

COVID 19:

Awards and classification in undergraduate modular programmes

This document sets out the University approach to calculating final year students' modular undergraduate degrees in the academic year 2019-20 only. However, separate rules will apply to programmes in Law and may apply to one-year undergraduate programmes, including the International Foundation Programme, other Foundation Programmes and students on intercalating degrees.

Calculating the safety net

This approach allows each School to determine how the safety net will work in ways which are appropriate for each programme, and which take account of the likely impact of individual units - but also provides for a uniform approach which is simple to calculate across the University.

1. The composition of the safety net is determined for each programme by Schools or Faculties in line with the principles set out in the letters to students sent on Friday 3 April. The composition of the safety net applies to all students in the programme cohort and should be decided on the basis of the assessment and units taken rather than on the individual marks achieved. Where an individual student's mark for a unit included in the programme safety net is affected, Boards will consider this impact at the point of classification.
2. The safety net will normally include
 - a. all complete units with marks unaffected by COVID-19;¹ exceptions to this principle must be approved by the Faculty Education Director, and
 - b. any other units specified by Schools².
3. Schools will determine how to calculate unit marks. For example, an individual assessment element might be waived because of ECs or for other reasons in determining the unit mark.

Normally, the threshold for awarding a unit mark will be that the student has completed at least 50% of the assessment which applied to the unit in the year in which it ran.³ Exceptions to this principle must be approved by the Faculty Education Director.
4. The value of the 'safety net mark' is calculated as the average of the marks from the units included within the safety net; each unit is weighted to give an equivalence to its normal weighting in the degree overall. Examples are given in an appendix at the end of this document.

¹ A complete unit is defined as a unit where students have already completed all the assessment which formed a part of the unit in the year it was run.

² The principle of the 'safety net' applies across all Schools. Schools have different programme structures and therefore may apply the 'safety net' in different ways. They will always include marks from previous years (excluding first year) and may include one or more of the following: the work completed in TB1 of your final year; the dissertation or project; and other work completed before 27 March 2020.

³ Where an assessment element was waived for all students in 2019-20, this element will be excluded before the 50% completion threshold is applied for individual students.

5. Where a final year assessment was taken and failed before 27th March 2020 marks achieved from the re-sit (second attempt) will not alter the safety net mark.
6. Any supplementary attempts of assessment prior to 27th March 2020 will contribute to the completed programme mark (as defined in 14) but not the safety net mark.
7. Boards of Examiners will apply the University's normal regulations on academic misconduct before they calculate the safety net mark for each student.

Awards

8. Students will be awarded 120 credit points for the final year of study and complete their programme if they have:
 - a. achieved a pass mark for the final year overall;⁴
 - b. achieved a pass mark in any 'must pass' units;
 - c. met the programme learning outcomes.
9. A 'pass overall' means that a student achieves a year mark of: at least 40 out of 100 in level 4-6 programmes or at least 50 out of 100 in level 7 programmes. The Board will calculate the year mark for the programme on the basis of the assessments and units which have operated during the 2019-20 academic year.
10. If a student is unable to complete their programme, they will be permitted to undertake any units they have missed or failed - as a first attempt if extenuating circumstances are deemed to apply and a second attempt if failed. Second attempt unit marks relating to assessment in the summer term will be uncapped, and capped if relating to assessment to teaching block 1 (TB1).
11. If a student is unable to complete their programme at the September exam board but is otherwise deemed by the exam board to be on track to fulfil the programme learning outcomes, the student may be permitted to take any outstanding assessment in the next academic year as part of a supplementary year.
12. Otherwise, and exceptionally, a Board of Examiners may permit a student to repeat an entire year of study without penalty.
13. A student may be permitted three attempts to meet the standard to complete their programme. Third attempt unit marks will be capped at the pass mark.

Classification

14. Exam Boards will calculate the 'completed programme mark' according to the regulations in place at the start of the 2019/20 academic year on the basis of all the available unit marks and the normal weighting for the degree programme.
15. Boards will first consider each student's degree classification on the basis of the completed programme mark.

⁴ Students were informed in the letter of 3 April 2020: 'You will need to have an overall pass mark in assessment taken in the final year including the summer assessments...'

16. Boards will then compare the completed programme mark and the numerical value of the safety net mark for each candidate and classify by the primary rule on the basis of the higher of the two (the 'determining mark').
17. Where the determining mark is within the range in which the secondary rule for degree classification applies, the secondary rule should be calculated according to (i) the marks achieved by the student in the programme overall and (ii) the marks within the safety net - classification will be according to the higher of the two. When calculating the secondary rule according to safety net marks, each unit should be weighted as it was when calculating the value of the safety net as in (4) above.
18. Where an Exam Board makes an award to a student on the basis of an incomplete set of unit marks, the student will have the right to request an opportunity to take any assessment missed during Teaching Block 2 2020 or the summer assessment period of 2020. Such new assessments will be in the same form as in summer 2020.

Students will not need to appeal the decision of the Exam Board in order to access this right.

Following such new assessments, the Board will review the new evidence and may award a higher classification but will not award a classification lower than that previously awarded.

*Approved by the Chair of the Board of Trustees
24 April 2020*

APPENDIX – WEIGHTING OF UNITS IN CALCULATING THE VALUE OF THE SAFETY NET

This appendix gives examples of how units will be weighted to calculate the value of the safety net. A full table will be produced to cover the programme structures currently in operation.

Normal degree weightings by year	Weighting of each 2 nd year 20 credit point unit included in the safety net	Weighting of each 3 rd year 20 credit point unit included in the safety net	Weighting of each final year 20 credit point unit included in the safety net
40:60	2	-	3
25:75	1	-	3
30:10:60	3	1	6