

COVID-19 supporting resources

Exclusively for QAA Members

Introduction - 'No Detriment': A Student's Experience

In April 2020, QAA published a COVID-19 supporting resource on ['No Detriment' Policies: An Overview](#) as many providers across the UK were beginning to introduce 'no detriment' or safety net models in response to rapid course delivery changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of student feedback, QAA's Student Strategic Advisory Committee has created this student-facing supporting membership resource - ['No Detriment': A Student's Experience](#) - to explain through student conversations: the fundamentals of these policies, how it affects students in their assessment, progression and student experience; to share their own experiences; and to analyse some of the pros and cons of these models.

QAA's guidance ['No Detriment' Policies: An Overview](#) notes that:

'a 'no detriment' policy seeks to mitigate against the impact of a set of circumstances, by ensuring that an individual is not unfairly disadvantaged by a requirement to change rules or regulations, in session.'

These approaches were applied across UK providers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and offered reassurance to students taking part in examinations and submitting coursework during their respective assessment periods in the spring and summer semesters of the 2019-20 academic year.

As national governments begin to ease lockdown measures, the future of the pandemic is still a cause for uncertainty. Evidenced by providers exploring new digital environments, new methods of course delivery and self-study, and reduced on-campus student capacity, the next academic year is going to be different. Therefore, the 'no detriment' policies and safety-net approaches remain a possibility for providers across the country should a second wave of COVID-19 cause further changes to teaching and learning, or indeed any other circumstances that have the potential to disadvantage students. These approaches, should they be required, remain a student-support mechanism by providing the environment for students to succeed. This is not to say that 'no detriment' policies and safety-net approaches will be applied in the same way as previously, given that disruption might occur at a different time of the academic year. However, student awareness and understanding of how a provider might apply a mitigating approach to support their achievement remains significant in these unusual circumstances.

While students continue to receive their assessment results for the 2019-20 academic year, exam boards will continue to exercise these policies and approaches to enable student success. This resource continues to provide an important source of information for students to understand how such an approach might be applied to their assessments. Students are advised, in the first instance, to speak to their provider or provider's student representative body if they are unsure of how the approach has been applied to their studies and assessment or how this may affect their progression.

QAA's supporting resource ['No Detriment' Policies: An Overview](#) contains some important reflective questions for providers and students to assess their 'no detriment' policies or safety-net approaches.