

**From:** Freedom of Information

**Sent:** 09 September 2020 16:04

**To:**

**Subject:** Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/314)

Dear

**Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/314)**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 17 August 2020, reference K/20/314.

Your request read:

“My request is for information concerning the changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic to the way in which the University has assessed achievement and awarded qualifications in respect of LLB / BA Law programme(s).

Please provide the following information:

- a) Changes to the examination and assessment arrangements introduced as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.
- b) Steps taken by the University to ensure compliance with the quality requirements set out by regulatory bodies and the Government.
- c) Where the final mark for a module was based on two or more components the weighting given to each component.
- d) The steps taken by the University to prevent cheating and plagiarism, including ‘contract cheating’ (the use of commercial essay writing services)
- e) If the University introduced a ‘safety net’ guaranteeing that a final-year student’s overall average mark would not fall short of the average they had attained in exams and assessments taken prior to the pandemic, an outline of the policy.
- f) Steps taken, if any, to ensure that grade inflation or deflation was kept to a minimum.
- g) Were marks in any module or modules adjusted to ensure that they were more closely in line with the performance of candidates in previous years? If so, please identify the module(s) and the nature of the measure(s) adopted.
- h) Other measures adopted by the University to ensure that student achievement was reliably assessed, the standards of awards were secure and the awards held their value.”

The University of Leeds holds this information. For your convenience we have responded to each of your questions in turn below.

**a) Changes to the examination and assessment arrangements introduced as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.**

Law examinations were moved to online open book assessments for all core modules in order to meet professional requirements. Optional module assessments

were cancelled for students where they had taken assessments for core modules which would not have taken place under the University guidance to cancel examinations. Further information is available on [our dedicated coronavirus webpage](#).

- b) Steps taken by the University to ensure compliance with the quality requirements set out by regulatory bodies and the Government.**

The Solicitors Regulation Authority restriction on changes to assessment methods to accommodate online examinations applied only to professional training courses not Law Degrees. Methods adopted at Leeds reflected a mixture of existing approaches.

- c) Where the final mark for a module was based on two or more components the weighting given to each component.**

This information is available as part of our [Undergraduate Module Index](#)

- d) The steps taken by the University to prevent cheating and plagiarism, including 'contract cheating' (the use of commercial essay writing services)**

The University expects students to complete an Academic Tutorial and Test. The School of Law also provide an Academic Integrity Handbook. All students are required to sign our [Declaration of Academic Integrity](#) when submitting coursework. Further information regarding cheating, plagiarism, fraudulent or fabricated coursework, and malpractice in University examinations and assessments is available on our [Student Education Service website](#).

- e) If the University introduced a 'safety net' guaranteeing that a final-year student's overall average mark would not fall short of the average they had attained in exams and assessments taken prior to the pandemic, an outline of the policy.**

You can find information about our [safety net approach](#) and our [no detriment policy](#) on our coronavirus webpage.

- f) Steps taken, if any, to ensure that grade inflation or deflation was kept to a minimum.**

Please refer to our answer to question (h) below.

- g) Were marks in any module or modules adjusted to ensure that they were more closely in line with the performance of candidates in previous years? If so, please identify the module(s) and the nature of the measure(s) adopted.**

No marks were adjusted. All module mark averages were consistent with the previous five years module statistics.

**h) Other measures adopted by the University to ensure that student achievement was reliably assessed, the standards of awards were secure and the awards held their value.**

Please refer to our answers above regarding our 'safety net' approach and 'no detriment' policy. Our approach was developed and implemented with reference to existing regulatory requirements as well as being informed by guidance issued from bodies such as the Office for Students and the Quality Assurance Agency during the period of the pandemic.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about this email, however, please do not hesitate to contact us on [foi@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:foi@leeds.ac.uk)

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you can request an Internal Review. Requests for Internal Review should be made in writing using the following contact information:

Post: Mr D Wardle  
Deputy Secretary  
The University of Leeds  
Leeds  
LS2 9JT

Email: [foi@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:foi@leeds.ac.uk)

Requests for Internal Review should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving the University's response to your request. Further information about how the University manages Freedom of Information requests and about our complaints procedure is also available on our website ([www.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.leeds.ac.uk)).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review/complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Kind regards

**Chloe Wilkins**  
Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat  
University of Leeds