

Academic Regulations for the Exceptional Management of Taught Awards

Teesside University – No Detriment Approach

For all current students progressing their studies and/or completing during the 2019/20 Academic Year

The University's Assessment Regulations allow the University, under exceptional circumstances, to modify its approach to learning, teaching and assessment (see standard taught Assessment Regulations Section 3.21 and the Academic Regulations for the Exceptional Management of Taught Awards). The No Detriment Approach outlined below has been designed to manage the current circumstances arising from the Coronavirus (Covid-19 pandemic) and was approved by the Vice-Chancellor for implementation on 2 June 2020. The Approach will apply until the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) formally rescinds its application.

As the situation evolves relating to Covid-19, the University reserves the right to re-shape its Approach to safely and securely manage student learning and achievement, ensuring the integrity of its academic standards and awards. This will reflect evolving national guidance via the Office for Students (OfS), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and sector practice.

It is intended to apply the No Detriment Approach, outlined below, to the Assessment and Reassessment of students at Module Assessment Boards [MABs] and Progression Award Assessment Boards [PABs], for the level(s)/modules studied in 2019/20.

As soon as is practicable, the University will cease use of this Approach and continue to operate under the standard Taught Assessment Regulations. A Strategy will be developed to support this transition, which will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee).

Definition of Teesside University No Detriment Approach:

The No Detriment Approach is a "safety net" approach to calculate a student's overall score for the academic year, acknowledging the exceptional circumstances presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. The basic principle is that a student's marks for the portion of the academic year affected will not cause their overall academic year average to go down, as long as they attempt and submit all assessments, and successfully complete the requirements of their course in line with the standard Assessment Regulations and the No Detriment Approach (with PSRB variance where applicable). This will require students to achieve a minimum overall average pass mark for the year/level (40% for Level 3-6¹ or 50% for Level 7)².

¹ 55% to progress from Level 5 to 6 and 6 to 7 on Integrated Masters courses

² the minimum percentage achievement is not required for Higher National awards

The Approach will enable the University to ensure the student's achievements are reliably assessed and academic quality and standards remain secure by ensuring learning outcomes are met. It takes into account assessments submitted and assessed before 16 March 2020, the date when the University deemed that assessments have been affected by the disruption to learning, teaching and assessment in the current academic year. If the hand in date for any component of a module is within the affected period the whole module will be classed as affected.

It is acknowledged that courses that have Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies [PSRBs] accreditation/recognition will be considered under the standard Assessment Regulations pertaining to those courses and may need to sit outside of the No Detriment Approach due to their requirements.

1. Taught Awards included in the Approach:

- 1.1 Foundation Degrees
- 1.2 Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma
- 1.3 Undergraduate Degrees (including Dip HE, Cert HE and University Certificates)
- 1.4 Integrated Masters
- 1.5 Masters, Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) and Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) and Postgraduate University Certificates

2. Exceptions to this Approach:

- 2.1 Provision linked to PSRBs may need specific approval by the associated PSRB before application of this approach can be confirmed. This will be managed by Schools and communicated directly to students.
- 2.2 The Professional Doctorate award is graded on a pass/fail basis only and, therefore, the No Detriment Approach will not be applied to these awards. Such students may request to defer, in line with the University's Deferral option.

3. Years/Cohorts the Approach will apply to:

- 3.1 All currently enrolled students in 2019/20 academic year at Levels 3-7, including those who have applied for the Deferral option. The timing of when the No Detriment Approach will be applied may differ for those students who have chosen the Deferral option.
- 3.2 Students studying modules/courses already designed for online delivery and/or assessment for the level(s) being studied in 2019/20.

- 3.3 Students studying in Part-time mode, for the module(s)/level(s) being studied in 2019/20.
- 3.4 Students who are enrolled on a course with an academic year, e.g. B Occurrence students, at the relevant point in relation to their award. In the event of a student key worker who returns to their studies beyond the current academic year, it will be applied at a later date, as appropriate. In liaison with FCD, these groups of students will be identified and managed by Schools.

4. Principles

- 4.1 The No Detriment Approach is a 'safety net' for calculating a student's overall mark for the year, acknowledging the exceptional circumstances and potential impact on studies. It will be applied at Progression and Award Boards to the results from module assessments due to be submitted on or after 16 March 2020, until the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) formally rescinds its application.
- 4.2 Students are expected to continue to engage with their studies. It is a requirement that students attempt and submit all remaining assessments/reassessment, as this will only improve their outcome and not lessen it.
- 4.3 If a student considered that they are unable to submit their assessment(s), they were advised to apply for the Deferral option, which was available between 30 March 2020 and 19 April 2020.
- 4.4 For modules where the whole module assessment was due to be submitted before 16 March 2020 the module will be classed as "unaffected". If any individual module or component(s) were due to be submitted on or after 16 March 2020, the **whole** module will be classed as "affected".
- 4.5 The standard Assessment Regulations in relation to progression and award will apply and will be extended to include the No Detriment Approach.
- 4.6 Where students do not make a valid attempt at a module (as defined within the standard Assessment Regulations), the module will be considered to be a fail and a reassessment of the failed component(s) will be offered as detailed in the standard Assessment Regulations.
- 4.7 In order to meet the learning outcomes of their course, students are expected to attempt and submit all assessments, and successfully complete the requirements of their course in line with the standard Assessment Regulations and the No Detriment Approach (with PSRB variance where applicable). This will require students to achieve a

minimum overall average pass mark for the year/level, as noted in the Definition for the No Detriment Approach.

- 4.8 Where the 7-day universal extension has been applied, and this takes the submission date beyond the 16 March 2020 implementation date for the No Detriment Approach, the revised submission date(s) will be included in this Approach.
- 4.9 Where students have approved additional short extensions to assessments (outside of that in 4.8 above) their revised submission date will be used for the No Detriment Approach.
- 4.10 Throughout the period of disruption, there will be clear communication of the No Detriment Approach with students, staff, Partners and External Examiners.

5. Operational Factors:

- 5.1 In addition to modules delivered at TU main campus and TU Darlington, this Approach also applies to TUCP Partners and other franchise partners including UK employer and TNE (validated, franchise and dual). It also applies to Validated Partnerships with UK Colleges, where feasible. (See 5.2 below.)
- 5.2 In some instances, Partners, due to the timing and specific nature of the circumstances in their location, may already have established processes in place that vary from those implemented at TU. The TU Main Campus implementation date of 16 March 2020 may not be appropriate for all Partners due to the date they became affected, and a different date may need to be agreed for those Partners. There will, therefore, need to be consideration of this by:
 - a. **Academic Registry** for TUCP and UK Validated Colleges
 - b. **Schools** for all other UK provision
 - c. **Associate Deans (I)** for TNE provisionin liaison with the relevant Partner, in light of their own responses to how and when they have been affected by Covid-19, e.g. when/if they moved to online delivery and/or campus closure. Records will need to be maintained of any specific arrangements and clearly communicated to students by Partners.
- 5.3 **Schools** will need to establish:
 - a. What assessments were completed/due to be submitted prior to the introduction of the No Detriment Approach (16 March 2020).
 - b. What was to be submitted/assessed on or after the above date (taking in to account any agreed extensions).

Academic Registry will adapt the School Module Assessment Trackers (MATs) for this purpose. Schools will then be asked to complete and return these to FCD to feed into SITS. Schools will also need to

investigate any PSRB requirements, providing FCD with a definitive list of modules and occurrences that the No Detriment Approach cannot be applied to (also to be captured on the School MATs). Schools will liaise with students accordingly.

- 5.4 **FCD** will develop a method of comparing the No Detriment calculation against the standard final outcome(s) within the existing Assessment Regulations. Reports will be produced to enable standard checking at pre-Boards prior to the final Progression/Award Boards.
- 5.5 **Academic Registry** will develop guidance/training for Schools on specific categories of students, e.g. those restudying during 2019/20 and for Chairs, Secretaries, External Examiners and other members of MABs and PABs.
- 5.6 A transition and exit strategy from the No Detriment Approach will be developed to return TU to the normal state of operating the assessment regulations. The University will consider the impact on progression/award on future cohorts of students.

6. Calculation of the Benchmark Score and Progression/Award Boards Decisions and Recommendations:

- 6.1 MABs will continue to consider module outcomes in the standard way, i.e. the requirement to pass a module will not change. Reassessments in the failed components will be offered to students who have not passed the module at the first attempt and where compensation cannot be applied (as detailed within with the standard Assessment Regulations and 6.3, below, with PSRB variance where applicable).
- 6.2 The **Benchmark score** will be calculated from the overall average of the module(s) deemed “unaffected” (as outlined in 4.4).

All modules, including those “affected”, will be included in a standard calculation to arrive at the average mark/grade for the academic year as per the approved Assessment Regulations.

The higher of these two averages (**Benchmark score** and standard) will be used for progression and classification/grading purposes. This means that a student’s final outcome will be at least the **Benchmark score**, and could increase if the profile of marks/grades achieved after 16 March 2020 improves the overall average mark/grade.

For standard start students, i.e. September/October 2019, Semester One modules will normally form the **Benchmark Score**.

For non-standard start students the **Benchmark score** will be determined utilising their “unaffected” modules at that level, when they are next due to be considered for progression/award.

For students studying a course that comprises solely of year long modules, the **Benchmark score** will be determined utilising the overall average from the “unaffected” modules achieved at the previous level of study.

6.3 The No Detriment Approach to module compensation would permit additional compensation, for the below award types:

6.3.1 ***Undergraduate, Foundation Degree and Integrated Masters awards***: In addition to the application of compensation as detailed within 5.5.1 of the Standard Assessment Regulations, Progression/Award Boards may use their discretion to apply an additional 20 credits of compensation **at Level 3 and 4** where course learning outcomes have been met, subject to the following conditions:

- a. Compensation can only be awarded if an overall Level average of at least 40% and a total of at least 80 credits has been successfully achieved.
- b. Compensation is only permitted for 20 credits if the failed module has been attempted at the first and/or second attempt as defined within the Standard Assessment Regulations.
- c. Compensation is only permitted for an additional 20 credits if the failed module has been attempted at the first and/or second attempt and the student has achieved a minimum of 30% in the module under consideration.
- d. Where the failure is in a 40 credit module, the Assessment Board may use its discretion to consider the module for compensation if the failed module has been attempted at the first and/or second attempt and the student has achieved a minimum of 30% in the module under consideration.
- e. Any module where academic misconduct has been proven will not be eligible for compensation.
- f. There are no existing contradictory variances for PSRB requirements.

6.3.2 ***Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma awards***: In addition to the discretionary application of compensation as detailed within 5.5.1 within the Standard Assessment Regulations, Progression/Award Boards may use their discretion to apply an additional 15 credits of compensation **at Level 4** where course learning outcomes have been met.

6.3.3 The No Detriment Approach to award of additional module compensation does not apply to modules at Level 5, 6, 7 or 8.

6.3.4 Existing PSRB Variances will need to be observed, which may make the application of compensation unfeasible for those modules/awards. This will need to be determined by Schools in liaison with PSRBs and noted in Assessment Board minutes. It

will not be necessary to apply for variance for the additional 20/15 credits of compensation.

- 6.4 The No Detriment Approach to Progression Under Provision (PUP) permits an extension of the period in which the progression criteria for the current level must be attained to within 8 weeks of the start of next academic year. All other expectations of the standard Assessment Regulations³ for PUP remain the same, including that it is a discretionary decision by the Progression Assessment Board (PAB). It applies to the following award types:

Higher Nationals, Undergraduate, Foundation Degree, Integrated Masters

- 6.4.1 PABs should give careful consideration as to the likelihood of students being able to successfully complete the outstanding reassessment diet in the timeframe available. Where the outstanding reassessment diet is high, consideration to be given as to whether deferring progression to the next semester pending completion of the assessments, is a better option.
- 6.4.2 PABs must be held in a timely manner after the 8 week period has passed in order to consider the outcome of assessments and make progression decisions.
- 6.4.3 Where students have not been able to complete the first assessments, consideration should be given on a course by course basis as to the next steps, which may include interruption of studies for a semester in order to permit the outstanding assessments to be completed.

³ Section 5.7.3 for Undergraduate and Foundation Degree, 5.7.2 for Higher Nationals and 5.7.7 for Integrated Masters