

COLLEGE OF INTEGRATED CHINESE MEDICINE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

This document is to plan for threatened or actual course closure.

Objectives

To prepare Members, Management Committee, academic and administrative staff, students and prospective students and all stakeholders to deal with situations that may threaten the existence of the course.

Priorities

- To minimise risks and impact to stakeholders of course closure
- To ensure that the College acts in a lawful and ethical manner
- To facilitate effective recovery/management of the situation

CICM is a one course provider and therefore if the course were to discontinue, the College would also be forced to close.

There are two broad scenarios:

The first is a staged, long term closure of the course. Should circumstances dictate that long term survival of the College is not possible the Management Committee shall 'teach out' the course and the following steps shall be taken at the earliest opportunity:

- i) Current students (including deferred students) shall be informed of the intentions of the College to teach out and explain that this will not affect current students. Ideally a protracted arrangement of teach out will be possible to allow all deferred students a chance to return. Any deferred student unable to return before the College closes shall have individual arrangements made for them with their nearest acupuncture college. Deferred students unable to transfer to another college shall be refunded the cost of the course fees they had paid to date to CICM. Deferred students shall also be compensated for any additional travel or accommodation costs they incur as a result of transferring to another acupuncture college.
- ii) The Accreditation Body, the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board, shall be notified as will the validating body, if they are hitherto unaware.
- iii) Lecturers and administrative staff shall be informed of the process and a staged withdrawal of their services and those of contractors shall be agreed.

- iv) Marketing activity shall be stopped and the website shall be updated to inform stakeholders that the College is in a process of teach out. Prospective students shall be informed.

The second and less desirable scenario is that closure of the College needs to happen very quickly, i.e. teach out is not possible and current and deferred students are unable to complete the course. The risk of this eventuality is considered very low to negligible. Should this scenario be necessary and unavoidable, steps i) to iv) above shall also apply. In addition, current students shall be informed of the process and alternative arrangements made at an alternative acupuncture college. Current students who are unable or unwilling to transfer to another acupuncture course shall be refunded the full cost of the course fees paid to date to CICM. Any students who transfer shall be compensated for any additional travel or accommodation costs incurred as a result of studying with another acupuncture College.

Minimising the risk

The risk that CICM is unable to operate and needs to close before teach out is possible is minimised in several ways:

We hold more than £200,000 in reserves which represents 20% of our annual turnover. We therefore have a substantial financial buffer with which to protect our students. We own 2 grade II listed buildings in the centre of Reading. We are able to borrow money on these assets if required to finance students completing their course if necessary. Or we would be able to sell one of the buildings and operate out of the other. Funds from the sale of one of the properties will fund the College ensuring all students are able to complete the course at CICM and it will also fund compensation for deferred students. We have received advice and the smaller building could be sold to a residential developer while the larger of the 2 buildings would have considerable interest either as residential development or commercial property. We have been advised that there will be a strong demand for the property, however should we need to release funds sooner than a property sale will allow, then we will borrow against the value of this property.

Lecturers and administrative staff

All of our lecturers are part-time and many aspects of the course are taught by a number of lecturers. Where topics are taught by a single lecturer there is at least one other member of staff that could teach the topic. Therefore, if lecturers were to leave or the College went into teach out, the curriculum could still be taught effectively even with a small core of lecturers.

Not only are lecturers part-time (some doing as little as 6 hours a year), they are all also practising acupuncturists and do not rely on lecturing as their only source of income. They also provide considerable flexibility which allows the College to adjust their teaching hours according to the College's needs.

Administrative staff are contracted with a mix of part-time and full-time. The priority is to ensure that the high level of support for staff and students continues. Consequently, the appropriate level of administrative staff shall be maintained during teach out or immediate closure to ensure continuity of service.

Refund Policy following discontinuation of course

Fees are paid monthly throughout the course, however any advance payments that students have made shall be reimbursed on a pro rata basis and be refunded for the proportion of the course they have not accessed. This applies to self-funding students and those receiving a student loan.

Compensation for maintenance costs and lost time would be made where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study. If a student were to transfer to another provider, then any additional costs that they incur would be compensated. We do not have student bursaries.

Compensation costs to students shall be paid for in the first instance from the reserves previous stated and then sale of one or either property which totals more than £1m.

Arrangements with other colleges

There are several colleges around the country that are prepared to take CICM students in the eventuality of a course closure. All these colleges are part of the Council for Heads of Acupuncture Colleges (CHAC) and all courses are accredited by the BAAB and therefore students are eligible to join the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) once qualified.

The colleges are: The International College of Oriental Medicine; The Northern College of Acupuncture; Lincoln College; City College; The Acupuncture Academy.

In the eventuality of closure, the Principal and Registrar shall contact Colleges and CICM students to place as many students as possible. Given the current over capacity of colleges and for the preceding few years a lack of spaces at colleges is not envisaged to be a problem.