



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



# Teach Out Policy

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## Purpose

1. Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) continuously strives to improve, update, and develop its academic portfolio and will occasionally decide to discontinue recruitment to specific programmes where they are being replaced, substantially amended, or through the termination of a partnership provider.
2. The University is committed to maintaining academic quality and standards, safeguarding equality, and student support throughout the teach-out process, ensuring that students from all backgrounds are supported fairly and without disadvantage.
3. This policy outlines the purpose of the teach-out and market exit process at Buckinghamshire New University (BNU). Teach-out and/or market exit refers to situations where an education provider ceases delivery of a programme, or removes support of delivery at a partner institution, and commits to ensuring that currently enrolled students can complete their programme of study. The process ensures that learners enrolled on affected programmes can complete their studies with minimal disruption while maintaining academic standards and safeguarding student interests.

## Applicability and Scope

4. This policy applies to both internally delivered programmes and those offered in partnership with external institutions. It covers course closures, partnership terminations, and partner programme teach-outs.
5. The policy addresses scenarios whereby the University no longer recruits new cohorts to specific programmes either taught at BNU or a partner provider, and supports currently enrolled learners to complete their programme of study.
6. This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Student Protection Plan](#) and the [Programme Suspension and/or Closure Policy](#) and aligns to the Office for Students (OfS) [market exit plan](#). Partner institutions should also refer to their relevant Operations Manual and any supporting documents that detail the contractual arrangements between the University and the Partner.

## Regulatory Compliance

7. Once a programme or partnership arrangement has been approved for discontinuation and enters a teach-out status, all expectations to quality assurance and enhancements in teaching and learning remain in effect, including annual monitoring, external examining and the regulatory compliance with University policies and procedures.
8. This policy aligns with the Office for Students (OfS) guidance on student protection and market exit planning. It ensures compliance with OfS requirements for safeguarding student interests, mitigating risks, and maintaining academic standards during teach-out periods. OfS guidance can be found here - [Protecting the interests of students when universities and colleges close - Office for Students](#).

## Principles of Teach-Out

9. There are several reasons why a programme or partnership agreement may be discontinued. These include but are not limited to:
  - The programme, its mode of delivery, or its delivery location may no longer support the strategic aims of the University.
  - Demand for the programme has declined, as indicated by consistently low application and enrolment data.
  - The University may be unable to maintain the relevance and quality of the curriculum, facilities, or learning resources, making continued delivery unviable.
  - Delivery of the programme may not be achievable to the academic standards required for students to successfully meet the intended learning outcomes.
  - The programme may cease to comply with the standards or expectations of external regulators or professional accrediting organisations.
  - An existing partnership agreement may expire without renewal, or strategic changes may necessitate changes to or termination of the partnership arrangement.
10. Any teach-outs will be confirmed by the University Strategy Group (USG) or delegated group(s) as applicable, which will appoint an appropriate Dean of College, or their delegate, to manage the process.
11. BNU is committed to:
  - Ensuring students can complete their studies under the same conditions as at the point of entry to the course.
  - Providing alternative study options if necessary, including transfer opportunities if possible.
  - Maintaining academic quality and support services during the teach-out period.
  - Transparent communication with students and stakeholders throughout the process.
  - Continue regular monitoring of academic delivery to ensure standards are upheld.
12. The University will ensure that no learner is disadvantaged by the discontinuation of a programme and that appropriate teach-out plans are in place.

## Partnership Programme Teach-Out

13. When the teach-out of a programme involves a Partner institution, a clear plan must be developed for teaching out existing cohorts, either by guaranteeing the involvement of the Partner in the teach-out or by providing alternative methods to enable learners to achieve their degree without the Partner's involvement.
14. For partnership programmes, BNU will:
  - Engage with partner institutions frequently to ensure the teach-out is on track and address any emerging issues.
  - Honour contractual obligations and regulatory requirements.
  - Work with partner institutions to develop a formal teach-out plan to meet BNU's approval.

- Facilitate student transfers to equivalent programmes within BNU or the partner network, if possible and where deemed necessary.
  - Continue to monitor the quality of delivery until programme completion through regular reporting.
15. The Partner institution will:
- Take all reasonable care and skill to perform the obligations and responsibilities assigned to it through the arrangement of a teach-out plan.
  - Agree to continue to keep all records relating to enrolled learners up to date, including address and contact details and ensure these are available to the University on demand.
  - Maintain appropriate confidentiality of any information or materials supplied by the University during the teach-out period.
  - Refrain from using the University's name and/or logo for any purpose other than as permitted through the teach-out agreement.

## **Components of a Teach-Out Plan**

16. The teach-out plan will be managed by the relevant Dean of College, who will ensure all stakeholders, including the University Strategy Group (USG), the Academic Registry, Admissions, Marketing and Student Recruitment, Finance, and the Pro-Vice Chancellor (External Collaborations), if applicable, are informed of the actions required to facilitate the teach-out process.
17. An audit must be carried out by the Dean or their appointed delegate with appropriate support from the Academic Registry to determine how many learners are enrolled on the programme and will be affected by the teach-out. They must determine which modules or other activities associated with the programme are required to enable learners to complete their programme.
18. A detailed teach-out plan must be developed that includes key dates for teaching out and closing the programme. The plan should include:
- A rationale for the closure of a programme or termination of a partner institution.
  - A named teach-out lead to oversee the management and monitoring of the plan.
  - An outline of the teaching and assessment schedules for all remaining modules, taking into consideration different cohort arrangements.
  - Arrangements for reassessments and timelines that must fall within the teach-out period.
  - Arrangements for learners with outstanding failed modules and consideration of learners with low attendance rates.
  - Plans for managing interrupted returners and adjustments for part-time learners.
  - A list of key academic staff, including their commitment period and continuity plans if academic staff leave during the teach-out period.
  - Access to learning resources, including the library, VLE and specialist facilities.
  - Communication plan with a timeline for stakeholder notifications, including external bodies such as the Office for Students or professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies where applicable, and named points of contact for learner support.

- External examiner arrangements during the teach-out period.
- Assessment Board scheduling, including reassessment timelines.
- Timelines for final awards and graduation.
- A summary of any key risks and mitigation strategies, including contingency planning for unexpected challenges such as transferring learners to alternative provider(s) should the teach-out become unviable.

## Considerations for Outstanding Assessments

19. The University will ensure all reasonable attempts are made to enable learners to complete reassessment work during the teach-out period. The following will apply:
  - Learners who have reached the end of their stage but have failed fewer than 60 credits will be allowed reassessment opportunities within the teach-out period.
  - Learners who have reached the end of their stage but have failed more than 60 credits will not be offered reassessment and will be given an appropriate exit award based on completed credits.
  - If no cohort remains for reassessments, learners will be offered an appropriate exit award based on completed credits.
  - Students on part-time courses or those who have interrupted their studies will be individually reviewed, and options such as transfer to alternative providers, tailored support, or exit awards will be considered.
  - Additional support will be provided to help learners understand their academic standing and possible next steps.
20. Learners will not be offered a repeat year opportunity (where one is normally available) where either of the following apply:
  - Failure to make a genuine attempt at all required reassessment elements.
  - Failure to adhere to the requirements of the University's *Attendance and Engagement Policy*.

## Student Communication and Support

21. BNU prioritises clear and timely communication with learners through:
  - Direct emails and official arrangements through appropriate channels.
  - One-on-one advisory meetings with a Personal Tutor to discuss individual study plans.
  - Dedicated support services, including academic and mental health resources.
  - Opportunities for students to provide feedback and express concerns.
  - Communications will be available in accessible formats upon request to ensure accessibility for all students.

## **Impact on Students and Support Mechanisms**

22. Recognising the potential emotional and academic impact of programme closures, BNU will:
- Provide mental health and well-being support to affected students.
  - Offer academic guidance to help learners make informed decisions about their options.
  - Ensure financial guidance is available to those facing funding or fee-related concerns.
  - Establish a dedicated support team to assist learners throughout the teach-out period.

## **Governance and Responsibilities**

23. The following governance and areas of responsibility will be applied across the University:
- The University Strategy Group (USG) will oversee all teach-out plans and ensure regulatory compliance, including formal approval before implementation.
  - The Academic Registry will coordinate learner communications and support.
  - Deans of College, in association with Programme Leaders, will manage the academic delivery and monitor ongoing quality during the teach-out period.
  - The Pro-Vice Chancellor External Collaborations will oversee arrangements related to partner institutions and monitor partner teach-out delivery.
  - Progress reports on student progression, risk, and support arrangements will be submitted to USG at agreed intervals during the teach-out period.

## **Risk Management and Contingency Planning**

24. To mitigate risks, BNU will:
- Conduct impact assessments before finalising programme closures.
  - Ensure resources are in place to support teach-out commitments.
  - Regularly monitor student progression, retention rates and academic standards during teach-out periods.
  - Ensure that financial viability assessments do not compromise the University's commitment to current learners.
  - Provide alternative arrangements if unforeseen circumstances disrupt the teach-out plan (for example, institutional changes).
  - Produce a final closure report summarising lessons learned to support continuous improvement for future market exits.

## Appendix: Equality Impact Assessment

As a university, we are committed to enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We have a legal (Equality Act 2010) and ethical obligation to ensure our policies, systems and processes are fair, inclusive and ensure every member of the BNU community can thrive.

Whilst we all have protected characteristics, we know there are certain characteristics and communities that are marginalised and underrepresented in Higher Education and the workplace. These are: different ethnicities (including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) Disabled individuals; neurodiverse individuals; pregnancy (including maternity and paternity impact); the LGBT+ community; carers; people of different faiths; people impacted by menopause and individuals from a range of backgrounds including: socio-economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, ex-armed forces, looked after children and care leavers. We also know individuals have multiple intersectional experiences and different points in their lives and careers.

**1. With reference to the above characteristics, in what ways does this policy enhance equality and the access of opportunity at BNU?**

This policy enhances equality and access by ensuring that all students, including those from marginalised and underrepresented groups, are fully supported to complete their studies during a teach-out. It provides tailored support for disabled and neurodiverse students, care leavers, and those with protected characteristics. The policy ensures accessible communication and flexibility for interrupted and part-time students and recognises the intersectional needs of learners at different life stages.

**2. In what ways does the policy adversely impact individuals from marginalised and underrepresented communities?**

While the policy aims to safeguard student progression, there may be indirect adverse impacts, such as increased anxiety and uncertainty for students with additional vulnerabilities. The closure of specialist or access routes could disproportionately affect students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Transfers to alternative provision may also present barriers for disabled students, carers, or those with financial constraints.

**3. How does this proposal work towards achieving the BNU Equality Objectives as outlined in the [Equality Strategy 2023-2028](#)? Please signpost objectives and actions in the BNU Equality Strategy.**

The policy supports BNU's Equality Strategy by advancing an inclusive student experience, addressing attainment gaps, and ensuring accessibility during periods of programme closure. It promotes leadership accountability through formal governance and embeds inclusive practices in managing student transitions. It particularly contributes to objectives 1, 2, and 3 of the Equality Strategy, including providing appropriate support, maintaining academic standards, and safeguarding the student experience for all groups.

**Signed:** 

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