No Detriment Policy – Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

1. Introduction

In light of the unprecedented and exceptional circumstances under which you are currently having to sit assessments, the University has decided to implement a No Detriment Policy.

In principle, this approach works like a “safety net” and means that as long you achieve the minimum pass mark in your remaining assessments, then your final average will not be negatively impacted by any disruption brought about by changes to assessment methodology or scheduling during this challenging period.

The policy is not designed to cover any other exceptional circumstances that may impact your ability to sit or submit an assessment. Please note that the University has relaxed its concession policy so that you can choose not to sit or submit any assessments during this period and there will be no penalty.

Note that if you perform well in assessments taken during this period then you still have the opportunity to raise your overall final average. Once again, as long as you achieve a pass mark then completing these assessments can only improve your average and cannot lower it.

2. Time Period

The No Detriment Policy will come into effect for all assessments scheduled on or after 18th March 2020 and will remain in place until such time as the University is confident that all assessment functions can return to normal. Students will be notified as soon as an end date for the Time Period can be confirmed.

3. Professional Bodies

Please note that the University may not be able to apply the No Detriment Policy to programmes which are regulated by external professional bodies. Specifically, these are the LPC (which is regulated by the Solicitors Regulations Authority) and the BPTC (which is regulated by the Bar Standards Board). The University is working closely with these regulators to adapt their current requirements in response to the current situation.

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy will apply to all other University programmes.
4. Minimum Pass Threshold

For the avoidance of doubt, you must achieve the minimum pass mark required for each assessment in order to demonstrate satisfactory completion of the learning outcomes for that module. The No Detriment Policy cannot be applied to condone a fail mark (ie, treat a failed mark as a pass).

5. Resitting Students

Please note that students resitting assessments at the second or third attempt during the Time Period defined in Point 2 will still be subject to: (i) any module capping rules in place for that programme; and/or (ii) where it applies, any award criteria requiring students to pass all assessments at first attempt.

6. No Detriment Policy in Operation

To ensure consistency, the No Detriment Policy will operate in the same way for all University programmes, subject to Point 3.

If you are completing your course of study in 2019/20 then your award will be determined as follows:

(a) Your final overall weighted average will be calculated normally, in accordance with your programme’s assessment regulations.

(b) Your final overall weighted average will be calculated again, as in (a), but this time all assessments sat during the Time Period defined in Point 2 will be excluded from the calculation.

(c) You will receive the higher of the two averages and the Examination Board will award your grade classification accordingly.

For the avoidance of doubt, assessments which do not contribute to the overall weighted average (eg, undergraduate Level 4 modules) will not be taken into account when applying the calculation above. Although marks achieved in these assessments will not have any impact on your final grade classification, remember that you are still required to pass them.

If you are not due to complete your course of study this academic year then your overall final average will be calculated once you reach the end of your course. However, the No Detriment Policy will be applied in exactly the same way as described above.

Note that the actual marks you achieve in assessments sat during the Time Period will not change. The marks for these assessments will appear on your final transcript as normal. The only difference is that the final overall weighted average displayed will be the higher of the two averages calculated as per (a) and (b) above.
7. Students with Few or No Completed Assessments

In order for the No Detriment Policy to work most effectively, it relies on there being a sufficient number of completed assessments upon which to derive an average, which then accurately reflects the level of academic performance and attainment achieved by a student outside of the Time Period defined in Point 2.

We are aware that, in some cases, there may be students who are about to undertake the significant majority of their grade-contributing assessments during the Time Period. These include, among others, students on the current BPTC, the January 2020 start Accelerated LPC and the January 2020 start Academic Masters in Law programme. For these students, it may prove difficult to come up with a reliable or robust enough average to which we can fairly compare the performance in assessments taken over the Time Period. Our Programme Teams are currently looking closely at ways in which we can mitigate the impact of this scenario and we will inform students of our findings as soon as possible. Be assured that we will seek to incorporate the “no detriment” principle in our solution as best as we can, while at the same time maintaining academic standards and ensuring the integrity of our awards.

If you find yourself in the situation above, remember that you can choose not to sit any assessments during this period and there will be no penalty for being absent.

8. Quality and Standards Assurance

The policy is being implemented so as to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the assessment and awarding of students, whilst also ensuring that:

(a) rigorous processes to maintain quality and secure standards are maintained or appropriately adapted;
(b) the University uses reliable evidence of student achievement to determine award outcomes;
(c) the management of assessment during this period is in line with sector guidance and expectations.

The University of Law

8th April 2020