

Our ref.: c. 18721

Enquiries: registrar@iie.ac.za

Date: 08 July 2021

Dear Student



RE: QUERIES RELATED TO AMENDED EXAMINATION TIMETABLE



We refer to the queries received about the letters and new Programme Assessment Schedules (PAS) released. This pandemic continues to disrupt all we do and while we had planned for safe examinations even with an increase to Level 3, Level 4 has caused further disruption. We continue to do all we can to balance the need to protect the integrity of your qualification against the anxiety, fears, concerns, and practical disruptions each wave brings. Our guiding principle is, and must remain, well-reasoned decisions that encompass the best long-term interests of our students and ensuring you safety.



Your concerns seem to be centred around a few themes, so we are addressing each of those in this letter.



Why did we not plan for all take home examinations to start with?

When you registered with us, you registered for a particular type of qualification with a particular set of disciplines which are best assessed in particular ways. As far as is humanly possible we need to protect that integrity in the face of this pandemic. Therefore, we planned to only examine some modules in a written unseen, exam conditions manner. Under level 3 we planned for this to be done safely. The Delta variant and Level 4 were not anticipated and while it is reasonably easy now to say that they should have been, it is very clear that the current challenge we face is more disruptive than any predictions even six weeks ago would have suggested.

How do we categorise modules as needing a written unseen examination?

The conversion of written unseen to take home examinations is not something that should, or will, be taken lightly. Nor is it a task that can be done hastily whilst still ensuring quality and integrity of assessment.

Everything we do is driven off sound principles. Different disciplines and areas of study require different decisions.

Some modules such as practical modules require campus resources; numeracy modules require timed assessments written under exam conditions; exit-level modules that are subject to further scrutiny from moderators and employers must happen under very tight conditions, and at times, even professions that are eager to ensure that integrity was not compromised must be accommodated.

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In a summative assessment we must reduce any risk we can to a perception that the assessment did not require you to show individual competency, and this is best done, in most instances, with an invigilated formal examination that has very limited time parameters.

As such we have three categories of final summative assessments:

1. Modules that traditionally follow an assessment strategy that is not completed under examination conditions because the nature of the module is best assessed through an accumulation of assessment points and processes. For example, Portfolios of Evidence, Summative Projects etc.
2. Modules that would be best assessed as a written unseen examination, but for which a planned Take Home Examination (THE) strategy can be put in place, to reduce the footprint on campus while not seriously undermining your ability to demonstrate individual competence in the module.
3. Modules where a sit-down examination was prepared, and planned, because it is the most appropriate and credible way to assess the module and qualification outcomes. These remaining modules are at risk of intellectual compromise if we change the format of the assessment.

Why are we expected to do these examinations in the second semester?

This was a difficult decision. Given the trajectory of the 3rd wave we do not believe that planning to write these prior to start of semester 2 is realistic. That left us with the test week in Semester 2 (which we then extended by adjusting the academic calendar) as a means of getting these done as close to semester 1 as possible. By adding a week to it, we have managed to fit in the assessments. The benefit of this is that you do not have to deal with these exams at the end of the year and thus there is no risk to graduation.

Is this load reasonable? (Including details of arrangements to achieve this).

We have ensured that the load is reasonable. We have made the following arrangements to ensure that you have enough time to complete S1 successfully, whilst minimising disruption to the S2:

Take home examinations (THE).

1. We are converting more sit-down assessments to THE.
2. The additional converted THEs have been scheduled in a dedicated three-week period in July as per the PAS you already have. These additional assessments are not spread over all qualifications and years of study equally as you are not all studying the same things requiring the same assessments. They may also be scheduled on a Saturday.

Written unseen/ sit down examinations.

1. The remaining sit-down exams will be written in a dedicated 2-week period between 30 August and 11 September.
2. You will write no more than 3 exams in this period if you are registered for the ordinary curriculum for the year of study in your qualification. If there are currently four exams scheduled for a standard curriculum in a year of study, we will make a different arrangement for at least one of those – and advise accordingly.
3. If, however, the reason you have more than 3 sit down exams is because you have been repeating a module, you have the option to write your repeat(s) sit down exams in December. You can apply to do so on the Student Hub.

Formative assessments currently scheduled for Test Week 1 in Semester 2

1. We will “reweight” all formative tests that are scheduled in test week 1 (30 August to 4 September) for Semester 2 thus clearing this week for the purpose of the Semester 1 examinations that cannot be converted to take home assessments. Reweighted means that we cancel the assessment and take the % contribution to CASS and redistribute that equally to the remaining formative assessments.
2. We will also adjust submission deadlines for other formatives just before and after this “Test Week” so that you have time to prepare for these examinations.
3. An amended PAS for Semester 2 will thus be issued.

Exceptions

1. These arrangements do **not** apply to the following programmes – these students will get a separate letter:
 - a. final year B. Law (year 4 or 2 depending on which programme)
 - b. B. Acc 2 (core modules) and B. Acc 3
 - c. PG Diploma students

What if there is a further wave in Semester 2 or this one does not ease soon?

1. Given the uncertainty of the Delta variant and the possibility of a further wave at the end of the year, we are evaluating the possibility of converting additional S2 formative and summative assessments modules to take home assessments.
2. At this stage, we will start Semester 2 on the 2nd of August 2021. The balance between contact and online lecturing for full time contact students will be determined by the lockdown provision in place at the time.

We all agree that the current situation is not ideal. We are committed to supporting you to the successful completion of your chosen path of study. The current pandemic has added a layer of complexity to this. To mitigate this we are constantly reviewing what is in the best interest of your education and making decisions aligned with the principles and policies of the IIE whilst ensuring student safety and success.

Please continue to monitor communication as we keep you abreast of developments. Please engage directly with your campus for further information.

Yours sincerely



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