from our campus at 6 Mitre Passage. We successfully relocated to our current campus in July 2023 in time for the commencement of the 2023/24 academic year. Our existing leases for our current operational spaces, which are sublet from Coventry University (our validating partner), run until at least 2030 with no break clause, except in the event of insolvency in which case our arrangements for teach-out provisions occur (as set out in section 1 above). As our leases are sublet from CU, CU remain the tenants and the liability of the subleases would therefore revert to CU in the event of AAP failure.

In 2024, Escape Studios acquired additional space within its current building to align with our long-term estates strategy which is reflective of our strength in increase of student numbers and our commitment to protecting the student experience.

Risk of non-continuation of specialised programmes and/or modules

5. The risk that we may not be able to continue to deliver our specialised programmes and/or specialised modules in VFX, Computer Animation or Game Art was identified as moderate because the specialist nature of the subjects means that recruiting staff with the relevant knowledge and expertise can be difficult. However, we have reduced the likelihood that this risk will crystallise to **low** through the following measures:

- Recruiting “studio assistants” who are specialists in the subject to assist in the classroom alongside the tutors. These studio assistants are being trained up to become tutors in their own right.
- Having very close contacts with industry, including involving them in the design of our programmes, in mentoring students and in assessing student work which means we could take on someone from industry on a secondment to cover any recruitment gap (and we have budgeted for the need to provide an appropriate salary for this)
- Using specialist recruitment agencies to source talent
- Advertising well in advance of the need for new tutors to ensure that we have sufficient time to recruit.

Risk of loss of UKVI sponsor license

6. Escape Studios is a newly awarded UKVI sponsor ‘on probation’, and non-compliance with UKVI requirements could lead to withdrawal of our sponsor license. We assess the likelihood of this risk crystallising as low. We have enhanced our existing robust regulatory compliance frameworks and processes, at both operational and strategic levels, to ensure the additional and essential requirements from UKVI are adequately prepared for and delivered across both academic and corporate functions.

2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

7. We do not consider any of the risks identified under 1 to 6 in the section above are reasonably likely to crystallise, for the reasons given in that section.

3. Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

8. A copy of our "Policy for Refunds and Compensation to students in the event that Escape Studios no longer continues to offer programmes of study" is annexed to this plan (Annex D1).
9. We will implement this policy by giving effect to it in our Terms and Conditions for students.
10. We have sufficient cash reserves to fund our student liabilities, and actively monitor and control cash to ensure this remains the case throughout the financial year.

4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan

11. We will publicise our student protection plan to current and future students by putting it on our website. In addition, we will give effect to the refunds and compensation policy at Annex A in our terms and conditions (which we send with offers to students and which students sign to accept their offer). The refunds and compensation policy is relevant to both home and international students.
12. We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our student protection plan when they propose changes to courses, or modes of delivery or locations by including a student impact assessment as part of the documentation required before such changes can be approved.
13. If we need to implement the student protection plan we will, in as far as is reasonably possible, give students a minimum of one month's notice. We will do this by informing any affected students in writing and also give them an opportunity to meet with the appropriate member(s) of staff.
14. We will add our student protection plan to the review schedule for all our policies and procedures and ensure that it is reviewed annually. We will involve our students in the review by consulting with student representatives via the Student Voice Forums and (c) consulting with the ESSA (Escape Studios Students' Association) before making recommendations to the Executive Team and Governing Body as to whether or not changes should be made and if so what these should be.

15. Both UoK and CU (our validating partners) have agreed in our respective partnership agreements that if for any reason the agreement is terminated, the interests of the students will be paramount and all efforts will be made by both parties to ensure they are able to complete the programme.
16. If our student protection plan had to be implemented, we would communicate with students in writing and invite them to a one-to-one meeting with their personal tutor for advice and guidance (if a number of students were affected, we would also hold open meetings as well as one-to-ones).
17. We will develop an advice booklet for use by students in the event that we need to implement the measures in our student protection plan. We will take legal advice in the drafting of this booklet. The booklet will also point students to other sources of information, advice and guidance.

Annex D1

Escape Studios Policy for Refunds and Compensation to students in the event that Escape Studios no longer continues to offer programmes of study

1. We consider that the interests of students are paramount and all efforts will be made at all times to ensure they are able to complete the programmes on which they are enrolled at Escape Studios (ES)

Teach Out

2. If a programme or programmes no longer continue to be offered at ES we intend to “teach out” all existing students, and to do so at ES, so that students can complete in accordance with the applicable academic regulations and in accordance with the terms and conditions of their programme of study. This is provided for in the legally binding corporate undertaking provided by our parent company.
3. In the unlikely event that a programme or programmes no longer continue to be offered at ES and it is not possible for us to “teach out” existing students at ES we will:
 - (a) facilitate the awarding by our validating partner of any exit award to which the student is entitled and the issuing of a transcript showing any additional modules which the student has successfully completed.
 - (b) use our best endeavours to find an alternative institution (where possible in London) at which the student will be given the opportunity to complete their degree (or other award as applicable).

Refund of Tuition Fees

4. If a programme or programmes no longer continue to be offered at ES and it is not possible for us to offer students the opportunity to complete their degree (or other award as applicable) either at ES or elsewhere, we will refund all the tuition fees that the student has paid for the programme:
 - a) In the case of students in receipt of a tuition fee loan from the Student Loan Company (“SLC”), we will reset the tuition fee for the programme to zero. This will mean that the tuition fee is returned to the SLC and the student will no longer owe the SLC that portion of the fee;
 - b) For any student who has paid their own fees, we will refund the tuition fees paid;
 - c) For any student whose fees are paid by a sponsor, we will refund to the sponsor the tuition fees paid.
5. However, if a student is not able to continue their study at ES and we arrange for the student to have the opportunity to continue at another institution (as outlined at 3b above), but the student unreasonably chooses not to continue their study (either at all, or not at the institution we have arranged), we will not refund any tuition fees.
6. If a student is not able to continue their study at ES but we arrange for the student to have the opportunity to continue at another institution (as outlined at 3b above), the tuition fee at the new institution may be higher. This may be because the new institution has set their fees at a higher level, or because the student had the benefit of a fee waiver, scholarship or bursary for study at ES. If this situation arises we will pay, for the remaining period of study, the difference between the actual tuition fee for the student if they had continued at ES and the fee charged for that student by the new institution.

Compensation for Travel Costs

7. If a programme or programmes no longer continue to be offered at ES and it is not possible for us to offer students the opportunity to complete their degree (or other award as applicable) either at ES or elsewhere, we will refund the cost of their travel to and from Escape during the period they were studying with us.
8. However, if we arrange for a student to have the opportunity to continue at another institution (as outlined in 3b above) but the student chooses not to continue their study, we will not refund their travel fees.
9. If:
 - (a) ES stops teaching a programme or programmes at 6 Mitre Passage and relocates teaching of the programme(s) to another location outside Transport for London Zones 1 or 2; or
 - (b) A student is not able to continue their study at ES but we arrange for the student to have the opportunity to continue at another institution (as outlined at 3b above) which is outside Transport for London Zones 1 or 2,we will pay any additional travel costs incurred by a student which is caused by this.
10. However, if we arrange for a student to have the opportunity to continue at another institution (as outlined in 3b above) but the student chooses to go to a different institution other than that arranged by ES, we will not pay any extra travel costs caused by this.

Compensation for Accommodation Costs

11. If a programme or programmes no longer continue to be offered at ES and it is not possible for us to offer students the opportunity to complete their degree (or other award as applicable) either at ES or elsewhere, and if they moved out of the family home to study at ES, we will refund the cost of their accommodation during the period they were studying with us.
12. However, if we arrange for a student to have the opportunity to continue at another institution (as outlined in 3b above) but the student chooses not to continue their study, we will not refund the cost of their accommodation during the period they were studying with us.
13. If:
 - (a) ES stops teaching a programme or programmes at 6 Mitre Passage and relocates to another location outside Transport for London Zones 1- 6; or
 - (b) A student is not able to continue their study at ES but we arrange for the student to have the opportunity to continue at another institution (as outlined at 3b above) which is located outside Transport for London Zones 1-6,

and if either of these situations reasonably causes the student to change their accommodation, we will refund “wasted accommodation costs” caused by this. “Wasted accommodation costs” means any of the following which are caused by early termination of their current accommodation agreement:

- a. The loss of a deposit
- b. Payment for a period of time during which the student is no longer able to use the accommodation due to moving location and for which the student is unable to get a refund.

However, if we arrange for a student to have the opportunity to continue at another institution (as outlined in 3b above) but the student chooses to go to a different institution other than that arranged by ES we will not pay any wasted accommodation.

