

## UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

22 January 2021

Dear staff and students

### DUT COVID-19 UPDATE

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to infect thousands of people daily in our country and it has tragically claimed more lives in recent weeks. Eight members of the DUT community have now sadly passed on due to COVID-19 complications and we convey our most sincere condolences to their family and friends. We are still under Lockdown Level 3 restrictions in South Africa and we remind you to act responsibly and to help stop the further spread of this vicious disease. The DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team pleads with you to consistently follow the published, public health guidelines: **wear your mask, wash your hands, save a life...**

Globally, more than 98.1 million people have now been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and its variants. Yesterday, South Africa confirmed 11381 new infections. Last night, we were 15<sup>th</sup> in the world for new daily infections.. Sadly, 647 people in South Africa passed on from COVID-19 related medical conditions yesterday.

Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

Total number of people infected:	233	
Total number of staff (positive):	120	
Total number of students (positive):	113	
Total number of recoveries:	205	(104 students and 101 staff)
Total number of deaths:	8	(2 students and 6 staff)
Total number of active cases:	20	
Number of new infections:	10	(this week)
Number of new infections (staff):	5	(this week)
Number of new infections (students):	5	(this week)
Location of new infections: (DBN)	10	
Location of new infections: (PMB)	0	
Has contact tracing commenced:	Yes	
Has physical disinfection commenced:	Yes	

We wish our students and staff a safe return to good health.

Please take note of the following DUT Guidelines on **COMPULSORY COVID-19 PREVENTION MEASURES** for all students and staff. In terms of the South African Government's adjusted Level 3 regulations that were published in the Government Gazette 44044 on 29 December 2020 and by Gazette 44051 on 29 December 2020:

***“The wearing of a face mask is mandatory for every person when in a public place, and any person who fails to comply with a verbal instruction by an enforcement officer to wear a face mask, commits an offence and is, on conviction, liable to a fine or a period of imprisonment not exceeding six months or to both such fine and imprisonment.”*** Ref: Government Notice R 1423 as at 29 December 2020

Please remember:

- In terms of these regulations, it is **compulsory** for all students and staff to **wear a face mask** at all times while on DUT premises (on campus and in residence).
- The mask must cover both your nose and mouth.

Furthermore, it is compulsory for every person to wear a face mask in public. Anyone failing to comply, will be committing a criminal offence that could result in a fine of up to R1500.00 or, up to six months in prison and a criminal record.

## **WEARING OF FACE MASKS & PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

The Durban University of Technology is committed to promoting the health and safety of all students and staff. Each member of the DUT community must adhere to the COVID-19 policy and protocols - and you have a responsibility to know and to act in accordance with all of the applicable laws of the country, for our collective health and safety.

Wearing face masks correctly can reduce the transmission of the coronavirus. In accordance with the Department of Health COVID-19 guidelines and regulations, the Durban University of Technology requires students and staff to wear face masks on all campuses, public and shared and outdoor spaces, including any instructional spaces and in student residences.

Physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres must also be maintained at all times.

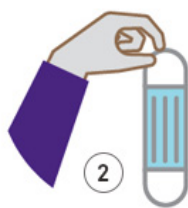
All students and staff must sanitise their hands upon entry to DUT property - and wash or sanitise their hands regularly throughout the day. Hand hygiene dictates that you should wash your hands with soap and water, for a minimum of 20 seconds. The soap helps to breakdown the virus wall (if it's on your hands) in 20 seconds.

The following guidelines must be adhered to at all times:

- Face masks that meet the minimum criteria listed below must be worn by all students, staff and visitors on DUT property. This includes all public, shared and outdoor spaces, lecture venues, libraries, dining halls and residence common areas.
- Employees are not required to wear a mask while working alone in a private office. A face mask must be worn in common workspaces or when others are present in the employee's workspace. People occupying a cubicle, or any kind of open working environment, must wear a mask at all times.
- Face masks must be worn by all students and staff while using DUT transport and any other form of public transportation serving the campus.
- Face masks can be removed as needed for eating, but the maintenance of strict social distancing of a minimum of 1.5 metres is required.
- Contact tracing has indicated that communal eating in a room is an identified risk because of removing masks, so caution is hereby advised.
- Heads of Department are encouraged to designate a common space for eating where staff can be physically distanced.
- It is recommended in a shared area, to limit the amount of time without your mask to less than 15 minutes.
- Drinks are permitted in shared spaces including cubicles, but it is recommended that you keep on your face mask and use a straw or your own water/drink bottle.
- Specific guidelines for laboratories and other instructional spaces will be provided by the person in charge/facilitator.

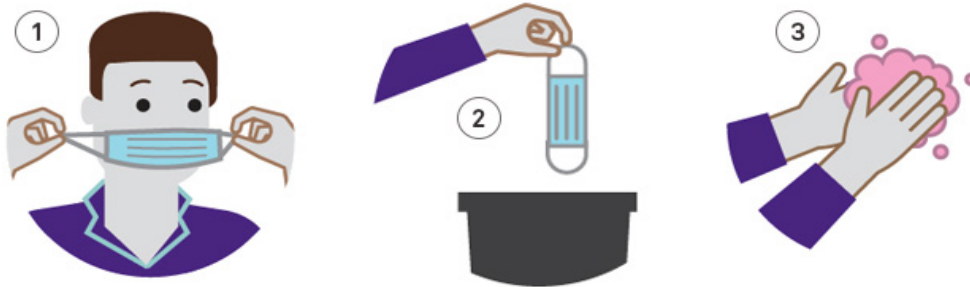
## HOW TO PUT ON YOUR FACE MASK

1. Wash your hands.
2. Inspect the face mask.
3. Place the loops over your ears.
4. Ensure the face mask is worn properly and securely covers your mouth and nose.



## HOW TO REMOVE YOUR FACE MASK

1. Hold the loops and pull it away from your face. Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth while removing the face mask. (*Do not touch the outside surface of your mask when you remove it.*)
2. Dispose of the face covering after using it or if it is reusable, wash it thoroughly with soap and water and allow to dry. (*Disposable, single use face masks must not be used more than once.*)
3. Wash your hands thoroughly after touching the face mask.



**NB:** All students and staff are expected to know and to comply with all COVID-19 recommendations and requirements of the South African Government and DUT. These guidelines will therefore remain in effect indefinitely until withdrawn or modified, as guided by the appropriate health directives issued by the South African government and DUT Management.

Failure by a student or staff member on DUT premises to:

- Wear a face mask covering both nose and mouth;
- Maintain a distance of 1.5 metres between themselves and any other individual; or
- Sanitise their hands at entrances to campuses and venues;

shall constitute an offence and a direct contravention of the above regulation (*Government Notice R 1423 as at 29 December 2020*) and may result in DUT imposing a fine or taking disciplinary action against the person or persons.

## ATTENTION STUDENTS

Students are kindly requested to leave campus when they have finished with their assessments, exams, library work, etc. This is to prevent crowding, socialising and consequently, the potential spread of COVID-19.

## PERMITS TO ENTER DUT CAMPUSES

In line with the South African government's extended Alert Level 3 regulations, only a limited number of students and staff are currently permitted access to campus. Those students who qualify to enter campus will be issued with permits by their relevant Head of Department. Staff members should apply to their HOD, who may then refer the request to Faculty level. Please show your permit to campus security upon entry. No permit means no access.

## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

The current 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 3 in the national “State of Disaster” - the DUT community must continue to take the COVID-19 pandemic very seriously.

Therefore, we reiterate 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.

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. Have a safe and blessed 2021.

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team

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