

COVID 19:

Classification in undergraduate modular programmes in 2020/21 onwards - for students on an intermediate year of study

This document sets out the University approach and regulations for calculating the classification of students on modular undergraduate degrees who will be considered for a classified award in 2020/21 and subsequently, where assessment that contributes to degree classification has been affected by COVID-19 in 2019/20.

Separate rules may apply to programmes in Law.

Approach

- a) The approach for determining how unit marks achieved during the 2019/20 academic year will contribute to classification when a student completes their degree programme is set out in this document. The overall means by which degrees will be classified in 2020/21 and subsequently may be amended in light of circumstances related to COVID-19 in future academic years.
- b) The letter to students on 'intermediate' years stated that: *"Any assessment you have undertaken after 27 March and in the summer term may have been affected. The effect of marks from these assessments will be carefully considered at the end of your programme. If they improve your final degree mark, they will be included. If not, they will be disregarded. This means that your final degree classification will not be adversely affected by your results this summer."* This underpins the approach.
- c) The approach is broadly the same one as adopted for final-year undergraduates in 2019/20.
- d) The method for calculating the safety net mark mirrors the one set out in the UG finalist regulations (with some minor wording changes).
- e) The quantitative safety net for intermediate years applies by preserving the relative weighting of the unit marks for the programme: this means that each unit within the safety net is weighted to give an equivalence to its normal weighting in the degree overall. See Appendix A for an example.
- f) A safety net may also be applied for a study abroad or industrial placement year undertaken during 2019/20. The mark for this year of study may be disregarded for the purpose of classification where necessary in exceptional circumstances.

Calculating the safety net

These regulations allow 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 in 2019/20 - 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 that contribute to classification (including those that will be completed in the 2020/21 academic year and subsequently) with marks unaffected by COVID-19¹; 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 ran³. 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. Please see Appendix A for an example of this.
5. Where an assessment was taken and failed before 27th March 2020 in the 2019/20 academic year marks achieved from the re-sit (second attempt) will not alter the safety net mark.
6. Any supplementary attempts at assessment taken prior to 27th March 2020 in the 2019/20 academic year will contribute to the completed programme mark (as defined in 8) 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.

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), potentially future years and may include one or more of the following from the 2019/20 academic year: the work completed in TB1; 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.

Classification

These regulations set out how unit marks achieved during the 2019/20 academic year will contribute to classification when a student completes their degree programme in 2020/21 or subsequent academic year.

8. Exam Boards will first calculate the 'completed programme mark' according to the regulations in place at the start of the final year of study on the basis of all the available unit marks and the normal weighting for the degree programme. Clause 3 applies in establishing what constitutes a 'unit mark'.
9. Where a student has: failed a unit affected by COVID-19 in the 2019/20 academic year but is not required to take it again; is permitted to progress during 2019/20 notwithstanding a missing unit mark (including where there is not sufficient assessment to constitute a unit mark); or the unit undertaken in 2019/20 is pass/fail, the mark will be disregarded when the degree classification is calculated.
10. Boards will then calculate the 'safety net programme mark' 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 programme overall
11. Boards will then compare the completed programme mark and the numerical value of the safety net programme mark for each candidate and classify by the primary rule on the basis of the higher of the two (the 'determining mark').
12. 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 (ii), each unit should be weighted as it was when calculating the value of the safety net as in (10) above.

*Approved by the Chair of the Board of Trustees
13 May 2020*

APPENDIX A – 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 programme mark for students who are in intermediate years in 2019-20. Separate rules will apply to programmes in Law. The multipliers were chosen to give integer values for the weighting of 20 cp units.

Three-year bachelors honours degree

	Weighting of each 2 nd year unit						Weighting of each final year unit					
	10cp	20cp	30cp	40cp	60cp	120cp	10cp	20cp	30cp	40cp	60cp	120cp
40:60	1	2	3	4	6	12	1.5	3	4.5	6	9	18
25:75	0.5	1	1.5	2	3	6	1.5	3	4.5	6	9	18