

**Exceptional Refunds and Compensation Policy 2018-2021**

The University Centre Weston (UCW) Exceptional Refunds and Compensation Policy only applies to programme discontinuation where it is not possible, or feasible, to ‘teach out’ a programme at UCW.

Should a programme be discontinued, UCW will always seek to complete the provision to ensure that the student academic experience is maintained, with every effort made to minimise inconvenience to students. The design of the programme should also ensure that the qualification holds its value over time.

If it is not possible to ‘teach out’ the programme at UCW, in the first instance students will be supported in transferring to an appropriate HE provider. If this is not feasible, the Exceptional Refunds and Compensation Policy is then applicable.

**Continuation at a partner university**

If it is not possible to ‘teach out’ a programme, UCW will seek to transfer students into a subsequent year of study at one of its partner universities. In the majority of cases equivalent qualifications are available at these institutions. In the event of such a transfer occurring, any difference in tuition fees will be met by UCW, along with any reasonable agreed maintenance costs agreed, such as accommodation, childcare and/or travel.

If a student was awarded a Bursary from UCW, there will be a commitment to ensure that this is paid for the subsequent years of study, as if the student had continued their studies at UCW.

**Continuation at a different HE provider**

If it is not possible for students to continue at UCW or one of its partner universities, UCW will explore the options that are available to students to enable them to transfer into a subsequent year of study at a different HE provider. In the event of such a transfer occurring, any difference in tuition fees will be met by UCW along with any reasonable agreed maintenance costs agreed, such as accommodation, childcare and/or travel.

If a student was awarded a Bursary from UCW, there will be a commitment to ensure that this is paid for the subsequent years of study, as if the student had continued their studies at UCW.

**Restarting of studies**

Where it is not possible for students to continue their studies either at a partner university, or a different HE provider, it may be necessary for the students to restart their studies. Although this scenario is highly unlikely, should it occur UCW will normally refund all reasonable maintenance costs incurred as agreed during the students study at UCW.

This will usually include the refund of tuition fees, maintenance loans and any reasonable additional costs incurred. Depending on the source of funding the refund will be paid to the individual themselves, or to the appropriate body. In addition, students may be eligible for compensation (see below).

Where it is not possible to continue their studies at either a partner university or a different HE provider, then should a student choose not to continue with their studies at an alternative HE provider, they would still normally be eligible for refunds and compensation**.** However,

in the event that a student unreasonably rejects an offer to continue their studies at either a partner university or a different HE provider, there will be no obligation on UCW to refund costs or pay compensation to them.

**Compensation**

Any monetary compensation for distress and inconvenience caused would be negotiated on an individual basis and considered by a panel which would normally comprise of the following people (or personnel with equivalent status):

* Vice Principal: Higher Education (The Chair)
* Finance Director
* Head of Higher Education

Applications for compensation for distress and inconvenience need to be made in writing to the Vice Principal: Higher Education and can only be applied for up to a maximum of six months after the event. If approved, payments will normally be in line with the Office of Independent Adjudicators advice regarding the level of distress or inconvenience incurred:

* Moderate: Up to £500
* Substantial: £501-2000
* Severe: £2001-5000

If a student is not satisfied with the decision made by the panel they have the right to appeal. Appeals must be made in writing to the Principal and Chief Executive of Weston College within five working days of the date of the written notification of the decision. The decision of the appeal will be communicated to all parties involved within five working days.

UCW as part of the Weston College Group is able to deliver the financial implications of the Exceptional Refunds Policy as it has “Good Financial Status as confirmed by the ESFA; it has significant reserves and insurance in place to provide refunds and compensation if required.