

Safety Net Policy

Assessment and Degree Classification (COVID-19 Impact)

The University of Hertfordshire has developed a 'safety net' policy to ensure it remain fair and flexible so students are awarded grades and graduate with a degree classification that reflects their efforts and overall performance.

In developing its policy on assessment arrangements, the University has been guided by the following principles:

- All students are treated fairly and equitably, whilst retaining the integrity of the University of Hertfordshire award;
- Students performance will be based upon the evidence available to the Board;
- Students completing their studies should not graduate with a degree classification lower than their current predicted classification;
- The (revised) expectations of PSRBs should not be compromised.

Please see the FAQs below to help you with any questions or concerns you may have.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who does this apply to?

1. Does this apply to all students taught and online, undergraduate and taught postgraduate?

Yes. This applies to all students on taught programmes, unless a professional or regulatory body that accredits or approves your degree dictates otherwise (see below).

2. Does this apply to students registered at the University's collaborative partners?

Yes. This applies to all students at UK and international collaborative partners who are registered with the University. Some international partners may propose alternative arrangements, contextualised to the situation in their country, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Dual and joint awards may also be considered differently.

Module Grading

3. How will minimum grades for Semester B (and Semester AB) modules be calculated?

The University guarantees that, as long as a module is passed, then the grade awarded will not fall below a benchmark grade which is calculated from your performance prior to the Covid-19 outbreak.

This benchmark is calculated as follows:

(i) For level 0, level 4 and level 5 students: This is calculated using the weighted average grade from all Semester A module grades (whether passed or failed). A minimum of 30 credits of completed Semester A modules is required in order for this benchmark grade to be calculated. If you have completed between 0 and 15 credits, then you will instead be judged solely on your performance in the Semester B and AB modules concerned.

(ii) For level 6 and level 7 students: This is calculated using the weighted average grade from all Semester A module grades (whether passed or failed) plus any coursework from Semester B or AB modules that was submitted prior to Friday 13 March 2020. Individual assignments will contribute according to their weighting within the module, and the credit-rating of the module itself.

As long as you have passed a Semester B (or Semester AB) module, then the grade awarded will not fall below this calculated benchmark grade. Not all Semester B and AB modules need to be passed in order for this safety net to apply to individual modules.

4. What date is used when considering the impact of Covid-19?

Friday 13 March 2020. Any work submitted after this date is considered to be affected by the current situation. Any work submitted prior to that date is marked solely on its merit, with marks awarded contributing towards their module grades.

5. I'm a Semester B entrant and have no previous results to fall back on. What does this mean for me?

Students performance must be based upon the evidence available and so Semester B entrants can only be judged on their Semester B performance. Any failed assessments will not be capped on referral.

6. I'm on a short course. What does this mean for me?

Students performance must be based upon the evidence available, and so short course students can only be judged on their performance in the short courses concerned.

7. I am a part-time student. What does this mean for me?

The safety net applies to part-time students. However, it depends on what stage of your studies you are at. Please contact your programme leaders.

8. Will students' performance on Semester C modules be considered in the same way?

The same principles are likely to be adopted if Semester C is affected in the same way. Further guidance will follow.

9. What happens if I am deferred in a module?

If the module is passed in the referred/deferred assessment period, the grade awarded will remain the same as, or higher than, the calculated benchmark grade calculated from Semester A grades (plus assignments from Semester B and AB, where applicable). If you achieve a grade higher than this benchmark grade, then your module grade will reflect this.

10. What happens if I fail a module?

Failed Semester B modules will retain their fail grade. However, if the module is passed at referral, grades for referred assignments will not be capped to the pass grade. In which case, the grades awarded will remain the same as, or higher than, the calculated benchmark grade calculated from Semester A grades (plus assignments from Semester B and AB, where applicable). If you achieve a grade higher than this benchmark grade, then their module grade will reflect this.

Please note that any failed Semester A modules will require the failed elements to be capped, as per the regulations.

11. I am a Joint Honours student. Will the averages for Semester A be distinct in each field of study or will it be an overall average?

There will be no distinction between different fields of study. One single benchmark grade will be calculated for each student.

12. What if I have failed the module, and I don't want to/I'm not able to do the referral in June/July?

Deferral to next academic year should be offered. Please speak to your programme leaders.

Degree classification

13. How will degree classification be calculated?

Current level 4 Bachelor's students: level 4 modules do not get included in the degree classification algorithm

Current level 5 Bachelor's and Integrated Master's students: The module grading policy should ensure that most level 5 and Integrated Master's students are not disadvantaged by the Covid-19 outbreak. If for any reason a benchmark grade cannot be calculated for a student then the final programme board has the discretion to disregard all level 5 grades from this academic year when calculating degree classification:

(i) For Bachelor's students, the best 90 credits at level 6 would be used

(ii) For Integrated Master's students, the best 90 credits at L7 plus the best 120 credits from the remaining L6/7 modules would be used.

Current level 6 Bachelor's students: The average grade for all completed L5 and L6 modules (weighted by module size, but not by academic level) will be calculated, and used as the minimum classification grade from which a minimum classification is calculated. Programme-specific regulations may apply to individual project/dissertation modules.

Current level 6 Integrated Master's students: The module grading policy should ensure that most Integrated Master's students are not disadvantaged by the Covid-19 outbreak.

Current level 7 Integrated Master's students: The average grade for all completed L5, L6 and L7 modules (weighted by module size, but not by academic level) will be calculated, and used as the minimum classification grade from which a minimum degree classification is calculated. Programme-specific regulations may apply to individual project/dissertation modules (NB. This assumes that students have obtained a pass grade in their remaining Semester B and AB modules).

Current Master's students: The module grading policy should ensure that most taught postgraduate students are not disadvantaged by the Covid-19 outbreak. Programme-specific regulations may apply to individual project/dissertation modules.

14. How will failed modules affect degree classification?

University regulations allow for up to 30 credits of failed modules (at any academic level) to be compensated by the programme board, with the classification grade being reduced by 2.5 for each 15 credits compensated. The limits of compensation are unaffected, however programme boards are instructed to compensate without applying the penalty to the classification grade (except where there are proven cases of cheating in a module). This applies to all failed modules, at all academic levels.

Exemptions

15. How will this affect the Professional accreditation/recognition of my programme?

Your School is in contact with the relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) regarding the University's 'safety net' policy. Most PSRBs are adopting a flexible approach to assessment, but if the relevant PSRB does not accept this policy then your School will be in contact with you to explain the assessment arrangements that will apply.