

HE Regulatory Amendments FAQs

Updated 23/6/2020 to provide further clarity on the opportunity for an uncapped assessment attempt for students who were unable to attend an assessment event.

Core and Non-Core Modules

With the adoption of Compensation as a result of the current COVID-19 situation all Foundation and Bachelor degree programmes have been reviewed and modules determined as Core or Non-Core. This is already causing some confusion, as is natural with a new way of working. This update seeks to clarify the aspects which are causing concern.

What does a non-core module mean?

The key distinction between Core and Non-Core modules in the programme design is whether a module is considered to be essential to meet the Programme level Learning Outcomes. So, a Core module is one without which a student cannot graduate. Non-core modules are those which a student could fail and it would not invalidate the overall aims of the degree programme.

If a module is non-core, do we not have to do it?

Neither Core nor Non-Core modules are optional, and it remains the expectation that students attempt and pass all their modules.

What is compensation for non-core modules? Can we only take forward module credits that are associated with core modules?

The aim of compensation is to accommodate poorer performance in a module whilst not jeopardising the opportunity to complete the degree programme. Compensation is an addition to our regulations at this time which adds to the flexibility given by our approach to retakes.

Progression to next year study

Previously, to progress onto your next year of study you would need to have obtained a minimum of 100 credits (out of the 120 credits available per year). If you carried over 20 credits to your next year of study, you would have to retake and pass these before the end of your degree programme to be awarded your degree. With compensation, you can fail up to 40 credits of non-core modules, without having to retake them, and still be able to progress onto your next year of study, as long as your overall credit weighted average mark for the year from all credits (120) is above 40%.

Award Classification

Under our normal regulatory arrangements, you would have had to achieve 240 credits for a Foundation degree, and 360 credits for a Bachelors degree, at a pass grade (40%) to be awarded your degree. Compensation, which has been introduced to support student during the Covid-19 pandemic, means that you can fail 40 credits of non-core modules, without having to retake them and still be awarded your degree, as long as your overall credit weighted average mark for the year, taking into account all modules (Core and Non-Core), is

above 40%. However, it should be noted that particularly low marks for these compensated modules may bring the average for the year down below that level.

To mitigate the impact of failing up to 40 credits on your overall grade, we have additionally implemented a safety net to ensure that the final degree classification for Bachelor programmes will not fall below the year average for your second year.

In the case of Foundation and Top-Up degrees, where only the final year is used to calculate your degree classification, the safety net will be that the Awards Board will have the discretion to consider the pattern of a student's marks achieved during the final year, and take into account any detrimental impact as a result of Covid-19, when considering the degree classification to award to the student.

Please note that **Students are expected to make a bona fide attempt at all modules.**

It should equally be remembered that modules will be listed on your transcript and performance may be important in future study.

Can students fail a non-core module with no attempt to pass it and use these as part of the 40 credits compensation?

No, as stated above students need to make bona fide attempt at all assessments

Can students still take 20 credits outstanding into the next year from core modules, as they can at the moment?

First year students can progress to the second year of their study with 60 credits outstanding. These 60 credits can be a mix of compensated non-core modules and non-achieved core modules. Within this, the maximum credit of compensated non-core modules is 40.

Second year students can progress to the third year of their study with 40 credits outstanding. These 40 credits can be a mix of compensated non-core modules and non-achieved core modules.

NB The credits from core modules must be achieved by the end of your programme to be awarded your degree.

Will the option to request a 10-day Extension impact on my Progression or Graduation?

We have offered students the option to request a 10-day extension against their assessments in order to further mitigate against some of the impact of Coronavirus on your studies. Every effort will be made to complete marking in time for the Module Assessment Boards in July. However, in some instances where extensions were applied it may not be possible to present results to the July MAB. In these cases, the results will be presented to the September Module Assessment Board, therefore delaying the confirmation of results and Awards. Steps will be taken in September to minimise or prevent any impact on progression or graduation.

Questions raised about the Safety Net

We have introduced the safety net to protect students who may perform less well in assessments during the period of remote delivery.

If I did less well in the previous year of study does this safety net mean that I am at a disadvantage?

No, the intention of the safety net is to ensure that no student's award classification is adversely affected by COVID19. Your performance in the penultimate year is there to set a base level that your classification will not fall below. Students who perform better in their final year will still be able to improve their final classification, as per previous cohorts.

What if I prioritised some of my second year (penultimate) Bachelor degree modules over others because I didn't think these would count towards my award classification?

It is still the case that only the best 60 credits from level 5 would be included in the classification, whether these are from core or non-core modules. This hasn't changed. If the above approach was taken it may impact on your safety net being lower, but this will only come into play if your level 6 grades fall below your level 5 grades. A decision to not put full effort into a module is neither something that we would recommend, nor be able to mitigate.

Questioned raised regarding assessments during this period.

What happens if IT fails during a live assessment?

You will be given the opportunity to try again later but if IT is still an issue you will be given an uncapped defer.

Regarding the opportunity for an uncapped 2nd assessment attempt *for any student who is unable to sit exams and other assessment 'events'* - does this include non-live assessments e.g. essays?

Yes, it does.

If some students, within a cohort, sat an exam before the disruption, and some didn't, could the students who have already sat it, sit it in the new format without a cap? If they do re-sit it and get a lower grade, which grade counts?

All students will be given the opportunity for another first attempt, and students taking advantage of this would receive the higher mark of the two.

If a group score lower as a whole on the new exam format, will the College apply a group uplift?

As has been the case previously, Exam Boards have discretion to review the entire years' marks (pre and post virus) to mitigate for impact but obviously there is no guarantee that they will decide to apply such an uplift.

Questions about Special Allowances

FAQs for students in receipt of special allowances will be published separately.