

# Principal Dates Guidelines

Please note: The [UNE policy-based response to Government directions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic](#) was initially approved by the Academic Board Standing Committee on 31 March 2020. A link to the response is provided at clauses impacted by the current extraordinary circumstances, and provides additional information to support the application of this policy instrument.

## Section 1 - Overview

(1) These guidelines provide assistance for UNE Representatives in the development of the University's [Principal Dates](#).

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) These guidelines apply to the University's Principal Dates and UNE Representatives when developing and applying the the University's [Principal Dates](#).

## Section 3 - Guidelines

### Primary Parameters for Principal Dates

(3) The University's academic calendar consists of three trimesters, which comprise:

- a. Trimester 1 and 2 which are 15 weeks in length inclusive of:
  - i. an 11-week teaching session;
  - ii. a 2-week intensive school session; and
  - iii. a 2-week end-of-session assessment period.
- b. Trimester 3 which is 14 weeks in length inclusive of:
  - i. an 11-week teaching session (including an intensive school session);
  - ii. the University Christmas break; and
  - iii. a 2-week end-of-session assessment period.
- c. Some courses adopt a different structure within the trimester for teaching and learning activities than that noted in 3(a) and 3(b).

(4) The preference is (where possible) that:

- a. Trimester 1 consist of two teaching sessions of 7 and 4 weeks in length, depending on the timing of Easter.
- b. Trimester 2 consist of two teaching sessions of 7 and 4 weeks in length.
- c. Trimester 3 consist of two teaching sessions of 8 and 3 weeks in length, depending on the timing of the University Christmas break.

(5) In accordance with the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#), the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS)

census date must be no earlier than 20% of the way through the period during which the unit is undertaken.

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

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

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

- a. the Autumn graduation ceremony for the four combinations of awards will take place on a Friday one year and a Saturday in the subsequent year; and
- b. the Spring graduation ceremony for the two combinations of awards will take place on a Friday one year and a Saturday in the subsequent year.

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

(10) Enrolment variation deadlines must allow for what is considered academically reasonable for a late start to teaching and for organisational stability.

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

- a. Trimester 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 of candidature
- e. Part-time Honours units: Monday of week 32 in the second year-long Honours teaching period.

Please note regarding clause 11 above: Please refer to section 7.1 of the [UNE policy based response to Government directions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic](#) for additional information relating to the application of this clause.

(12) [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. Lectures start in on-campus units
- i. Lectures end in on-campus units
- j. Examinations start
- k. Examinations end
- l. Final date for release of examination results
- m. Enrolment variation deadlines
- n. Graduation ceremonies
- o. Orientation programs
- p. Open Day

q. Gazetted NSW public holidays

(13) Parallel academic years (e.g. the Joint Medical Program) will be declared as part of the University Principal Dates but negotiated separately in accordance with the applicable agreement.

(14) Other business dates (e.g. Council and Academic Board meetings) shall be inserted by negotiated agreement with appropriate business managers and communicated to the Executive Principal Student Experience.

## Approval

(15) Draft Principal Dates for a specific year/s shall:

- a. be circulated for comment for twenty (20) working days and specifically distributed to:
  - i. Deputy Vice-Chancellor
  - ii. Pro Vice-Chancellors
  - iii. Dean of Faculties
  - iv. Head of Schools
  - v. Head of Colleges
  - vi. Directors: UNE International, Research Services, Student Experience, Education Enterprise, Residential System, UNE Life
  - vii. Director Library Services and University Librarian
  - viii. Secretary to Council.
- b. The final draft is submitted to Academic Board for endorsement and Council for approval.

(16) Approval of the [Principal Dates](#) should ideally occur no later than 20 months before their implementation (i.e. by April year 1 for year 3).

(17) Under exceptional circumstances, the University reserves the right to change a [Principal Date](#) (but not a statutory date) after it has been published, but no later than the first day enrolments open for the relevant trimester.

Please note regarding clause 17 above: Please refer to section 7.1 of the [UNE policy based response to Government directions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic](#) for additional information relating to the application of this clause.

## Responsibilities

(18) The Education Futures Directorate is responsible for:

- a. developing and circulating for comment the draft Principal Dates;
- b. submission of final draft to Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Innovation); and
- c. publication of approved [Principal Dates](#) on the University website.

(19) The Executive Principal Education Futures is responsible for submission of the final draft of the Principal Dates to Academic Board.

(20) The Secretary to Council will advise the Executive Principal Education Futures of Council's approval of the Principal Dates.

## **Authority and Compliance**

(21) The Guideline Administrator makes these Guidelines.

(22) University Representatives must observe these Guidelines in relation to University matters.

(23) These Guidelines operate as and from the Effective Date.

(24) Previous guidelines on Principal Dates and related documents are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Guideline.

## **Section 4 - Definitions**

(25) The Effective Dates is the date on which these Guidelines will take effect.

(26) The Guideline Administrator is the Vice-Chancellor, or delegate.

(27) University Representative means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent) contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	26th June 2020
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<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Approval Date</b>	26th June 2020
<b>Expiry Date</b>	15th December 2021
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## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"UNE Representative"** - Means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

**"Principal Dates"** - The official list of dates for University activities approved by the UNE Council and published annually on the University website. The list includes the official dates of teaching periods, examination periods, graduation days and the deadlines for enrolment in, and withdrawal from, unit and courses.

**"Effective Date"** - means the Rule/Policy takes effect on the day on which it is published, or such later day as may be specified in the policy document.

**"University Representative"** - University Representative means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent) contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.