

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

26 March 2021

Dear staff and students

UPDATE FROM DUT COVID-19 RESPONSE TASK TEAM

According to research conducted and announced by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) earlier this week, the number of COVID-19 cases in South Africa is once again on the rise, currently increasing by an average of 2% week-on-week. This is a cause for grave concern. Positive cases started rising when South Africa moved to Lockdown Level 1 in our National State of Disaster and we are now witnessing cluster outbreaks in various regions of the country.

Social interactions over the coming Easter weekend pose a serious threat of a drastic increase in COVID-19 infections, and what the experts predict, could be the beginning of a third wave for our country. Therefore, it is essential for us to exercise maximum vigilance and to take all of the necessary precautions to prevent the further spread of this dangerous disease. Please find the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

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TOTAL NUMBER OF POSITIVE CASES:	244
TOTAL NUMBER OF STAFF WHO TESTED POSITIVE:	129
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO TESTED POSITIVE:	115
NUMBER OF NEW CASES TO REPORT:	0
NUMBER OF NEW CASES (Students):	0
NUMBER OF NEW CASES (Staff):	0
LOCATION OF NEW CASES, DURBAN /PIETERMARITZBURG:	Durban 0 & PMB 0
NUMBER OF RECOVERIES:	234 (112 students & 122 staff)
TOTAL NUMBER OF DEATHS:	10 (7 staff & 3 students)
TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVE CASES:	0 (0 staff & 0 students)
HAS CONTACT TRACING COMMENCED FOR NEW CASES:	No new cases
HAS DISINFECTION OF AREAS COMMENCED FOR NEW CASES:	No new cases

Please take the following precautions for the benefit of yourself and others:

- Distance yourself physically - stay at least 1.5 metres away from any other person at all times on campus and in public. Remember, the virus doesn't move; people do.
- Wear a mask – wear a mask covering your nose, mouth and chin at all times on campus and in public. Avoid touching the outside of your mask, and when removing it, do so by means of the ear elastics or tapes. Regularly wash fabric masks in hot, soapy water and then wash your hands.
- Wash/sanitise your hands – sanitise your hands when entering campus and continue to clean your hands regularly throughout the day.
- Don't touch your face with unwashed hands as germs such as the coronavirus can be transferred from your hands to your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Keep surfaces clean -- clean/sanitise frequently touched surfaces such as kitchen and bathroom surfaces, door handles and so forth.
- Avoid the three C's: 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.

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If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive, please do the following:

- If you suspect you may be positive for COVID-19, or if you develop symptoms, please contact the **DUT Clinics** for assessment as you may need to leave campus immediately. The DUT Clinics can be contacted on **031 373 2223 (Durban), 033 845 8913/8966 (Indumiso) or 033 845 8811/8812 (Riverside)** during office hours. They will advise you on what to do next.
- If you live in residence, please inform your Residence Advisor immediately. They will advise you accordingly.
- Please also inform your Head of Department or Lecturer.
- Sometimes people with COVID-19 develop severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, shortness of breath or high fever. In this case, please call the DUT Clinic as detailed above, during office hours, or contact **0600 123 456** (via WhatsApp). National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) Hotline on **0800 029 999**; or the COVID-19 National Call Centre on **012 337 1997** for advice on what steps to take next.

- If you do get tested, please send your COVID-19 test results to your Head of Department or Lecturer for forwarding to the COVID-19 hotline on covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za.
- If you test positive, you will be asked to list other DUT members with whom you have been in contact over the previous seven days and what DUT venues you have occupied. This is to ensure that close contacts self-isolate, and that venues are disinfected.
- No negative test is required for returning to campus after the 10-day quarantine period has elapsed.

If you require further advice and information:

- Please visit the DUT website COVID-19 webpage: www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus.
- For enquiries and advice on COVID-19, please email covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za or telephone the DUT COVID-19 Task Team's hotline during office hours on 031 373 3760/2223.
- After hours, staff and students may contact 0600 123 456 (via WhatsApp); or the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) Hotline on 0800 029 999; or the **COVID-19 National Call Centre** on **012 337 1997**.
- For free, **24-hour mental health support and advice**, please call the Higher Health, toll-free hotline on **0800 36 36 36** or **SMS 43336**.



Permits:

- Please note that permits to enter campus, for both staff and students, are issued by the Faculties.

To conclude, please take care in the run-up to Easter and beyond, so that you can ensure that we continue to protect our health and the health of our family and friends. Please remember that we have a combined responsibility to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. We wish all staff and students a safe and successful 2021 academic year.

Please wear your mask, wash your hands and practice social distancing...

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team