

23 March 2020

Dear Staff

This afternoon Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced that New Zealand's COVID alert level has now risen from 2 to 3, moving towards level 4 within 48 hours. We have been given this period of time to fully prepare. This means that the nation is preparing for self-isolation. By midnight Wednesday 25 March 2020, all but essential services must work and study from home, for a minimum expected period of 4 weeks. We will let you know when you are able to return to the workplace.

Tertiary institutions like Future Skills must now close. Student and staff access to the building will cease from end of day Wednesday 25 March.

We will now cease face-to-face teaching delivery and move professional services to a work-from-home model with immediate effect. This is a suspension of face-to-face teaching, not a suspension of learning. The support functions of the organisation will continue to operate to support our core business, albeit from home.

We will be publishing updated leave guidelines shortly, as well as further operational details as they are agreed. Please continue to check your emails daily.

Staff are advised to prepare over the next 48 hours to work from home – including entering campus to take equipment home, alerting all issues to their Manager, and discussing as a team how they will function. Please keep a diary of who you have been in close contact with while on campus for this purpose, in the event that we need to contact trace.

What does this mean for staff?

Tutors should work towards all teaching having an online presence, if possible.

Tutors need to make contact with each of their students by email or phone.

We ask that tutors reinforce key messages to students about support available to them.

Any staff who require access to campus to take home equipment, files, etc, are urged to do so by Wednesday before closure.

If you don't have access to a suitable laptop or computer at home, please feel free to take home your work desktop computer, monitor etc.

All teams should connect via Teams/Skype to firm up protocols and processes so that working from home can be effective immediately.

What about casual and contract staff?

Casual staff remain casual; they work while there is work to be done.

Contract staff are staff and they work as work is available.

Fixed term staff will be treated the same as permanent staff.

What if I want to take a holiday?

From this point on, everyone is considered to be working and being paid unless leave is requested from a Manager. If you are sick apply for sick leave, and if taking a break, apply for annual leave.

Easter schools break has now been brought forward by government to begin on Thursday. This can still be a holiday break for those who wish to take it. Book it in the usual method through MyPay for approval by your Manager. It will still be important to find time for wellbeing breaks from work where possible in this busy time. Continue to check your emails daily.

How will we support learners?

Students will receive an email from Future Skills to communicate the lockdown. The tutor will also be directly in touch with each of their students.

We will remind students that StudyLink maintain support for students so long as their study start dates have not changed.

We are giving particular focus to how we will support students with additional needs beyond access to learning. Some of these measures include:

- Compiling a series of tips for wellbeing, safety and managing isolation
- Academic staff will communicate the support available and field queries/needs to Student Pastoral Care Support

How are Future Skills senior staff managing the situation ongoing?

The Senior Management Team will meet via Skype on a regular basis.

All Future Skills teams are encouraged to organise regular meetings online and continue to feedback issues that need addressing.

The latest COVID-19 MoE Bulletin is here.

Please look after yourselves and check in on each other.



Sam Alavi

Group Chief Executive