

BWU Business School Face to face (F2F) classes for MBA

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the business school's plan to conduct face-to-face (F2F) contact sessions for the second semester of 2021 and, in principle, for 2022.

Rationale

Over the course of a semester, there is one (1) one-week study school, eight (8) contact sessions plus two (2) morning workshops, spread over the semester, as far as possible at two-week intervals. In past years, these contact sessions were on different times and modes for the three campuses, but during the Covid-19 lockdown, all classes are held on Saturdays (08:00-14:00). Since one of the most important benefits/deliverables of an MBA is the networking that takes place, this has suffered during lockdown while all classes were presented online. Some students have not even met all the members of their eight-person study groups yet. Online teaching also negatively affects classroom engagement, which is critical in a practical programme such as MBA. We urgently need to remedy this lack of student engagement and this lack of interaction between students.

Proposed timing

MBA is presented over two years, and therefore we have two phases. Classes are on Saturday mornings and will be hosted online with voluntary physical class attendance. Since large enough class facilities that are suitable for the Business School on the Mafikeng and Vaal campuses are still being developed, all face-to-face sessions will initially be hosted in Potchefstroom. As soon as suitable facilities on other campuses are established, host venues will rotate between those campuses where a venue is available. Permission is also requested to have a facilitated session on the campuses that are not used as the host venue, should the need be expressed by students. Albeit online-facilitated, this will also serve the purpose of student networking.

There are venues on the NWU that are equipped with the necessary equipment that supports simultaneous online/face-to-face classes. (The lecture room G20 at the Business School's K14 building is one of them). Having the classes on one site will ensure monitoring of compliance to Covid-19 protocols and all classes will be controlled by a responsible person that will be on-site for the whole day. If classes are rotated, monitoring of all sites will accordingly be done, with a responsible person on each site.

Please see the attached Excel document for more detail about the exact dates and times.

Method of delivery

The F2F classes will be in the form of limited, interactive sessions. Attendance of the F2F sessions will be voluntary, with online classes the official mode of delivery. All learning material is still distributed online.

The F2F sessions will be broadcast live for those students unable to attend in person. This means that students will be able to connect to the session from their homes in real-time, using a platform such as Zoom or Teams. These sessions will also be recorded and uploaded for students to watch in their own time if they are not able to make use of the live broadcasting option. The former methods will ensure

an inclusive approach is followed to maximise the learning benefit that students could obtain from these sessions.

Logistics

Study school: The study school runs for a week from 19-23 July 2021 with daily classes from 08:00 to 16:00 and one evening workshop from 18:00 to 21:00. These classes will simultaneously be broadcast online (and recorded for later viewing) and presented face-to-face. Attendance of the face-to-face classes will be voluntary.

Saturday classes: There are eight Saturday classes scheduled for the second semester of 2021. Classes are divided into three sessions of two hours each, and the online sessions are hosted by an independent host, who will be seated in the class to facilitate both online and F2F sessions. Lockdown rules permitting, this will also be the mode of delivery for 2022. Attendance of F2F classes will be voluntary.

Saturday workshops: There are two practical workshop days on Saturdays per semester. These will be treated similarly to Saturday classes.

The advantage of all these dates is that the study school is during the winter recess and other classes are on Saturdays, most classrooms are not occupied by undergraduate students on campus.

If permission is granted to continue through 2022, a similar schedule will apply for the first semester of 2022. The timetable has not yet been set for 2022, but the format is similar to the attached year plan for 2021.

Modules and timetable

The modules for the second semester are:

MBA phase 1: Managerial accounting, Technology management, Strategic talent management

MBA phase 2: Marketing Management, Entrepreneurship, Corporate governance.

Venues will be cleaned and disinfected before each session. At the study school, venues will also be cleaned and disinfected between sessions.

Venues

Venues on the Potchefstroom campus will be Room G29/G20 in building K14 (Covid-compliant and equipped as a Zoom room, seats 60 students), and Rooms K12 and G20 in Building E3 (Both Covid-compliant and seating 60 students each).

We will only make use of Covid-19 compliant venues allocated to our faculty.

We will implement a booking process in which students book their space on a first-come-first-serve basis – although preference will be given to underperforming students.

Other sites

Should we be able to find suitable venues on the Vaal and Mafikeng campuses, the same protocols will be observed there, and classes will be rotated to accommodate students from all geographical areas.

Covid-19 risk

Attendance and presentation of the F2F study school will be completely voluntary for students and staff. If a staff member does not want to teach a specific lesson, he/she needs to arrange a willing facilitator for the F2F session

Strict Covid-19 protocols will be adhered to, including the regular cleaning of venues, sanitization, social distancing, the wearing of masks and adherence to maximum occupancy restrictions at all times.



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