

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

COVID-19 NO-DETRIMENT MEASURES FOR TAUGHT STUDENT OUTCOMES, 2019/20

STUDENT EXPLAINER

Issue 1.4, 19 November 2020

NOTE: *This document was created for the 2019/20 year.*

What is this document, and is it relevant to me?

This information applies to all our students studying on taught programmes, including undergraduate (bachelor, integrated master, Honours Year programmes, and Foundation degrees), postgraduate taught, and continuing professional development programmes.

This information also applies to students on Franchised and Licensed undergraduate programmes of the University but not to students on Validated programmes. Information for students on the University of Bath International Year will be provided separately.

This document outlines how no-detriment measures may apply to you, and how they will work within your programme requirements.

We refer to principles that will generally apply to all our students studying on taught programmes, as well as specific examples that apply only to students studying on specific types of programmes.

Where we refer to “undergraduate students” and “undergraduate finalists”, this also includes students on the Honours Year programmes. When we refer to Continuing Professional Development framework programmes this does not include postgraduate online courses.

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Important sources of information

The University is taking a broad range of actions as part of its no-detriment measures, all of which are intended to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 disruption on your assessment, and your academic outcomes.

This document outlines more specific detail about how no-detriment measures may apply to you, and how they may work within your programme requirements.

You may also find it helpful to review:

- General FAQs about study and assessment during the Covid-19 disruption, updated periodically.
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/coronavirus-covid-19-faqs-for-students-on-learning-and-assessments/>
- Your programme requirements and assessment regulations as described in your programme handbook and in the relevant parts of the Programme/Unit Catalogues.
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/catalogues/>
- The relevant parts of the assessment regulations that apply to your programme, stage or year, and award, in the *New Framework for Assessment* (NFA):
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/new-framework-for-assessment/>.
- *Individual Mitigating Circumstances & Assessment* (IMCA).
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/imc-reference-documents/attachments/imca.pdf>
- All of the emails related to study and assessment.
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/emails-to-all-students-on-coronavirus.bho/>
- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor's (Learning & Teaching) announcement of initial detail of the University's no-detriment measures.
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/announcements/important-update-on-covid-19-and-assessments/>

How will my results be considered this year?

We will provide no-detriment measures for our 2019/20 student cohort (all students who are registered on a taught programme in 2019/20). This means that we will mitigate, as

much as is possible, the effects of the Covid-19 disruption on our taught students' academic outcomes, while maintaining the standards of our degrees.

Your department/School lecturers have been working hard to provide you with appropriate online study opportunities. To match these, they have redesigned your semester 2 assessments to test your learning in an online environment. Alternative study and assessment are designed 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, after assessment marking is complete. Our examination boards will make their academic decisions using individual, unit and cohort profiles.

At the unit level, we will compare results against previous results to ensure no disadvantage due to COVID-19 disruption, adjusting marks or scaling if necessary. We will also, as in Semester 1, take into account an evidence-base about any disruption caused by semester 2 industrial action. At the individual student level, we will look at individual outcomes in the context of overall individual academic achievement.

In summary, our academic decision-making will balance awareness of the context in which you undertook your semester 2 assessments with the need to maintain standards and preserve the value of your degree.

In practice, we will consider your results as follows:

1. The **Boards of Examiners for Units (BEU)**, as normal, will be responsible for ensuring the academic standards of the units under its academic authority. The BEU looks at individual units and determines the overall marks for that unit. It also ensures that the assessments provided an appropriate level of academic challenge, and that the marks awarded are an accurate reflection of the standards achieved by the students.

In the context of COVID-19 and no-detriment measures, the BEU will look at an evidence-base to make sure that the impact of the disruption is mitigated in the overall marks for the unit. For example, we will ensure that the average of the outcomes for each year of the 2020 student cohort are collectively no worse than the average of the outcomes of the previous three cohorts for the appropriate year group. Where this benchmark is not available, or not appropriate, we will use appropriate alternatives in our consideration.

2. The **Boards of Examiners for Programmes (BEP)**, as normal, will be responsible for the academic standards of the programmes under its authority. The BEP determines progression and makes awards in respect of the students registered on programmes under its academic authority, based on the cumulative, weighted academic achievements from each finalised unit. It is the BEP that takes account of Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMCs) to decide whether normal decision-making about reassessment, progression, or award should be adjusted in order to mitigate the impact of those circumstances.

In the context of Covid-19 and no detriment measures, the BEP will apply the discretion normally associated with Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMCs) to its consideration of *all* students' outcomes.

We will be looking at the final degree outcomes of every finalist student carefully and on an individual basis, using our classification safety-net where a student is eligible alongside *IMCA* judgements.

3. Finally, **Boards of Studies** are responsible for confirming all decisions put forward by the Boards of Examiners for Programmes. They consider the recommendations of the BEP and will approve decisions on progression and on the making of awards.

In summary, you can be assured that we will use academic judgement, and consistent and fair rule-based decision-making, to take the disruption of Covid-19 into account in:

- The design and marking of individual alternative assessments;
- Finalising of unit marks that reflect the standards achieved by your cohort and taking into account the context of your semester 2 assessment;
- Decision-making about whether we can award you credit for a unit, how much reassessment you can take and when, and whether you can continue on your programme; and
- Your individual degree award, if 2019/20 is an academic year that is weighted towards your classification.

There are additional no detriment measures which apply to specific year groups. You can find more information on these through our [additional student guidance documents](#) and the Learning and Teaching [FAQ pages](#).

Do I still need to meet the requirements of my programme?

Yes, though where we can we will make sure there are no barriers to your reassessment, progression, and award that would be unreasonable as part of our no-detriment measures.

It is important that you are aware that our no-detriment measures must work within the standards for awarding degrees that are expected by the Office for Students and the Quality Assurance Agency. There are some important things that will not change about our decision-making as part of our no detriment measures.

- You must still pass Designated Essential Units (DEUs) at the normal pass standard. We use DEUs sparingly in design, but where they exist in a programme, it is very important that the normal pass standard is met.
- We will still expect certain quantities of credits to be gained for the award of a degree, though we may be able to condone more marginal failure than normal where regulations allow if your non-DEU unit result is in the 35-39% range.

- Our normal rules about showing actual assessment and unit achievement on the transcript will remain in place, though we will provide contextual information that will be helpful to explain your results in the light of the Covid-19 disruption.
- While this document describes some of additional judgements open to a BEP, when considering your specific performance the BEP could judge that a specific course of action is not suitable for your particular academic circumstances in light of your academic performance previous to semester 2 2020.

What will be possible in your individual academic circumstances is therefore dependent on your programme's requirements and your academic performance to date.

You will know from your programme handbook and/or the programme outline in the Programme/Unit Catalogues what the requirements are for passing your year/stage and, where appropriate, for gaining your award. This guidance assumes you have that information to hand.

What is the degree classification safety-net and how will it work for me?

The safety-net is an element of our overall no-detriment measures specifically around classification decision-making. The safety-net provisions will differ depending on the type of taught study you are undertaking, and what year of your study you are currently in.

You can find more information for your type of course and year of study in these guides:

- [Continuing \(non-finalist\) undergraduates](#) who are currently in a part/stage that counts towards the degree classification
- [Finalist undergraduates](#) (including integrated masters programmes and honours years programmes)
- [Postgraduate taught programmes](#) (PGT)

Foundation Degree programmes are not classified, therefore there is no classification safety-net.

How will no-detriment measures help if I will be continuing my study?

If you are a continuing student, the BEP considers your aggregated and weighted unit outcomes to make decisions about your reassessment, progression, and eligibility to remain on your programme.

Below we outline some of the no-detriment measures that may be applicable in this consideration. The full range of possibilities depend on your individual academic circumstances and the programmes of study you are undertaking.

Where our regulations state that we have a “normal” expectation (for example, regarding your eligibility to progress or to continue on your programme), we will use evidence-based academic judgement to decide whether it would be reasonable to vary from this practice given Covid-19 disruption. *IMCA* decision-making may also be applicable in areas such as:

- Qualifying progression thresholds for integrated masters or remaining on a programme of study.
- Amount of reassessment that can be taken.
- Timing of reassessment (trailing assessment while progressing into next year of study).
- Condoning more marginal failure in non-DEU units.

Undergraduate students on Foundation Degree programmes

Your Foundation Degree is not classified, so there is no safety-net calculation to be performed. However, where there is a threshold OPA normally required for entry to a top-up Honours Year programme, that threshold can be varied to take into account any disruption in your Semester 2 performance in 2019/20.

Will I need to apply for Covid-19 disruption-related IMCs?

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 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, 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.

In summary, this semester **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.

However, 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.

You can find more information in our [no detriment and assessment guidance](#).

Who can help me understand my individual academic situation?

Your Director of Studies or personal tutor.

The SU Bath Advice & Support Centre (<https://www.thesubath.com/advice/>) can provide general advice and guidance.

Partnership students at Bath College, Wiltshire College and Action on Addiction may contact the Learning Partnerships Office (lpo@lists.bath.ac.uk) with any questions.