

Excerpt from Blue Book 2005

Variations to the Academic Year

Click here for the full Academic Board policy on [Variations to the Academic Year](#).

APC Requirements

1. A proposed elective subject change that involves the introduction of a requirement for students to attend classes or field trips outside of published semester dates will require approval by the relevant Faculty Associate Dean (Academic Programs) under delegated authority from the Chair of the Academic Programs Committee. The application for approval should indicate the academic reasons for the proposed variation and what steps will be taken to inform students about the consequences of the variation for enrolment and assessment in other subjects, as well as their responsibilities in relation to such enrolments. They should also include the proposed Handbook Subject Entry. It is expected that approvals will be given without time restrictions, so that re-application for variations to the academic year for a course and/or subject will normally only be necessary where further changes to variations in the academic year are proposed. Approved variations should be reported to the Academic Programs Committee in a Quarterly Report.
2. A proposed variation involving one or more core subjects within a course or program will require approval by the Chair of the Academic Programs Committee. The application for approval should: (a) indicate the academic reasons for the proposed change; (b) indicate what provisions will be made to handle student enrolment and progress processes (where relevant); (c) identify any potential problems for prospective students incurred by the out-of-semester schedule; (d) indicate what steps will be taken to inform students about the consequences of the variation for enrolment and assessment in other subjects, as well as the commitments they entail; and (e) include the proposed Handbook Subject Entry. It is expected that approvals will be given without time restrictions, so that re-application for variations to the academic year for a course and/or subject will normally only be necessary where further changes to variations in the academic year are proposed. Guidelines for approval of variations to the academic year by APC are listed below.
3. In the case of subjects that require students to attend classes and/or field trips outside of published semester dates (e.g. workshops and/or field trips prior to the start of semester), the “Contact” field in the Handbook Subject Entry should briefly indicate the nature of the requirement. (Volume 1 of the Blue Book should provide explicit advice on this point.)

4. In the case where variations apply at the course level, details of the variations should appear in the general course material in the Handbook rather than for each individual subject.
5. Volume 1 of the Blue Book should also recommend that explicit mention of within-semester field trips be made in the “Contact” field for Subject Handbook Entries.

Guidelines for approval of variations to the academic year

Proposed variations to the academic year for a course or subject are likely to be approved by the Academic Programs Committee where the following can be demonstrated (where relevant):

- Additional time outside of semester dates is required in order to incorporate aspects of a course or subject that are important to learning and/or professional accreditation in the subject/course (e.g. because of the need for practical or field work);
- The variation is necessary to permit travel to one or more destinations of significance and for which a visit will enhance learning;
- An intensive component will enhance learning in a subject that is otherwise taught during semester (e.g. an intensive skills training component);
- Information will be provided to students about the consequences of the variation for enrolments in other courses and subjects (e.g. likely timetable clashes, and a clear statement of the period in which other subject or course enrolments are unlikely to be possible);
- Information will be provided to students about their responsibilities for determining the impact of their enrolment in a subject or course with a variation on their potential enrolment or completion of other subjects;
- Where the variation for a subject overlaps with any portion of a University examination or supplementary examination period, information will be provided to students about the consequences of the variation for assessment in other subjects. In particular, students will be advised that enrolment in a subject with an approved variation will not be grounds for special assessment arrangements in other subjects.