

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

20 August 2021

COVID-19 RESPONSE TASK TEAM WEEKLY STATEMENT

Dear staff and students

KwaZulu-Natal is still firmly in the grips of a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. While some provinces are recording lower or stable daily rates of infection, KZN's rates are rising steeply. Officially, our province has approximately 52 000 people infected with COVID-19 at the moment and this number is rapidly increasing.

Disturbingly, research conducted by the DUT Institute for Water & Wastewater Technology (IWWT) confirms that the actual number of people infected in the province is several times higher than the official figures. Even more concerning was the opinion by some public health officials that the number of people who have died from COVID-19 related complications is far higher than the published statistics. Unfortunately, two primary school children in KZN passed on from COVID-19 related medical complications over the last week. This is tragic testimony to the fact that the highly infectious Delta variant of the virus – currently responsible for most infections in South Africa - is having a dire effect on all age groups, including the youth in South Africa.

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

Total number of positive cases:	288
Total number of staff who tested positive:	156
Total number of students who tested positive:	132
Number of new cases to report:	5
Number of new cases (students):	1
Number of new cases (staff):	4
Location of new cases:	4 in Durban & 1 in Pietermaritzburg
Number of recoveries:	270 (127 Students & 143 Staff)
Total number of deaths:	10 (3 Students & 7 Staff)
Total number of active cases:	8 (1 Students & 7 Staff)
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.

Anyone 18 and older is now eligible for vaccination

Evidence being collected around the world shows that vaccination is the single biggest step that a person can take to protect oneself and others from COVID-19. The good news is that government has, from today, opened vaccination for anyone aged 18 and older. Just take your ID and your student/staff card to your nearest vaccination centre as soon as possible. It is only when the majority of us are vaccinated that we can gain control over the pandemic.

No pre-registration is required. You can choose a vaccination centre here:

<https://sacoronavirus.co.za/active-vaccination-sites/>

How effective are the COVID-19 vaccines?

The COVID-19 vaccines are designed to prevent severe disease, hospitalisation and death, and they do this remarkably well, even against the Delta variant. To date, over 10 million people in South Africa have been vaccinated, and not one person has died as a result of taking the vaccine. The “Centers for Disease Control” in the USA has recently found that the vaccines reduce your chances of being hospitalised or dying from COVID-19 25-fold. In other words, you are **25 times less likely** to be hospitalised or to die from COVID-19 if you are vaccinated than if you are not vaccinated.

Epidemiological data from the United States has shown that most of the morbidity and deaths in the current COVID upsurge has been in the **unvaccinated** sections of the population, who also continue to serve as hosts for the continued spread and mutation of the virus among all age groups. Hence the urgent need to break the chain of transmission of the virus through vaccinations.

If you have a question or concern about vaccination, please call our COVID-19 Hotline on 031 373 3760 or 031 373 2223 - or please email covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za for assistance.

Cleaning venues after COVID-19

Please note that the World Health Organisation (WHO), Higher Health and other public health experts agree that so-called ‘fogging’ has no special role to play in the process of cleaning and disinfecting a venue that

has been occupied by someone with COVID-19. This is because it is ineffective against the virus. DUT does not, therefore, utilise 'fogging.' Staff and students should be rest assured that the current cleaning and disinfection procedures at DUT are more than adequate to disinfect against COVID-19.

As we continue to battle this vicious third wave of the pandemic, please remember the basic prevention measures:

- **Wear a mask** securely covering your nose and mouth,
- **stay a minimum of 1.5 metres from all other persons,**
- **wash your hands** frequently with soap and water or with a 70% alcohol-based sanitiser,
- **avoid crowds** and **gatherings,**
- **get vaccinated** against COVID-19 as soon as possible.

Please stay safe and do your best to protect your health and wellbeing.

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 Stanley Onwubu at 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, e.g. 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.

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

During office hours

Counsbookingdbn@dut.ac.za

(Durban)

Counsellingpmb@dut.ac.za

(Midlands)

DUT counselling services for staff

During office hours

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** During office hours

covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za

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/](https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19/)

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