

Principles for Principal Dates Guidelines

(1) In theory the issue of principles should be relatively simple and uncontroversial. In reality, UNE's Principal Dates have been predominantly governed by significant and occasionally competing, business considerations.

(2) These considerations are dictated by, for example:

- a. a large external (and offshore) student population;
- b. large student nurse, teacher and student doctor populations;
- c. infrastructure (such as the residential colleges and Services UNE) that is required to be self-sustaining and
- d. competitiveness with other universities (academic year start)

(3) There are also major academic considerations such as the appropriate length of the academic year, length of terms, timing of Orientation, residential schools and examinations, and the ability of staff to engage in collaborative scholarship such as attending conferences (Universities Australia Common Week).

(4) This set of guidelines lists critical considerations in priority order.

(5) Principal Dates should be adapted to meet changing priorities and circumstances but changes should be considered in the light of major related and recognised factors listed.

Section 1 - PRIMARY PARAMETERS FOR PRINCIPAL DATES

(6) The main academic teaching program should comprise:

- a. Two 12-week teaching periods and one 11-week teaching period
- b. Three 2-week periods for end-of-teaching period assessment

(7) The preference is that Teaching Period 1 consist of two terms of 7 and 5 weeks in that order, however two terms of 6 weeks are acceptable, if required by the timing of Easter.

(8) Teaching Period 2 should consist of two terms of 7 and 5 weeks in length.

(9) Teaching Period 3 should consist of two terms of 8 and 3 weeks, with a 2-week break for the Christmas — New Year period.

(10) Mid-teaching period vacations must have sufficient length to allow enough consecutive residential schools to meet typical external enrolment patterns.

(11) Academic year start should be in reasonable concert with major NSW competitors — neither too early nor too late in February.

(12) The starting dates of teaching periods must be such as to provide for at least 4 weeks teaching before statutory HECS census dates (31 March, 31 August and 30 November) to allow students sufficient time to evaluate their enrolment and decide whether or not to commit to the HECS/fee liability.

(13) Statutory census must not fall later than 6 weeks into semester.

(14) Autumn Graduation ceremonies shall be held in late March/early April timed to avoid Easter and the intensive school period. Spring graduation shall be the Friday and Saturday of the final weekend in October.

(15) Graduation ceremonies will be scheduled on alternate days from one year to the next, such that:

- a. the Autumn graduation ceremony for each combination of Schools will take place on a Friday one year and a Saturday in the subsequent year; and
- b. the Spring graduation ceremony for each Faculty will take place on the Friday one year and the Saturday in the subsequent year.

(16) Normally no teaching takes place on NSW Public Holidays.

(17) Term dates shall accommodate student teacher practicum requirements in the NSW public education system.

(18) [Inward] Enrolment deadlines must take allowance of what is considered academically reasonable for a late start to teaching, and for organisational stability.

(19) [Outward] Enrolment deadlines must take allowance of what is fair to the students and the organisational needs of the University to make final arrangements for end-of-semester assessments.

(20) Open Day shall be the first Friday in May.

(21) The last date for withdrawal without academic penalty (award of grade WN) shall be set as follows:

- a. Trimesters 1 and 2 units: Monday of week 10 of the trimester
- b. Trimester 3 units: Monday of week 7 of the trimester
- c. Year Long units: same day as the deadline for units in the second consecutive trimester
- d. Full-time Honours units: Monday of week 32
- e. Part-time Honours units: Monday of week 32 in the second year-long Honours teaching period.

(22) Draft Principal Dates shall have at least one month circulation for comment and then shall be submitted to the Academic Board and the Vice-Chancellor's Committee for endorsement prior to submission to Council for approval not later than 20 months before their implementation (that is, by April year 1 for year 3). Planning dates for 2+ years from the current academic year may be distributed for initial planning and comment as required. All drafts will be published in the UNE intranet and shall be specifically distributed to:

- a. DVCs
- b. PVCs
- c. Academic Directors or Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning)
- d. Research Director or PVC/D's nominee
- e. Heads of Schools
- f. Heads of Colleges
- g. Directors, International, Research Services, SAS, TLC,
- h. University Librarian
- i. Secretary to Council
- j. Campus Conference Company
- k. Services UNE

(23) Draft Principal Dates shall include the following:

- a. Year start
- b. Year end
- c. Teaching Period start
- d. Teaching Period end
- e. Designated Intensive schools period start
- f. Designated Intensive schools period end
- g. Last date for withdrawal without academic penalty
- h. Classes begin in on-campus units
- i. Classes end in on-campus units
- j. Examinations start
- k. Examinations end
- l. Final date for release of examination results
- m. Enrolment deadlines
- n. Graduation ceremonies
- o. Orientation programs
- p. Open Day
- q. Gazetted NSW public holidays

Section 2 - OTHER POINTS

(24) Parallel academic years (such as that of the Joint Medical Program being offered by the University of Newcastle and UNE) will be declared as part of the UNE Principal Dates but negotiated separately in accordance with policy (such as the bilateral agreement for the BMed program).

(25) Other business dates (Council meetings, Board meetings, Boards of Examiners) shall be inserted by negotiated agreement with appropriate business managers and communicated to the Manager, Information Management (SAS).

(26) The Principles for Principal Dates shall be reviewed regularly by the Academic Board.

(27) Principal Dates shall be determined by (a) endorsement by Academic Board and the Vice-Chancellor's Committee and (b) approval by Council.

(28) Drafting, circulation for comment, submission to the VCC and subsequent publication of approved Principal Dates shall be the responsibility of the Directorate of Student Administration and Services (Information Integrity).

(29) The Secretary to Council will inform the Director, Student Administration and Services, of Council's approval of the Principal Dates.

Acronyms

(30) DVC Deputy Vice-Chancellor

(31) HECS Higher Education Contribution Scheme

(32) PVC Pro Vice-Chancellor

(33) SAS Student Administration and Services

(34) TLC Teaching and Learning Centre

(35) UAC University Admissions Centre

(36) VCC Vice-Chancellor's Committee

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