Effects of the coronavirus on studies: questions and answers

Page updated 28.6.2021

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

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Orientation of new students

How will orientation take place in autumn 2021? (updated 10.6.2021)

- The orientation of new bachelor’s degree students will take place partly remotely, partly on campus. The orientation of master’s degree students and students enrolled in English-medium bachelor’s programmes will take place mostly remotely. Some orientation events on campus will be outdoors. Particular attention has been paid to ensuring the health security of new students in the orientation arrangements.
- The orientation has been planned in accordance with the May 2021 status of the pandemic and the guidelines in force at the time. The plans may have to be reviewed in light of the pandemic situation in the autumn.

Teaching and examinations

What should I do if I receive a notice from the contact tracing authorities or from my Koronavilkku app about having been exposed to the virus? (updated 29.9.2020)

- If you receive a notice from the contact tracing authorities or from your Koronavilkku app about having been exposed to the virus, you have a justifiable reason to stay away from campus. This means quarantine-like conditions during which time: Avoid unnecessary social contact; don’t come to campus, don’t participate in in-class teaching or events. Follow the instructions of the health authorities on getting a coronavirus test
- We ask you to contact us so we may get the message out as soon as possible to teachers whose courses are affected by absences. This will help them to plan other ways to complete the course for students who need alternatives.
- Please follow the instructions below.
  - Contact us at confidential.corona@aalto.fi and tell us what courses you are registered to take this autumn.
  - Email sent to confidential.corona@aalto.fi can only be read by specially designated employees within your school’s Learning Services.
  - All messages sent to that address will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. We still emphasise, however, that you attach no health documents or medical reports to your message.

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

Where can I get vaccinated? Can I get vaccinated if I am not an EU/EEA citizen? (updated 10.6.2021)

- Public health care services are responsible for Covid-19 vaccinations. The vaccination is free of charge for the person being vaccinated. The authorities recommend that foreigners residing in Finland should get vaccinated in their municipality of residence.
Keep an eye on the progress of the coronavirus vaccinations in your home municipality on its website. You will also find instructions on how to book a vaccination appointment and the locations of vaccination sites on the same website. Check the vaccination information of the cities in the capital region on their websites:

- Helsinki (hel.fi)
- Espoo (espoo.fi)
- Vantaa (vantaa.fi)
- Other municipalities in the Uusimaa region (koronarokotusaika.fi).

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

Where can I find information in English on public healthcare in Finland during the coronavirus pandemic? (updated 17.4.2020)

- See here for more information on public health care services and instructions for if you fall ill: https://www.infofinland.fi/en/living-in-finland/health/health-services-in-finland

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 17.4.2020)

- 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? (updated 3.5.2021)

- As of Monday, 31 August, students have limited access to university's facilities. Summary info including students’ financial aid, services and facilities is available in Into.
- Starting Point service desk for students is open Monday–Friday, 12.00–15.00, at Otakaari 1. Other student service points closed until further notice. Read more >>
- For the time being, other student service points (Applicant Services, Open University, schools 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.

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?

- Now that the university premises are open, students may print materials on campus. A list of PrintingPoint devices available for use: https://www.aalto.fi/en/services/locations-of-printing-devices-printingpoint
- A printout mailing service is available for those Aalto University students who are unable to visit the campus due to belonging to a risk group, for example. The service is free of charge. Please only order printouts that are absolutely necessary for your studies! Read more >> (updated 16.9.2020)
- 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? (updated 3.5.2021)
• From May 3rd, customers can promptly collect the materials they need from the shelves. Books are borrowed with borrowing machines or at the customer service desk in the lobby.

How can I read Aalto theses?

• 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 can 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.
• Customers have a limited possibility to use archived theses, that are only available in printed form. (updated 3.5.2021)

International students

I have been admitted to exchange studies at Aalto University in the spring term 2021. How will exchange studies be organised in spring 2021 at Aalto? (updated 9.12.2020)

• Incoming exchange students to Aalto University may either study remotely online from their home countries or arrive in Finland for their exchange studies if travel restrictions allow. The options are subject to the approval of the student’s home university. More information.
• Exchange students coming to Aalto Mikkeli Campus, please contact exchange-mikkeli@aalto.fi for details

Can international students enter Finland from a country on which Finland has placed travel restrictions (e.g. Austria, France, Spain)? Are studies a valid reason to enter Finland? If so, is my letter of acceptance to the university sufficient proof of my status? (updated 27.8.2020)

• Follow the recommendations of the Finnish authorities and also the instructions of your travel agent. You can find guidelines for border traffic during pandemic at https://raja.fi/en/guidelines-for-border-traffic-during-pandemic (updated 15.2.2021)

Will people arriving from flights be directed to an airport coronavirus testing station? (updated 27.8.2020)

• Follow the recommendations of the Finnish authorities.

If I was tested for COVID-19 and the result was negative, do I need to be in quarantine? (updated 27.8.2020)

• Please see the following link for quarantine instructions about when the quarantine is needed, exceptions to quarantine recommendations, how to shorten the quarantine and general instructions on voluntary quarantine. Travel and the coronavirus pandemic - Infectious diseases and vaccinations - THL. (updated 15.2.2021)
• Also worth noting is that Aalto expects anyone coming from any country to stay off campus for two weeks, not just from countries on the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) travel restriction list. Aalto University information on coronavirus (https://www.aalto.fi/en/aalto-university/information-on-coronavirus), Travel.

If I have to be in quarantine for two weeks, how can I leave the airport? Can I use public transport or must I take a taxi? (updated 27.8.2020)

• Taxies are recommended over public transport.
• It’s good hygiene to disinfect your hands before getting into a taxi and to wear a new, clean mask during the trip. Most airport taxies are equipped with plexiglass shields and taxi drivers generally know if you are arriving from a flight. Some taxies allow you to pay the fare with an app.

What special considerations are there about living in shared housing and going to buy groceries during the quarantine period? (updated 27.8.2020)

• Shared accommodations can be quite challenging under quarantine conditions. It is important to keep your own room clean and for everyone living in a shared accommodation to keep the shared areas tidy and in good working order. The Aalto University Student Union (AYY) will gladly help with any questions. They have compiled a FAQ at https://www.ayy.fi/en/housing/covid-19-and-housing-faq and cleaning guidelines at https://www.ayy.fi/en/housing/cleaning-instructions-for-the-common-spaces-of-shared-apartments, Homes for students - When arriving to Finland (hoas.fi). (updated 15.2.2021)
• Please note that, in general, student housing in Finland is completely unfurnished.
• Helsinki region groceries stores that have pick-up and/or delivery services include the following: K (Kesko) group grocery chains (https://www.k-ruoka.fi, in Finnish and Swedish only) and Prisma (https://www.foodie.fi/, in Finnish only). Wolt also makes home deliveries (https://wolt.com/, in English and other languages).

Exchange studies

I have been admitted as an exchange student for the spring term 2021. Can I go to my exchange destination? (updated 9.12.2020)

• Aalto University recommends that during the spring term 2021 exchange studies will be completed as distance (online) learning if the host university offers this opportunity. However, the final decision whether to travel to the destination country is left to the student. More information.
• Aalto Mikkeli campus students please contact exchange-mikkeli@aalto.fi for details.

I have been admitted as an exchange student for the autumn term 2021. Can I go to my exchange destination? (updated 12.3.2021)

• Aalto University guidelines for the autumn term 2021 will be published later this spring.

I have been admitted to exchange studies at Aalto University in the autumn term 2021. How will exchange studies be organised in autumn 2021 at Aalto? (updated 12.3.2021)

• Aalto University Guidelines for the autumn term 2021 will be published later this spring.
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? (updated 12.3.2021)

- Yes, you will have to return the grant. Please contact your school’s exchange coordinator.

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/vdiaaltofi-how-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

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?

- Students can buy a CC license from Adobe reseller IlonaIT with special price which is significantly lower than regular student price. Visit https://kauppailonait.fi for further details about pricing and terms. Special offer can be purchased when logged in via Haka-login with Aalto credentials. Check the instructions in Into: https://into.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=28417770 (updated 9.11.2020)

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