Dear Students,

I am writing to provide additional information on how the policy, described in the letter from the Pro Vice Chancellor; Professor Tansy Jessop on 03 April 2020, relates to the Faculty of Engineering.

What is the Safety Net?
There has been some confusion about what the safety net is. The safety net is not your final or predicted degree classification. It is simply a calculation of marks that we will use to ensure us that you are not disadvantaged by the effect of the crisis at the end of your degree and the new style of assessments. Prior to our Faculty Exam Boards a safety net mark (SNM) will be calculated and used as a reference point. Your final degree classification will be equal to or higher than the calculation - but not lower. Your final degree will be calculated according to the revised University Regulations for Degree Classification calculations using all of the information available at the point of exam board. Importantly the SNM can only be calculated from complete unit marks.

Which units are used for the calculation?
The basic principle is that we capture any completed units up to March 27th (prior to the lockdown) and use this with your major project marks as a benchmark for the year. So, this includes all of the units that you completed in the first teaching block plus any units in the second teaching block where the assessment is complete (or for which there are only minor outstanding assessments and no further assessments are planned). The design of our programmes and professional accreditation status of our degrees, means that projects and project marks are particularly important in your final year of study. All year long projects BEng and MEng students will be included in the calculation to recognise your effort throughout the year (with the exception of individual BSc projects in Computer Science). Additionally, in Engineering we have introduced the option for you to complete a mitigation plan as part of your project submission if necessary.
This is not an exceptional rule for our faculty. It is exactly the same policy for students in Life Sciences, the Faculty of Science and for STEM programmes throughout the University.

What next?
Your Programme Directors and Departments will shortly clarify the exact units that will be used in the calculation for your cohort and programme. It is now important to focus on this terms’ assessment points. As you know it is your programme design that dictates what unit assessments you need to now complete as not every student registered on a unit will necessarily need to complete the assessment. Your programmes will also confirm units where a simple Pass or Fail will be the recorded as the assessment outcome (and not a percentage mark). It has not yet been confirmed what the exact wording will be on your transcript post-graduation for these units, but we suspect that employers will simply see the phrase credit awarded.

Please note:
1) The university has now released the safety net email for finalist students only
2) That the university is still reviewing and agreeing the policy for non-finalist students
3) The consideration of study abroad and placement year calculations is ongoing at University level

Work is underway to provide further clarity for points two and three above as soon as possible.

With graduation in mind can I also encourage you all to follow the new mycareer route through the career services site: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/careers/
Colin Dalton (Undergraduate Education Director) on behalf of the COVID-19 Faculty Education Group.