



Dear fourth year and PGCE students

I hope the email finds you well. I am very sure you are all concerned about what will be happening with WIL and how the pandemic will impact your future. I really hope that the explanation below will provide some piece of mind. Perhaps I should start by explaining the official allowances the DHET indicated they will recognise:

- One week will be recognised in lieu of a portfolio (Portfolio done in the first semester)
- One to two weeks recognised in lieu of simulated teaching practice (see discussion of part 2 below)
- One week recognised in lieu of an online WIL course (See discussion of part 1 below)

Over the last two months we have been in negotiation with the DHET and have come to an agreement we believe are in the best interest of you as our students. The programme devised will consist of three parts:

Part one: Online course

A number of academic attached to various institutions across South Africa, including an NWU researcher, have developed an online course focused simulating a work environment. The DHET acknowledges the course and upon completion a student will be credited with one week of WIL. You will be completing the course between 1 September and 30 September.

More information on the course will be communicated to you by your academic WIL coordinator as soon as we have received all the information on the process.

Part two: Simulate Teaching Practice

In order to minimise risk to learners, teachers and students, the academic WIL lecturers, guided by Prof Carisma Nel, have devised an innovative plan to evaluate your lesson presentation skills while building a bank of resources for schools to access. Once again, I am not going to expand on the details of the plan. This I will leave to the lecturers involved, but I can tell you that this innovative idea was so well received by the DHET that they have, for the first time ever, allowed a university to assess students remotely. The Simulated Teaching Practice will be recognised as equal to 2 weeks of WIL requirements.

Part three: School placement

The DHET is adamant on students being placed at schools. Based on the allowances made by the DHET, BEd fourth year students will be required to spend 15 days at schools and PGCE students twenty days. At the moment I am not able to confirm exactly when school placements will take place. We have asked school principals for feedback on their preferences on how to handle the school placement. As soon as we have their feedback, we will communicate how we will deal with placement. There will be no need for you to return to your campus should you not need to. Our aim is to find a solution aimed at minimising risks while accommodating the needs of students and schools.

Please do not send emails with questions regarding school placements at this time. We will communicate with you as soon as we have all the information. Then you will have time to ask your questions.

Kind regards
Dr E Kung
Deputy Dean