Subject: COVID-19 Faculty of Engineering: Education Update on the Safety Net Calculation for Undergraduate Intermediate Year Students

Dear Students,

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

**Progression**

At the end of March, your Programme Directors explained the assessments that you are required to complete this term in order to satisfy the intended learning outcomes of your programme and to put you in the best starting position for the next academic year. If you are able to successfully complete all of these assessments this term, then at our July examination boards we can confirm your progression to the next academic year as we usually would. If for any reason you are unable to complete or pass any of those assessments this term, then you will have the summer (for coursework components) and a second assessment period (dates to be confirmed but likely to remain August) in which to complete the work.

As communicated by the University, first year assessments are formative in nature, but it is important for progression that you engage with the assessments as they have been communicated to you by your programme.

At our examination boards in September, we will then progress students with complete assessments. If, at that point, you still have incomplete or failed unit marks but have secured a pass mark for the year, then the Board of Examiners will consider whether it is in your best interest to progress notwithstanding these missing marks. The usual progression hurdles will not apply for progression this year. If you have previously self-certified or failed units in Teaching Block 1 (prior to the period affected by COVID-19) and have requirements to re-sit or resubmit, these assessments must be completed prior to progressing. At the September examination boards, compensation and progression decisions will be made to ensure that the impact of COVID-19 does not significantly affect progression and continuation of your programme.

**What is the Safety Net?**

As we explained to our final year students, there has been some confusion about what the safety net is. The safety net is not in any way the final or predicted year mark that will contribute to your 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 this year’s disruption - and any new style of assessments - at the point that you graduate.

A safety net calculation does not affect progression for intermediary year students and will not be available before the examination boards as it is only relevant at the point of calculating your degree classification. Prior to our Faculty Exam Boards, a safety net mark (SNM) will be calculated and used as a reference point. The affected year mark that contributes to your degree 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 the information available to us at the point of the exam board. Importantly the SNM can only be calculated from complete unit marks.

**Which unit marks 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 as an indicative 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). For project submissions that you feel have also been impacted, we have introduced the option for you to complete an additional mitigation plan as part of your project submission.

**What next?**

Your Programme Directors will shortly clarify the exact units that you need to complete for progression and 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. Not every student registered on a unit will necessarily need to complete the assessment - it is your programme of study which determines which assessments you are required to complete.

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). The exact wording that will appear on your transcript to record your progress this year has yet to be confirmed. There will be a common University format for transcripts which is being developed with all Faculty and externally with employers and partner institutions.

If you have questions or concerns about the contents of this email, please contact the Faculty Education Manager’s team by emailing engf-fem@bristol.ac.uk

*Colin Dalton (Undergraduate Education Director) on behalf of the COVID-19 Faculty Education Group.*