Effects of the coronavirus on studies: questions and answers

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This page provides questions and answers on the effects of the coronavirus, especially regarding studies.

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Teaching and examinations

What type of flexible arrangements are made under these special circumstances (e.g. if I have small children at home and can’t study at a certain time)?

- We understand that studying remotely can be challenging and we aim to allow some flexibility in studies. The university recommends that teachers record their lectures so that they can be available for viewing afterwards. You can ask your teacher whether this is a possibility in your course. When possible, there is flexibility in deadlines, too.

Will the course grading scales be changed to Pass/Fail due to the coronavirus situation? What if I retake the exam?

- As a rule, the course grading scales remain unchanged. For this spring’s courses, changing the scale from 1 to 5 to Pass/Fail is possible by decision of the school. This exceptional arrangement due to the coronavirus pandemic is in force only until 31 July 2020. For students who retake an examination in the 2020 autumn term, the grading scale specified in the current curriculum (i.e. from 1 to 5) will apply. The scale of 1 to 5 is preferable to a Pass/Fail scale, and the student cannot choose the grading scale used.

Health and well-being

Who can I talk to if I am having trouble coping with my worries?

- You can get help with coping through the Starting Point of Wellbeing: https://into.aalto.fi/display/fiopisk/Starting+Point+of+Wellbeing

Where can I find information in English on public healthcare in Finland during the coronavirus pandemic? (updated 17.4.)


Delays in studies

What will happen to my student financial aid if I earn less credits this spring because of the coronavirus situation?

- As a general rule, although teaching is carried out remotely, it is organised in accordance with the normal schedule. Kela has, however, stated that the statutes on financial aid for students allow Kela to take the state of emergency caused by coronavirus into consideration when calculating the study time and requirements for the progress of studies. You can stay updated by reading Kela’s bulletins at https://www.kela.fi/web/en/corona

My studies have been delayed due to the changes in teaching arrangements caused by the pandemic. How will this be taken into consideration when applying for an extension? (updated 17.4.)

- Study arrangements made due to the pandemic in spring term 2020 may have caused delays in studies. These are taken into account in decisions on extensions, in accordance with the government decrees (126/2020, 191/2020) on temporary restrictions.

Further information

University spaces and services

Do student service points operate normally?

- University’s facilities are not available for students after 17 March 20.00 until 13 May. Summary info including students' financial aid, services and facilities is available in Into.
• For the time being, student service points (Starting Point! Applicant Services, Open University, schools, Harald Herlin Learning Center and Starting Point of Wellbeing) are moving to an operational model where no face-to-face customer service is provided, but service happens via telephone or service addresses. Service providers other than Aalto University follow their own procedures. In addition, special situations, such as returning of pre-tasks related to entrance examinations, will be specifically instructed.

Can I work alone or work in a group on the university premises (e.g. in a workshop, laboratory or my office)?

• Unfortunately, while the university is officially closed, we cannot grant students access to any workshops, laboratories or offices. Our aim is to organise all courses remotely. Using the university facilities will be possible again when the pandemic eases up. Follow up on the university news about coronavirus to stay updated on the re-opening of the Aalto facilities.

How will teaching requiring special facilities be organised?

• The teacher will give you additional information on the course’s MyCourses page. These courses, too, are being organised remotely, if possible.

How is the lending of equipment for ARTS courses organised?

• Aalto ARTS infra workshops and Väre Takeout are closed for the time being. Read more about the temporary pickup service here: https://www.aalto.fi/en/aalto-university/internal-instructions-related-to-coronavirus. Workshop masters can answer by email your questions about how to technically implement your study project. For contact details to workshops and more information, see aalto.fi/arts-infra (requires logging in).

Where can I print files related to my studies when the university is closed?

• Unfortunately, the university cannot arrange printing options for students. Many private operators are keeping their printing services open during the epidemic. For example, Unigrafia provides printing services that include home delivery. Unigrafia and other private providers, however, charge students a fee for services rendered.

Library services

Can I borrow books or other items from the library?

• The Learning Centre launched a pickup service on Thursday, 26 March. To use the service, go to Aalto-Finna https://aalto.finna.fi and reserve any item you wish that is available at the Learning Centre. The Learning Centre staff will retrieve the book for you and lend it out in your name. When you get a pick-up notice of your reservation, call the customer service (tel. +358 50 316 1011) to make an appointment for pick-up (Mon - Fri 10am - 2pm). The pickup location is the main entrance of the Harald Herlin Learning Centre, Otaniemiestie 8. Come at the arranged time, show your ID to staff and you will receive the book packaged and ready to go without physical contact with staff. Books may be returned anytime day or night at the return slot by the door to the coffee shop (on the street side). For further information, contact oppimiskeskus@aalto.fi.

How can I read Aalto theses when the Learning Centre is closed?

• Information on theses can be found at the Aaltodoc publication archive at https://aaltodoc.aalto.fi/. Some theses can be read immediately at Aaltodoc in PDF format. If a PDF thesis is not immediately available, you send a request for it to oppimiskeskus@aalto.fi. If we have it in digital form, we will send it to you by email attachment. If it exists only as a printed archive copy, it unfortunately is not possible to read during the state of emergency. For further information, contact oppimiskeskus@aalto.fi.

Exchange studies

The first part of the exchange grant has been paid to me. I haven’t been able to travel. Do I need to return the grant?

• You don’t have to return it. You can cover with it those costs that you already have. The second payment will not be paid though.

I started in the exchange university but had to cancel. The university does not offer remote studies. What do I do?

• You can enrol Aalto University courses. The learning services staff helps with the process if needed. Even if you study at Aalto, you can keep the grants already paid to you.

What if I am not able to finalise my courses that I have started as an exchange student?

• If you are not to complete remotely the course you have started, we will most of all seek a solution to validate the acquired knowledge here in Aalto to include the course as part of your degree.

I am an exchange student at Aalto. Now my own university requests me to return. Does Aalto offer possibilities to complete the unfinished courses remotely?

• Aalto University pauses all contact teaching from 17 March to 13 May. Follow MyCourses and Into for updates.

I left the exchange to wait for the situation to calm down. Will this trip also be replaced?

• The travel allowance is paid if you return to Finland (or, in the case of an international degree student, to the home country). We wanted to meet the student’s travel expenses that come with having to return earlier than planned, taking into account the instructions given by the authorities.

I am a student exchange abroad. What should I do?
Return home at your earliest opportunity. If needed, Aalto University supports financially your travel from your university town to Helsinki, or alternatively, to your home country. If you return from a trip abroad you should conduct your work or study from home for the first 14 days after the trip. In such cases, make the necessary special arrangements by contacting course teacher-in-charge, or the learning services for your school.

Tuition fees

I have a tuition fee liability and am worried about my graduation. Where can I get more information on how the emergency conditions caused by coronavirus may affect me?

- Students who have a tuition fee liability can apply for an Additional Semester Scholarship if their graduation is delayed due to the measures taken on account of the coronavirus pandemic. More information for students with a tuition fee liability: https://into.aalto.fi/display/enopisk/Tuition+fees+and+scholarships#Tuitionfeesandscholarships-Coronavirusandtuitionfees

Student admissions

Where can I get more information about Aalto’s student admissions?

- Answers to the most common questions concerning coronavirus and its effect on student admissions are found at the following page, which is kept up to date according to the situation: https://www.aalto.fi/en/admission-services/how-does-the-coronavirus-affect-student-admissions-at-aalto-university

IT services, software and remote use

How can I gain access to software on the university computers (such as Aspen)?

- The Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) at vdi.aalto.fi gives your computer access to the Aalto workstation environment. Instructions on VDI: https://www.aalto.fi/en/services/vdi/who-to-use-aalto-virtual-desktop-infrastructure
  
- A list of the software available through VDI: https://wiki.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?spaceKey=AaltoWin&title=Aalto+IT+Windows+Classroom+Software+List
  
- Remote access to Windows classroom computers (aalto.fi)

The computer programs I need for studying are too large for the computer I have available. How can I get a more powerful computer?

- The Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) at vdi.aalto.fi gives even less robust computers access to the Aalto workstation environment. Through VDI you can use many of the programs licensed by Aalto and run demanding programs in the virtual environment without having to strain your own computer’s capacity. More information about using VDI is at aalto.fi/vdi. If you have technical problems, contact servicedesk@aalto.fi.

Can Aalto University lend me a computer to use for as long as the IT classrooms remain off limits?

- Unfortunately, Aalto cannot lend computers to students. If you have a computer, you can increase its computing power by using the virtual environment (see VDI above). If you don’t have a computer at all, the computer discounts available for Aalto University students might help your situation.

Can I use Adobe software at home now that I cannot come to campus?

- Adobe provides CC applications licenses for Aalto students until 31 May. Adobe has deployed Adobe Creative Cloud desktop applications license for all students in Aalto University. Students can now install CC applications to home computers directly from Adobe. Check the instructions in Into: https://into.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=28417770

I’m worried about the security of Zoom and other software for studying remotely. Is Zoom safe to use?

- Funet Miitti, which is used at Aalto, is a Nordic version of Zoom that adheres to the data protection standards of both Finland and the EU legislation. Aalto University IT Services has evaluated it and found it to offer sufficient protection for users who keep their software updates up to date. Read the Aalto statement on Zoom’s data security at https://www.aalto.fi/en/news/statement-regarding-zooms-security

Where can I find instructions for using Microsoft Teams?

- This tool for collaborative work is available to all Aalto University students and employees. Read more about Teams here: https://www.aalto.fi/fi/palvelut/microsoft-teams