# Grade Safety Policy: Enhanced Moderation and Standardisation Framework due to Covid-19

1. **Context** 
   1. There is a growing concern amongst students across the country about the disruption caused by changes to government guidance to response to the spread of the Covid-19 virus and the imposition of a third lockdown.
   2. The University’s safety net introduced last year is still in operation on an ongoing basis for marks from the 19/20 academic year but there have been calls for a new one. It is not possible to put in place a new safety net since we no longer have a clean baseline of individual performance from which to draw inferences. Secondly, it should be recognised that the University has invested significantly in staff training to develop and deliver online and blended provision, we have developed our assessment strategies and we are confident of the excellent quality of the experience we offer.
   3. An enhanced moderation and standardisation framework has been developed to provide a reasonable and proportionate response, which balances concerns to ensure students are not being disadvantaged by the lockdown, whilst maintaining the quality and standards of our provision.
   4. Benchmarking has been undertaken to ensure our position remains in line with other Higher Education Institutions in England.
2. **The Framework**
   1. The framework is an enhancement to the current emergency regulations and an addition to the current regulations on marking and moderation. It applies to all module marks which contribute to classification of the award.
   2. It employs a means of standardisation to track performance in 20-21 against earlier years as follows:
      1. All module marks will be considered at a pre-board before the CAB. To accommodate timing, it is recognised that CAB dates and therefore previously published results dates may need to move.
      2. The pre-board will be provided with a comparison of the mean and distribution of marks for the last four years along with the mean and distribution of marks for the module in 20-21.
      3. If the 20-21 results for a module show a statistically significant discrepancy between the two sets of marks, then the pre-Board can make a recommendation to the CAB that the marks be scaled.
      4. Explicit instructions on the practice of scaling will be provided to each pre-Board and employed consistently.
   3. Where modules have not been running for the full four years, the pre-Board will consider such data as is available.
   4. Scaling can only take place on accredited courses where the PSRB has given its approval.
   5. It is recognised that using averages for modules where teaching has improved significantly in recent years, is likely to slightly reduce the positive impact of that progress. Some regression to the mean is inevitable in these circumstances, however the priority is to ensure students are not disadvantaged by the latest lockdown.
   6. This framework addresses concerns about a general and unspecific impact of the latest Covid-19 restrictions on student performance. Where individual students encounter specific issues; extensions and ECs remain available as the most appropriate processes to ensure they are not disadvantaged.