Appendix 2 – Net Safety Policy FAQs

1. Do I have to pass all my remaining modules this year to access the Safety Net?

Yes, this was communicated in the email to students on April 3rd. To access the Safety Net you will have to take all semester two assessments and obtain the minimum pass mark for each remaining module. Unfortunately, if you do fail a module then you can still access the Safety Net if you pass the module following re-sit.

2. What if I have mitigating circumstances or have deferred my assessments from this summer?

You will still be able to access the Safety Net if you pass these modules in future.

3. I am a without residence student only taking some modules this semester. How does the Safety Net work for me?

You will need to discuss with your School team how this might work as it will very much depend on which modules you were taking.

Benchmark Calculations

1. Why are there some variations in how different programmes calculate the benchmark CWA?

This is due to the different structures found across different degree programmes and, in some cases, to external accreditation or regulatory requirements. For many degrees a calculation based on the general principles outlined above allows a robust and transparent benchmark CWA to be calculated in the best interests of students in the programme. For other programmes it may be to the student’s benefit to also include some year-long and/or semester two modules where it can be evidenced that assessments were complete prior to the disruption caused by COVID-19.

2. Why can’t my programme team tell me now which year-long or semester 2 modules will be included in my Benchmark?

As this is a complex process, it needs to be checked on a programme-by-programme basis to ensure that the proposal for the benchmark is robust, transparent and does not include any assessments affected by disruption caused by COVID-19. Unfortunately, this will take time, but all programme teams are working hard to get this information to you as soon as possible.

3. Why can’t you calculate my benchmark for me or produce a calculator to do so?

Due to the complexity of the process and the fact that the calculation differs for different degrees, this is not possible due to time and resource limitations. Staff are currently focussed on the assessment period and ensuring that students can be awarded their degrees or progress this summer.
4. I am a finalist with 60 credits complete from semester one. Will my benchmark CWA be calculated on the basis of my best 45 credits?

No, the benchmark would be calculated from the CWA of all completed semester 1 credits.

5. Will my module (or assessment) marks be changed because of my benchmark CWA?

No, the benchmark is only going to be used in the final degree classification calculations and only then if it is higher than your CWA after all assessments are complete. The benchmark will not change any previous or new assessment or module marks.

6. I have agreed mitigating circumstances for semester one this year and have not completed some modules. Will they still be included in the benchmark calculation?

No, we will only calculate a benchmark based on achievement that has not been affected by the covid-19 pandemic, so any modules from semester one with agreed mitigating circumstances will not be included.

7. I failed some semester one modules without mitigating circumstances, will they be included in the calculation?

Yes these modules will be included in the benchmark calculation. However, for the purposes of the calculation they will ‘count’ as having a module mark of 35%. The actual mark will not change on the transcript nor for any preponderance calculations.

8. I have some modules from last year that I am due to sit or re-sit this summer. How does this affect my CWA from last year that might be used in the benchmark calculation?

When calculating the CWA for last year we will apply the same general principles outlined in the two preceding questions. Thus, modules with agreed mitigating circumstances will not be included whilst failed modules (with no mitigating circumstances) will be ‘counted’ as 35% for this calculation only.

9. For the 4 year integrated Master’s courses why are you weighting the CWA from years 2 & 3?

We have weighted the CWA from these years, where appropriate, to match their overall weighting to the final degree calculation.

10. I spent last year in industry or abroad will that go into my benchmark calculation?

Only years in industry or abroad that contribute to the final degree classification will be included in any benchmark calculations. If you are unsure you should check with your local programme team.

11. This year I am in industry or abroad, how will my benchmark be calculated.

You will only get a benchmark for your year in industry or abroad if the mark for it contributes towards your final degree classification. If this is the case then it will be calculated using the general principles outlined earlier in this document.
12. I am a direct entry student into year 2 with less than 30 credits of completed semester one module. How will my year 1 CWA be calculated to feed into the benchmark calculation?

For these exceptional cases it may be possible to generate a year 2 benchmark using less than 30 credits of year two modules. You will need to discuss your individual circumstances with your School in the first instance.

13. I am a 2nd year student when does my benchmark get applied?

All benchmark calculations will only be applied when it comes to final exam boards and for the classification of degrees. So, in this case, your benchmark may be potentially used next summer at the end of your final year (or the summer afterwards if you are on a 4 year degree).

14. Can I get a separate benchmark calculated for me?

Like calculations for degree classifications the benchmark calculation must apply to the whole cohort on each specific programme, so this is not possible. The only exceptions are those mentioned in answers to questions above e.g. modules with accepted mitigating circumstances, direct entry students, RWR students etc.

15. I am due to graduate this year, how will my CWA for this year contribute to my final degree classification?

For students graduating this year your final CWA for your degree is calculated on the basis of your performance across years 2 and 3 (or across years 2, 3 and 4 for students on four year programmes). If you are on a three year programme the weighting of years 2 and 3 within the final degree classification is 40:60. This means that your CWA for this year will count for 60% of your overall degree level CWA. For finalist students on a four year programme, your CWA for this year will count for 50% of your overall degree level CWA.

Preponderance Rules

1. How does the Safety Net apply to preponderance rules for degree classification?

In light of the COVID-19 disruption to semester 2 this year we are also making temporary amendments to the preponderance rules used for degree classifications to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the current situation. Examples of these for both 3 and 4 year degree are shown below and indicate a reduction in the number of credits needed at the higher classification. These amendments will apply at the point of calculation of your degree classification - i.e. usually the exam board at the end of your final year.

Examples:
3 year scheme
Rule 2: First Class Honours
Modules to the value of at least 120-90 credits at 70% or better, a weighted average mark greater than or equal to 67%, and failed modules worth less than 40 credits

OR
Weighted average mark greater than or equal to 70%

**Borderline for 3 year scheme**
First Class Honours - Three Year Programmes

Modules to the value of at least 120-90 credits at 68% or better, including modules to the value of at least 90-60 credits at 70% or better, a weighted average mark greater than or equal to 67%, and failed modules worth less than 40 credits.

**4 year scheme**
Rule 2: First Class Honours

Modules to the value of at least 180-150 credits at 70% or better, a weighted average mark greater than or equal to 67%, and failed modules worth less than 40 credits

OR

Weighted average mark greater than or equal to 70%

**Borderline for 4 year scheme**
First Class Honours - Four year integrated programmes

Modules to the value of at least 180-150 credits at 68% or better, including modules to the value of at least 150-120 credits at 70% or better, a weighted average mark greater than or equal to 67%, and failed modules worth less than 40 credits.