

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

06 April 2021

Dear staff, students and members of the Public

REGISTRATION UPDATE

The University has been exploring strategies to deal with the challenge of the slow pace of registration of first time entering (FTEN) students, for various reasons including their challenges with our online registrations system. The number of returning students who have registered has been largely met and does not appear to be a problem at this stage.

As part of the strategies to deal with this slow challenge with FTEN registrations, the University decided to decentralize the on-campus registration support, in order to assist those applicants who were struggling to complete their online registration. Many of those who had required assistance with their online registration had either experienced internet access challenges at their homes or they had faced delays due to funding concerns. The on-campus support facilities were specifically implemented to assist this group of students, many of whom, were FTEN students.

In late last week's email from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching & Learning to Faculties, several strategies were shared about how the University would quicken the pace. One of the strategies was about enlisting professionalised call centre services, in addition to their own Faculty-based initiatives. Such a service would help to reach out to all students with firm offers, students on waitlists and other qualifying students that could have approached them since registration started. Some call the latter group 'walk-ins.' As a result of this, the University had also decided to extend the registration period for FTEN applicants to 9 April 2021.

It does appear that there were a number of unauthorized social media posts inviting all applicants to come to the campuses today, 6 April 2021. Many potential applicants arrived at our gates, expecting to be registered. These persons were not invited by the University to register, nor given any indication that they were to arrive at the University. All along, the University has been using a strict Covid-19 compliant system where those struggling with our online registration would report their experiences via the telephone, and, where necessary, be invited and granted permits. As a result, all our registration venues, including the Sports Centre, has been orderly and Covid-19 compliant.

The unauthorised social media and fake text message invitations resulted in a large scale influx of persons onto the campuses today. Following the violation of the Covid-19 guidelines as a result of the campus invasion by a large number of people this morning and considering the related risks to health, safety and security, the University has decided to **immediately suspend on-campus support for online registration**. Thus, for the time being, all registration continues strictly online from whatever points registrants may choose.

The University remains deeply committed towards successfully registering FTEN students who received firm offers from DUT. However, this process cannot be at the expense of the safety and security of staff and students and contraventions of the Covid-19 protocols.

The University will contact all first-year applicants who received firm offers to study at DUT but for whatever reason, have not registered as yet. We will directly consult with this group of applicants and advise them accordingly. On-campus support for online registration was specifically for first year students only.

When on-campus, online registration support resumes, if it ever will, we will assist these applicants as best as we can. Qualifying, registered students who also qualify for accommodation, will be assisted as well. However, the University **will not** be providing accommodation to those who are not registered to study at DUT, particularly those who simply arrive at our gates and then expect to be accommodated in our residences, even though they may not be accepted into a programme of study.

The SRC has also raised a new set of demands amidst all of the turmoil experienced today. The new list of demands must be raised with the appropriate structures most of which have been specifically designed to deal with registration, funding and accommodation challenges. The SRC is well aware of the process that needs to be followed in consulting with the relevant and responsible structures at DUT.

We wish to reiterate that the University has very limited available spaces for study programmes relative to the public need for more spaces at DUT. So-called 'walk-ins' were not invited to come onto our campuses to register. The University advised interested students to contact the Faculties directly on the specific contact details that were provided. The contact details are on our website.

We advise all prospective and returning students to please be wary of "fake" statements on social media, emails and text messages that purport to be official DUT ones. While all such are in themselves fraudulent, lurking behind them could be scammers promising 'walk-ins' admission to programmes and overnight accommodation for a fee. People must be aware of all of these sinister schemes. Those who may have been scammed this way must please report such incidents by clicking on this link: <https://www.whistleblowing.co.za/make-a-report-steps/> or call 0800204134.

The University releases official statements via the website and its internal email platforms, DUT PinBoard (for staff) and DUT4life (for students). Please monitor our website www.dut.ac.za for official University statements.

In conclusion, our country is still in a national “State of Disaster” and we must all work together to prevent the further spread of Covid-19. We must act responsibly during the pandemic so please, abide by the Covid-19 guidelines, wear your mask, wash your hands regularly, avoid large gatherings and observe physical and social distancing at all times.

Sincerely

DUT Management team



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