



Bulletin – Tertiary Provider Bulletin

5th May, 2020

COVID-19

Kia ora koutou,

Thank you for the communication and planning you put in to be ready for Level 3.

The Government will make a decision on 11 May as to whether to stay in Level 3 or move to Level 2. We are working with the sector on advice so that you are prepared for that move, whenever it occurs. We know that everyone needs as much clarity on this as soon as possible, and we are expecting to be able to engage with peak bodies on this in the coming week.

In today's bulletin:

- Support for tertiary students to learn online
- Advice on students wanting to return to accommodation under Alert Level 3

Government announces \$20 million to support tertiary students to learn online

Education Minister Chris Hipkins has announced a \$20 million fund to help eligible tertiary learners continue their education disrupted by COVID-19. [Click here to read the announcement in full.](#)

The fund will be available to tertiary education organisations including Wānanga, the NZIST and its subsidiaries, Universities, Transitional Industry Training Organisations and Private Training Establishments who will be required to ensure vulnerable students are prioritised.

TEC intends to open an application process for a second phase of funding in the coming weeks. The application process will allow TEOs not covered by the initial round, and those who need more funding, to apply.

Details on how tertiary providers can access the fund are available on the [TEC website](#).



Advice on students wanting to return to tertiary accommodation under Alert Level 3

Student accommodation has remained open during Level 4 and Level 3, although many students have returned to their whānau. As set out in the [Guidelines for TEOs on how to operate under different Alert Levels](#), students who left residential accommodation before lockdown, to join a “bubble” with friends, family or whānau, should not return to student accommodation under Alert Level 3. The aim of this is to minimise the number of tertiary students traveling across the country, leaving their current bubble and potentially entering a new bubble.

However, under exceptional circumstances, a student may return to their accommodation if;

- they face serious welfare/safety issues
- there is absolutely no way for them to learn remotely from their current residence
- a student has no other appropriate accommodation

A student finding it difficult to study at their current residence, or wanting to attend on-site classes/workshops (where these have reopened), are not what we would consider to be valid reasons for a student to return to their accommodation.

The decision on whether a domestic or international student should return must be agreed between the provider and the student. Students will not be accepted at student accommodation unless the exception is agreed with the provider. Acceptance will be based on whether:

- specific circumstances of the student meet the above guidelines for granting exemptions
- the provider can guarantee they are able to safely self-isolate the returning student, in line with the Ministry of Health guidelines re social distancing and hygiene practices.
- they can comply with the Ministry of Transport [guidelines on travel under Alert Level 3](#).

Providers must keep a record of all students who return to their student accommodation under Alert Level 3, in line with existing contact tracing requirements.

Private flats are not covered by this advice but we would still recommend that these students remain in their current accommodation and avoid relocating, unless this is absolutely necessary.

If a student needs to return to a private flat, they must follow general guidance on travel and relocations during Alert Level 3 (see [COVID-19 website](#) and [MOT Guidelines on travel](#)).

Emotional and mental health are still important. Students may be feeling stressed or lonely, especially if they are self-isolating or are worried about family and friends overseas. Providers should encourage students to reach out to their usual supports, like family and friends, and to talk about how they feel. Under the international Code, providers must ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to address the needs and issues of international students at risk or with special needs.

Things change quickly so stay up to date:

For answers to questions about Student Allowance and Living Cost payments refer to StudyLink’s website <https://www.studylink.govt.nz/>.

Students can access support for urgent and unexpected costs such as food and rent here <https://www.studylink.govt.nz/in-study/urgent-costs/index.html>

For health advice, refer to the Ministry of Health's website <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

For official Government information about COVID-19 (novel coronavirus), including health advice and travel restrictions visit the All-of-Government website <https://www.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/>

For more information on tertiary students and providers, visit the Ministry of Education's website <http://www.education.govt.nz/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-3/>