TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Government

PUBL 210
Policy Analysis Methods and Practice

Trimester 2, 2016
(CRN 28263)

COURSE OUTLINE

Prescription

This course offers an introduction to key policy theories and methods underpinning problem formulation and policy design. Policy examples from New Zealand and overseas help students develop crucial skills for engaging with contemporary policy issues. The focus is on gathering and analysing evidence, investigating public values and stakeholder interests, assessing options, and presenting policy advice effectively.

Course Learning Objectives

The study of public policy requires utilisation of both qualitative and quantitative methods. This course will teach how to develop and think about the methods to be used in political science as researchers try to refine and improve their ways of discovering the political word and the world of public policy. Lectures will address key questions which shape what we think we are doing, how we do it and what we think we can claim about the results we find. The course will explore the role and influence of the researcher in answering these key questions.

Course Objectives: By the end of this course, students should be able to:		Major Attributes
1	Compare and critique various philosophical approaches to policy analysis and illustrate how they influence various frameworks and methods of policy analysis	MA1, MA2
2	Investigate the available evidence for policy challenges and understand how various sources and types of uncertainties may affect problem structuring	MA2
3	Analyse the diversity of values underpinning approaches to problem structuring and design engagement strategies towards target groups and stakeholders	MA1, MA3, MA4, MA5, MA6
4	Apply core policy frameworks and theories to design intervention strategies and policy options for contemporary policy issues.	MA2

Course Objectives: By the end of this course, students should be able to:		Major Attributes
5	Assess policy options against a range of ex-ante evaluation criteria such as effectiveness, cost effectiveness efficiency and equity	MA2
6	Construct effective policy arguments, by persuasively connecting relevant policy challenge features to policy advice	MA1, MA2, MA5

Major Attributes: PUBL majors will be able to:	
MA1	Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of public policy and how, at various stages of the policy process, policies can be influenced by ideas, values, interests, institutions, cultural factors and socio-economic contexts.
MA2	Select and apply relevant concepts, frameworks and methods of policy analysis in order to formulate and assess policy options for addressing societal challenges.
MA3	Interpret the significance of New Zealand's constitutional arrangements, including the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi), in the practice of public policy.
MA4	Exhibit critical thinking about the role of the state, the economy and civil society and the implications of different governance modes for public policy and societal outcomes.
MA5	Demonstrate an understanding of the challenges to democratic governance and public policy in the context of complexity, risk and uncertainty, including the role, benefits and limitations of various kinds of evidence.
MA6	Critically assess the respective contributions of state and non-state actors (including business, civil society and community organizations) to the design and implementation of public policy.

Course Content

This course introduces students to the world of policy analysis and advising – a world in which people who are strictly neither ordinary citizens nor elected representatives are officially authorised to inform and advise elected policymakers about the decisions facing government. Key features of this world include: the relationship between policy analysis and policy advice; the roles, identities, and attributes of analysts and advisors; the relationships between policy advisers and various types of policy stakeholders; the multiple pathways through which policy information and advice flow. Fundamental questions facing the student of policy analysis are the questions related to values, knowledge, evidence and uncertainties. What are the defining features of good policy analysis and advice? How is good policy analysis and advice best produced?

This course addresses these fundamental questions within the larger context of New Zealand's policymaking system via three broad types of activities: familiarising students with the chief philosophical approaches, tools and methods of policy analysis; helping students apply these tools and methods to contemporary policy issues; and defining and encouraging those dispositions and habits of mind which are found in the best policy analysts.

Trimester Dates

Monday 11 July to Saturday 12 November 2016

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 22 July 2016**.

2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 23rd September 2016.** 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 online.

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator: **Verna Smith**
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Other Contributor/s: **Dr Jaikishan Desai**
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Administrator: **Robyn McCallum**
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Telephone: (04) 463 5699
Email: robyn.mccallum@vuw.ac.nz

School Office Hours: 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Class Times and Room Numbers

This course is delivered in weekly lectures:

Tuesdays 2.40pm – 4.30pm   GBLT1 (Pipitea Campus, Old Government Buildings)

The timetable is also available to view on the Victoria University website at
www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/timetables .

Course Delivery

This course will be delivered by means of lectures and tutorials. Four or five tutorials are offered every week (max 20 students per tutorial).

Tutorials:
Wednesday	10.30 – 11.20am	RWW222
Wednesday	13.40 – 14.30pm	RWW222
Thursday	10.30 – 11.20am	RWW313
Thursday	13.40 - 14.30pm	RWW313
Friday	10:30 – 11:20am	RWW414

Students are expected to contribute to tutorial discussions individually. Tutorials have two main purposes: a) to reinforce what has been taught during the lectures of the respective week, by discussing various concepts and ideas explained during the relevant lectures and the readings; b) to illustrate theoretical ideas and methods of policy analysis by means of practical examples or policy case studies. A minimum attendance requirement applies for both lectures and tutorials (please see below).

Please enrol in a tutorial group

To enrol in your desired tutorial group, you will need to log onto Myallocator. The PUBL210 signup will open at 10 am on Monday 11th July and close at 4:00pm on Friday 15th July. Tutorials will begin during the week of *Monday 18 July 2016*. If you have any serious problems selecting a tutorial group, please contact the Course Co-ordinator.

Readings

Set Texts:

Bardach, Eugene and Patashnik, Eric M. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis* (5th ed) 2016 Sage Los Angeles

Wheelan, Charles (2013) Naked Statistics. Norton New York

Required readings indicated below 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), a url will be provided, 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. Some recommended reasons are also included; additions may be added as the course progresses.

Mandatory Course Requirements

1) You must **submit all 3 Assessments mentioned in the below table**. Failure to submit any of these assessments within five days from the deadline (please see the Penalties section, below), will lead to an automatic failure of this course, unless acceptable evidence is provided for the delay in submission. Please note that even when a grade higher than 50% is obtained for Assessments 1 and 2, failure to hand in the Assessment 3 will lead to a failure of the course.
2) Minimum mandatory class attendance:
Students are required **to attend at least half of the tutorials relevant for each of the three assessments.**

Please contact the relevant Tutor as soon as you become aware you are now able to meet the class attendance requirements to discuss your situation and provide evidence of personal circumstances.

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

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 200 hours for a 20-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.

Assessment

Assessments	Weight	Due Dates 2013	Max word length	Lectures of relevance	Course objectives
1) Policy Report Part A (mandatory)	30%	9 August 2016 9.00 am	2200 words	Lectures: 1,2, 3	1, 2, 3, 6
2) Policy Report Part B (mandatory)	30%	6 September 9.00 am	2200 words	Lectures: 2,4,5,6,	2,3,4,5,6
3) Examination (mandatory)	40%	TBC	NA	Lectures: 7, 8,9,10, 11	2,5

All assignments should be submitted via Blackboard.

Students should keep a copy of all submitted work.

General Notes for Assignments

Please submit your assignments through the "Turnitin Assignments" system on Blackboard (under "Course Tools). Extensions may only be granted to those who meet the University's aegrotat rules, viz. medical certificate or personal bereavement, or critical personal circumstances involving the health of a close relative, or exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control. Students should keep a copy of all submitted work.

Examinations

Students who enrol in courses with examinations are obliged to attend an examination at the University at any time during the formal examination period. The final examination for this course will be scheduled at some time during the following period:

Friday 21st October – Saturday 12th November (inclusive)

Course Content

Part 1 Aspects and processes of policy analysis

Lecture 1 - 12 July Dr Verna Smith
Philosophical perspectives on policy analysis and implications for the conceptualisation of policy problems
- Rationalism; Post positivism
- Policy analysis styles – Rational; Argumentative; Clients Advice; Participatory; Process; Interactive
- Policy analysis activities
- Stages of the Policy Process and the role of the policy analyst.

Required reading:
* Mayer, I.S., C. Els van Daalen and P.W.G Bots. (2013). Chapter 3: "Perspectives on Policy Analysis: A Framework for Understanding and Design", in W. A. H. Thissen and W. E. Walker (eds.), *Public Policy Analysis*, International Series in Operations Research & Management Science 179, Springer Science &Business Media. New York. Pp. 65-99. (available as digital book through VBS Library).
* Smith, K.B. and C.W. Larimer. (2009). "What should we do? The field of policy analysis", Chapter 5 in *The Public Policy Theory Primer*, pp. 101 – 128.
* Fischer, Frank (1998) "Beyond Empiricism: Policy inquiry in post positivist perspective" Policy Studies Journal 26 (1) 129-146

Lecture 2 – 19 July Dr Verna Smith
Problem definition and problem structuring
- Diagnosing problem types and objectives; matching analytical strategies to problems
    o Messy vs non-messy
    o Well-structured for institutional action; moderately structured; ill-structured
- Types of analysis:
    o Boundary; Classification; Causal; Analogy-based; Brain-storming; Assumptional analysis

Required reading:
*Ledbury, M., Miller, N., Lee, A., Fairman, T., & Clifton, C. (2006) Understanding policy options. Report 06/06. London: Home Office.
* W.A.H. Thissen. (2013). Chapter 4: "Diagnosing Policy Problem Situations", in W. A. H. Thissen and W. E. Walker (eds.), *Public Policy Analysis*, International Series in Operations Research & Management Science 179, Springer Science &Business Media. New York. Pp. 65-99. (available as digital book through VBS Library).
* Guess, G.M. and P.G. Farnham. (2008). "Chapter 2: Problem identification and structuring", in *Cases in Public Policy Analysis*. George University Press, Washington D.C. Pp. 23-62.
* Smith, C.F. (2010). Chapter 3: "Definition: Frame the Policy Problem", in *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy-Making Process*. Oxford University Press. U.K. Pp. 31-59.

Lecture 3 – 26 July Dr Verna Smith
Stakeholders and the policy problem
- Types of participation
- Managing the process interactively

Required reading:
* de Bruijn, H., E.F.ten Heuvelhof and B. Enserink (2013). Chapter 6: "Organising the Policy Analysis Process", in W. A. H. Thissen and W. E. Walker (eds.), *Public Policy Analysis*, International Series in Operations Research & Management Science 179, Springer Science &Business Media. New York. Pp. 65-99. (available as digital book through VBS Library).
* Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., and Perl, Anthony (2009) Chapter 3: "The Policy Context" in *Studying Public Policy"* Oxford University Press, Ontario

Lecture 4 – 2 August Dr Karl Lofgren
Policy instruments: an introduction to frameworks of thinking
- Elements of policy design
- Typologies of policy instruments
- Practical realities of applying and implementing policy instruments

Required Readings:
*Vedung, E. (1998). "Policy instruments: typologies and instruments", in Carrots Sticks and Sermons – policy instruments and their evaluation, Eds. M.L. Belemans-Videc, C.L. Rist and E. Vedung. Transaction Publishers. Pp 21-55.
*Mitchie et al. (2011). "The behavioural change wheel: A new method for characterizing and designing behavioural change interventions", in *Implementation Science* 6(42):1-11

Lecture 5 – 9 August – Dr Verna Smith
Strategies for designing effective policy programs
- Reflections on direct regulations, communication-oriented instruments and Nudge

Required reading:
*Soman, D. (2013). "*Making policy through a behavioural lens*" in Options Politiques, June 2013, pp. 10-13.
*Dolan, P., M. Hallsworth, D. Halpern, D. King, R. Metcalfe, I. Vlaev. (2012). "Influencing behaviour: The mindspace way", in *Journal of Economic Psychology* 33: 264–277
*Thaler, R.H. and C.R. Sunstein (2008). "Introduction" (Chapter 1, pp.1-14)); "Biases and blunders" (Chapter 2, pp. 17-73); "When do we need to nudge" (Chapter 4, pp. 74-82).

Part 2 Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Lecture 6 – 16 August Dr Verna Smith
Qualitative methods for policy analysis – when are they appropriate?
- Identifying need; assessing and selecting options; evaluating impact using qualitative methods
- Approaches:
  - Basic/mixed methods; Grounded theory; ethnography; phenomenology; critical social research; historical research
  - Data collection; thematic analysis; field research design and rigour

Required reading:
* Marsh, David and Stoker, Gerry (eds) Theory and Methods in Political Science (3rd ed) 2010 Palgrave Macmillan Basingstoke Chapter 12: Debating methods: Rediscovering Qualitative Approaches

*Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd ed., pp. 37–73. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
*Yanow, D. (2006). Neither rigorous nor objective? Interrogating Criteria for Knowledge Claims in Interpretive Science. In edited by Yanow, D. & Schwartz-Shea, E. (eds). *Interpretation and method: empirical research methods and the interpretive turn,* NY: M.E. Sharpe. pp. 67-88.
* Cabinet Office & National Centre for Social Research (2003) *Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A Framework for Assessing Research Evidence: A Quality Framework*.

Lecture 7 - 6 Sept – Dr Jaikishan Desai
An introduction to quantitative analysis (QA) for public policy
- Quantifying information: what all to look for in quantitative data
- Source of quantitative data – primary and secondary
- What does quantitative analysis contribute to public policy
- Analysing data - descriptive statistics & statistical inference

Required reading:
* Freedman, David (2010) Lies, damned lies, and statistics. The Atlantic
http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/11/lies-damned-lies-and-medical-science/308269/
* Wheelan, Charles (2013) Naked Statistics. Chapters 1-4, 7, 9
* Lecture notes: see Blackboard

Lecture 8 - 13 Sept – Dr Jaikishan Desai
Quantitative analysis for identifying need for public policy

- How does a policy problem/issue come to attention (policy-initiating information)
- What all to think about with policy-initiating information - representation, validity, reliability, representativeness
- Systematic quantitative examination of a policy issue – translating issue to theoretical construct, assessing measurability of construct, identifying quantitative data, analysing data to gauge extent/severity of phenomenon (policy problem), constructing a conceptual model explaining phenomenon, identifying points of entry for policy interventions - short term & long term

Required reading:
* Lecture notes: see Blackboard

Lecture 9 – 20 Sept – Dr Jaikishan Desai
Quantitative analysis for selecting policies - CBA

- Logic models for assessing impact of policy intervention
- Challenge of measuring impact of a policy intervention in a complex multi-factorial world
- Selecting policies to get greater efficiency in resource use - CBA or CEA
- Mechanics of doing a CBA

Required reading:
* New Zealand Treasury. (2015). Guide to social cost benefit analysis
http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/guidance/planning/costbenefitanalysis/guide/cba-guide-jul15.pdf
* Lecture notes: see Blackboard

Optional reading:
* Grimes, et al. (2012). Cost Benefit Analysis of the Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart Programme.
http://motu.nz/assets/Documents/our-work/urban-and-regional/housing/Cost-Benefit-Analysis-of-the-Warm-Up-New-Zealand-Heat-Smart-Programme.pdf

Lecture 10a - 27 Sept – Dr Jaikishan Desai
Quantitative analysis for selecting policies - CEA

- What's different between CEA & CUA
- Measuring non-monetized benefits in natural units
- Mechanics of doing a CEA

Required reading:
* Lecture notes: see Blackboard

* Taylor, M and P Scuffham New Zealand bicycle helmet law – do the costs outweigh the benefits? Injury Prevention, 2008; 8: 317-320
  http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/8/4/317.full.pdf+html

Optional reading:
* Gold, Marthe R. et al (2002) HALYs and QALYs and DALYs, Oh My: Similarities and Differences in Summary Measures of Population Health. Annual Review of Public Health, vol 23 (1)
http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.23.100901.140513

Lecture 10b - 27 Sept – Dr Jaikishan Desai
Quantitative analysis for monitoring policy implementation
- What do you want to monitor, what for, and how often?
- Monitoring policy implementation process
- Monitoring policy impact continuously

Required reading:
* Lecture notes: see Blackboard

Lecture 11 - 4 October – Dr Jaikishan Desai
Quantitative analysis for assessing policy impact
- The context for policy intervention - a complex real world
- Structural models linking outcomes of interest with potentially causal, mediating, and moderating factors & Policy intervention as one additional causal factor
- The challenge of causal analysis: Isolating the impact of one factor in a inter-related, dynamic world in a reliable, quantifiable way (i.e. statistically)
- Potential outcomes framework
- Randomized control trials for measuring policy impact
- Observational designs for measuring policy impact

Required reading:

* Wheelan, Charles (2013) Naked Statistics. Chapter 13

* White, Howard. (2013) An introduction to the use of randomised control trials to evaluate development interventions. Journal of Development Effectiveness, vol 5(1)
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19439342.2013.764652

* Bauchet, Jonathan and Jonathon Morduch (2010) An introduction to impact evaluations with Randomized Designs. Financial Access Initiative Framing Note.
http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.401.5924&rep=rep1&type=pdf

* Lecture notes: see Blackboard

Lecture 12 - 11 October - **Dr Verna Smith**
Concluding reflections on policy analysis and interventions:
- Reflections on Policy Interventions

Required readings
*Amy, D.J. (1987). "Can policy analysis be ethical?", in *Confronting Values in Policy Analysis: The Politics of Criteria*. Eds. F. Fischer and J. Forester. Sage Publications.

Note on Quality Assurance

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.

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.

A penalty applies also on the word count. A written assignment that exceeds the word limit by more than 200 words will be penalised by 5%, with further 5% deductions for any additional 300 words excess. For example if the word limit is 2200 words, but the handed-in assignment has 2700 words, the total word penalty will be 5% (given that 2400 words are 'penalty free'); if the assignment has 3100 words, the total word penalty will be 15%. Please note that the word count includes all footnotes, tables and figures, but excludes the reference list. Assignments need to be provided in Word documents.

Access to Blackboard

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.

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.**

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.

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 http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information

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