

FAQs for Students – April 2nd 2020 – the Safety Net approach

1. **What is the “Safety Net” and how will it help me?** – The University of Lincoln announced the development of a Safety Net policy for year 2, 3, 4 and postgraduate taught students on April 1st. We are developing this approach because we are concerned about the impact of CV-19 on you all at this current time, and we want to reassure you that should it impact on you negatively during the upcoming assessment period, there will be a “back up plan” wherever possible and permitted for professionally accredited programmes. You will still be required in all circumstances to pass modules as per current university regulations.
2. **How will the Safety Net be applied?** – We are currently working through the mechanism of applying this approach to your outcomes for this year. This is complex because of the wide variety of programmes we deliver at Lincoln, and the different ways we teach and assess students. We know you will be keen to hear the details, and they will be with you as soon as possible. We are also working with professional accrediting bodies to establish their position on Safety Net policies.
3. **Do I need to do anything now?** – You need to continue to study and work on your current assignments and upcoming assessments. The Safety Net is only a “back up plan” – you still need to pass your modules (please check the standard University regulations on progression to level 3/4study/completion for the precise requirements). You still have the opportunity to improve on the standard degree classification algorithms by performing to the best of your ability in your remaining assessments.
4. **Why can't you tell me the details of the Safety Net approach now?** - As you will appreciate, the approach to generating this Safety Net informed mechanism is going to be complex, and we want to get it right for all students at Lincoln. You will therefore have to bear with us regarding the precise implementation of our Safety Net approach. Rest assured, we will make this approach fair, equitable, and with the best possible outcome for all students at its heart. We are seeking to ensure that you will not be in a position where your overall outcome is not any worse than it is now, but you can still **improve** your position by doing well in your remaining assessments this year
5. **When will the Safety Net be applied?** – this will happen during the Board of Examiners process, when the university checks your marks (all years) and calculates your degree classification using our degree algorithms (final year). It may not be possible for some professionally regulated programmes to apply the Safety Net and your School will inform you if this is the case.
6. **What is a degree algorithm?** - We use 3 different “algorithms” to calculate your possible degree outcome when your final results are announced and this is how the Board of Examiners calculates your degree classification. You can read about our current algorithms in [our regulations](#) – we normally use three different calculations and you are awarded the best of these outcomes. It is likely that the Safety Net for final year students will involve an additional degree algorithm which may exclude modules taken after the impact of CV-19. Hence, we would pick a “best of 4” approach rather than the usual “best of 3”, ensuring students who perform well in the upcoming assessments can still benefit from their improved marks.
7. **Why aren't we using a Safety Net for Year 1/0/Cert HE students?** – for many of these students, this is not necessary as we are applying a [“Performance to Date” approach](#). This is essentially the same principle as a Safety Net, but we made the decision to cancel examinations and face to face assessments in many programmes for year 1/0/CertHE students because marks are non-contributory – that is they do not count towards your

eventual degree classification. There are some exceptions to this approach because of professional or regulatory requirements and local reasons relevant to individual programmes.

8. **Are you excluding all my final year modules?** – No, any modules already completed are likely to still “count” towards your degree classification. In some cases we may also “count” completed assessments which are contributing to as yet incomplete modules. And don’t forget, you still need to pass your modules as per current regulations, and if you do well, this will always improve your outcome overall.
9. **I’ve already submitted my dissertation/final project, does this mean it won’t count?** – absolutely not, by performing well in your final modules you will improve your average marks and potentially your degree outcome. The Safety Net procedure is simply a back up process.
10. **I’m a postgraduate (Masters/PGCert/PGDip) student, how will this work for me?** – We will apply a similar “Safety Net” principle for all postgraduate taught students, to ensure you are not disadvantaged by the current situation. The details may differ because of our Postgraduate regulations, but again we will give you further information as soon as we can.
11. **Should I make an EC claim if I am worried about an assessment?** - We would suggest that you make every effort to complete all of your assessments as they are scheduled; use all of the advice and guidance from your School and ask questions in advance if you are unsure of anything. If you are struggling with completing an assignment then you can apply for an extension (please note that extensions are not applicable to Time Constrained Assessments (TCAs); you will still need to explain why you need an extension although evidence requirements have been relaxed so that we do not put any pressure on the NHS.
 - Please bear in mind when you think about making an EC claim that the “safety net” approach will make sure that we take the impact of the current circumstances into account when considering your assessment results. A successful EC claim will mean that **you will need to resit the assessment item again later in the year (if necessary)**.
 - Students who are unable to complete an on line, time constrained assessment due to significant technical failures of equipment or lengthy loss of WIFI access during the assessment can make an EC claim.
 - Students affected by having caring responsibilities at home that might impact on their ability to complete time constrained assessments should always attempt to complete the assessment but might choose to make an EC claim if they feel their performance was significantly adversely affected.
12. **What does it mean now that the resit cap has been lifted?** - University regulations currently limit the number of modules a student can resit – this “cap” varies dependent on level of study ([section 5.4.8 of the undergraduate regulations](#) explains this). The temporary CV-19 regulations lift this cap – this means students may be granted resit opportunities in all modules of study in which they are currently enrolled. The “Resit Mark Cap” is NOT removed – this is the principle whereby any resit work you do is capped at the pass mark (40 for undergraduate programmes, 50 for Postgraduate programmes). You are therefore allowed to resit any modules you fail this year, whether they were in Semester A or Semester B, but for all modules you need to resit, the mark will still be capped.