

Safety Net policy: 2020/21 academic year¹

Based on student academic achievement as of 7 February 2021

Purpose

1. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the move to online learning and teaching provision, the University re-introduced a Safety Net policy for students on taught programmes at levels 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (academic year 2020/21). Students on postgraduate research programmes, Professional Training Year and Exchange (including Erasmus) programmes will be offered separate arrangements to allow them fair and transparent assessment opportunities.
2. The Safety Net policy is designed to reassure students on taught modular programmes at levels 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (academic year 2020/21) who meet the learning outcomes set for their current level or stage of programme that their final aggregate level average mark for that level or stage will be no lower than the average of module marks (subject to eligibility criteria as described in pp. 3-4 below) they had already achieved as of 7 February 2021.

Eligibility

3. All students are required to meet the learning outcomes for their current level or stage of programme and fully engage with their academic study and assessments in order to qualify for the Safety Net. Where students are unable to submit work for all required assessments due to Covid-19, they may be eligible for [extenuating circumstances](#).
4. The level safety net figure is based on the average mark from modules attempted prior to/on 7 February 2021, with a minimum set value of credits. A student must have attempted the final assessment of the module(s), irrespective of the module result (pass or fail), for these marks to be included in calculating the level safety net figure:
 - Foundation Year modular programmes:
 - The level average mark from modules with a total value of at least 30 credits
 - Undergraduate students (levels 4, 5, 6 and level 7 for Integrated Masters programmes):
 - The level average mark from modules with a total value of at least 30 credits
 - Taught PG Cert and PGDip postgraduate programmes
 - The level average mark from modules with a total value of at least 30 credits
 - Taught Master's postgraduate programmes (full time):
 - The level average mark from modules with a total value of at least 45 credits
 - Part-time programmes:
 - Subject to the minimum number of credits for the programme, the average mark from all modules attempted at the relevant level or stage of the programme before/on 7 February 2021. See also point 11 below where students were also eligible for the Safety Net during the 2019/20 academic year.
5. Eligibility for the application of the Safety Net is based on the award for which the student is registered. Eligibility for the Safety Net is not reassessed in cases where a student fails

¹ This Safety Net policy was agreed by Senate on 20/04/2021.

to meet the requirements of their award but receives an exit or intermediate award at an overall lower credit value².

Application of the Safety Net

6. Once all assessment (Semesters 1 and 2) for the level or stage of the programme has been attempted, the level safety net figure will be compared with that achieved for all modules at the level or stage. The higher weighted average will then be used to determine eligibility for compensation, progression and classification.
7. Transcripts will be annotated to explain the use of the Safety Net policy. Where the Safety Net is not applied the transcript will not make reference to the policy.
8. The Safety Net policy will be applied unless there are restrictions imposed by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB).
9. Students with approved extenuating circumstances for modules undertaken before/on 7 February 2021 who meet the minimum credit requirement will have a level safety net figure calculated as described in pp. 2-5 above. The weighted average used for the level safety net will be recalculated once assessment for all modules undertaken before/on 7 February 2021 has been attempted. This will determine whether the weighted average for modules studied before/on 7 February 2021 has improved. If so, the level safety net figure will be amended upwards.
10. Students with approved extenuating circumstances for modules undertaken before/on 7 February 2021 who do not meet the minimum credit requirement may still be considered eligible for the level safety net once they complete the module(s) assessments.
11. Students who have remained at the same academic stage or level for more than one academic year (2019/20 and 2020/21) and were eligible for a Safety Net on both the 13 March 2020 and 7 February 2021 will have their safety net figures compared at both dates. The higher of the two safety net figures will be used for the purposes of determining eligibility for compensation, progression and classification.

Arrangements for students undertaking mid-module assessment after 7 February 2021

12. For year-long modules and where students have partially undertaken assessment before/on 7 February 2021 (or later as a result of extenuating circumstances) for modules concluded during Semester 2, a module safety net will be calculated for the remaining assessments within those modules. To qualify for the module safety net, the student must meet all learning outcomes for the module and have passed the module overall. The module safety net is applied as follows:
 - Where mid-module assessments attempted before/on 7 February 2021 have a weighting of 25% or more, the mark for the module will either be the weighted average mark for units of assessment attempted before/on 7 February 2021 or the weighted average for all units of assessment within the module, whichever is higher. For the purposes of the safety net calculations applied to the academic level the module will be considered to have been completed after 7 February 2021.

² As an example, this could be a student who was undertaking a 180 credit Master's programme who following unsuccessful completion was eventually awarded a 120 credit PG Dip as an exit or intermediate award.

- Where mid-module assessments attempted before/on 7 February 2021 have a weighting of less than 25%, the module mark will be calculated in the normal way using a weighted average from all units of assessment. For the purposes of the safety net calculations applied to the academic level, the module will be considered to have been completed after 7 February 2021.

13. In cases where a penalty has been applied to an assessment within a module as a result of issues of [academic integrity](#) any safety net for that specific module will be forfeited and not be applied.

Arrangements for students on exchange year with abroad partner institutions

14. As with the University's standard assessment Regulations, marks achieved in modules/credits studied through exchange arrangements are not normally used for determining degree classifications. The Safety Net policy will not apply to exchange students.

Exceptions to this policy

15. Exceptions to the standard Safety Net policy must be approved separately through the University's academic governance structures. Regulatory matters are overseen by the University Senate on recommendation from the University Education Committee.

Further specific details about the Safety Net policy are available on the FAQ web page here: <https://exams.surrey.ac.uk/safety-net-and-emergency-regulations>