

Dear Tim,

In light of Monday's announcement of a new national lockdown that will see students forced to learn fully online for at least six weeks, we believe that now there is an undeniable need to reintroduce a mitigation policy akin to the No Detriment Policy to protect students' grades. We find ourselves in a situation equivalent to that of last March (worse even, looking at case numbers) and therefore need to put equivalent protections in place.

Whilst last term, the absence of a No Detriment Policy was justifiable and understandable, the situation has radically changed now, demanding a radical change in stance from the University. We understand that a replica No Detriment Policy may be impossible for academic standards purposes (or due to the absence of pre-pandemic benchmarks), but if this is the case a similar alternative needs to be devised as quickly as possible. Additionally, any such policy should back date to cover January assessments and exams.

Some of the many arguments in favour of reimplementing such a policy are:

- Students are unable to access physical library resources, nor to travel for data gathering and field work, in most cases.
- Students are unable to access resources that they may have left at their term-time accommodation, for example books or equipment.
- Students are unable to access campus study spaces, which might be their preferred work space for a variety of reasons e.g. less noise, shared room at home, lack of desk at home, Wi-Fi connection.
- Students may have additional caring responsibilities than usual.
- Students may have less access to lecturers and personal tutors due to staff illness and caring responsibilities.
- Students may be struggling with poor mental health due to the impacts of the pandemic and strict social isolation.

It is appreciated that due to the pandemic it is not possible for the University to provide the same service and quality of education to students as in previous years. Therefore, it must be equally appreciated that it is not possible for students to provide the same quality of work in their assessments.

Students locally and nationally are calling for this:

- Please see the Make a Change petition linked below, accessible only by students in Cornwall, with (at the time of writing) 218 signatures.

[www.thesu.org.uk/studentvoice/change/?idea=210#idea210](http://www.thesu.org.uk/studentvoice/change/?idea=210#idea210)

- Please see the petition below created by the Students for Academic Mitigation group (founded by Exeter students but open to all nationally), with (at the time of writing) 9600 signatures.

[www.change.org/p/uk-universities-and-nationwide-protective-academic-mitigation-policies-for-uk-university-students](http://www.change.org/p/uk-universities-and-nationwide-protective-academic-mitigation-policies-for-uk-university-students)

Exeter was sector-leading with the No Detriment Policy last year, and it would be great to be so again. Furthermore, it would greatly improve student satisfaction and faith in the University; please see testimonials attached from Subject Chairs and other students in Cornwall.

We would be happy to meet with you, and representatives from the Students' Guild to discuss further.

Yours Sincerely,

Cara Chittenden, President Exeter

Jack Wilkins, Undergraduate Education Officer

Maariyah Najeeb, Postgraduate Education Officer (endorsed this letter on 08/01/21)