

27 March 2020

COVID-19 Update

The New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has announced new, stronger measures to stop the spread of COVID-19, that will affect you.

This information is to help you understand what is happening. As an international student you are a valued part of our community, and your health and wellbeing is a priority.

New Zealand is now at Alert Level 4. [Information about the four level alert system is here.](#)

The latest Government information about the COVID-19 situation in New Zealand is available at covid19.govt.nz

General guidance on Alert Level 4

Under Alert Level 4, everyone needs to stay home and self-isolate.

Important things to know:

- Hostels must support remaining students to self-isolate and must strictly enforce personal distancing and hygiene requirements, in accordance with [Ministry of Health guidelines](#). Check with your place of study to confirm what accommodation arrangements they have in place during Alert Level 4.
- Other campus services like medical facilities and essential support services will not close.
- Businesses will be closed except for essential services. For example, supermarkets, hospitals and pharmacies will remain open. Read [the full list of essential services](#) on the Government COVID-19 website.
- Food delivery is now stopped except online supermarket shopping or whole food delivery (eg subscription food boxes). Pre-cooked food delivery is not allowed.
- Travel within New Zealand will be severely limited and public transport will be restricted.

Will my place of study close?

- Under Alert Level 4, all education providers will close face-to-face teaching by midnight on 25 March.
- Your education provider will contact you regarding how to access the online material and new way of studying.

Can I stay enrolled?

- It is really important to not make any quick decisions to withdraw from study.

- At this stage, please stay enrolled and stay in touch with your education provider through the usual channels.
- Please be proactive about checking online material from your place of study to keep up with the latest developments.

Accommodation

Feeling safe and secure is more important than ever at this time.

- Your education provider has signed up to the [Code of Pastoral Care for International Students](#). They have an important responsibility to ensure that you are well informed, safe and properly cared for during this time.
- If you are living in a student hostel, check with your place of study to confirm what accommodation arrangements they have in place during Alert Level 4.
- Student hostels will strictly enforce personal distancing and hygiene requirements, in accordance with [Ministry of Health guidelines](#).
- Self-isolation means you should limit your contact with other people as much as possible. However, it is okay for friends and family to drop off food, providing a two metre distance is followed at all times.
- If you live with other people you should minimise close contact with them. Avoid situations where you have face-to-face contact (closer than two metres) for more than 15 minutes.
- You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, pillows or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should clean them thoroughly.
- If you do not have access to suitable accommodation, contact your place of study as they have a responsibility to help you.
- For any other information that your tertiary education provider is unable to help with, call the [Tertiary Education Commission](#) on 0800 123 797 (within New Zealand).

Travel and visa advice

We understand these are really important things you will be thinking about.

- If you would like to return home, it may still be possible to do so, but the situation is quickly changing. If you do decide to return home, you will need to arrange your travel as soon as possible.
- If you are staying in New Zealand, check the expiry date on your current visa. Travellers with a temporary (work, student, visitor, interim and limited) visa expiring before 1 April 2020 who are unable to leave New Zealand [must apply online](#) for a new visa. An interim visa will be issued.
- Travellers with a temporary visa due to expire between 1 April and 9 July 2020 will have their visas extended to 25 September. Confirmation of extensions will be emailed to all visa holders.

- Student visa holders or applicants who have specific COVID-19 related immigration queries should see the [Immigration New Zealand website](#) or call the Immigration Contact Centre on 0508 225 288 (within New Zealand) or +64 9 952 1679 (outside of New Zealand).
- For tertiary students who are unable to leave and are no longer enrolled, you should talk to Immigration New Zealand.

Repatriation flights

- A small number of countries might look to repatriate (bring home) their citizens by making special flights and have been in contact with some students directly via email. If you think that might be you, make sure you check your email regularly.
- If repatriation flights do go ahead, then there are likely to be a number of flights available in the coming days and weeks. Don't feel panicked or pressured to make the first available flight.
- Stay with your homestay or accommodation providers until your repatriation flight is confirmed.
- From midnight on 27 March, there will be no domestic flights permitted for international students wanting to connect with their flight home.

Student eligibility for health care

- Check in with your insurance provider regarding changes to your insurance policy.
- You are eligible for free public healthcare if you think you have COVID-19. Further information is available on the Ministry of Health's website.

Institution-specific information

- Your education provider must keep you up to date with clear information about what is happening. Check your education provider's website or contact them if you have any questions or need advice.

Your health and wellbeing is a priority

- If you're feeling anxious or lonely, there are a number of free counselling services you can use. You can find contact details for these services and other advice on our page [Feeling lonely, homesick or depressed](#).
- There is also information on this page to help you keep in contact with friends and family. It is more important than ever to maintain these connections.
- It is okay to leave your house for a walk or bike ride. You do not have to be in your room all the time. However you must maintain a two-metre distance from other people at all times.
- Your education provider is a signatory to the [Code of Pastoral Care for International Students](#). They have an important responsibility to ensure that you are well informed, safe and properly cared for during this time. This means you should have access to up-to-date information

about COVID-19, know who to contact if you need support for health, wellbeing or accommodation issues, and know how to access health and counselling services.

- People who develop symptoms of fever, cough or shortness of breath should seek medical advice – phone Healthline’s dedicated COVID-19 number [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453).

This is an exceptional situation for everybody. We know this must be really difficult being away from your family and friends. Please do reach out to support services if you need them.

This information will be updated regularly, but for the latest Government information about the COVID-19 situation in New Zealand go to covid19.govt.nz

He waka eke noa. (*We are all in this together*)