

Safety Net Mark Regulation (Covid-19 enforced)

Context

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the University has made the decision to adhere to normal quality and standards approaches with regard to progression and award requirements at all levels of study. However, in order to facilitate support mechanisms, and to ensure equitability of the student experience across the University the Covid-19 Teaching and Assessments team were asked provide a package of support to students to minimise the impact of the pandemic and the move to online delivery and support from 16th March, 2020. The Safety Net includes previously implemented temporary changes to approval mechanisms for Extenuating Circumstance and Extensions requests, and a removal of the volume of allowable resits in the academic year 19/20. The last stage in completing the Safety Net package was to formulate a strategy for mitigation against impacts on student performance. This regulation details the Safety Net Mark (SNM) calculation and implementation processes which will be used to inform decisions by Boards of Examiners.

Calculation of the Safety Net Mark

- The SNM calculation will be based on marks in assessments submitted on or before 16/03/2020.
- The SNM calculation will operate as follows:
 - o Where the cumulative summative assessment submissions constitute a **MINIMUM** of 45 credits at the level of study, the weighted mean of **all assessments submitted on or before 16/03/2020** will form the SNM. Where this cannot be applied the programme team will develop an evidence-based approach to awarding a SNM using a programme-specific combination of factors that **may** include combinations of the following:
 - The outcomes of all summative assessments made on or before 16/03/2020;
 - Marks achieved in any formative assessments prior to 16/03/2020;
 - Consideration of student performance in ongoing informal formative assessment;
 - Marks achieved at the previous level of study.
 - o The SNM will always be raised to the next whole number.
- College Directors of Academic Quality and Standards must approve the approaches to SNM generation that require consideration of additional factors in all cases.
- Wherever possible, cognate area groups should adopt a consistent approach to SNM calculation mechanisms.
- Generation of the SNM may not be possible/appropriate for some students via the standard calculation approaches identified above (for example some part-time students, integrated degree apprenticeship students or students retaking the year on a small number of modules). In such cases alternate mechanisms which are informed by the principle of not disadvantaging students will be agreed on a case-by-case basis with relevant programme staff and the College Directors of Academic Quality and Standards.

Application of the Safety Net Mark

- For Undergraduate Final Year students:
 - The standard three-algorithm approach to calculate degree classification will be generated as normal for all students.
 - If the SNM is greater than the performance indicator outcome of the three-algorithm approach and the general pass standard appropriate to the level of study has been met, the SNM will dictate the final classification.
- For Undergraduate non-finalists:
 - If the SNM is greater than the overall weighted mean for the full level of study and the general pass standard appropriate to the level of study has been met, the higher of these two marks will constitute the Level 2 overall performance indicator for each student.
 - The Level 2 overall performance indicator will be carried forward to the final year Board of Examiners and utilised in the degree classification algorithm which constitutes the weighted mean of Level 2 and Level 3 modules.
 - The standard 'best-of-three-algorithm' approach will then be used to calculate the degree classification.
- For Post-Graduate Taught students:
 - The final classification of award will be based on the best of:
 - The SNM
 - The overall weighted mean of the full 180 credits of study
 - The overall mean mark of the assessed elements that comprise the final 60 credits of the programme (final 120 credits for MFA and MArch programmes).
 - For Post-Graduate Taught 'February Starters' the SNM will be the weighted mean mark of the 60 credits of study that constitute the second semester taught modules.
- For Integrated Masters (IM) students:
 - The final classification mechanism for IM awards differs under standard University regulations, with some programmes adopting undergraduate calculation mechanisms, some adopting postgraduate calculation mechanisms, and some adopting calculation mechanisms that are informed by performance indicators across multiple levels. The SNM for IM students therefore will adopt as appropriate one of the following:
 - the Undergraduate Final Year application listed above
 - the Undergraduate non-finalists application listed above
 - the Post-Graduate Taught students application listed above
 - The SNM in these cases will be utilised either to inform the final classification of the award in the current academic year or recorded and carried forward to the final year Board of Examiners.

Kevin Jacques

21st April 2020