Teaching Delivery, Coursework, Tests and Examinations under COVID-19 Alert Levels in Semester 2 and Quarters 3 and 4, 2021

Policy Statement

Application

This policy statement applies to all staff members and students of the University of Auckland and applies to teaching and assessment in Semester 2 and Quarters 3 and 4, 2021.

Purpose

To provide information for staff and students on teaching delivery, coursework, tests and examination arrangements in Semester 2 and Quarters 3 and 4, 2021. The provisions in this policy statement operate together with the University’s Policy and Procedures for Assessment (Coursework, Tests and Examinations) and the University’s Examination Regulations.

Provisions of the Assessment (Coursework, Tests and Examinations) Policy or Procedures that are waived at particular Alert Levels are noted below. This Policy statement will be made available on the Policy Hub.

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POLICY

Student wellbeing, resources and facilities

Health and safety in learning and teaching environments under COVID-19 Alert Levels

1. When on campus all staff and students are to practice hand hygiene and ensure physical distancing measures are observed where possible. All students must adhere to current Government requirements regarding masks and face coverings.

2. Staff and students must refer to University Guidelines regarding contact tracing requirements.

3. Teaching spaces and test/examination locations are included in the University's enhanced cleaning regime and hand sanitiser and sanitisation materials will made available in these spaces.

Resources and facilities for students

4. Where possible, pastoral care and learning support services for students will be available on campus.

5. Under COVID-19 Alert Levels the University will continue to make devices and internet connectivity assistance available to students in need through the Student IT Equity Initiative.

6. Where Government requirements allow, the University may be able to provide limited space for students who need a suitable study space, or who need to complete online examinations or tests. This process will be managed centrally and in accordance with Government guidelines for the appropriate Alert Level. Students will be notified about the availability of these spaces.

7. In 2021 lecture recording will have a system default release time of 24 hours.

Note: Lecture recordings are available for most lectures that take place in lecture-recording enabled rooms. Staff may opt to provide recordings (where available) for small-group teaching (e.g. tutorials, workshops, seminars etc). Some courses have approved exemptions from the lecture recording release requirement. Staff may reset the default lecture recording release time for their courses to a shorter or longer timeframe (up to a maximum of 72 hours). Staff electing to release at the maximum 72 hours must have a compelling reason for delaying release for this long and must have considered the impact on students, including equity student groups.

Higher-risk students – COVID-19

8. For the purposes of this policy statement the University defines ‘higher-risk students’ under COVID-19 Alert conditions as learners who face increased risk in attending on-campus events because they:

- are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 as defined by the Ministry of Health;
- or
- live with people who are at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19;
- or
- have significant mental health issues that may be exacerbated by COVID-19 or COVID-19 Alert Level requirements. Government guidelines underpin recommendations on
higher-risk status. These guidelines state that risk of exposure and transmission in the community at Alert Level 1 is very low. Applications made under Level 1 conditions to study remotely for health reasons will be considered in accordance with this advice.

9. Applications to study remotely for one or more of the reasons above must be supported by written evidence from a medical practitioner or mental health professional. The written evidence must specify at what Alert Level (or Levels) the student should not be on campus. This provision is available to all students enrolled in 2021 who may qualify.

*Note: See the Appendix for further details.*

10. To allow time for the necessary preparations to be made, applications for higher-risk status must be made by the relevant deadline. Requests received after this point will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

*Note: See the Appendix for further details on the procedures to be followed and the timeframes for applications for Semester 2.*

**COVID-19 Alert Level shifts and changes to assessment arrangements**

11. The University’s Assessment (Coursework, Tests and Examinations) Policy states:

> ‘...substantive changes to assessment arrangements that have been approved and published cannot be made without unanimous agreement from students, and approval by the Academic Head or delegate and Dean of Faculty. Substantive changes (i.e. changes that affect task weighting, timing or the nature of the assessment tasks) to assessment arrangements must be agreed and publicised to students within the period of deleting the course from a student’s enrolment without penalty.’

This policy requirement is modified for Semester 2 and Quarters 3 and 4, 2021 as follows:

To ensure fairness for students, substantive changes to assessment after the start of teaching in a course may only be made where:

- there is unanimous agreement from students, and approval by the Academic Head and Dean, or
- the University is required to shift to different Alert Level conditions, or
- where emerging local or regional situations have unacceptably elevated the COVID-19 risk for students and staff and changes to assessment arrangements are required to ensure the viability of assessment and/or fairness for students.

Students must be informed as early as possible where Alert Level shifts or emergency measures require changes to assessment or delivery.

**Definitions**

12. For the purposes of this policy statement the following definitions will apply:

- A ‘test’ is defined as an assessment that would ordinarily be conducted in an invigilated setting at a specified time outside of the examination period, that counts towards the final grade of the course, and is time limited. At Level 1 tests will be conducted onsite under invigilated conditions. At Level 2 or higher tests will be conducted online as time-limited, non-invigilated assessments.
Note: Some tests with approved exceptions may be conducted on site at Level 2. See 25.

- A ‘quiz’ is defined as an assessment that counts towards the final grade of the course, is non-invigilated, may be conducted online, and usually has a lower assessment weighting than a test.
- An ‘examination’ is defined as a summative, time-limited final assessment that is conducted at a specified time as per the examination timetable. At all alert levels, examinations will be conducted online as time-limited assessments.

Note: examinations in courses with approved exceptions may be conducted on site at Alert Level 1 and 2. See 15.

Examination arrangements - Semester 2 and Quarters 3 and 4, 2021

13. To provide certainty for students and staff, and to mitigate the risk of a pivot to online examinations immediately before or during the examination period, final examinations in Semester 2, and Quarters 3 and 4, will be conducted as online, non-invigilated, time-limited examinations regardless of Alert Level. Examinations will be scheduled as per the examinations timetable.

14. Courses with professional accreditation or registration requirements specifying invigilated examinations; courses that are a requirement for selection into limited entry programmes; and courses with performance or practical examinations may apply for an exception to conduct Semester 2, or Quarters 3 and 4 final examinations on campus.

Notes:
- Courses in these categories should also apply for an exception to have relevant tests conducted on site if the University is under Level 2 conditions (see 25 below).
- An exception to conduct on-campus examinations with appropriate physical distancing would apply under Alert Levels 1 and 2 only.
- In the event that the University is under Level 3 or 4 Alert Level conditions, all examinations will be conducted online. An online version of the examination should be prepared as contingency for a shift to higher Alert Levels.
- Applications for an exception to hold an examination on campus must be submitted to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) by the last day of the first week of teaching in the relevant academic term, and approved applications will be advised to the Examinations Services Office.

15. Where possible, arrangements will be made for remote students enrolled in courses granted an exception under (14) to sit invigilated examinations. Invigilation for examinations may consist of one or more of: web-based video monitoring; a lock-down browser; remote invigilation software. Where a web camera and/or microphone is required to facilitate remote invigilation students will be advised as soon as possible.

16. If an exception is approved for an on-site examination (or test, where relevant) students must be advised as soon as possible.

17. Students approved to be studying remotely or off-shore in 2021 will complete online, time-limited, non-invigilated tests and examinations as required in their courses, regardless of Alert Level (with the exception noted above in 14).

18. Where necessary because of practical considerations, examinations for students studying remotely may differ from those completed by on-campus students but will be of equivalent difficulty and will address the same learning outcomes.

19. Course Directors are asked to ensure that course information makes it clear to students if the course has ‘pass requirements’, i.e. assessment components (including the final
examination), and/or standards that must be met in order for students to pass the course and the implications for final course grades if these requirements are not met e.g. DNC and DNS grades.

20. In Semester 2, and Quarters 3 and 4, 2021, the requirement that 50% of the assessment in stage 1 courses must occur in invigilated settings is waived.

Teaching delivery, tests and coursework arrangements under the different Alert Levels - Semester 2, and Quarters 3 and 4 2021

ALERT LEVEL 1

Ministry of Education Principles for TEOs at Alert Level 1 include:
- All on-site activities at tertiary education facilities can resume as normal.
- All staff and students should return to on-campus activities.
- TEOs should be ready to move up alert levels at short notice.

Ministry of Education rules for on-site examinations at Alert Level 1 include:
- Anyone who is unwell should stay away.
- Face coverings are not required.

21. At Alert Level 1 where courses have compulsory requirements (e.g. laboratories, placements) students will be expected to attend (except for those studying off-shore or approved to be studying remotely).

Invigilated tests

22. At Alert Level 1 invigilated tests will be held on campus. All students are expected to sit tests on campus unless they are studying off-shore, enrolled in an online course, approved to be studying remotely, or observing Government COVID-19 guidelines to remain at home temporarily.

Note: the only exception to this would be where the University determines that an emerging local or regional situation has unacceptably elevated the COVID-19 risk for students and staff and tests are moved online (see 11).

23. At Alert Level 1 online versions of tests ordinarily sat under invigilated conditions may only be taken by students studying off-shore, approved to be studying remotely, or enrolled in online courses.

24. Students studying in New Zealand who miss an on-campus test because they are temporarily ill and at home observing Government COVID-19 guidelines must be advised to apply for an aegrotat. Online versions of tests may not be taken by these students.

Note: Students approved for an aegrotat or compassionate consideration for an invigilated test may be permitted (at the discretion of an Academic Head) to:
- sit another written test; or
- receive a mark for the test based on the average of marks awarded for other coursework; or
- take a viva voce examination; or
- have the percentage of marks allocated to the test reallocated to the examination.

It is recommended where possible that students sit an alternative, on-site deferred test to ensure that a component of secure assessment is available should the student require an aegrotat for the final examination. Alternative test questions must be of comparable difficulty and format.
Ministry of Education Principles for TEOs at Alert Level 2 include:

- All on-site activities at tertiary education facilities can take place... provided the necessary public health control measures for TEOs are in place.
- Remote learning and teaching arrangements should remain in place to allow the TEO to manage capacity and for ‘at risk’ students and staff
- Contact tracing information must be collected that identifies which students and staff (and any other visitors) have been in each ‘controlled learning space’ and ‘other controlled environments’ and at what time.
- There are no size restrictions for lectures and classes at alert level 2, though TEOs should limit capacity to enable physical distancing of one metre, where possible.

Ministry of Education rules for on-site examinations at Alert Level 2 include:

- Anyone who is unwell should stay away
- TEOs should ensure there is a gap of 1.5 metres between students in all directions
- Face coverings are not required

25. At Alert Level 2 most teaching, coursework assessment, and the majority of tests will be conducted online unless an exemption is approved by an Associate Dean (Academic) through faculty committees.

   Note: University teaching activities in locations or on campuses outside of Auckland may be taking place under different Alert Level conditions.

26. A number of criteria need to be met to approve an exemption to allow onsite teaching activities including ‘agreement and approval that the acquisition and practice of practical skills cannot be achieved by remote learning or that a physical event or the use of physical resources from a University site is necessary for the continuation of student progress.’ The full criteria are available here.

27. At Alert Level 2 where students based in New Zealand need to remain at home to observe Government COVID-19 guidelines regarding respiratory illnesses, or are approved to be studying remotely, alternative arrangements must be in place for compulsory attendance events that have an exemption to take place on campus. These could include, for example, a brief written activity or attending a laboratory in another stream where possible.

Invigilated tests

28. At Alert Level 2 tests ordinarily sat under examination conditions will be online, non-invigilated, time-limited tests designed to test higher-order thinking. Long test windows (such as 24-hour test windows) must not be used.

Notes:

- At Alert Levels 2 and above the requirement in the Assessment (Courses, Tests and Examination) Policy that ‘tests which count towards the final result of a course will be conducted under examination conditions’ is waived.
- If the University is at Level 2 an exception may be granted for some courses in programmes where accreditation or registration requirements require an on-campus, invigilated test to be undertaken. Tests scheduled on campuses outside of Auckland at different Alert Levels may take place on campus.
• Online tests will be non-invigilated; staff must not set up ad hoc invigilation methods for online tests.

29. Online tests that require the student to draw diagrams or write equations can have answers submitted via scanned image or photograph. Students must have an opportunity to complete a practice exercise prior to the test to ensure they are familiar with the technological requirements for file upload. Students must be advised at least two weeks before the test of equipment or technology necessary to complete the test. Examples include pens, paper, and access to a digital camera.

30. Test design for remote or off-shore students must ensure that students will be able to complete the set tasks in the time available. Feedback suggests that online tests often take longer than written tests, so consideration must be given to extending the time allowed for the test, where appropriate. In the online test format students must be able to review previous answers.

31. All students sitting online tests must be advised about the importance of academic integrity, the University’s approach to academic misconduct, its determination to use all possible means to identify students who dishonestly use external or online resources during tests, and the penalties that are available where academic misconduct is confirmed.

32. Spaces may be available at some Alert Levels for students who need a suitable study space to complete an online test. This process will be managed centrally and in accordance with Government guidelines.

ALERT LEVEL 3

Ministry of Education Principles for TEOs at Alert Level 3 include:

• All teaching and other activities should be done remotely, where possible
• Distance learning provision should remain available for all students
• Any class, workshop that cannot be delivered online and remains open must be limited to 20 people or less. Each such group is considered a ‘bubble’ and must not interact with any other student/staff bubbles of 20.

Ministry of Education rules for on-site examinations at Alert Levels 2.5 and 3 include:

• On-site tertiary exams may proceed at Alert Level 3 although strict physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres must be in place.

33. At Alert Level 3 teaching delivery and assessment will be online with some limited and managed exceptions.

34. The rules for online tests noted above (28-32) apply to Level 3.

ALERT LEVEL 4

Ministry of Education Principles for TEOs at Alert Level 4 include:

• All teaching and other activities should be done remotely, where possible.
• Distance learning provision should remain available for all students.
• Any class, workshop that cannot be delivered online and remains open must be limited to 20 people or less. Each such group is considered a ‘bubble’ and must not interact with any other student/staff bubbles of 20.
Ministry of Education rules for on-site examinations at Alert Level 3 include:

- On-site tertiary exams may proceed at Alert Level 3 although strict physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres must be in place.

35. All teaching delivery and assessment will be online. The rules for online tests noted above (28-32) apply to Level 4.

Note: At Alert Levels 3 and 4 the requirement in the Assessment (Courses, Tests and Examination) Policy that 'tests which count towards the final result of a course will be conducted under examination conditions' is waived

Examination design, submission and approval in Semester 2 and Quarters 3 and 4, 2021

Examination design and format

36. Unless an exemption applies (see 15), summative examinations in Semester 2, and Quarters 3 and 4, 2021 will be designed and conducted as online, non-invigilated, time-limited examinations.

37. Where an examination is held online and is non-invigilated it will be designated an open-book examination. Students’ examination answers should show that they have identified and engaged with relevant sources to which they will have access when writing their examinations. Students must be advised that all material used in online, open-book examinations must be appropriately referenced if used in examination answers.

Note: Other examinations may use the examination designations available in the Assessment (Coursework, Tests and Examination) Procedures.

38. Examinations will be designed to test higher-order thinking and the application of concepts rather than the recall of facts. To ensure examinations test higher-order thinking examiners must review the use and design of multi-choice questionnaires. Where appropriate, examiners will include examination components that require a distinctive text-based response that can be reviewed for academic misconduct using academic integrity checking tools.

39. Unless an exemption applies, online examinations will be designed and delivered using Inspera.

40. For online, non-invigilated, open-book examinations in 2021 examiners may not release to candidates any of the questions in advance of the sitting of the examination.

41. Time granted for the completion of online examinations will be extended by 30 minutes to allow for the complexity of online modes of completing and submitting examination answers. An extension of time will not apply to paper-based examinations delivered on-campus.

42. A student who experiences technical difficulties in an online examination and does not submit their examination on time (as specified in 41) must be advised to contact the Examination Services Office.

Note: Students must be advised not to contact their Examiner under any circumstances.

43. Submissions not made on time must be made manually by Examination Services Office staff.
and will only be accepted if the following criteria are met:

- candidates must have followed the examination instructions provided and logged their technical and/or submission issues; and
- not have further modified their examination paper in any way.

Note: Students who exceed the examination time and have not logged an issue as instructed, or have modified their examination paper after the hard deadline, should be advised to apply for compassionate consideration if they believe they have grounds.

Examination submission and approval

44. Before approving examination scripts Academic Heads must ensure that the examination design and format maximise assessment security and deter academic misconduct. For examination papers in Multiple Choice Questionnaire format this might include the preparation of multiple versions and the randomisation of question numbers. Further guidance will be provided for staff and Academic Heads.

45. Examination questions will be submitted to the Examinations Services Office for approval and checking.

Note: see the Inspera Online Assessments Staff Development Hub for further guidance.

Assistance during examinations

46. For online examinations in-exam support and contact arrangements will be in place. Detailed instructions will be provided to students.

47. For on-site examinations the usual processes regarding questions or requests for assistance in the examination room will apply.

Aegrotat and compassionate consideration

48. Administration fees for applications for aegrotat and compassionate consideration are reinstated for 2021.

49. Procedures for aegrotat and compassionate consideration applications allow virtual consultation with University Health and Counselling Services to obtain evidence of impairment where required. Alert Level permitting, in-person consultations can also be arranged with appropriate physical distancing and Personal Protective Equipment in place.

50. For 2021 examination aegrotats the usual requirement that in order to make a recommendation for an aegrotat or compassionate grade a student’s coursework must be ‘well above minimum pass standard’ is reinstated.

Special conditions

Invigilated tests

51. Students with temporary or permanent disabilities or conditions that affect their ability to sit tests under the prescribed conditions may apply for special conditions through Student Disability Services.

52. Approved students are entitled to special conditions for time-limited (on-campus or online)
tests of 30 minutes or longer, including where appropriate support from a reader or writer.

53. At Alert Levels 2 or above students should be advised to contact Student Disability Services to discuss additional options for assistance in online tests.

54. Advice for staff on assistance for students with approved special conditions sitting online tests may be found on the Canvas Resources website.

Examinations

55. Students with impairments or special requirements should be advised to contact the Examinations Services Office to discuss additional options for assistance in online examinations in Semester 2, and Quarters 3 and 4. Where students are required to sit on-site examinations (i.e. courses with approved exceptions for onsite examinations) candidates with temporary or permanent disabilities or conditions that affect their ability to sit examinations under the prescribed onsite conditions may apply for special conditions through the Examinations Services Office.

56. Advice for staff on assistance for students with approved special conditions sitting online examinations may be found on the Canvas Resources website.

Academic integrity and academic misconduct

57. Examiners will use forms of examination that test the application of knowledge and reduce opportunities for dishonest academic behaviour.

58. An academic honesty declaration for use with coursework assignments, online tests and examinations is available for use and adaptation on the University’s Remote Learning website.

59. All students sitting examinations will be advised about the importance of academic integrity, the University’s approach to academic misconduct, its determination to use all possible means to identify students who dishonestly use external or online resources during tests, and the penalties that are available where academic misconduct is confirmed.

60. The revised academic misconduct policy and process adopted in 2020 applies for academic misconduct identified in online examinations in 2021.

61. Normal policy and processes for academic misconduct, as per the Student Academic Misconduct Statute, apply to examinations conducted as on-site, invigilated examinations.

Definitions

Staff members means all part and full-time staff members of the University of Auckland.

University of Auckland means the University and includes all of its subsidiaries.

Key relevant documents

Student Academic Conduct Statute
Examination Regulations
Assessment (Coursework, Tests and Examination) Policy
Special Conditions for Tests and Examinations Policy
Assessment (Coursework, Tests and Examination) Procedures
Academic Misconduct in Online Examinations (2021) Procedures
Academic Honesty Declaration

Document management and control

Owner: Provost
Content manager: Manager, Academic Quality Office
Approved by: Provost under Vice-Chancellor's Special Powers
Date approved: 19/07/2021
APPENDIX: Teaching delivery and assessment arrangements for higher-risk students under COVID-19 Alert Levels - procedures

Identification of higher-risk students

- Under COVID-19 Alert Level conditions students who believe they may be at higher risk attending activities on campus may complete the [Health Consideration Form](#) available on the University website.
- The form requires students to provide written evidence from a medical practitioner or mental health professional about why the student should not come to campus.
- Te Papa Manaaki | Campus Care staff in Campus Life work with students to obtain additional evidence or clarification of circumstances as necessary, liaising with Student Disability Services (SDS) in cases where the student is registered with SDS.
- Te Papa Manaaki | Campus Care staff verify that the evidence is provided and, as appropriate, recommend a plan be made for the student to study remotely.

*Note: Medical or health information provided to Te Papa Manaaki | Campus Care staff will be treated as confidential and in accordance with the University’s Personal Privacy Statements. That a student has been assessed as at ‘higher risk’ will be disclosed only to those University staff members who need this information to address the student’s needs with respect to teaching and learning situations.*

Advice to faculties

- The names, IDs and contact details of higher-risk students will be provided to the appropriate faculty contact (usually Student Academic Services and Engagement Managers / Student and Academic Services Managers), who will inform the Course Director responsible for addressing the student’s learning and teaching needs.
- Faculty contacts will have access to the Campus Care system to view the relevant details for students in their faculty approved for higher-risk status.

Tests and examinations

- Students supported to be studying off campus should sit a time-limited, online version of course tests and examinations. Where that is not possible alternative assessment arrangements should be made.
- Students sitting an online version of a test or examination must have access to a suitable computer and reliable internet connection.

*Note: Students may request devices through the Student IT Equity Initiative.*

- A student who provides the appropriate medical evidence may remain off-campus and sit time-limited, online versions of tests and examinations until such time as the higher-risk status is no longer required and their record is updated by Te Papa Manaaki | Campus Care.
- Where a student is approved to study remotely in 2021 Te Papa Manaaki | Campus Care staff will provide the relevant student and course information to the Examinations Services Office ([results@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:results@auckland.ac.nz)) to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for examinations.
Timeframe for applications

- To allow time for the necessary preparations to be made applications for higher-risk status should be made for **Semester 2 by COB Monday 16 August**.

Continuation of online study

- Students studying remotely in 2021 as higher-risk students will be contacted at the end of 2021 to determine whether they wish to remain enrolled as online students. From 2022 the range of courses available in this mode may be further restricted.