

Teaching options in the event of a COVID-19 campus closure

In light of the control measures being put in place around the world to limit the spread of Covid-19, Unitec is developing a plan for the unlikely event where we are asked by the Government to close down. In the event of a close down we may be expected to continue teaching some of our courses where appropriate by distance.

Distance learning is not generally used to attempt to teach more practical or physically hands on skills and wouldn't be recommended by Te Puna Ako. If practical teaching activities are interrupted by a close down additional options may need to be considered in order to make up for any lost time. The following suggested options could be considered for managing the impact of a campus closure:

- Distance learning
- Rescheduling of individual class sessions
- Rescheduling of assessment activities
- Changes to semester dates

A number of courses across the institution already make use of distance learning methods. Distance learning is generally used for teaching theory or activities that can be easily performed on a computer.

These distance learning methods are generally either synchronous (learners and teachers interacting at the same time) or asynchronous (learners and teachers interacting at different times). The following section describes the most commonly used distance learning methods at Unitec.

Synchronous distance learning

- Virtual Classroom

Zoom is Unitec's centrally supported virtual classroom. It allows a teacher to set up a class where their learners connect using a computer or mobile device. The teacher can use the classroom to present slides or share whatever is on their screen. This can be an effective way of teaching small to medium sized groups of students or larger groups when supported by a second teacher.

Asynchronous distance learning

- Moodle activities

Moodle can be used for much more than sharing slides and documents to learners. It can support many different activity types that enable learners to actively engage in online learning. Activities such as quizzes, lessons and glossaries can be used to recreate many of the types of activities that might form part of the learning happening in a face to face class.

- Echo360 personal capture videos

Echo 360 can be used from a teacher's laptop to record videos including the image from their screen and from their laptop's webcam at the same time. These videos can be used to explain concepts or provide demonstrations, and learners can watch them any time choose. The videos also include a question panel where learners or teachers can ask questions that can be answered by anyone in the class. These videos can be a more engaging alternative to traditional pre reading.

Please contact your Te Puna Ako Liaison for support with using any of these methods of distance learning.

Options for rescheduling of classes

Classes that cannot be appropriately managed online could be rescheduled to a different date and/or time. For some teaching spaces there may be relatively straightforward options for offering additional class sessions. However, a number of teaching spaces are heavily utilised and may require usage outside our current standard practices.

Options for rescheduling of classes will be managed in conjunction with the Timetabling team.

Options for rescheduling of assessments

Any Unitec assessment can be rescheduled with due notification to students. It is likely that some assessments may also need to be modified to suit the new learning environment. As changes to assessment falls under Unitec's governance as a Type 1 change, then we are able to make changes internally to suit any circumstance. We would need to ensure that any modified assessment still meets the learning outcomes as required.

In the event that a student is unable to complete an assessment due to illness or in this case a closure that would be beyond their control, then Unitec's existing Affected Performance Consideration process offers five options to consider for supporting students to be appropriately assessed where they are affected by circumstances beyond their control. These are:

- Extension or Deferment of Assessment (excluding exams)

The most straightforward resolution is to provide the affected student(s) with an extension to their original assessment. This ensures that all the learning outcomes for the course are met through methods as closely aligned to those originally intended as possible.

This can be arranged as an extension where the new date is within the original dates of the course, or a deferment where the new date is outside the original course dates.

- Alternative Assessment (excluding exams)

In some cases the extension or deferment of an assessment may also require the use of an alternative assessment. Examples include where the original assessment involved group work or the solutions to the assessment are made available to students. The new assessment needs to be the equivalent of the original assessment.

In the event of a closedown the use of alternative assessments could be considered if students are unable to effectively work in groups or if there are other resources they will be without as a result of not attending the Unitec campus.

- Extension or Deferment of Formal Examinations

In the event that examinations are disrupted by a close down the date of the exam can be extended by two to three weeks, or failing that deferred to the following semester.

- Estimated Grade (also known as Aegrotat Pass)

If extensions or alternative assessments cannot be used as means to find a resolution then an estimated grade can be calculated in cases where a significant proportion of the grade has been successfully assessed.

- Restricted Pass

This method is not generally recommended as it will have an impact on a student's transcript and their GPA. It is unlikely to be appropriate to use this method in the event of a campus closure.

Full details on the resolution options for assessments can be found on this [Te Korowai Kahurangi Nest page](#).

Options for changes to semester dates

Unitec could consider making changes to the existing semester dates. Options could include:

- Extending existing breaks such as the Easter holiday break
- Extending the end of the semester
- Delaying the start of semester two

Changes to the existing dates will require liaison with TEC, MOE, NZQA and StudyLink.

StudyLink has provided options where changing the dates may impact the student's allowance entitlements so Unitec will need to work with students on a case by case basis.

Unitec is seeking further advice from the above bodies and will communicate this as we receive it.