

UCM/University of Chester Student FAQ Document

2020/21 – Safety Net Scheme

This FAQ document should be read in conjunction with the guidance documents available on [the Registry Services Portal pages](#)

Students experiencing difficulties with assessments, who may require an extension or deferral, should speak to their Programme Leader, with further information on the Mitigating Circumstances scheme available [on the Registry Services Portal pages](#)

The requirement to provide independent documentary evidence in support of extension and deferral requests has been waived for the 2020/21 academic year.

This FAQ document will be amended at regular intervals in the next few weeks and months as we start to receive questions from students and staff.

1. What is the 'Safety Net' scheme?

The safety net scheme allows students to retake assessments they have taken in the 2020/21 academic year with the aim of ultimately improving their classification.

A student taking further assessment via the safety net scheme can only improve the mark of any assessments they select; the component/module mark and classification cannot get worse as a result of assessments undertaken under this scheme.¹

2. Which students does the safety net apply to?

The scheme applies to students studying modules in the 2020/21 academic year on the following awards and levels:

- Bachelors Degree Level 6
- Foundation Degree Level 5
- Integrated Masters Level 6/7
- Taught Masters Degree Level 7
- Postgraduate Diploma Level 7

Students can only retake assessments completed in the 2020/21 academic year and for final module results published from 1 March 2021. This is the date module results are published following the assessment boards; it does not mean that students can only retake assessments submitted on or after 1 March 2021.

For example, a full time Bachelors Degree student who studied Level 6 in the 2020/21 academic year will be able to retake any of the Level 6 assessments they completed this academic year, not just those submitted from 1 March 2021.

3. Does this also apply to part time students?

Yes, if they are studying on one of the awards and levels specified in the answer to question 2 then they are entitled to retake assessments in the same way as a full time student.

¹ unless the student commits a serious breach of the academic integrity policy

4. Will the no detriment policy from 2019/20 also be applied?

Yes, if a student has a no-detriment average from the 2019/20 academic year that is better than their standard average for that level/year, it will be used in addition to the 2020/21 safety net. For example, a Level 6 full time Bachelors Degree student is likely to have a no-detriment average for Level 5 from the 2019/20 academic year.

5. Do all final level marks count towards the average and classification?

The best 100 credits from the level are used in the calculation of the average of Bachelors Degrees and Foundation Degrees, which in the vast majority of cases means the lowest 20 credits are discounted. For example, a Bachelors Degree student with marks for 120 credits at Level 6 will have the lowest 20 credits discounted.

Integrated Masters students also benefit from a 20 credit lowest mark discard.

See [classification guides](#) for further information.

6. Does this only apply to students who successfully complete their award in the 2020/21 academic year?

No, it is available to all students who meet the criteria set out in the answer to question 2. For example, if a Level 6 Bachelors Degree student passes four 20 credit modules but fails the 40 credit dissertation, they will be eligible to retake any of the assessments they passed. In these cases the student won't know their final classification, but if they do wish to take further assessments they must elect to do this when the results of the modules are first published, not when they attain their award.

7. When do students need to apply to retake assessments under the safety net scheme?

Students will have seven calendar days from the date official results are published on evision following the Awards Assessment Board. Late applications cannot be considered, so it is critical that students check their results as early as possible following publication.

8. How do students know when their results will be published?

Main results publication dates are available [on the Registry Services Portal pages](#). Registry Services will also email students at least 7 days before their results are published to confirm the release date, and will then send another email to students once results have been published. It is critical that students regularly check their University email account.

9. When will the retakes be due for completion?

Undergraduate students receiving results on 9 June 2021 will be given the option to retake assessment either in the June/July 2021 reassessment period, or with

attendance/engagement with the modules when they run again in the 2021/22 academic year, from September 2021.

Postgraduate students and those on other programmes will retake the assessment at the next opportunity, with the deadline set by the relevant academic department.

10. How do students then let the University know which assessments they wish to retake?

The University is developing a notification system which students will be able to access via their confirmed online results. Notifications must be submitted via this system; any notifications submitted via any other method (eg email) will not be accepted.

11. Is there a deadline for letting the University know which assessments a student wishes to retake?

Yes, given the extremely tight turnaround, students have a maximum of seven days from publication of results to notify the University of the assessments they wish to retake; late applications cannot be considered.

12. What happens if a student attains a lower mark following the retake?

If a student attains a lower mark following further assessment the previous, higher mark will be entered; unless they breach the Academic Integrity Policy, a student cannot attain a worse mark as a result of assessments retaken under the safety net scheme.

13. Will students keep the original award whilst undertaking the retake(s)?

Yes, students will keep their original award (if made) whilst undertaking retakes via the safety net scheme. For example, if a Bachelors Degree student is awarded a 2.2 but decides to retake some assessments under the scheme, they will keep the 2.2 Degree during this period.

14. Where can students get advice on which assessments to retake?

Advice can be sought from a number of different areas: Registry Services and the relevant academic department(s), for example. The University is also developing a calculator tool, which will assist students in calculating the potential impact of improving particular assessment results.

However, ultimately the decision on which, if any, assessments to retake is the responsibility of the student.

15. Can students retake assessments completed in previous academic years?

No, the safety net scheme is being put in place to take into account the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020/21 academic year. Other measures such as the no-

detriment policy were in place in the 2019/20 academic year, so students cannot opt to retake assessments from previous years.

16. Can students retake assessments they have failed as a first attempt for an uncapped mark?

No, the mitigating circumstances scheme is available to help students who are experiencing difficulties completing assessments on time, to the best of their abilities, or at all. If a student fails an assessment/module at first attempt, they will be offered a reassessment but the module mark will be capped at the pass mark.

17. Can students retake assessments passed at second or third attempt?

No, these modules are capped at the pass mark and if a student did retake the assessments the result would still be capped, so it would make no difference to their results

18. Will students receive the certificate for the original award whilst undertaking the retake?

Certificates will be issued at the usual time; if a student subsequently improves their classification, Registry Services will request that the original is returned, and upon receipt will then send out the updated version.

19. Will students be able to defer the retake if they experience mitigating circumstances?

Yes, if a student opts to take assessments again but cannot, as a result of mitigating circumstances, they will be able to apply for a deferral to the next assessment point.

20. If a student doesn't improve the classification following the retake(s) can they opt to take other assessments again?

No, students are given one opportunity to retake assessments under this scheme. For example, if a student awarded a 2.2 decides to retake two components but following completion of the assessments does not improve their classification, they will not be entitled to take any more assessments and the 2.2 classification will be final.

21. What happens if a student doesn't submit the retake by the deadline and doesn't officially defer it to the next assessment point?

In these cases, the retake opportunity is spent and the original marks and award will be confirmed at the next Awards Assessment Board. Students will not be given another opportunity to take the assessments if the submission deadline is missed.

22. If a student already attains a First Class Degree (Bachelors and Integrated Masters) or a Distinction (Masters Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Foundation Degree) can they take further assessments to improve the profile of marks?

No, the safety net scheme is in place to protect a student's final classification, so if a student already has the best classification possible (1st Class or Distinction) they will not be entitled to take further assessments.