

COVID-19: Info for AUT Research Students: Update #1 (19 March 2020)

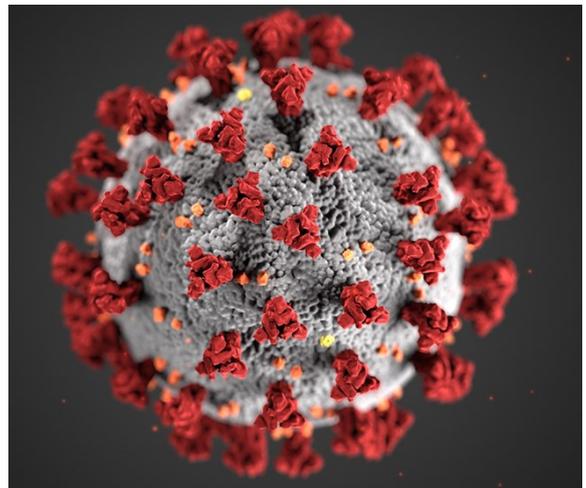
New Zealand has had a relatively low incidence of COVID-19 (coronavirus) infections so far, with only [20 confirmed cases](#) as of 19 March 2020. However, this is an ever-changing situation, and an international event affecting almost all of us in some way. This communication is to advise you of the current situation and provide some suggestions for you to ensure your postgraduate research journey is disrupted as little as possible.

In order to minimise the risk of getting sick, it's important now (as always) to practice good hygiene and frequent hand-washing. Stay home if you feel unwell, and call ahead before visiting any clinic or doctor's office in person. (AUT students registered with our [Medical Centres](#) can call (09) 921 9992 for the city campus, or (09) 921 9998 for North campus; and anyone can call [Healthline's](#) dedicated coronavirus line on 0800 358 5453.)

Although few people in New Zealand have tested positive for COVID-19, a great many are affected by [self-isolation](#) requirements and travel restrictions. The [New Zealand Government now requires](#) all people entering the country from overseas (excluding Pacific Islands) to self-isolate for 14 days.

In addition, AUT has cancelled all staff and AUT funded international travel and this includes post-graduate research students. If you choose to travel internationally (and it is strongly recommended that you do not at present) remember you may find it difficult to return to New Zealand for some months.

If you experience coronavirus-related disruptions which impact what you are doing as postgraduate research student at AUT, there are a few things we can do to help.



Firstly, the Graduate Research School has asked schools/faculties and supervisors to allow students to work remotely if they need to. As long as you have a device and an internet connection, there is a lot you can do to make progress in self-isolation. For example:

- Keep up-to-date with your reading using the [AUT Library's](#) online collections
- Research and refine your methodology by browsing the online [SAGE Research Methods database](#) (access through AUT Library)
- Check out the [AUT Academic Writing Advisors' YouTube channel](#) for loads of video resources on referencing (including APA 7th) and academic writing skills
- Attend postgraduate workshops via Zoom. Check out our [Researcher Development Planner](#) to see which ones are Zoomable (look for the blue-green bubbles)
- And of course, writing is a solitary activity that can be done easily at home! If your files are in your AUT H-drive, you can access them from <https://fileaccess.aut.ac.nz>. You'll need to log in with your username in the format "autuni\yourusername" and enter your password.

Secondly, we are providing some flexibility for research students affected by the pandemic:

- For doctoral candidates approaching the oral examination, we are providing options for remote examinations (via Zoom) if needed.
- If you are constrained in your ability to progress (e.g. unable to collect data, access workspaces, laboratories, travel for data collection etc) you can apply for an extension to your milestones (such as PGR9 or thesis/exegesis submission) or for a Leave of Absence. We will consider these on a case-by-case basis – retrospectively if needed and ensure we are flexible and supportive in considering these applications (for example, we will not strictly enforce the maximum number of Leave of Absence or extensions permitted). [Link here for these application forms.](#)
- If you are supported by a scholarship and you can continue to make progress with your research/studies/writing then your scholarship is unaffected. If you consider that your ability to complete your program within the scholarship timeframe has been compromised, please specify this and provide details in your regular progress report ([PGR8](#)). If it is necessary, there is the potential to consider an extension to your scholarship towards the end of your scholarship period. These will be considered on a case by case basis.

Thirdly, please liaise with your supervisors and seek their advice on your options. You may, for example, be able to change the order of your work tasks and spend the next few weeks writing draft chapters of your thesis/exegesis (or sections of your paper). You may be able to amend your plans for data-gathering to allow you to collect data via remote means or by using ICT (eg. Interviews via Zoom or via telephone). Explore what is possible and adapt your plans accordingly. You should note these changed plans and any implications for your candidature progression in your regular [progress reports or via variation of record or other relevant progression and change of status forms](#).

This pandemic is a constantly changing event, and we will continue to monitor and respond as necessary. Please bear in mind that it is possible there could be some disruptions to Graduate Research School events which cannot be recorded and/or delivered remotely (eg. writing retreats, mix & mingles, etc). We will endeavour to keep you informed and supported as much as possible, while keeping everyone's health and wellbeing our number one priority.

To keep up to date on AUT information, for doctoral candidates please visit our [AUTi COVID-19](#) page. Information for other postgraduate research students and the general public can be found on our [COVID-19 website](#) page.

Finally, please regularly check the NZ Ministry of Health Covid-19 advice pages:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

Kia ora and kia kaha!

From the team at the Graduate Research School