



## **Programme Suspension and Closure Policy**

Date of first approval: October 2024  
Approved by: Academic Board

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy sets out the process for the closure or suspension of higher education programmes at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. It aligns with the School's Student Protection Plan and the Higher Education Terms of Enrolment. Consideration will be given to the full implications of suspension or closure on the School's obligation to its students and the impact on the student experience throughout the process.
- 1.2. The process consists of six stages, or five if the process is not taking place immediately prior to/during an admissions cycle.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. This policy is applicable to all taught and research provision delivered online and on campus.
- 2.2. Where regulated programmes are closed or suspended, guidance must be sought from the relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body.
- 2.3. Modules that are suspended or closed as part of this process should be noted on the Programme Suspension and Closure Form, but the suspension or closure of individual modules (as opposed to whole programmes) should be dealt with using the module and programme amendment process.
- 2.4. Registry will provide a list of suspended and closed programmes each year to Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

## **3. Definitions**

- 3.1. Closure is when there are no students enrolled on the programme. Initially the programme will be closed to applicants and therefore not accepting new students, but the programme will not be fully closed until there are no students enrolled on the programme, including those who have intermitted.
- 3.2. Suspension is where a decision has been taken not to recruit to and/or to deliver a programme for a defined period. Programmes can only be suspended for a maximum period of 36 months. After this time the suspension must be reviewed by Academic Board, and a decision made to either reinstate the programme or follow this process to close it.

## **4. Introduction**

- 4.1. It may sometimes be necessary close or temporarily suspend a programme for a defined time period.
- 4.2. The School Executive Committee will initially consider the proposal and rationale for suspension or closure of a programme. The Academic Board will then make a recommendation to the Board of Governors who will give final approval of decisions to close or suspend a programme.

- 4.3. All decisions to suspend or close programmes must be taken in good time, taking into consideration the situation for current students, applicants and offer holders. Therefore, if a decision to suspend or close a programme is taken late in the admissions cycle, it may not be possible to approve at institution level. This is because applicants might be able to claim financial compensation from the School.

## **5. Principles**

- 5.1. Programme Leaders should discuss the proposal to close or suspend the programme and the options available with the department's Vice Principal and Head of Administration in the first instance. The impact on current students and other programmes (if any) should be considered, along with any transitional arrangements. Following School Executive Committee, Programme Board, Planning and Operations Committee and Academic Board consideration of the proposal, the final decision to close or suspend a programme rests with the Board of Governors.
- 5.2. Where partnerships with other institutions would be affected by a closure or suspension of a programme, the Department will need to check the memorandum of agreement prior to starting the formal closure or suspension process to understand the implications, including whether the agreement may need to be renegotiated, varied or terminated.
- 5.3. Evidence to support proposals for closure or suspension should be referenced in the Programme Suspension and Closure Form.
- 5.4. Transitional arrangements will need to be put in place to support students currently undertaking the programme and protect the quality of the student experience through to completion of study. These should be detailed on the Programme Suspension and Closure Form and will need to include arrangements for students on intermission or who are re-sitting. It is expected that there will be a phased approach to closure or suspension, which will enable existing students to complete their programme of study. Should exceptional circumstances mean this may not be possible, alternative arrangements will be put in place to ensure students can complete their studies in line with the School's Student Protection Plan.
- 5.5. Transitional arrangements should be overseen and monitored by the Programme Board, reporting to Academic Board as required.
- 5.6. It should be noted that once applicants have accepted an offer of a place on a programme, it is unlikely to be possible to close or suspend the programme unless it can be proven that there are no suitable alternative arrangements available. Decisions to suspend or close a programme should therefore be made as early as possible in the application cycle, prior to offer-making, to avoid this situation.

## **6. Programme closure or suspension process**

- 6.1. If a Department internally decides that it would like to close or suspend a programme just before or during an admissions cycle, it may be possible to stop any more applicants applying. In this case, Registry and Marketing should be contacted in writing to request that applications are temporarily paused while the rest of the

procedure is followed. Registry will remove the option to apply for the programme from eGO, and Marketing will make any appropriate amendments to the relevant webpage(s).

- 6.2. The process for closure or suspension of a programme then officially starts with the relevant VP giving initial notification to School Executive Committee.
- 6.3. Consultation with current students and other stakeholders (including partner institutions where appropriate) about the potential suspension or closure of the programme should then take place, in advance of formal discussions at the Programme Board and Academic Board and of submission of the form to Registry. Any feedback or concerns should be included in the Programme Suspension and Closure Form. Students and other stakeholders should usually be given at least 3 weeks to respond to the consultation and it should take place before any final decision is made. Programme Teams should then maintain regular dialogue with students throughout the closure or suspension process. Where possible, students should be assured that arrangements will be in place for them to complete their studies.
- 6.4. The completed Programme Suspension and Closure Form and any proposed correspondence for applicants and/or offer holders should be considered by the Programme Board.
- 6.5. Following a recommendation for approval from the Programme Board, the Programme Closure and Suspension Form should be considered by the Academic Board who will liaise with the Board of Governors for final approval of the closure or suspension. The Head of Administration will have responsibility for notifying Planning and Operations Committee for any operational considerations.
- 6.6. The Department should ensure that current students are formally notified of the decision to suspend or close the programme after final approval, and that any transitional arrangements are in place (see above). At this point applicant and offer holders must also be notified.
- 6.7. Registry should then take the relevant SITS records out of use as appropriate through the closure process.