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10<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Dear Students,

I hope that you are all doing well. We remain in the most extraordinary of times and I understand how challenging it is for everyone. In this letter I wish to share with you four updates regarding: the Safety Net, return to in person delivery, end of year arrangements and Graduation, and details of a survey that we ask you complete.

### **Safety Net**

You may recall that we wrote to you on [28<sup>th</sup> January 2021](#) to confirm that many of the aspects of the Academic Safety Net for last year have been carried forward to this year. I have set out these Safety Net measures below for ease of reference.

I explained in my communication of 28 January that working with other partners, a review of the measures in the Safety Net would be undertaken to consider whether any further amendments might be needed in relation to the current circumstances. A thorough review was carried out, which confirmed that the appropriate measures are in place to alleviate the pressure of the pandemic on your education as much as we can while maintaining academic standards. However, it did identify that an additional measure should be made to relax the regulations governing compensation.

### Compensation

There has been a relaxation of the compensation rules for eligible modules so that if you fail up to 80 credits, you may be eligible for compensation in up to 20 of those credits. Amending the compensation rules in this way, should reduce the assessment burden for any student who needs to submit referral work during the referral period. Further information on compensation, and the full detail on this additional measure of the Safety Net, can be found in our Safety Net information page.

As a reminder, the other measures of the Safety Net already in place, for all taught courses, are:

- **Extenuating circumstances – no evidence required**  
If there are circumstances beyond your control, including those related to COVID-19 which prevent you from attending or submitting an assessment, you are asked to submit an EC form. We have removed the need to submit evidence, which would normally be the case, making ECs as accessible as possible to more students. This effectively means that all EC claims in 2020-21 are self-certified.
- **Reassessment at the same attempt under some circumstances**

If you submit assessments and fail a module, you can have a further assessment opportunity (referral and/or repeat) at the same attempt. You will also be offered, in the normal way, a reassessment opportunity at the same attempt if you had valid extenuating circumstances to cover non-submission of your assessments. Please note that if you have submitted an assessment and failed because of a penalty for an academic offence, your reassessment will be at the next attempt.

- **Extensions – extra time**

If you make a claim for extenuating circumstances which is valid, you will be given an additional 10 working days in which to submit your coursework. We have increased the usual extension of five working days for self-certification to 10 working days, giving you as much additional time as possible while ensuring that you don't fall too far behind for you to reasonably continue with your studies.

- **Referrals – increased credits and deadlines**

We have increased the volume of credit for referrals from 60 to 80 credits. The majority of these referred assessments will be taken in the summer referral period. In addition, we have increased the volume of credit for extended referrals from 20 to 40 credits so that students can progress with more credits outstanding. We have also set a longer deadline for extended referrals (December 2021) giving you a longer period to achieve these.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Academic Safety Net, please don't hesitate to speak to your personal tutor or a member of the HE Team.

I hope this message is helpful and provides reassurance about the measures we have put in place. We will get through this very difficult period together. I am hugely proud to work at an institution whose staff care so deeply about its students, and are working hard to ensure your education continues.

### **Return to in-person delivery**

From the 17<sup>th</sup> May it will be possible for the return of in-person delivery. I have asked that your personal tutor confirm with you by 1700hrs 12<sup>th</sup> May details of this planned return for your programme. We recognise that this may affect different ways.

I would also encourage you to also review my previous communication regarding Covid testing from the [14<sup>th</sup> April](#) where I shared information about Covid testing and general access to premises.

### **End of year arrangements and Graduation**

In the majority of cases, delivery for the academic year ends in late May/early June. Following which, your programme teams meet with External Examiners and undertake Subject and Awards Boards, where grades and outcomes are confirmed through our quality processes.

The outcome of this process is the production of Transcripts and results letters. This year these will be emailed to students' college email account between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Your tutor can provide more detail if you have any questions.

We are pleased to confirm that we are planning an in-person Graduation Ceremony in October 2021, in Torbay. Please save this date. More details will be provided by the end of June on registration and tickets.

### **Support Service Survey**

Firstly, thank you for your engagement with our Student Perception Questionnaire/National Student Survey (SPQ/NSS). We have commenced analysis of the results of the Student Perception Questionnaire and are delighted with the positive feedback you have provided, as well as some areas for focus. I am especially pleased that over 93% of students were satisfied with the quality of your course...but I am determined to continue to focus on gaining 100%!

Whilst the SPQ and NSS were focussed on your academic programme of study (and in some cases your Apprenticeship), annually we also ask students to share feedback on the support provided by the HE Team, and your wider experience. I therefore ask that you complete the following survey by the 24<sup>th</sup> May. At the end of the year we will also be in touch with one final survey about your experiences regarding Covid.

Please [click here](#) to complete the Support Service Survey.

Best wishes,

Alastair Wilson  
Head of Higher Education and Academic Registrar

