



Student Protection Plan

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Provider's name: **International College of Oriental Medicine (UK) Ltd**

Provider's UKPRN: **10023445**

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Risk assessment for continuity of studies

The International College of Oriental Medicine (IOM) is small organisation, specialising in delivering an Acupuncture programme at the higher education levels. Being highly specialised the college attracts a small number of students on its vocational professional programme which is the oldest of this kind in the UK. Since 1972 our focus on teaching and clinic excellence has secured us a first-class reputation nationally and internationally.

Overall our financial performance is strong, and it is independently audited and overseen by our Board of Governors. Given the strength of ICOM's financial position and its status we assess the risk that we might need to terminate our provision in an unplanned or urgent way, as very low. However, the changing requirements of government agencies make it harder for small Alternative Providers to continue to invest directly in the student learning experience.

Additional resources in terms of staffing, time and materials are diverted into ensuring compliance with an increase range of requirements which pose a significant challenge for the College in the face of erosion by payments to external agencies (the Quality Assurance Agency, the University partner, the Prevent strategy, the HESA surveys, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and Office for Students). This directly impacts the quality of students' learning opportunities since less time is available – from senior management down to support staff – to create, discuss and implement new learning refinements or developments. Consequently, although the college had just been validated by the University of Greenwich until 2022, on February 2018 the ICOM Board of Governors voted unanimously for the college to give formal notice to withdraw from its partnership with the University and from that of the Higher Education Funding Council for England now called the Office

for Students. The college is also withdrawing from its relationship and obligations to the Quality Assurance Agency.

In 2018 ICOM applied for and was granted teach-out designation. **Teach-out designation allows students enrolled prior to September 2018 (and registered with the University partner) to continue to access student tuition and maintenance loans for the remainder of their studies while on their current programme, which was designated up to that point.**

At least until 2022 (when all the students enrolled with the University of Greenwich have completed their degree or withdrawn) the College will continue to have shared responsibilities with the University of Greenwich with regard to programme specifications, processes for curriculum change and development, staff development and operational aspects of academic regulations. The role of the University is to maintain responsibility for quality assurance, programme monitoring, link tutor monitoring and for student progression and award examination boards. Students enrolled prior to September 2018 abide by the University's academic regulations for taught awards and University student policies. Furthermore, Teach-out students at ICOM are covered by the [UoG Student Protection Plan 2018-19](#).

Besides interrupting its partnership with the University of Greenwich, the college is not terminating its activities; it is maintaining the same credit system, and no change has been made in terms of curriculum, staffing or assessment. Both the students enrolled until September 2017 who belong to the University of Greenwich and the ones enrolled with ICOM in September 2018 will receive the same award (Licentiate in Acupuncture which offers entry to professional registration in the UK) as all students who have studied at the college since 1977. This implies that teach-out students following the part time route (enrolled with the University of Greenwich before September 2018 and therefore entitled to receive a degree award) will attend the same classes attended by students who will receive a Licentiate in Acupuncture only. **The partnership with the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board, who accredits the college under the auspices of the British Acupuncture Council, will remain.**

According to our agreement with the University of Greenwich and as reported in [UoG Student Protection Plan 2018-19](#) **students will be taught out by the University** (no students will be required to transfer because the period of designation for teach out is shorter than the period it takes for the student to complete their course)

In the event that a programme's option is suspended or terminated

At ICOM we routinely consider the ongoing viability of our programme's options of study (in our case the viability of weekend and weekday options) through our annual planning process. Any potential risk to continuing provision is addressed first at Management and Academic Advisor Board meetings and then at Board of Governors meetings.

In the event that one of the study options we offer is not viable or sustainable, students are advised not to attempt to withdraw or interrupt their studies and are offered two different options:

1. To move to the equivalent option still running at the college (i.e. moving from weekend to weekday mode of delivery); and when this is not possible
2. ICOM, in agreement with its university partner, will attempt to arrange bespoke delivery modes in order to offer the support students need to obtain their qualification.

Transfer Plan

Should it prove impossible to make alternative provision for enrolled students affected by the termination of one of our mode of delivery, there are still opportunities to transfer to another programme accredited by the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB) and receive a professional licentiate to practice Acupuncture.

Students will be provided with all the information they need (i.e. transcript of marks and documentation of academic progression) in order to make the transfer as smooth as possible. Staff members responsible for the communication will be the student's personal tutor and the Student Administrator who will provide the documentation and guide the student through the steps needed to complete the transfer successfully.

All Acupuncture teaching institutions in the UK, besides the final qualification gained on programme completion, do not provide students with Exit Awards. However, ICOM and all the UK acupuncture teaching institutions offering a degree award are accredited by the BAAB. Principals from BAAB accredited institutions share best practice and policies at the Council of Heads of Acupuncture Colleges (CHAC) and on 19/06/19 they laid out the CHAC Student Transfers Advisory Document which reports the procedure to follow in case of transfer (reported below).

Council of Heads of Acupuncture Courses

Student Transfers Advisory Document

Aims and Intentions:

- For the benefit of the student: to build transparency into the transfer process
- For the benefit of colleges: to protect good professional relationships

Underlying values and commitments:

Colleges subscribing to this policy:

- agree to act in the best interests of the student wherever possible
- agree to act in such a way as to preserve good relations between colleges
- agree not to act in such a way as to solicit transfers
- undertake not to denigrate another college or its procedures either overtly or by implication. With this in mind, to hold a clear boundary when entering into discussions with students about their history with the original college

Proposed procedure:

1. The student contacts another college and considers transferring
2. The receiving college gives an informal indication that the student would be eligible to apply and seeks agreement from the student that the original college will be contacted by the receiving college. The student may wish to inform the original college first

3. The student makes a formal application, and an interview will usually be arranged, and then the original college makes a transcript available to the student
4. If the transfer goes ahead, the receiving college then makes a binding contract with the student (financial or contractual)

Note: A college's views about a student should only be disclosed if evidenced by the student having failed an assessment or been through a grievance procedure, subject to the requirements of the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation.