TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Government

GOVT 535
CONTRACTING, PROCUREMENT AND COLLABORATION
(15 Points)

Trimester 2 / 2015

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator:	**Associate Professor Bill Ryan**
	Room RH 801, Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus
	Telephone: (04) 463 5848
	Email: bill.ryan@vuw.ac.nz
Administrator:	**Darren Morgan**
	Room RH 821, Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus
	Telephone: (04) 463 5458
	Fax: (04) 463 5454
	Email: darren.morgan@vuw.ac.nz
School Office Hours:	8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Trimester Dates

Monday 6 July – Tuesday 27 October 2015

Withdrawal from Course

Formal notice of withdrawal must be in writing on a Course Add/Drop form (available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks or from the course administrator). Not paying your fees, ceasing to attend lectures or verbally advising a member of staff will NOT be accepted as a formal notice of withdrawal.

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before **Friday 17 July 2015**.

2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 25 September 2015**. After this date, students forced to withdraw by circumstances beyond their control must apply for permission on an '*Application for Associate Dean's Permission to Withdraw Late*' including supporting documentation. The application form is available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks or at www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/publications/Application-for-late-withdrawal-2010.doc .

Class Times and Room Numbers

This course is delivered in a modular format.

Module One:	Friday 10 July 2015	9.00am – 5.00pm
Module Two:	Friday 28 August 2015	9.00am – 5.00pm
Module Three:	Friday 23 October 2015	9.00am – 5.00pm

Locations: Classes will be held on the Pipitea Campus of Victoria University in Wellington and you will be advised of your classroom one week prior to each module by email. The timetable is also available to view on the Victoria University website at www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/timetables .

Attendance is required at all teaching days

Course Delivery

This course is delivered in a modular format over three days (three 'modules') of 6 hours contact time each (18 hours total) between 9.00am and 5.00pm on the days indicated above, supplemented by 6 hours of work away from the campus, during which you will work on a group project between module meetings, as detailed below. **Attendance is required at all teaching days**. **Participation in additional work sessions is mandatory.**

Group Work

The course requires 6 hours of group work between modules. This work is considered part of the class contact, but rather than being accommodated in a longer module day (i.e. 8.30am to 6.00pm), the equivalent of 2 hours per module can be flexibly scheduled by groups of students, with tasks undertaken and reported back as detailed below.

Expected Workload

The learning objectives set for each course are demanding and to achieve them, candidates must make a significant commitment in time and effort to reading, studying, thinking, and completion of assessment items outside of contact time. Courses vary in design but all require preparation and learning before the first day of the course and regular learning is also necessary (students who leave everything to the last moment rarely achieve at a high level).

Expressed in input terms, on average, the time commitment required usually translates to approximately 150 hours for a 15-point course. Some of that is set contact time. The rest is your study time and we recommend you study weekly for approximately 8-10 hours.

Prescription

This course examines approaches used when government organisations work with 'external providers', i.e. public, community and private sector organisations, particularly in service delivery. It focuses on contracting out (from classical to relational contracting), procurement (purchasing) and more recent shifts towards partnership and collaboration (especially in social services).

Course Learning Objectives

Students completing this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the history, theory, development and evidence regarding contracting, procurement and collaboration, especially in service delivery;
2. Critically analyse the theory and practice of contracting, procurement and collaboration in the public sector;
3. Apply their knowledge to cases of simple, single-organisation as well as complex, multi-organisation service delivery.

Readings

Required, application and further readings indicated with an asterisk are available from the Victoria University of Wellington library databases or e-book collections. As a VUW student, you have complete and free access to these materials. University copyright licenses allow you to download and print these materials, so long as you use them for educational purposes only. Please ask your course convenor or a VUW librarian if you require help to access material, or if you run into any other problems.

If the library does not have database or e-book access to required readings (those with no asterisk in this course outline), the readings will be available on Blackboard, or you will be advised to buy the readings. In some cases, you may need to go to the library to consult books, or to check them out.

You will need to draw on additional materials to complete assessment items.

Blackboard is Victoria University's online environment that supports teaching and learning by making course information, materials and other learning activities available via the internet through the myVictoria student web portal. Ensure that you can access Blackboard before the course begins.

To access the Blackboard site for this course:

1. Open a web browser and go to www.myvictoria.ac.nz .
2. Log into myVictoria using your ITS Username (on your Confirmation of Study) and password (if you've never used the Victoria University computer facilities before, your initial password is your student ID number, on your Confirmation of Study, Fees Assessment or student ID card – you may be asked to change it when you log in for the first time).
3. Once you've logged into myVictoria, select Blackboard (from the options along the top of the page) to go to your Blackboard homepage.
4. The "My Courses" section displays the courses you have access to – select the appropriate link to access the course-specific Blackboard site. Please note that only courses that are actually using Blackboard and have been made available to students by their respective course coordinator will be displayed.

If you have any problems gaining access to Victoria University's computer facilities, such as myVictoria and Blackboard, you should contact the ITS Service Desk on (04) 463 5050 or its-service@vuw.ac.nz . See www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/ for more information.

Power-point slides and other lecture materials that are posted on Blackboard may differ from the presentations used in class, as the copyright rules for archived presentations differ somewhat from those for live presentation.

Course Content, Required and Further Readings

Text
The required text for this course is:

> Alford, J., & O'Flynn, J. (2012). *Rethinking public service delivery: Managing with external providers*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book can be purchased from VicBooks (www.vicbooks.co.nz), the Victoria University bookshop.

There are several good and useful books on the topics covered in this course. Four that can be recommended are:

> Greve, C. (2008). *Contracting for public services*. London: Routledge.
> Thai, K. V. (Ed.). (2009). *International handbook of public procurement*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press. (This huge edited volume contains case studies from a range of European, Asian and African countries.)
> O'Leary, R., & Bingham, L. B. (Eds.). (2009). *The collaborative public manager: New ideas for the twenty-first century*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
> Agranoff, R., & McGuire, M. (2003). *Collaborative public management: New strategies for local governments*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

MODULE 1
Contracting out and procurement
This module covers the introduction and development of contracting of service delivery to third-party providers in the 1980s to the present, including critiques and evidence, providing coverage of many of the core ideas, models and concepts in the field. It includes discussion of the relationship between the terms 'contracting out' and 'procurement' (treated sometimes simply as 'purchasing') and 'public-private partnerships'.

Topics to be covered are:
- Implementation in the bureaucratic era, implementation research, the economic critique
- The construction of 'service delivery' to 'customers' by 'external providers'
- 'Contracting out' (a.k.a. 'outsourcing'): Transaction cost theory, principal/agent theory (a.k.a. 'agency' theory) – 'the contract state'
- What were/are governments trying to achieve? What were/are providers seeking to gain?
- Contracts, tendering and letting the contract, approaches and methods
- Contract management, evaluation and accountability
- The critiques and the evidence

- Organisational capability, funders and providers
- From legal to relational contracting, from outputs to outcomes
- Contracting out and procurement
- Public-private partnerships, proponents, critiques and the evidence

Required reading

Alford, J., & O'Flynn, J. (2012). *Rethinking public service delivery: Managing with external providers* (Chapters 1–4, 10–11). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (TEXT)

* Althaus, C. (1997). The application of agency theory to public sector management. In G. Davis, B. Sullivan, & A. Yeatman (Eds.), *The new contractualism?* (pp. 137-153). South Melbourne: Macmillan.

Boston, J., Martin. J., Pallot, J., & Walsh, P. (1996). *Public management: The New Zealand model* (pp. 1640). Auckland: Oxford University Press. (BLACKBOARD)

* Domberger, S., & Jensen, P. (1997). Contracting out by the public sector: Theory, evidence, prospects. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, *13*(4), 67–78.

* Boston, J. (1996). The use of contracting in the public sector: Recent New Zealand experience. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, *55*(3), 105–110.

* Hodge, G. (1996). Contracting public sector services: A meta-analytic perspective of the international evidence. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, *57*(4), 98–110.

* Hodge, G. (1999). Competitive tendering and contracting out: Rhetoric or reality? *Public Productivity and Management Review*, *22*(4), 455–469.

* Hodge, G., & Greve, C. (2007). Public private partnerships: An international performance review. *Public Administration Review, 67*(3), 545–558.

Further reading

Greve, C. (2008). *Contracting for public services*. London: Routledge.

* Brown, T., Potoski, M., & van Slyke, D. (2006). Managing public service contracts: Aligning values, institutions and markets. *Public Administration Review*, *66*(3), 323–331.

* Cohen, S., & Eimicke, W. (2008). *The responsible contract manager: Protecting the public interest in an outsourced world*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

OECD. (1997). *Contracting out government services: Best practice guidelines and case studies*. Public Management Occasional Papers No. 20, Paris: OECD. www.oecdbookshop.org/en/browse/title-detail/?k=5LMQCR2KHMD7 (also BLACKBOARD)

OGC. (2008). *An introduction to public procurement*. London: Office of Government Commerce. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62060/introduction-public-procurement.pdf

OECD. (2007). *Integrity in public procurement: Good practice from A to Z*. Paris: OECD. www.oecdbookshop.org/en/browse/title-detail/?ISB=9789264027503 (also BLACKBOARD)

IAPWG. (2006). *UN procurement practitioner's handbook*. Geneva: United Nations. www.ungm.org/Areas/Public/pph/channels/PPH.pdf

PDG. (2010). *Contracting out government functions and services in post-conflict and fragile situations*. Paris: OECD. www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/handbook-on-contracting-out-government-functions-and-services-in-post-conflict-and-fragile-situations_9789264091993-en (also BLACKBOARD)

Useful sources (advocacy, guidelines, and discussion documents) on public-private partnerships (PPPs) can be found on NZ websites of the NZSIF, Treasury (the Infrastructure Unit) and the OAG. Go to:

> www.nzsif.co.nz/Social-Infrastructure/What-are-Public-Private-Partnerships/
> www.infrastructure.govt.nz/publications/pppguidance
> www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/research-policy/ppp/2006/06-02
> www.oag.govt.nz/2011/public-private-partnerships

MODULE 2
Contracting in New Zealand

This module uses New Zealand as a case study of current practice and ongoing developments in contracting out. Ongoing debates between funders and contractors about appropriate and effective approaches are leading to significant changes in practice of which an outcome orientation and streamlining approaches are two important aspects.

Module 2 will be conducted with the assistance of the MBIE group heading the development of procurement (see www.business.govt.nz/procurement). It will include discussions with selected funder agencies and non-government providers.

Module 2 will also include a detailed examination of relevant sections in the NZ Productivity Commission draft report on *More effective social services* (2015)
(see www.productivity.govt.nz/inquiry-content/2032?stage=3)

Topics to be covered are:
- Contracting and procurement: the NZ context
- Guidance from the centre: Treasury and the OAG
- Issues arising: funder and provider concerns
- MBIE and 'streamlined contracting'
- Capability: funders and providers
- The funder perspective: a discussion
- The provider perspective: a discussion

Required reading (and pre-module preparation)
General material on procurement
Government Rules of Sourcing
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/pdf-library/agencies/rules-of-sourcing/procurement-government-rules-of-sourcing-v3.pdf

Mastering Procurement
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/pdf-library/agencies/GUIDEMasteringProcurement.pdf

Read the 'Toolkit' page
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/for-agencies/guides-and-tools

Read 'Developing Procurement Capability'
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/for-agencies/nz-procurement-academy/developing-capability

Read 'Government Model Contracts'
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/for-agencies/government-model-contracts

Streamlined contracting

The key page for MBIE's functional leadership of procurement can be found at
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/procurement-reform

Read 'Streamlined Contracting with NGOs'
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/procurement-reform/streamlined-contracting-with-ngos

Read especially

The contracting framework:
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/procurement-reform/streamlined-contracting-with-ngos/the-contracting-framework-1

Contracting framework documents and tools:
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/procurement-reform/streamlined-contracting-with-ngos/contracting-framework-user-guides-and-templates

Results Based Accountability™ (RBA):
> www.business.govt.nz/procurement/procurement-reform/streamlined-contracting-with-ngos/results-based-accountability

Read also
> www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/what-we-do/streamlined-contracting
> www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/investing-in-services-for-outcomes/index.html
> RBA Homepage - Implementation guide http://raguide.org/

Further reading

Material you will read in the course of doing your group project on the NZ Productivity Commission's 2015 draft report on *More effective social services* will also contribute to your learning in this module.

MODULE 3

The reconstruction of 'service delivery' under conditions of complexity

Recognising the new conditions of public policy implementation in the 21st century (e.g. complexity, uncertainty, inexplicability) has forced increasing acknowledgement of the inappropriateness of simple-minded approaches to contracting out, replaced by a focus in some policy areas on partnership and collaboration as potentially efficacious in service delivery. But these trends depend on new types of relationships between government agencies and third-party organisations, now and in the future.

Topics to be covered are:
- 21st century conditions of implementation: Beyond 'contracting'
- Complexity and uncertainty
- Holistic solutions to uncertain and complicated/complex problems; emergent solutions to uncertain and complicated/complex problems ('learning by doing')
- Partnering and collaboration in service delivery: from principal/agent to partners
- Partnership, networks and co-production
- Implications for funders
- Central and local government, the non-government and private sectors; New roles? New relationships?
- Collaboration? Or is it really only communication, coordination, cooperation?
- 'Boundary spanning' and other competencies
- Organisational/system capacity?
- Outcomes as the end; collaboration only as the means?
- The future of 'third party provision' in the public sphere

Required reading

Alford, J., & O'Flynn, J. (2012). *Rethinking public service delivery: Managing with external providers* (Chapters 5–9, 10–11). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (TEXT)

Eppel, E., Gill, D., Lips, M., & Ryan. B. (2014). The cross-organisational collaboration solution? Conditions, roles and dynamics in New Zealand. In J. O'Flynn, D. Blackman, & J. Halligan (Eds.), *Crossing boundaries in public management and policy* (pp. 47–63). Oxon: Routledge. (BLACKBOARD)

* Williams, P. (2002). The competent boundary spanner. *Public Administration*, *80*(1), 103–124.

* Huxham, C. (2003). Theorising collaboration practice. *Public Management Review*, *5*(3), 401–423.

Ryan, B. (2011). The signs are everywhere: 'Community' approaches to public management. In B. Ryan, & D. Gill (Eds.), *The Future sate: Directions for public management in New Zealand* (pp. 85–122). Wellington: Victoria University Press. (BLACKBOARD)

Further reading

* O'Leary, R., & Bingham, L. B. (Eds.). (2009). *The collaborative public manager: New ideas for the twenty-first century*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

* Agranoff, R., & McGuire, M. (2003). *Collaborative public management: New strategies for local governments*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

Demos. (2007). *The collaborative state*. London: Demos. www.demos.co.uk/files/Collaborative%20State%20-%20web.pdf

Eppel, E. (2013). *Collaborative governance: Framing New Zealand practice*. Working Paper No: 13/2. Wellington: IGPS. http://igps.victoria.ac.nz/publications/files/07705653e38.pdf

Materials and Equipment

Students need to have internet access for this course. You are also encouraged for your convenience to bring laptops or tablets to modules.

Assessment

The Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf .

You should keep a copy of all submitted work.

There are two items of assessment for this course:

	ITEM	DUE DATE	LENGTH	MARKS/100	CLOs
1	Group project: a. Critical analysis	Friday 4 September 2015	3,000 words	50 marks	1, 2, 3
	b. Briefing	Friday 18 September 2015	1,000 words	20 marks	
2	Blog + comments	Tuesday 27 October 2015	400-800 words plus comments	30 marks	1, 2

Assignment 1: Group Project – Where to for contracting social services in the 21st century? (in two parts, (a) and (b))
   a. **Critical analysis: 3,000 words, due date Friday 4 September 2015, uploaded to the Assessment section of Blackboard, 50 marks**
   b. **Briefing: 1,000 words (or equivalent), posted to the course Wiki on Blackboard, due date Friday 18 September 2015, 20 marks**

Background:
'Funders' are usually government agencies who have concerns about the economical, efficient and effective use of public monies, accountability to the government of the day (and ultimately, parliament) for results. 'Providers' are usually community or private organisations with concerns about achieving particular results for particular types of clients and, importantly, being able to run a viable organisation over time that can do so. Each group has different concerns with the state-of-play regarding contracting practices and is seeking changes for the future. The New Zealand Productivity Commission (NZPC) has entered the fray with a set of recommendations.

The task in this assignment is two-fold. First, conduct a critical analysis of both funder and provider arguments and, second, to prepare a free and frank future-oriented briefing for a (hypothetical) meeting of key senior government and non-government managers – bearing in mind that two major contextual imperatives of the moment are 'achieving results' and 'fiscal constraint'.

You will work in pairs. One of you is to prepare a critical analysis of the funder position. The other is to do the same regarding providers. Each, to some extent should account for the issues raised by the other. Both analyses should then be integrated (noting possible points of compatibility, compromise and incompatibility) in the final briefing.

Assignment:
The resources to be used in this assignment are the submissions to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into *More effective public services* www.productivity.govt.nz/view/submissions/2032 and the Commission's draft report a fair amount of which deals with contracting www.productivity.govt.nz/inquiry-content/2032?stage=3 . You may also use other publicly-available resources on this topic from government or non-government organisations.

There are two parts to this assignment. Work in pairs. Work together but divide your individual focus for part (a) and combine them both for (b).
   a. Conduct a critical analysis of funder concerns OR provider concerns regarding social service contracting in the future. Each individual should then submit their analysis for assessment to the Assessment section of Blackboard ('Critical analysis', 3,000 words, 50 marks, due Friday 4 September 2015).
   b. Together, create a free and frank future-oriented briefing for a (hypothetical) meeting of key senior government and non-government managers and post it to the Wiki section of Blackboard ('Briefing', 1,000 words, 20 marks, due Friday 18 September 2015).

Note regarding the 'Critical analysis' and 'Briefing':
Your 'critical analysis' should, as always, draw upon existing publications and evidence, be written in formal style and be properly referenced.

Your 'briefing', however, should focus more on readily communicating your main findings and conclusions to a professional (practitioner, researcher) audience. It can be in the form of standard text, a conference poster, a set of slides – whatever form you think would be effective in conveying your conclusions to a professional audience. You may use graphic content in association with words to communicate if you feel it would be effective.

Assignment 2: Blog – Learnings and reflections
      Blog entry (400-800 words) plus comments on at least one other student blog, entered into the course Blog on Blackboard, due date Tuesday 27 October 2015, 30 marks

Background:
It is clear that, in the views of many practitioners and researchers, 'managing with external providers' in the 21st century is complicated. Classical contracting was once thought to be 'the answer' but not so now – appropriate in some limited circumstances but not in many others. There are many issues and proposals surrounding outsourcing now and in the years ahead, whether outsourcing single providers through single funders ('one to one') or multiple providers through multiple funders ('many to many').

Throughout the course you will read and her many views and will have many thoughts yourself. What are your most significant learnings? What have you been reflecting on that seems important? The most significant ways your thinking has or is changing? The ways in which you intend changing your practice?

Assignment and Instructions:
1. Identify one or two of your most significant reflections and learnings and write at least one blog of 400-800 words on the topic(s). The purpose is not just to externalise your own increasingly informed views but also to share learning with your peers and hence learn from each other. (Feel free to post multiple blogs if you'd like; don't forget that assessment is one thing; ongoing collective learning is another and the more blogging you do, the more, the more you and others will benefit.)
2. Comment constructively on the views expressed on others' blogs – you are required to comment on at least one other person's.

A note on blogging and criteria for marking:
As some of you are aware, we are increasingly using blogging as a way of assessing your learning outcomes. The style of your blog should be similar to that of an 'informed commentator' in the print media (e.g. Colin James and Rod Oram are excellent NZ examples) or public address (e.g. a professional conference paper). The kind of 'practical reasoning' required to think and write in this way is different to that of 'theoretical reasoning' typical of academic research but very relevant to the workplace – and hence is appropriate in a professional education degree such as the MPM and MPP. You are not required to provide extensive referencing in your blog but your reflections should normally be placed in the context of other professional, practitioner or academic thinking and writing – so a small selection references may well be appropriate.

You can blog at any time during the trimester, as long as it is completed by the due date.

The criteria against which your blog will be assessed are: <u>depth of understanding, insight, succinctness and communicability to a professional audience.</u> Your mark will reflect the totality of your blogging. If you blog on multiple occasions and would like one blog in particular to be the focus of your assessment, advise the course convenor before the due date.

Penalties

The ability to plan for and meet deadlines is a core competency of both advanced study and public management. Failure to meet deadlines disrupts course planning and is unfair on students who do submit their work on time. It is expected therefore that you will complete and hand in assignments by the due date. Marks will be deducted at the rate of five per cent for every day by which the assignment is late and no assignments will be accepted after five working days beyond the date they are due. For example, if you get 65% for an assignment, but you handed it in on Monday when it was due the previous Friday, you will get a mark of 50%.

If ill-health, family bereavement or other personal circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting the deadline for submitting a piece of written work or from attending class to make a presentation, you can apply for and may be granted an extension to the due date. You should let your course coordinator know as soon as possible in advance of the deadline (if circumstances permit) if you are seeking an extension. Where an extension is sought, evidence, by way of a medical certificate or similar, may be required by the course coordinator.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and the Use of Turnitin

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must still acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- material from books, journals or any other printed source
- the work of other students or staff
- information from the Internet
- software programs and other electronic material
- designs and ideas
- the organisation or structuring of any such material.

Acknowledgement is required for *all* material in any work submitted for assessment unless it is a 'fact' that is well-known in the context (such as "Wellington is the capital of New Zealand") or your own ideas in your own words. Everything else that derives from one of the sources above and ends up in your work – whether it is directly quoted, paraphrased, or put into a table or figure, needs to be acknowledged with a reference that is sufficient for your reader to locate the original source.

Plagiarism undermines academic integrity simply because it is a form of lying, stealing and mistreating others. Plagiarism involves stealing other people's intellectual property and lying about whose work it is. This is why plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria.

If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you may be penalised under the Statute on Student Conduct. You should be aware of your obligations under the Statute, which can be downloaded from the policy website (www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx). You could fail your course or even be suspended from the University. Plagiarism is easy to detect. The University has systems in place to identify it.

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine www.turnitin.com . Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection

of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

There is guidance available to students on how to avoid plagiarism by way of sound study skills and the proper and consistent use of a recognised referencing system. This guidance may be found at the following website www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx . If in doubt, seek the advice of your course coordinator.

Plagiarism is simply not worth the risk.

Computation of Grades

The translation from numerical marks to letter grades is set by the following grade ranges.

Pass/Fail	Grade	Normal range	Indicative characterisation
Pass	A+	90% - 100%	Outstanding performance
	A	85% - 89%	Excellent performance
	A-	80% - 84%	Excellent performance in most respects
	B+	75% - 79%	Very good performance
	B	70% - 74%	Good performance
	B-	65% - 69%	Good performance overall, but some weaknesses
	C+	60% - 64%	Satisfactory to good performance
	C	55% - 59%	Satisfactory performance
	C-	50% - 54%	Adequate evidence of learning
Fail	D	40% - 49%	Poor performance overall; some evidence of learning
	E	0 - 39%	Well below the standard required
	K		Fail due to not satisfying mandatory course requirements, even though the student's numerical course mark reached the level specified for a pass, usually 50%. A student whose course mark is below 50 should be given a D (40-49) or E (0-39), regardless of whether they met the mandatory course requirements
Pass	P	Overall Pass (for a course classified as Pass/Fail)	
Fail	F	Fail (for a Pass/Fail course)	

School of Government Service Standards

Good learning and teaching outcomes for students in School of Government courses depend on many factors, including open, transparent and accountable relationships between teaching and support staff, and students in their various activities. The following service standards indicate some of the key expectations that teaching staff and students can have of each other. In all cases, they represent what the School believes should be 'normal' practice; exceptional circumstances can and will be negotiated as required.

Please note that there are University-wide policies relating to assessment – including rights of review and appeal. Details may be found in the Assessment Handbook (which is reviewed and updated from time to time – www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications).

In general terms, any concerns that a student or students may have should be raised with the course coordinator in the first instance. If that course of action is not appropriate, the School's programme support staff will direct you to the relevant Programme Director/Coordinator.

Standards relating to staff timeliness of responses to email and phone queries:
- Email or phone queries from students will be responded to in 48 hours

Standards relating to availability of course materials:
- Students on modular or intensive courses will usually have course materials at least 4 weeks before the course starts
- Students on weekly courses will usually have course materials available on the first day of the course

Standards relating to attendance:
- It is expected that students will attend all contact teaching sessions for a course. If a student is aware that they will be unable to attend part of a course prior to it commencing, they are required to advise the course coordinator. In such a situation, the student may be declined entry into the course.
- Where a course coordinator approves some non-attendance before the class commences, the course coordinator may set additional item(s) of assessment of learning and teaching objectives for the course for students unable to attend. Advice relating to the submission and assessment of any such additional assessment will be provided by the course coordinator.

Variations to the assessment details provided in the course outline:
- Any variation to the assessment details in the course outline will be formally agreed between the course coordinator and students at the earliest possible time, preferably at the beginning of the course.

Standards relating to assignments – turnaround and feedback:
- Unless otherwise agreed between students and the course coordinator, items of assessment will be marked within 15 working days of submission.
- Comments on pieces of assessment will allow students to understand the reasons for the mark awarded, relative to the teaching and learning objectives specified in the course outline, and will usually include advice on how the student can improve their grades in future assignments.

Mandatory Course Requirements

In addition to obtaining an overall course mark of 50 or better, students must submit or participate in all pieces of assessment required for this course.

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of the MCRs because of exceptional personal circumstances, should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat .

Communication of Additional Information

Information will be communicated via Blackboard. It is essential, therefore, that you activate your @myvuw.ac.nz email account (the free email account created for you when you enrol and accessed via the myVictoria student web portal) before the start of the course. Once you have activated your @myvuw.ac.nz email account, if you want to receive these emails at your preferred email address (e.g. your home or work email address), you must modify the settings so all emails sent to it are automatically forwarded to your preferred email address. For more information, please go to www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/FAQs.aspx#Email_Forward .

Student Feedback

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php .

Link to General Information

For general information about course-related matters, go to www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information .

Note to Students

Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation and academic audit. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of VBS programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

<div align="center">********************</div>