



UWA STUDENT GUILD
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Notice for Deferred and Supplementary Exams

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At present, the UWA Policy on Assessment sets the notice for deferred and supplementary exams at 3 university days. The Guild strongly believes that this is not enough notice for students to plan for their deferred and supplementary exams, and that more notice should be given where possible.

Arguments for extending the notice period

Students living overseas, interstate, and regionally

There is currently a 4-week period between the end of the formal exam period, and the subsequent supplementary/deferred exam period. Over this time, most students who do not live in Perth (whether that be regionally, interstate, or internationally) return home. Increasing the notice period for deferred/supplementary exams gives these students more opportunity to plan their return to Perth to complete these exams, and in most cases to begin the next semester.

Work commitments

The majority of UWA students balance their study at university with part-time or casual work. Students must ensure that their work commitments do not clash with the time of their deferred/supplementary exam, and providing more notice makes it easier to students to do this. Furthermore, over 65% of students who have failed at least one unit (those the most likely to be sitting supplementary exams) cite “difficulties balancing studies and other commitments” (1) as a major factor affecting their academic progress. One small way that these students can be better supported is by increasing the notice given for deferred and supplementary exams.

Stress

For most students, deferred and supplementary exams are particularly stressful because it is their ‘last chance’ to pass the unit, and make academic progress. This stress and the stress of short exam notice periods compounds onto an already stressful part of the student experience – exams. Exams are the most stressful academic activity, over 70% of students report exams as “very stressful” or “extremely stressful” (1). Where feasible, the University should try to decrease the stress on students sitting exams, and one such way is to provide more notice.

Risks

The only concern that has been raised thus far the ability of regional, interstate, and international students to return home. From consultation with international student representatives, this is not a major concern. The supplementary and deferred exam period is already close to the beginning of the next semester, and most students do not return home between the supplementary/deferred exam period and the start of semester. Even so, in consultation, students said that they would prefer to have more notice to make arrangements to attend their exam, even if it means there are delays with the timing of the exams.

1. Headspace, The National Union of Students. National Tertiary Student Wellbeing Survey. Melbourne, Victoria; 2016.