

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

12 February 2021

Dear staff and students

DUT COVID-19 UPDATE

Although South Africa is currently witnessing a decline in daily COVID-19 infections, KwaZulu-Natal still has the highest number of active COVID-19 cases in the country, followed by the Western Cape and the Free State. Despite the concerns with the AstraZeneca vaccine, South Africa will still proceed with phase one of the vaccine rollout programme to health workers, However, they will now be vaccinated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Last night during the State of the Nation Address, President Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed that South Africa had secured 9 million doses of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. He also indicated that the first batch of the 80000 Johnson & Johnson vaccine will arrive in the country next week.

Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

Total number of people infected:	239
Total number of staff (positive):	125
Total number of students (positive):	114
Total number of recoveries:	228 (111 students and 117 staff)
Total number of deaths:	9 (3 students and 6 staff)
Total number of active cases:	2
Number of new infections:	2 (this week)
Number of new infections (staff):	1 (this week)
Number of new infections (students):	1 (this week)
Location of new infections: (DBN)	2
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.

In Phase one of the vaccine rollout, healthcare workers will be vaccinated, including our DUT health care workers. Staff and students over the age of 18 will qualify for vaccination later on in the programme, in either phase two or phase three, depending on age and co-morbidities. The DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team encourages all staff and students who are eligible to vaccinate in phase one to register electronically.

Here is some information as to what are vaccines and what they can do and why you should get vaccinated when your turn comes:

WHAT ARE COVID-19 VACCINES?

When germs like the coronavirus invade the body, the body uses various ways to fight off the invader. Our body naturally produces antibodies that act like soldiers to defend against specific germs.

Vaccines work by training the body to recognise and fight the virus. COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies to fight off the coronavirus and prevent us from becoming ill.

WHY SHOULD YOU BE VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19?

There is a lot of fake news circulating about COVID-19 vaccines. The vaccines cannot give you COVID-19, they do not change your DNA, and the healthcare worker who administers the quick vaccination will not be injecting demons into you. All of that is dangerous misinformation that might stop people from getting vaccinated.

The truth is that vaccines save lives! They have prevented millions and millions of people from suffering and dying from polio, measles, mumps, smallpox and other serious illnesses. In fact, most of us have already been vaccinated for several illnesses, usually when we were small children.

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and have already been given to millions of people around the world. The important thing to remember is that these COVID-19 vaccines are our best chance of preventing the continued spread of COVID-19.

If you have questions about COVID-19 vaccines, consult trusted sources such as the following for information.

- For further information on COVID-19, the symptoms, how it spreads, why we should wear a mask, and other useful topics, visit The Department of Health's COVID-19 Online Resource and News Portal at <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/vaccine-updates/>
- DUT has a number of resources available on the its COVID-19 webpage at <https://www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus/>.
- The Department of Health explains vaccines and answers many burning questions here <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/2021/01/20/vaccine-explanations-and-answers-dr-lauren-wise/>.
- For questions and answers, consult the World Health Organisation on <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/covid-19-vaccines>
- For information on South Africa's COVID-19 roll-out plan, visit South Africa's National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) at <https://www.nicd.ac.za/covid-19-vaccine-rollout-strategy-faq/>

The COVID-19 Response Task Team can also help. Please contact covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za or call the hotline on 031 373 3760 / 2223 during office hours.

Remember, our SURVIVAL is about:

- Prevention
- Awareness
- Being prepared and
- Knowing how to get help when you have a problem

SO WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

By taking the following precautions, you could save lives: your own life and the lives of your friends, your family and your fellow students. Let's take action and all be part of the solution to COVID-19.

What to do:

- Space – remain a minimum of 1.5 metres away from any other person at all times on campus and in public.
- Face – wear a mask that covers nose and mouth at all times on campus and in public.
- Hands – sanitise your hands on entering campus, and continue to clean your hands regularly throughout the day.
- Clean -- clean/sanitise frequently-touched surfaces.
- Fingers -- don't touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Vaccinate – when your turn in the vaccination roll-out comes along, please get vaccinated and help end COVID-19. You're not only protecting yourself; you're protecting others. The more of us who are vaccinated, the more quickly we can end this pandemic that has caused chaos around the world.

What to avoid: The 3Cs:

- Avoid spaces that are closed, crowded or involve close contact
- Avoid crowded and poorly ventilated spaces where people spend long periods of time close together. This includes restaurants, places of worship, choir practices and other situations. The virus spreads easily in these environments, so taking precautions is even more essential

PERMITS TO ENTER CAMPUS

Please note that only those staff and students with valid permits will be allowed to enter DUT property. Every time you access campus, please show your permit to the security guard, along with your staff/student card and your HealthCheck result. Please also sanitise your hands and note that there is a #NoMaskNoEntry policy for all DUT campuses and residences.

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>

Finally, we have a shared responsibility to protect our family and friends and to ensure that we keep the entire university community safe from the further spread of this devastating disease.

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team