

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

19 March 2021

Dear staff and students

DUT COVID-19 UPDATE

As we approach the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa, we as the DUT community need to take collective and individual responsibility for stopping the spread of this dangerous disease. Now is not the time to drop our guard. On the contrary: we need to stringently adhere to both national and DUT COVID-19 guidelines, and do our utmost to make DUT a COVID-19-unfriendly zone.

An important reason for extra vigilance and the maintenance of enhanced preventive measures is that the virus responsible for COVID-19 has already started to mutate (change its form). This is resulting in more virulent variants of the virus emerging that are much more infectious, cause more severe illness, morbidity and death.

In addition, we note that the COVID-19 vaccination campaign is still not fully operational, and large groups of vulnerable persons are still at high risk.

Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

Total number of people infected:	244
Total number of staff (positive):	129
Total number of students (positive):	115
Total number of recoveries:	232 (112 students and 120 staff)
Total number of deaths:	10 (3 students and 7 staff)
Total number of active cases:	2
Number of new infections:	0 (this week)
Number of new infections (staff):	0 (this week)
Number of new infections (students):	0 (this week)
Location of new infections: (DBN)	0
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.

Knowledge is power

As an educational institution, we are particularly aware that knowledge is power: The more we educate ourselves about COVID-19 and its prevention, the better our chances of defeating this disease.

So, what happens when you get COVID-19, and what should you do if you test positive or develop symptoms?

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Some people with COVID-19 do not develop any symptoms, but they are still able to pass on the virus to others who might develop more serious illness.
- Other people with COVID-19 develop symptoms such as fever, a cough, fatigue, loss of sense of smell and/or taste, and body aches/chills.
- In others, COVID-19 causes severe symptoms such as high fever, breathing difficulties and shortness of breath. If you develop these severe symptoms, phone the numbers listed below immediately for advice on what to do.

What to avoid

- Avoid buffs or masks with valves. These can actually increase the chances of spreading COVID-19.
- Do not share masks with others.
- When talking to someone, don't pull your mask down or take it off.
- Avoid touching your mask while wearing it. If you do touch it, wash/sanitise your hands thoroughly.

Remember

- A mask only works when you wear it and wear it properly.
- A mask protects you, but it also protects your loved ones, your friends, and the wider community.
- We can all be part of the solution to COVID-19 if we wear a mask and take all other necessary precautions.

Your health is in your hands

All students are asked to watch the following video from Higher Health. It addresses important issues about your health and wellness such as relationships, gender-based violence, mental well-being, COVID-19 and more. You can access the video via the following links: <http://higherhealth.ac.za/programmes/peer-to-peer-education/> or <https://youtu.be/6j79l6F3F2w>

Please follow these guidelines at DUT and in public

- Keep your distance – stay at least 1.5 metres away from any other person at all times on campus and in public.
- Wear a mask – wear a mask that covers your nose, mouth and chin at all times on campus and in public.
- Clean your hands – sanitise your hands on entering campus, and continue to clean your hands regularly throughout the day. Don't touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Sanitise/clean -- clean/sanitise frequently-touched surfaces.
- Avoid closed, crowded spaces that 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 crowded situations. The virus spreads easily in these environments, so taking precautions is essential.

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In conclusion, let us all as the DUT community work together to keep ourselves and each other safe from COVID-19.

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team