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Business Continuity Planning Policy

Document Control:

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Amendment History:

Version Number:	Effective Date:	Summary of Amendments:	Author:
v1.0	24/02/2023	Establishment of the Policy	Lauren McCleary, Risk and Resilience Manager
V2.0	12/08/2026	Updated ownership and links to related Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations, Policies and Guidance, Disruptive incident definition standardised across document, responsibility for BC plan testing clarified within RACI matrix.	Neil Slattery, Head of Risk and Resilience

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The effective management of institutional resilience through robust business continuity planning supports and enables the sustainability of University operations whilst supporting the health and welfare of its staff, students and visitors. The purpose of this policy is to define, formalise and clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to the University's approach and commitment to business continuity. The purpose section should succinctly outline the rationale and context for the policy.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to events falling within the University's disruptive incident definitions (Incident, Serious Incident and Major Incident, as detailed in section 2.3) across all of the University's activities and operations, in the UK and overseas, including its majority and wholly owned subsidiary companies. In the case of partnership arrangements involving the University, business continuity arrangements will be agreed between the partners and the University cannot mandate what partners must do unless terms are agreed in contracts. Where University staff share premises with other organisations, there will still be a need to create Business Continuity Plans, however certain aspects of the Plans may be the responsibility of non-University staff. In these situations, University staff must agree on shared rules and procedures with the other parties involved.
- 2.2 The basic principle of business continuity is to continue to deliver priority activities in the face of a disruption to the business - this could include ICT failure, severe weather, or an infectious disease. The ISO Standard surrounding Business Continuity Management, ISO 22301:2019, defines it as:

“the capability of an organisation to continue the delivery of products and services within acceptable time frames at predefined capacity during a disruption”.

2.3 The University uses the following definitions for the different levels of disruptive incidents:

Incident: An event, whether expected or unexpected, that disrupts the normal course of business operations for a short length of time, and which will be dealt with by routine operational management.

Serious incident: An event that causes serious disruption to business operations, including those involving major injury or serious illness, and which requires focused effort and diversion of resources from within the functional area or from another functional area.

Major incident: An unexpected event or series of events which significantly affects the University’s community or operations and where normal management arrangements are unlikely to be sufficient. A major incident would invoke the University’s Major Incident Policy, involve the MIT, and would require an immediate response.

3. Objectives

3.1 The objectives of business continuity planning are to ensure that the University shall:

- Understand critical and/ or priority activities and maintain the capability to resume operations within reasonable timeframes and with minimal operational impact, following the deployment of a contingency planning response, as agreed with appropriate senior management including the University Executive Board.
- Identify, protect and maintain critical areas of business activity via robust Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and Risk Assessment (RA).
- Increase resilience by protecting critical assets and data through a coordinated approach to identifying risk, management of risk, and optimising recovery.
- Raise awareness of business continuity and the interdependencies between Teaching, Research and Professional Services, and promote a standardised framework for the development, implementation and monitoring of business continuity Management, overseen by the Risk and Resilience Team.
- Ensure a formal, consistent, coordinated and cost-effective approach to the continuity of Teaching, Research and other operational activities.
- Support arrangements / procedures for compliance with relevant conditions of Office for Students registration.
- Identify, assess and minimise business continuity risks and safeguard the University’s reputational integrity.

- Improve planning quality and provide assurance to stakeholders via annual testing of Business Continuity Plans.

4. Responsibilities

Role	Responsible for
The University Executive Board (UEB)	Overall accountability for the University's Business Continuity Programme, led by the University Secretary.
The Risk and Resilience Team	The development, maintenance and annual review of the Business Continuity Policy, Framework and Programme ensuring that it remains aligned to the University's strategic objectives. Raising the profile of business continuity across the University as an ongoing responsibility and ensuring that information is available to staff (with the aim of embedding business continuity into the activities of the University). Overseeing the business continuity programme including key methodologies and establishing the standard for business continuity plans. Preparing reports and compiling evidence to provide assurance to internal and external audit that business continuity procedures are fit for purpose. Providing regular programme updates to the Audit and Risk Committee and the UEB and making business continuity recommendations to the Committees, as appropriate. Developing and delivering a programme of business continuity training, exercising and promotion. Assisting Schools/ Departments to develop strategies to mitigate business continuity related risks, as identified in their risk registers.
Senior Management (Heads of Departments/ Professional Services Group Directors, Heads of Faculties/ Schools/ Departments)	Providing sufficient resource (with appropriate authority) to ensure effective implementation, maintenance, integration, and improvement of local Business Continuity Programme arrangements. Participating in training and exercises, supported by the Risk and Resilience Team. Yearly testing of signed off Business continuity plans via desktop-based exercises. Ensuring a Business Continuity Plan, and other appropriate business continuity arrangements, are in place and signed off for their

	Department/ School/ Faculty, noting that this task may be delegated to an appropriate member of the Department/ School/ Faculty if required. Where continuity arrangements relate to a physical location, building, shared space or co-located service, the relevant senior manager must work with Interdependent departments, local safety leads and other occupants to ensure location-based dependencies are reflected in the Business Continuity Plan. Collaborating with colleagues in other Departments/ Schools where co-located, or where there are interdependencies in delivering critical services, to ensure appropriate joint or location-based plans are in place.
All University employed Staff	All Staff are responsible for ensuring they are aware of: The critical services within their department / school / faculty. Their own role and responsibilities during a disruptive incident. The importance of effective business continuity management and the implications if it is not in place. The Business Continuity Policy.

5. Operational Framework

5.1 Management of the Business Continuity Programme

- The Programme will consider the Business Continuity Lifecycle (set out in ISO22301) and will align itself as considered appropriate with the requirements of the Standard.
- Whilst Departments / Schools/ Faculties may oversee planning, all University departments will go through the business continuity process. This will involve identifying their priority activities, the resources required, and appropriate arrangements in the event of a disruptive incident.
- The Programme will be coordinated by the Risk and Resilience Team, however individual Departments will be expected to nominate an appropriate individual(s) to coordinate the development of their department's business continuity arrangements.
- All documentation will be reviewed, as a minimum, on an annual basis, and will also be updated when there are significant changes to personnel, premises, suppliers etc.
- Documentation should be stored both locally with the Department/ School/ Faculty and centrally with the Risk and Resilience Team, with consideration given to accessing the documentation in the event of an IT disruptive incident. Storage of business continuity plans with the Department/ School/ Faculty must include at least one level of redundancy (physical or digital) and be aligned to [IMST 03: Handling Information Standard](#). Further guidance / support on suitable platforms can be provided by the Information Security, Risk and Compliance team.

5.2

6. Associated Documents

[University Risk Management Policy](#)

[University Major Incident Plan](#)

[Managing Infectious Diseases Plan](#)

[Travel Risk Management Policy](#)

[Severe Weather Policy](#)

[Student Protection Plan](#)

[Handling Information Standard](#)