

## UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

23 July 2021

### COVID-19 RESPONSE TASK TEAM WEEKLY STATEMENT

Dear staff and students

On Tuesday this week, 596 people in South Africa died from COVID-19. On Wednesday, we lost 516 people and yesterday, a further 433 people passed on. That is 1545 deaths due to COVID-19 related complications in three days. Sadly, a total of 68 625 people in South Africa have lost their lives to COVID-19 and the disease has killed over four million people worldwide. The reality is that COVID-19 is far from over. Following last week's civil unrest, where large groups of people gathered without masks or social distancing, a spike in COVID-19 infections is anticipated. This is likely because of the Delta variant that currently dominates new infections in our country. This variant is up to 60% more infectious than the previous variants - and it is transmitted faster and much more easily from person to person.

As a result, it is crucial that you adhere to the safety protocols to contain the spread of this life-threatening disease. DUT's mandatory precautions remain firmly in place: securely wear a mask in public, social distance by 1.5 metres from others and keep your hands clean. Avoiding gatherings and in-person meetings is also vital at this time. Vaccination remains the most powerful tool that we have against severe illness and death from COVID-19.

#### Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for the DUT community:

|                                                   |                                |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Total number of positive cases:                   | 269                            |
| Total number of staff who tested positive:        | 144                            |
| Total number of students who tested positive:     | 125                            |
| Number of new cases to report:                    | 1                              |
| Number of new cases (students):                   | 0                              |
| Number of new cases (staff):                      | 1                              |
| Location of new cases:                            | 1 in Durban & 0 in PMB         |
| Number of recoveries: (students & staff)          | 257 (Students 121 & Staff 136) |
| Total number of deaths: ( staff & students)       | 10 (Students 3 & Staff 7)      |
| Total number of active cases: ( staff & students) | 2 (Students 0 & Staff 2)       |
| Has contact tracing commenced for new cases?      | YES                            |
| Has disinfection taken place for new cases?       | YES                            |

We pray for the safe return to good health for all those who are fighting the infection.

## **DUT's COVID-19 vaccination programme resumes**

After last week's unrest, the DUT vaccination programme in partnership with King Edward VIII Hospital has now resumed. Eligible students and staff members received their second COVID-19 vaccinations and some were also invited to receive their first jab.

The good news is that DUT members who are 35 and over are now eligible for vaccination. The DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team invites you to click on the following link to secure a vaccination appointment:

<https://forms.office.com/r/gPwsb0rWDN>

You will also need to register on South Africa's Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) by going to:

<https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za/#/>

Please note that if you have tested positive for COVID-19, you will need to wait 30 days before vaccination from date of your positive test. Also ensure that you have informed DUT of your positive test result.

Please wait 30 days between different vaccinations, such as between a COVID-19 vaccination and a flu or hepatitis vaccination. This is to ensure the efficacy of each vaccine.

## **Plan for vaccinating under 35s in the PSET sector at an advanced stage**

If you are under 35 years of age and you wish to be vaccinated against COVID-19, you will be pleased to know that planning for this age group is at an advanced stage with the National Department of Health and Higher Health. The COVID-19 Response Task Team will inform the DUT community about the practical aspects and dates for starting the vaccination programme for this age group in the coming weeks.

## **Why get vaccinated against COVID-19?**

Vaccination drastically reduces your risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19. While it cannot completely prevent you from catching COVID-19, it does protect against severe illness, hospitalisation and death. If you are fully-vaccinated and catch COVID-19, you will probably experience few to no symptoms or very mild illness.

As at 18 July 2021, a massive 3.69 billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccines have been administered - and they have been found to be overwhelmingly safe. Many people have experienced no side-effects after taking the vaccine, while some experienced mild symptoms such as headache, fever, body aches and a sore arm. These symptoms usually disappear within a few of days and can be treated with paracetamol (such as Panado). Because no live viruses are injected during vaccination, it is impossible to catch COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Symptoms that arise after vaccination are the result of the immune system responding to the vaccine and preparing the body to fight the disease. But if you do not develop post-vaccination symptoms, it does not mean that you have no immunity against COVID-19. Clinical trials show that even those who develop a few symptoms or none at all, are protected by the vaccines.

More serious side-effects such as a severe allergic reaction are extremely rare. To be safe, everyone who is vaccinated is monitored for 15 minutes after vaccination. It is vital to realise that your chances of having a serious reaction to the vaccine are tiny compared with the enormous and very real chances of contracting COVID-19, and the possibility of getting seriously ill and possibly dying.

Vaccines in general, have already saved countless millions of lives since the first vaccine was developed 120 years ago. We no longer suffer terrible diseases such as smallpox because of vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccines have undergone rigorous testing and clinical trials and they are overwhelmingly safe. When it is your turn to get vaccinated, don't hesitate, vaccinate! It could save your life and the lives of your loved ones.

In conclusion, please be as careful as you can to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. For maximum safety, please **avoid all gatherings, wear a mask** covering your nose and mouth securely, **stay a minimum of 1.5 metres from all other persons, clean your hands** frequently with soap and water or with a 70% alcohol-based sanitiser - and **get vaccinated** against COVID-19 when your opportunity arises.

Please take care and stay safe.

Sincerely

**DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team**



## DUT COVID-19 REGULATIONS, PROTOCOLS & RESOURCES

### DUT's compulsory COVID-19 guidelines

All persons on DUT property are requested to:

- Wear a mask at all times.
- Social distance by 1.5 metres from others.
- Sanitise one's hands at entrances to campus and venues

Failure to follow these guidelines shall lead to disciplinary and/or criminal action.

### To protect yourself and others, please also

- Avoid crowded, unventilated spaces, and avoid all gatherings, no matter how small.
- Stay at your place or residence as much as possible. Please keep contact with people outside your household to an absolute minimum.
- Avoid physical contact when interacting with others.

### If you test positive for COVID-19, please inform DUT, even if you haven't been on campus

For statistical, surveillance and management purposes, all staff and students are asked to inform DUT if you test positive for COVID-19, even if you have not been on campus or been in contact with anyone from DUT. Your test results will remain confidential.

Students in residence are asked to immediately inform your Residence Advisor. Staff members and students not in residence are requested to notify their HOD or Line Manager, who should then inform the relevant Faculty, Division or Departmental COVID-19 Response Task Team representative. Please ensure that COVID-19 test results are emailed to Dr Stanbley Onwubu at [covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za](mailto:covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za).



## If you think you may have COVID-19, please ...

1. Stay at home or in residence.
2. Contact the DUT Clinics for advice (see WhatsApp numbers below).
3. Inform your Residence Advisor and/or Lecturer/HOD.
4. Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
5. Treat your symptoms, eg take paracetamol (such as Panado) for fever and pain.
6. Wash your hands often with soap and water.
7. Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow, not your hand.
8. Stay away from other people to prevent them from becoming infected.
9. If you develop a high fever, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, contact your doctor, the DUT Clinics (see below for WhatsApp numbers) or the COVID-19 Hotline or WhatsApp lines (see below) for assistance.
10. 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](mailto:covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za).

## Mental health support for students and staff

Any student or staff member who is having mental health, relationship, study or other difficulties is asked to reach out for help from the services available from DUT and other support organisations. Help is available 24 hours per day.

**DUT counselling services for students** [Counsbookingdbn@dut.ac.za](mailto:Counsbookingdbn@dut.ac.za)  
(Durban)

[Counsellingpmb@dut.ac.za](mailto:Counsellingpmb@dut.ac.za)  
(Midlands)

**During office hours**

**DUT counselling services for staff** [ewp@dut.ac.za](mailto:ewp@dut.ac.za)

## 24-hour mental health support services

**Higher Health National Hotline**

**0800 36 36 36 or SMS 43336**

**South African Depression & Anxiety Group (SADAG)**

**0800 12 13 14**

**Lifeline** 0861 322 322

**South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA) for alcohol or drug dependence** 08611 73422

### Important contact numbers for information and advice on COVID-19

**DUT Clinics** 067 370 4482 / **During office hours**

**WhatsApp lines** 083 783 7057

**COVID-19 Hotline** 0800 029 999 **24 hours**

**COVID-19 WhatsApp line** 0600 12 3456 **24 hours**

**DUT COVID-19 Hotline** 031 373 3760 / 031 373 2223

**Email**

[covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za](mailto:covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za)

**During office hours**

### Resources on COVID-19 and vaccination

**Official SA government COVID-19 website** <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>

**National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD)** <https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19/>

**DUT COVID-19 webpage** <https://www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus/>