

**UNIVERSITY STATEMENT**

04 December 2020

Dear staff and students

**UPDATE: COVID-19**

Last night, President Ramaphosa urged the nation to “stand together and let us work together” when he addressed the country following the resurgence of COVID-19 infections. The President reiterated the importance of wearing your mask, of washing and sanitising your hands and always ensuring that you follow the social distancing guidelines. The DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team supports the President’s strong message. So please act responsibly, remember, it is **compulsory** to wear your face mask on campus and in all public and communal areas in residence.

Globally, more than 65.6 million people have now been infected with SARS-CoV-2. Yesterday, South Africa confirmed 4400 new infections. Last night, we were 27<sup>th</sup> in the world for new daily infections. South Africa is 11<sup>th</sup> in the world for total recoveries. Sadly, 94 people in South Africa passed on from COVID-19 related medical conditions yesterday. We are extremely concerned that 10 new cases were confirmed in the DUT community this week, meaning that we now have a total of 20 active cases amongst our students and staff, who are all currently in isolation.

Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

Total number of people infected:	135
Total number of staff (positive):	63
Total number of students (positive):	72
Total number of recoveries:	113 (60 students and 53 staff)
Total number of deaths:	2 (1 student and 1 staff)
Total number of active cases:	20
Number of new infections:	10 (this week)
Number of new infections (staff):	3 (this week)
Number of new infections (students):	7 (this week)
Location of new infections: (DBN)	9
Location of new infections: (PMB)	1
Has contact tracing commenced:	Yes
Has physical disinfection commenced:	Yes

The COVID-19 Response Task Team is extremely concerned that the number of new infections within the DUT community is increasing. There has been 20 new cases amongst our students and staff in the last two weeks. If we do not change our behaviour and renew our fight against the coronavirus, then the possibility of increased infections will be a sad reality for us. So please, let's work together to stop the spread. Furthermore, we hope and pray for the safe return to good health for our staff and students who are currently fighting this disease.

As the President said last night, *“we must remember that as much as we want to relax, this virus does not take a holiday. This has been a difficult year for us as a country. It has severely tested our resolve and demanded great sacrifices of each and every one of us. But even as the holiday approaches, we cannot let our guard down. Unless we take personal responsibility for our health and the health of others, more people are going to be become infected. More people are going to die.”*

The reality is that the COVID-19 pandemic has had physical and mental repercussions on a number of people. If you are experiencing depression, anxiety or any other emotional difficulties, please reach out for assistance. Free, compassionate, counselling and support is available to DUT staff and students as follows:

1. If you are a **student** and need mental health support, please contact Candice on [candicel@dut.ac.za](mailto:candicel@dut.ac.za) or Thokozani on [thokozanis1@dut.ac.za](mailto:thokozanis1@dut.ac.za) for online counselling. You can also call 031 373 2266 in Durban or 033 845 8900/8828 in the Midlands.
2. Students should also visit this webpage on the DUT website for more information on Student Counselling and Health: [https://www.dut.ac.za/support\\_services/student\\_services\\_and\\_development/student\\_counselling\\_and\\_health/](https://www.dut.ac.za/support_services/student_services_and_development/student_counselling_and_health/)
3. If you are a **staff** member, please feel free to email Samantha on [rajcooms@dut.ac.za](mailto:rajcooms@dut.ac.za) for counselling on various platforms. You can also call 031 373 2025 or email [NobantuB@dut.ac.za](mailto:NobantuB@dut.ac.za) for assistance.
4. Mental health support is available 24 hours a day to both students and staff. Please call the tollfree Higher Health national hotline on 0800 36 36 36 or SMS 43336.

To avoid congestion and delays at our campus entrances, please ensure that you always complete the **HealthCheck** online screening form **before** arriving on campus. There are three ways for you to access the online form:

- a. <https://healthcheck.higherhealth.ac.za>
- b. WhatsApp to contacts: 0600 110 000 / <https://wa.me/27600110000?text=hi>
- c. Dial in to HealthCheck tollfree on \*134\*832\*2#

You can only proceed to enter campus when you have received the **green light** after completing the online form. Please show your device, permit and student/staff card to the campus security team at the entrance gate and you will then be granted access to our campus. Kindly remember that the HealthCheck online form must be completed for each daily visit/attendance on campus.

Please view the DUT COVID-19 webpage by clicking on this link:

<https://www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus/>

Kindly review the DUT COVID-19 Information Booklet by clicking on this link:

<https://www.dut.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/COVID-19-Information-Booklet-07-09-2020.pdf>

## **COVID-19 protocols are still in place at DUT**

Whilst South Africa is currently on Alert Level 1 in the “State of Disaster” - the DUT community must continue to take the COVID-19 pandemic very seriously.

Therefore, we want to remind you that the following rules still apply:

- Always wear a mask on campus and in communal areas in residence.
- Please keep a minimum of 1.5 metres away from other people and avoid large groups.
- Thoroughly wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with water and soap.
- Sanitise frequently touched surface areas.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Please sneeze, cough or yawn into your bent elbow, even if you are using a mask.
- Thoroughly wash your cloth face mask after each use.
- Disposable masks should only be used once.

So please, remain alert at all times and do everything within your ability to **stay safe**, to **wear your mask**, to **wash your hands**, to **avoid large groups** and to **stop the spread**.

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team