



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
INVUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

05 June 2020

Dear Staff and Students

UPDATE ON UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

Yesterday, the Minister of Health Dr Zweli Mkhize confirmed that sadly, 40 792 people in South Africa have been infected with COVID-19. This was a massive increase of 3 267 people from Wednesday and it was South Africa's biggest single day increase since the pandemic began. The Minister also reported 56 more deaths, taking the total number of COVID-19 related fatalities to 848. On a positive note, 21 311 people have recovered from the coronavirus. We must continue to work together as we all have a responsibility to follow the guidelines to fight this disease.

We need to observe the recommended physical distancing rules, please wear a face mask whenever you leave your place of residence, you must wash your hands regularly, sanitize frequently touched surfaces and importantly, you must remember that when you need to cough, sneeze or yawn, only do so into your forearm, elbow or use a disposable tissue.

A number of colleagues have returned to campus over the last week, as we continue to ramp up University operations and implement our blended, multi-modal teaching and learning plans for the amended 2020/21 academic calendar. We remind all colleagues and students who will be on campus to please use the HealthCheck online form to assist with COVID-19 screening. It is essential that you complete this screening **before** you arrive on campus. If you are unable to complete the screening in advance, you will then be screened at the entrance gate but please expect delays, as the manual process is time consuming.

Please click on this link to read the HealthCheck announcement:

[HealthCheck-Communique](#)

I. ACCESS TO CAMPUS

We remind all students and staff that the University has implemented strict entry protocols at entry points to all campuses in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. We are grateful to our security team, screening staff and health experts who are working hard to ensure that all entry protocols and requirements are followed. With this in mind, we were disappointed to receive reports that some colleagues have been refusing to follow the entry protocols, refusing to be screened and have their temperatures taken and others, being rude and abusive to our staff at the gates.

The University wants to reiterate:

- a) The COVID-19 guidelines and protocols that the University has adopted are applicable to all staff and students, regardless of seniority.
- b) All staff and students, regardless of seniority, must use the HealthCheck online form for screening purposes. The HealthCheck outcome must be presented to staff at the entry gate, before you are allowed access to campus.
- c) All staff and students must wear a face mask on campus. If you are not wearing a mask, regardless of seniority, then you will not be allowed access to campus.
- d) Please be considerate and patient if you are doing a manual screening at the gate.
- e) Only a maximum 33% of staff is allowed to be on campus. Sector Executives and Line Managers must ensure that we remain within the gazetted guidelines. No staff members, regardless of seniority, should demand to be at the university even though they are not part of the categories prioritised for return.
- f) Staff members and students in leadership, no matter from which stakeholder and at whatever level of seniority, who are not part of the categories prioritised for return, must not present themselves at the University. With all sorts of levels of leaders in management, student leadership and Union leadership, for example, we could easily break the threshold, and legislation, too.

2. DATA AND DEVICES

The Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) started loading the students' data onto their cell phones this week. The MNOs are Cell C, MTN, Telkom, and Vodacom. Telkom successfully loaded data for 3717 cell phones that belong to their student subscribers. MTN successfully loaded data for 8967 of their subscribers. There were 1664 failures to load data for their subscribers. The failures were attributed to inactive or invalid cell phone numbers.

MTN has asked DUT to request that the students who own the failed numbers, to check/verify their numbers and contact them if MTN needs to resolve the failure. Students who are in this group must update their details here: https://mercury.dut.ac.za/pls/prodi41/w99pkg.mi_login?numtype=S

Cell C and Vodacom have indicated that they will be loading data for students from Friday, 5 June and on Saturday, 6 June 2020. It should be noted that only registered students are being provisioned with data. At this stage, data provision for ALL students is only for an initial period of 1 month. Thereafter, only NSFAS-funded students will receive government-funded data for an additional 3 months, by which time, we expect all students to be back on campus and could use available wi-fi.

The loading of the staff data commences on 5 June 2020 and updates/reports will be provided by the MNOs when they have completed the loading process. Procurement will also purchase Mi-Fi devices for staff who have no way of connecting to the IT systems from home or remotely. The Mi-Fi devices will be the property of the university and will be loaned out to staff that have indicated the need for one.

The university has also received quotations for laptops from the MNOs and SMD Technologies. A quotation was also requested from Huawei, who may have direct access to laptop manufacturers in China. DHET is co-ordinating the purchase of laptops for NSFAS-funded students; but, will be working closely with universities in this process.

Whether it is devices or data, government policy on which students it supports through its bursary system introduced in 2018, has not changed. Thus, self-paying students will have to continue to fund their learning, albeit in a new mode.

3. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Eligible students who will return to campus in June will be requested, on a daily basis, to present their student cards at the security gates for electronic scanning (verification of accreditation), in order to have access to the residences and our campuses. If a card is lost, Protection Services will be available to offer a new card for registered students.

You can access the programme list for DUT courses resuming in June by clicking this link:

[Programme List](#)

While DHET and the University continues to work hard on procuring laptops, other avenues of multi-modal/blended learning will be used, including, the use of printed material and USBs that will be distributed to students, accordingly. More information will be provided in this regard in due course.

4. DUT VIRTUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY

The DUT Virtual Graduation ceremony will be taking place at 12H00, on Wednesday, 10 June 2020. The ceremony, which will be under 20 minutes in duration, will be streamed on the DUT website www.dut.ac.za and on the DUT YouTube channel.

We are also excited to announce that a recording of the graduation ceremony will be broadcast nationwide on two radio stations; SAFM and 5FM, at 13H10, on Wednesday 10 June 2020.

The names of all graduates will be published on the official graduation roll, which will be available on the DUT website next Wednesday. Furthermore, we will be printing the full graduation roll in a special 16-page supplement in Isolezwe (KZN) newspaper and The Daily News (Durban); and print all graduate names in Msunduzi Eyethu and Public Eye (Midlands) newspaper. This will be published and available on Wednesday, 10 June 2020. On Thursday 11 June 2020, the DUT graduation roll will be printed in Ilanga newspaper, featuring the names of all graduates.

The University is aware that our graduands and their family, friends, funders and supporters are sad that we cannot host a traditional graduation ceremony. To be honest, the University is equally disappointed - but we have to ensure that we abide by the government guidelines related to public gatherings and events, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We want to congratulate all DUT graduands and express our immense pride and happiness. The hard work, dedication, commitment and sacrifices invested to this point by our graduands, must be applauded. We wish our graduating class continued success in the years ahead.

5. DUT SOLIDARITY FUND

We appreciate the support from staff and students who have already so generously donated to the DUT COVID-19 Solidarity Fund. The University is extremely grateful to you for your kind support. All funds raised will be used to support University initiatives to assist vulnerable students. We once again remind all staff and students, that you can still make a donation to our Solidarity Fund, by visiting the DUT website or by clicking on this link: <https://www.dutalumni.com/dutcovid-19>.

6. DUT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MASK DONATIONS FROM CHINA

DUT received a generous donation of 5000 masks on 23 May 2020. The masks were donated by DUT's Chinese cooperative partners, the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU), Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology (BIFT) and the Confucius Institute at DUT. Mr Frank WU, Co-Dean of the Confucius Institute (CI) at DUT, handed over the masks to the DUT team on behalf of the Chinese partners.

Furthermore, on 3rd June 2020, the Tianjin Vocational Institute (TVI) President, Professor BIN Liu, confirmed the donation of 50 000 masks to DUT. Shipping arrangements will be discussed soon to ensure the stock is safely delivered to DUT. Previously, TVI had assisted DUT to establish the 3D printing additive manufacturing laboratory and the Internet of Things laboratory, as part of the 1st Luban Workshop established in South Africa. The Luban Workshop has been instrumental in the printing of face-shields for frontline staff.

EMC/SENEX thanked its Chinese partners for their kind support during this very challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. DUT's RESPONSE ON ASSISTING GOVERNMENT COMBAT COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT

On the 1st of June 2020, DUT shared with the KZN Premiers Office, the report on its state of readiness to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Teaching and Learning Plan that was approved by the Executive Management Committee (EMC) and the Senate Executive Committee (SENEX) together with the Research and Innovation areas where DUT is making an impact, was shared with the Secretariat of the KZN Human Resources Development Council, which is Chaired by the KZN Premier, Mr Sihle Zikalala. This followed their request to report on measures that each institution was putting in place, to ensure the smooth return to teaching and learning during this level (3) of the risk-adjusted strategy.

Management also recognised the work done by our Department of Fashion and Textile, led by Ms Sunthra Moodley, in the Faculty of Arts and Design. The team of staff and students from the department designed over 500 masks which have been distributed to various DUT departments, including the Library.

Through DUT's partnership with ACSeedE and the MIT-Africa Initiative, an **Online Learning Hackathon 2020** that focussed on factors forming the value chain of a functional online learning system, was hosted. We are pleased to report that the DUT team of students, called the "Oracles" won the first prize. Their project focussed on "Online Content". Congratulations to Vusimuzi Bhengu, Chris Minoko, Sivuyise Mmbo, Fanie Ndlovu and Reddi Bambi. Thanks to the coordinating partners Mr S Duma of ACSeedE and the MIT-Africa Programme.

We reported, previously, on other Faculties that have made an immense contribution to this important work of assisting not just government, but all of us as a community, in combating this pandemic.

It was further noted that DUT, as a UNESCO-UNEVOC centre, will host a planned set of activities to celebrate the **World Youth Skills Day on 15th July 2020**, as per the UNESCO-UNEVOC guidelines that will have a local impact on our youth. The DUT Entrepreneurial entities, in partnership with our collaborators, have been tasked to ensure that students involved in entrepreneurial incubation programmes participate fully. All students and staff are invited to participate in the following virtual events, respectively, which can be shared widely:

- (i) 1 June – 15 July – TVET Youth Stories Campaign
<https://unevoc.unesco.org/wysd/World+Youth+Skills+Day#story>
- (ii) 6-14 July - Join Virtual Conference
<https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/UNESCO-UNEVOC+Virtual+Conferences>
- (iii) 15th July - Virtual Panel Discussion
[https://unevoc.unesco.org/wysd/.](https://unevoc.unesco.org/wysd/)

8. CONCLUSION

We urge you to please take all of the necessary precautions in preventing the spread of COVID-19. This is an infectious disease that continues to spread in our country. We all have a commitment and responsibility to protect ourselves and our loved ones. That also includes a responsibility to keep our campus and residences coronavirus free.

In the haste for all of us to return to university, we may, if we do not apply all the protocols and adhere to our plans for a phased return of staff and students, easily turn DUT into a COVID-19 hotspot. This would have serious and deleterious implications for our academic year; let alone our lives and those of our fellow South Africans. So please, follow the recommended guidelines, wear a mask, wash and sanitize your hands and observe physical distancing, stay away from the University until you are invited or permitted. Together, we can make a positive difference as we fight to win the war against this disease.

Wear a mask. Stop the spread. Stay put. Save lives...

Sincerely

DUT Management team

