FAQ WU policy and associated implementation guidelines cursory education period 1 academic year 2021/2022

- Cursory education
- Scheduling/ fall-back scenario
- Excursions
- Examination
- Testing, self-testing, and vaccination
- Support

Cursory education

Why are we preparing for education without the 1.5-metre social distancing rule?

- The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Dutch acronym OCW) has recently requested we focus primarily on preparing for a situation in which the distancing standard is no longer required. However, a maximum of 75 persons is permitted within a single (lecture) room.
- It is wise to also consider how you might approach education in the event the distancing rule is unexpectedly reinstated. Please communicate this fall-back scenario to the Scheduling Department, along with your standard preferences. This must be done before the start of the (summer) holiday period. For wet practicals, the support section (PFO) will inventory your needs for the fall-back scenario.

Can I elect to offer my courses based on the 1.5-metre distancing situation or entirely online?

- No, this is not permitted, as OCW expects the social distancing rule to be lifted in September. Thus, our education will be organised without the 1.5-metre distancing.

I feel more comfortable if students maintain their distance in the new academic year, is this permitted?

- We understand that teachers may have different preferences. However, we adhere to the government's advice and, in doing so, take all the safety risks into account.
- The non-distancing scenario is our point of departure, which means the Scheduling department will plan education without the 1.5-metre distancing.
- The lecture rooms will be re-furnished in accordance with this base scenario at the end of August, in time for the new academic year. The workstations will thus not be placed 1.5 metres apart.

What has motivated the 75-person limit per room?

- This number (which includes teaching staff) stems from the government advice related to the fight against Covid-19. The standard is partly related to the possibility to conduct source and contact investigations.
- Because this maximum number is expected to become part of the government regulations, it may not be exceeded.

My group is larger than 75. How does this impact my course?

- The maximum refers to the number of individuals permitted to be present in a room at any given time. It has no bearing on the number of students that can join a course. In light of the size of our lecture rooms, it means that, in terms of working groups, practicals etc, we will be able to resume almost all of our activities as normal.
We want to have students back on the campus as much as possible. Thus, we strive for solutions that will allow students from large courses/groups to also come to the campus, for example, through hybrid forms of education.

Reducing the number of students in practicals may mean the sliding walls must be closed.

Am I obliged to offer on-campus education, or may I choose to offer online work as well?

We value having students on campus as much as possible. However, online education has proven its worth. In the coming academic year, we seek to find a good combination of teaching forms. The choice for online education, however, must be didactically substantiated.

I worry about my safety and want to continue teaching online. Is this permitted?

We understand that teachers have varying preferences. Still, we follow the government directives and take all the necessary safety precautions.

Concerns about your safety are not a reason to move your education online. The responsibility for education lies with the chair group, and, in such cases, a colleague will have to stand in.

May I divert from the teaching methods or learning outcomes stated in the study handbook?

Since a significant part of our education will once again take place on campus, we may no longer divert from the learning outcomes. In the new year, the EER (Education and Examination Regulations) will contain a corona addendum indicating that diversion from the teaching methods is permitted.

Must we offer students infected with COVID and/or who are in quarantine an (online) alternative?

No. This disease will be classified as a "regular" ailment. If students contract COVID or have to quarantine and fall back as a result, they can apply for a FOS-provision (Student Financial Support Regulations).

If a teacher must quarantine, a suitable solution must be found. You may ask a colleague to take over or teach online.

What will happen if international students are unable to come to Wageningen?

Our general principle is that students must come to the campus. We are not obliged to offer education to students who are not present. (Please note: this deviates from this last year’s regulations.)

SSC will inform international students accordingly.

How are other universities organising their education?

We are in close communication with the VSNU (Dutch Association of Universities), and all institutes are working together. Other institutes will also programme their education in accordance with the OCW guidelines.

Will EDU-PCs become available again?

As of the 21/22 academic year, the use of personal laptops (Bring Your Own Device, BYOD) is the standard for education and self-study. This was already the standard for self-study and off-campus education over the past year.

EDU-PCs are only available in the (wet) practical rooms, for digital exams, and for use by teachers.

Can students who have forgotten their device borrow one?

No. Borrowing is not a solution, as this would require installing a variety of software. By the time this is done, the class will be over.
Scheduling/fall-back scenario

What should I do if the government decides the 1.5-metre distancing is to be maintained after all?

- We hope, and expect, this will not be the case. But, if the government so decides, we are obligated to offer education within the 1.5-metre distancing requirement.
- Thus, it is important to consider a fall-back scenario for this eventuality. You can communicate your wishes regarding this scenario to the Scheduling department along with your regular wishes. It is important to do so before the start of the summer/holiday period. For wet practicals, the PFO will inventory what you require for the fall-back scenario.
- Should this be needed, you will receive an email announcing the implementation of the fall-back scenario, and the new, previously prepared timetable will be published by the Scheduling department.

What type of fall-back scenario/alternatives must I consider?

- In the fall-back scenario, a 1.5-metre distance will be required within our courses, and the room capacity will be limited to the current capacity (which takes the social distance measure into account). In practice, this will result in a combination of on-site and online education. However, some working methods may be adjusted (while upholding the required learning outcomes).
- If needed, student assistants may be recruited. You may apply for increased support through your programme director.

Can we await the developments before communicating our wishes to the Scheduling department?

- This is, regretfully, not an option. Definitive information on how the new academic year will start is not expected before the second half of July, which will be too late to commence the scheduling process. As we want everyone to have the opportunity to enjoy a summer vacation, we do not want to burden our staff (teaching staff included) during the summer period.

Excursions

What will happen with the international excursions?

- Our policy will remain that international excursions are only permitted to areas marked as green or yellow.
- When certain areas are to be marked green/yellow by the government is difficult to predict. We recommend you seek a domestic alternative to prevent last-minute planning.

What will happen with domestic field trips?

- We expect these trips to continue as normal.

Examination

Why must an online alternative be offered for the exams?

- In the new year, all written exams will take place on campus. We aim to have the students sit exams using their own device. It is, however, not yet clear whether we can achieve this.
- We feel the impact of missing an exam is of such a magnitude that an online alternative must be offered. This will likely affect only a small portion of the students.
- These students may be offered alternatives such as a remote proctored exam in Ans, an oral exam or another online alternative.

**When may a student do a remote proctored exam?**
- In principle, all students will sit their exams on campus in the coming academic year.
- In certain exceptional cases, a student may take the exam from home. We are currently outlining what exceptions are possible and how to apply for a remote proctored exam.

**Why are more than 75 persons allowed in a single room during exams?**
- During exams, students are placed apart, as well as remaining at their designated desk. This allows us to work outside of the 75-person limit during exams.

**Testing, self-testing, and vaccination**

**Will voluntary self-tests be made available for students and staff next year as well?**
- Through the VSNU, we have requested information from OCW. However, a clear answer has not yet been given.

**What is the difference between the self-tests we are currently using and the rapid tests we hear about?**
- A self-test is a test you can perform on yourself to increase your safety when going to work or school. These tests are not effective in cases where you have corona-related symptoms, have been in close proximity to someone infected with the virus, or when returning from abroad. In these situations, you must be tested by the GGD. Self-tests are available on zelftestonderwijs.nl (you may order one package per week).
- Wageningen University will not use rapid tests as an entry requirement, even if there is a legal basis to do so.

**I do not feel safe if students have not been vaccinated. Why doesn’t WUR require vaccination as a condition for entry?**
- Currently, there is no legal basis for an admission control system. Moreover, we value our institute being freely accessible. We expect that by the start of the new academic year, sufficient people will have been vaccinated to allow our education to be safe.
- A major drawback of an admission control system is that it obligates us to offer alternatives to students who decline to get tested or vaccinated. Organising admission control is also extremely complex.

**What happens if a student is infected with COVID and has attended a class with other students and staff without the 1.5-metre distancing?**
- The ministry of VWS/RIVM-LCI must provide an answer to this question. The question has been sent to the VSNU, and we hope to have an answer as soon as possible.

**Why are compulsory self-tests deployed for multi-day field trips?**
- We expect self-tests to be included in the safety protocol for multi-day field trips because, in this case, students work and socialise intensively 24 hours a day and use shared facilities.
Support

Where can I ask for help or advice?

- Your programme director can discuss the set-up and organisation of your course with you.
- Practical information is provided in the Factsheet Teaching during COVID-19.
- For help on the didactic set-up of your course, please reach out to the Education Support Centre (ESC):
  - Course advice & redesign: education.support@wur.nl
  - Webinars en training: esd.crs.wur.nl
  - Brightspace helpdesk: brightspace.helpdesk@wur.nl, tel. (+31 3174) 86222
  - Digital assessment helpdesk: Digital assessment helpdesk, digital.examination@wur.nl
  - Educational Video: Educational Video, eduvideo.productionteam@wur.nl
  - Web lectures: weblectures@wur.nl
  - IT service desk: Servicedesk.IT@wur.nl, tel (+31 3174) 88888