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Coronavirus (COVID-19): FAQs for students on learning and assessments

Information on the changes made to learning and assessments as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19), which applied to the 2019/20 academic year.

About this guide

The information on this page relates to changes that were made to learning and assessments which applied to Semester 2 and the supplementary assessment

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period in the 2019/20 academic year.

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disadvantaged?

We will make sure that our decision-making about your progression into next year or your award outcome will take the disruption of COVID-19 into account. We will do this by looking at what you have achieved to date, alongside this year's results, and making sure that our progression and award rules do not cause detriment to your performance given the circumstances. We will also make sure that your transcript and other records of achievement describe the extraordinary context for your results.

We are committed to ensuring 'no detriment' for our 2019/20 student cohort at PGT and UG level. This means that it will ensure that the outcomes for each year of the 2019/20 student cohort are collectively no worse than the outcomes of the previous three cohorts for the appropriate year group.

We will be taking the following steps as part of a 'safety net' for all our students:

- Departments have redesigned your assessments to ensure they remain a fair and appropriate test of your learning in an online environment, and to give you the opportunity to fully demonstrate your knowledge and skills.
- Departments have been given authority to account for the COVID-19 disruption when considering your results. Exam Boards will check academic decisions using individual, unit and cohort profiles – to compare students' results against previous years and ensure they are not disadvantaged, adjusting marks or scaling if necessary.
- We have extended the assessment period by two weeks to take into account unforeseen circumstances and extend deadlines, reducing the pressure on our staff and students. This means you will receive your grades and outcomes from summer assessments slightly later than originally planned.

- If you are not able to complete assessments during this summer period, you will be allowed to defer your assessment to August/September 2020 or later, if necessary, due to the continued impact of the COVID-19.
- We will describe the context for results in a paper to accompany your transcript and other records of achievements, so employers understand the University's approach.

There are also specific no detriment measures for particular year groups:

- For First Year Students: As your first year is not weighted towards your final degree classification, there will be no classification safety-net applied when you graduate. Other no detriment measures will apply, however, when it comes to assessment, reassessment, and progression.
- For Continuing Undergraduate Students: For continuing students whose marks contribute to their final degree (principally second years), we will calculate both the year average and the Semester 1 average for 2019-20 and use the higher of the two marks to establish your stage average which will contribute towards your Overall Programme Average.
- For Undergraduate Final Year Students: Undergraduate students in their final year (including those on UG Masters courses) will not receive a class lower than that which they would be awarded on the basis of their

performance up to and including Semester 1 of their final year.

- For Postgraduate Taught Students: Boards of Studies and Boards of Examiners have been granted greater discretion to grant exception from key areas of our academic regulations for students regarding condoned failure and resits – essentially, removing some of the limitations. We have also approved extensions to the maximum period of registration to support students in exceptional cases. Your overall classification safety-net will focus solely on your overall performance and not require you to meet thresholds in either the dissertation/project stage or the taught stage(s). More specifically: to achieve a distinction you will need an overall programme average of at least 70%, and to achieve a merit you will need an overall programme average of at least 60%.

More detailed guidance on these matters, including eligibility criteria, can be found in the [updated student guidance documents](#).

Please note that in some circumstances programmes subject to professional accreditation may not be permitted to apply this policy – if this is the case, your department will keep you informed.

What changes have been made to my learning?

For undergraduates and those taking taught postgraduate courses since 18th March 2020 all teaching has been delivered online for the remainder of Semester 2, which ended on Friday 29 May 2020.

There will be no examinations held on campus. Departments will replace on-campus exams with alternative assessments – we have put together guidance on alternative assessments for the main Semester 2 and supplementary assessments which you may find useful.

You can access your exam timetable through the exams pages for the main assessment period or the supplementary assessment period.

if you have any questions, please speak to your personal tutor and/or Director of Studies.

For those of you completing projects or working on your dissertation, your Department will inform you about the arrangements associated with those and how any modifications to the assessment will be handled once these plans have been finalised.

Departments and the University will communicate regularly with you (including frequently updating this FAQ page) to make sure you are kept informed of any developments.

We have put together a webpage to help support you in adapting to studying online.

Postgraduate research students should refer to the [University's Coronavirus advice to doctoral students.](#)

Should I submit an Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMC)?

Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMCs) is the University term for circumstances which temporarily prevent students from undertaking assessment, or which significantly impairs their performance – for example, bereavement or serious illness. The “flag” of having an IMC against a unit’s assessment gives academics additional flexibility when making decisions about your reassessment options, progression into the next stage of your course, or classification.

Our no-detriment measures mean we will treat all your 2019/20 semester 2 and supplementary assessments with this flexibility, as though they already have IMCs. These apply automatically without requiring action from you, meaning you don’t have to apply for COVID-19 disruption-related IMCs to capture things like moving to online teaching, illness, technical challenges, caring responsibilities, bereavement, or leaving campus.

We are keeping IMCs in use this semester and during the supplementary period, however, in case you want to tell us that a specific assessment was significantly affected. This could be for COVID-19 or

non-COVID 19 related reasons (for example, bereavement, illness, caring responsibilities). Whilst this is not needed to allow you to benefit from the no detriment measures—that is automatic—it will allow you to flag any specific concerns which the University might be able to help you with. We want to ensure you have the right level of support to do the best you can at your assessments and to be aware of the different options available to you. It may be that applying for an IMC will help us to support you in some way.

If you do decide you want to submit an IMC for a particular assessment:

- The definitions of valid circumstances in [What are IMCs?](#) apply. Technical issues are not valid IMCs; these will be dealt with by general no-detriment measures.
- You should use the normal form and meet the normal timescales. You can find more information on our [IMC pages](#). The [SU Advice and Support Centre](#) will be able to talk through your options with you, so please contact them if you have any questions or concerns.
- We have waived the requirement for formal evidence (for example, a note from a doctor) due to the circumstances and the pressures on the NHS and other health services. You should just make sure to tell us what happened and how it affected your assessment.

In summary, in Semester 2, and during the supplementary assessment period, you do not have to submit an IMC in order to have IMC-related decision-making applied to your academic outcomes. No-detriment measures apply without your needing to take any additional action.

Where can I find copies of the emails sent to students?

All the emails sent to students about on coronavirus (COVID-19) can be found [here](#). This page will be regularly updated.

What will replace in-person exams?

There will be no examinations held on campus in Semester 2 or during the supplementary assessment period. Your Department will set an alternative form of assessment. Departments are currently developing plans for alternative assessments that will be suitable for your course. Your Department will be in touch once details of these have been finalised.

I have a Disability Access Plan (DAP), how will I be supported?

Your Department will continue to be responsible for supporting the requirements of your DAP.

Alternative assessments that will replace on-campus examinations should take into consideration your DAP requirements, but if you have any concerns please discuss your exam access requirements with your Director of Studies/personal tutor.

The [Disability Service](#) is available to help you with any difficulties you might face.

Should I consider suspending my studies?

We are aware that many of you are worried about the prospect of what will happen for the rest of the academic year, and in particular whether undertaking alternative forms of assessment will negatively affect your performance.

As a university, our priority is to support you in getting the best education possible. A key part of this is giving you the opportunity to test and demonstrate your knowledge and abilities under fair and appropriate conditions. Where possible, you should continue with your academic work as best you can and join all scheduled online teaching sessions. If you are concerned about your ability to study or complete an assessment you should contact your Director of Studies, supervisor, or personal tutor as you normally would.

If you do wish to consider suspending your studies, you should speak to your Director of Studies and consult the guide.

We also recommend you read through the no detriment measures in relation to assessment.

We hope that the steps we have taken above to ensure students aren't disadvantaged, including measures to provide a 'safety net' will provide reassurance.

Why haven't you cancelled exams and assessments completely?

We have closely reviewed practice across the sector and are confident our proposed approach is consistent, appropriate and well-informed.

It is important for both us and for you that we ensure learning outcomes and academic standards have been met. Only then can we award degrees and allow students to progress. The UK Government has emphasised that universities should enable students to leave with qualifications that have real value and reflect their hard work.

Our students deserve to be treated equitably and consistently. We want our students to graduate with a degree which provides the educational rigour and

challenge that lies at the heart of our reputation for high quality degree courses. This will place you in the best position for future study or employment.

We also know that many students perform even better during their summer assessment period, and we want to ensure you have the opportunity to fully demonstrate your abilities and gained knowledge.

How will you stop cheating?

Our normal procedures to prevent cheating and uphold our standards of academic integrity will remain in place. We are aware that remote assessments may be more vulnerable to academic misconduct (i.e. cheating)

The University will guard against this through use of the Urkund Plagiarism Detection Service, which searches the web and databases of reference material and content submitted by other students to identify duplicated work. The Service provides evidence about the origin and consistency of a student's submitted work that can be used to confirm academic misconduct.

Please also be aware that 'essay mills' may be seeking to exploit the current situation and marketing their services to students. Any use of their services will also be considered a form of academic misconduct.

The consequences of cheating are serious, including failing the assessment or expulsion from the University. You can find more information through our [academic misconduct pages](#).

If you have any concerns about a fellow student having committed academic misconduct, please report it to your Director of Studies. We will do all we can to protect your anonymity.

If you are concerned in any way about your assessments there are a lot of people who can offer you help and support - contact your personal tutor or your Director of Studies in the first instance, and they will be able to advise you further.

I am in my final year/a PGT will I be able to finish my degree?

By moving to online teaching and replacing on-campus exams with other forms of assessment we aim to support all students to graduate.

We will make sure that our decision-making about assessment and your award outcome will take the disruption of Coronavirus into account. We will also make sure that your transcript and other records of achievement describe the extraordinary context for your results.

What should I do if I am ill?

Firstly, do not worry about the impact on your studies. Concentrate on your recovery, following your region's local health advice. If you are able to do so, let your Director of Studies know you are unwell within three days of you falling ill, or as soon as you can.

Once you are recovered, you should contact your Director of Studies again to let them know you are well enough to study, and to discuss how best to continue your studies.

We recognise that students will have potential significant impacts from COVID-19 that have affected them individually – for example, you or a relative have become ill with the virus during the assessment period and its run-up. For more information on your options here we have put together guidance on how IMCs will work during Semester 2 and the supplementary assessment period.

Will teaching be back on campus in the autumn?

Whilst it remains unclear how long the coronavirus outbreak will last, Departments and the University will keep you updated on future plans.

What should I do now?

Most importantly, prioritise your safety and follow your region's guidance on what to do during the coronavirus outbreak. Where possible, you should continue with your academic work as best you can and join all scheduled online teaching sessions.

You should also update your contact address on SAMIS with your current details.

If you are still living in Bath, either on or off campus, and have particular personal or study support needs e.g. access to WiFi, that you are currently unable to fulfil, let us know by speaking to your Director of Studies or via studentservices@bath.ac.uk.

When and how do I choose optional units?

This year's timings are as follows

- 21 April 2020: Programme/ unit catalogue for 2020/1 now published
- 27 April 2020: Continuing students invited to choose their optional unit via SAMIS - further details are published on the catalogue pages.
- 11 May 2020 (5pm): Online unit selection closes.

If you have not yet secured a placement for 2020/1 and are registered on a programme which has an

optional placement year you will be invited to select your optional units for next year just in case your search for a placement is unsuccessful.

This decision has been taken in consultation with your department and placement teams. We appreciate that both students and placement teams are working hard to secure placements for 2020/1 but we are offering you this option to give you the flexibility at this uncertain time.

Who can help me understand my options?

Your Director of Studies or personal tutor will be able to answer questions about your individual academic circumstances, such as the implications for deferred assessment in your circumstances or questions about the requirements of your programme.

The SU Advice & Support Centre can also provide you with guidance on various academic processes including completing an IMC form, appeal form and/or making a complaint. They will work with you throughout the process, from helping you explain your circumstances to providing feedback on the information you compile and supporting you with next steps. They will also help you identify other support you may benefit from.

Advice and support - Semester 2 and supplementary assessments

You can find available support on our help and advice pages for Semester 2 and supplementary assessments.

When will I receive my results?

Results for undergraduate finalist students will be released on SAMIS on Thursday 23 July 2020.

Results for all other on-campus continuing students (UG and PG) will be released SAMIS on Thursday 30 July 2020.

Results for International Foundation Year students will be released on Thursday 23 July 2020; results for all other Franchised and Licenced students will be released on Thursday 30 July 2020.

You will see your unit marks and Individual Mitigating Circumstances outcomes.

If scaling has been used in a unit you have taken, information about the reason for the scaling and the method applied will be available in SAMIS.

You will be able to access the Self-Service Transcript/Self-Service Record of Assessment facilities from SAMIS after results have been released.



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