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No Detriment Policy Phase 3 – Academic Year 2020/21

1. Introduction/Context

1.1 The Cardiff Metropolitan University 'No Detriment (Safety Net) Policy' (NDP) was established in order to mitigate negative impact on students' academic achievement resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic during the academic year 2019/20. Initially approved on 21st April 2020 (and subject to regular review), the policy set out that the initial 'No Detriment Period' commenced on 21st March 2020; assessments submitted/attempted on or after this date would qualify for consideration under the original policy.

1.2 Phase Two of the policy, approved in September 2020, set out the principles and methodology for the 2019/20 reassessment period and confirmed how the NDP would be implemented at subsequent Exam Boards, through the transition into academic year 2020/21.

1.3 It was hoped that adjustments made to existing processes, assessment schemes and procedures (as set out in 1.5 below) would be sufficient to mitigate any ongoing impact of the pandemic and that there would be no requirement for 'prolonged expansive mitigation of assessment' beyond January 2021. It is, however, clear that the changeable circumstances since September 2020 necessitate further exceptional provision in order to safeguard the principle that no students' academic achievement should be detrimentally impacted by COVID-19.

1.4 We seek to set out what further adjustments may be made to the capturing of assessment outcomes, balancing exceptional measures with the need to preserve Cardiff Metropolitan University's high academic quality standards. The third phase of the No Detriment Policy, which relates to academic year 2020/21, is therefore defined within this policy document.

1.5 Over summer 2020, academic and professional staff across the University made exceptional efforts to prepare for 2020/21 and a range of adjustments were introduced prior to the start of the year in order to take account of the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the likely continuous impact through the new academic year. These included:

- a university-wide review of the delivery of programmes/individual modules which resulted in changes to modes of delivery and in some cases, assessment requirements. The arrangements for the delivery of teaching and assessment in 2020/21 have been carefully planned and all teaching has been blended/delivered online;



- The University's Flexible Learning Approach, which has allowed students to be in control of how and when their learning has taken place;
- Adjustments to the [Mitigating Circumstances](#) procedure, intended to ease burden on students and staff, including changes to the online claim submission portal and the introduction of 'Self-Certification' extensions of up to four weeks (for which no supporting evidence is required);
- The announcement, following Combined Academic Board approval on 2nd December 2020, that there would be no formal exams held on-campus during 2020/21 and these would continue to be run as online assessments;
- Additional Student Services resources, including creation of appointments to specifically support the mental health of self-isolating students, food vouchers for students spending Christmas away from their families and a dedicated mental health helpline open over the Christmas vacation to support all students.

2. No Detriment Policy, Phase 3 – 2020/21

2.1 In addition to the above, the below measures encompass an ongoing Safety Net for students, and will be introduced for results and awards being confirmed from January 2021 onwards (excluding those which fall under the previous Phase 2 of the No Detriment Policy).

2.1.1 Comparison of module performance

- In addition to the usual moderation processes (which do usually include a review of general module performance as standard), 2020/21 cohorts' marks will be explicitly benchmarked against previous years' results, in order to check there has been no significant overall decline in module performance, attributable to the pandemic.
- An approach is therefore being developed to safeguard marks against significant deviation from previous module performance. This approach may, in some cases, involve a proportional uplift of marks, however **no students' marks will be lowered** as a result of this process.

Further details will be confirmed as soon as possible.

2.1.2 Automatic upgrading of borderline students within 2% of higher class

- The [Assessment Regulations](#) state that students in the rounded 2% category may be upgraded by the Exam Board if they meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Exit Velocity (*UG only, where marks improve as study progresses through levels*)
 - Preponderance of Credit (*where 50% or more of the credit at L6 (UG) or L7 (PG) is in the upper category*)
 - Performance in the Dissertation/Major Project
- Under this policy, **any student whose award calculation puts them within the borderline 2% category will be automatically eligible for upgrade** by the



Exam Board due to the mitigating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, even if they do not meet any of the above usual criteria.

2.1.3 Reinstated Attempts

- As was offered in Phase 1 of the No Detriment Policy, **as long as a student has submitted an attempt for a particular assessment, they will be permitted one reinstated attempt at that assessment, whether or not they have passed.**
- Students who have not submitted (**Non-Attempt**) will not be entitled to a reinstated attempt, unless they have confirmed Mitigating Circumstances.
- Where a student has **failed an assessment and is required to resubmit**, that resubmission will be counted as the same attempt number as previously, and this will be confirmed in any formal Exam Board Outcome.
- Interim Exam Boards in February/March 2021
The process of issuing retrievals for failed assessments/modules will continue as usual, albeit at reinstated attempts (see above). Exam Boards will decide whether such retrievals will be best completed straight away or over the summer retrieval period (this will usually depend on the amount of work required to achieve a pass standard and the number of retrievals).
Under this policy, **any student who has been required to complete retrievals straight away (during Spring 2021) may request to defer their retrieval(s) until summer 2021**. Such requests to change the Exam Board outcome must be submitted by the school via the [Exam Board Outcome Amendments](#) process.
- Following official publication of results in June/July 2021, **students who have already passed** an assessment in 2020/21 (in S1 or S2) will be able to **opt-in to resubmit in an attempt to improve their assessment mark**. The reason for delaying this opportunity until after the end-of-year Exam Boards is so that students can make an informed decision based on a complete academic profile to which any ND provision has already been applied.

Students will be reminded that opting-in to resubmit, or choosing to delay retrievals until the summer will delay confirmation of a student's award and may delay confirmation of progression to the next level (and therefore re-enrolment), as their academic profile will need to be reconsidered by a subsequent Exam Board (as was the case in summer 2020).

- There will be a centralised reporting mechanism for students to make an application to opt-in, and guidance/counsel will be available from schools in order to ensure they are eligible and it is worth the student resubmitting.
- *Please note, if a student was already submitting at second or final attempt in 2020/21, their module mark will still be capped even if they have a reinstated (second or third) attempt, in line with normal regulations.*

- *Students will only have one reinstated attempt at each 20/21 assessment attempted under this policy. The only way a student can have a further attempt reinstated is if they have successfully claimed Mitigating Circumstances against that particular (re)assessment.*

2.2 Where necessary, **Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies** (PSRBs) will be consulted, to ensure none of these proposals compromise professional accreditation of awards.

2.3 Further **Exam Board Chair's Guidance** will be issued by Registry Services in order to guide consistent application of the No Detriment Provision in the context of the university Assessment Regulations.

2.4 **External Examiners**, most of whom will be familiar with Cardiff Met's previous No Detriment provision, will be contacted regarding this latest phase. Any constructive feedback will be duly considered within the context of balancing support for students with the preservation of academic quality standards.

3. Scope of NDP Phase 3

3.1 It is envisaged that the measures detailed above will apply to Cardiff-based students until the **end of the 2020/21 academic session**, however we recognise that there is still much uncertainty relating to future public health measures and their effect on on-campus study/access to facilities. Any provisions beyond that time will be confirmed via an update to this policy or in a future policy document.

3.2 No Detriment Provision for TNE Partners

3.2.1 As set out in NDP Phase 2, decisions made regarding the application of No Detriment provision to students studying at partner institutions will continue to be cognisant of:

- Whether teaching/course delivery was significantly disrupted or altered in the period leading up to assessment submission as a result of the Pandemic;
- Whether local 'lockdown' measures leading up to or at the time of assessment are likely to have had a significant impact on students' ability to engage with their studies.

3.2.2 Local circumstances relating to the pandemic, and any respective impact on Learning & Teaching, is likely to vary between partner institution countries at any given time; this will continue to be monitored by the Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC). Decisions regarding the application of the No Detriment Policy to TNE partners/cohorts will be reported to, and ratified by, the CPC.

4. Review and Revision of the Policy

4.1 The policy will continue to be subject to regular review to ensure it remains fair, fit for purpose and that the mitigation and/or intervention applied to student assessment under this policy is proportionate to the circumstances contemporary to the assessment period.

4.2 If future local or global developments necessitate a further phase or incarnation of the No Detriment Policy, the implications of that will be duly considered.
