

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

21 September 2021

Dear staff and students

IMPLICATIONS OF ADJUSTED LOCKDOWN LEVEL 2 ON DUT OPERATIONS

Earlier today, members of the DUT Executive Management Committee (EMC) and Senate Executive Committee (Senex) met to discuss the implications of Adjusted Lockdown Level 2 on university operations. This followed the recent Presidential announcement that resulted in a relaxation in some of the regulations. However, it must be noted that South Africa is still in a “National State of Disaster” and the COVID-19 pandemic has not disappeared.

EMC and Senex would like to encourage all students and staff to get vaccinated. We recently conducted a successful vaccination programme in Durban and the DUT Midlands Vaccination Centre is currently in operation on the Indumiso campus in Pietermaritzburg. All staff, students and Alumni are urged to get vaccinated. The DUT Midlands Vaccination Centre, in partnership with the Department of Health, will be open weekdays, 08H00 to 15H30 until Thursday, 30 September 2021. No pre-registration is required and those who are over 18 must present their valid identity document, a valid DUT staff card or student card and importantly, receive a green result from the HealthCheck online form. Remember you must use the HealthCheck to get your result before you arrive on campus. You can access the HealthCheck in three ways:

- Dial HealthCheck on *134*832*2# (This is a free call).
- Go to: <https://healthcheck.higherhealth.ac.za>
- Add 0600 110 000 - <https://wa.me/27600110000?text=hi> to your WhatsApp contacts.

As you know, the virus is still active in our country and many people are being infected and some are passing on from complications related to COVID-19. EMC/Senex reiterates the importance of following the public health guidelines and protocols to help stop the further spread of the disease. Therefore, please securely wear your face mask covering your nose and mouth, wash your hands regularly with water and soap, use a minimum 70% alcohol-based hand sanitiser, maintain a minimum 1.5 metres distance from the person next to you, avoid gathering in groups and do not frequent poorly ventilated venues.

IMPLICATIONS OF LOCKDOWN LEVEL 2 ON THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

Teaching and Learning activities will continue with remote online platforms, with the exception of those categories of students who require access to laboratories. The Heads of Department will issue permits to the eligible students.

The integrity of all examinations, class tests and other forms of assessments are critical in upholding the academic standards of Teaching and Learning at DUT and this must be consistent with our **ENVISION2030** strategy. Following the recent DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team meeting on 17 September 2021 and the Academic Executive Management (AEM) meeting yesterday, EMC/Senex received a proposal related to assessments and mask-to-mask, in-person, on-campus contact sessions for the current Adjusted Lockdown Level 2 at DUT. The meeting resolved to have further engagements with the AEM and the DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team to discuss and evaluate the associated risks. EMC/Senex will reconvene to review the proposal for mask-to-mask, in-person, on-campus assessments.

As per the University Statement on 02 July 2021, we would like to remind you that the second semester examinations will be scheduled to take place between 06 December 2021 and 20 December 2021. As a result, the academic year will terminate on 24 December 2021. This is the link for the amended DUT Academic Calendar: <https://www.dut.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Amended-2021-Calendar-02-July-2021.pdf>.

POSTGRADUATE TRAINING AND ACADEMIC EXCHANGES

The following categories will be permitted as per the Adjusted Lockdown Level 2 regulations, under the respective conditions as listed and as approved by the relevant Executive. It will also be expected that staff and students applying for these categories provide additional proof with their written motivation that:

1. They have been fully vaccinated before undertaking any travel.
2. That the host institution/organiser is willing to receive them and there is an invitation letter to that effect.
3. They will not hold DUT liable if they test positive for COVID-19, since the University itself is not encouraging international travel, where it is possible to have virtual engagements and where there is no practical components of work involved.
4. The source of the grant is external and the motivation clearly indicates implications/risks associated with forfeiting the grant, e.g. NRF, European Union and Erasmus+, etc. Researcher publication funds may be accessed as long as there is evidence of how such an international trip will add to the research outputs and impact on DUT's research and innovation profile as approved by the relevant Executive.

In some cases, where it is practically impossible to travel, as not all regions are open, those funds will have to be redirected/reprioritised or forfeited, as per the funder's approval of the necessary motivations.

The applicable categories include:

- International travel based on conditions of the four detailed above and in line with national COVID-19 regulations and the DUT COVID-19 protocols;
- Domestic travel in line with national COVID-19 regulations and DUT COVID-19 protocols;
- Postgraduate students and researchers who need to return to campus for research and practical work as permitted by the relevant Line Managers, as long as they have **proof of being fully vaccinated**;
- Entrepreneurial and Innovation students enrolled or undertaking practical training programmes e.g. creative and design thinking, ideation, agribusiness training, 3D printing (PLMCC and Luban Workshop) and other practical incubation sessions.
- This category will be limited to 35 students (as long as this does not exceed 50% of the capacity of the venue), for any such sessions at any given time where they have to be in person as approved by the relevant Executive and **on condition that that participants show proof of being vaccinated (for in person sessions)**.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLCATIONS FOR LOCKDOWN LEVEL 2

The EMC/Senex meeting upheld and maintained the current arrangement of staff working remotely, unless specific staff members are working in essential services or working in laboratories and they are involved in specific, approved, on-campus practical work. Staff members are advised to liaise with their respective Line Managers if they require clarification on working remotely.

CONCLUSION

Finally, we want to remind you of some important health resources which are available for you:

- **DUT Clinics:** WhatsApp 067 370 4482 or 083 783 7057 (office hours).
- **COVID-19 Hotline:** **0800 029 999**.
- **DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team Hotline:** 031 373 3760 or 031 373 2223 (office hours), or you can email: covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za.

For 24-hour assistance, seven days a week, you can call one of the following organisations for expert assistance:

- **Higher Health National Hotline** on **0800 36 36 36** or SMS **43336**.
- **South African Depression & Anxiety Group (SADAG)** on **0800 12 13 14**.
- **Lifeline** on **0861 322 322**.

You can also access the DUT COVID-19 webpage *via* this link <https://www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus> or visit <https://sacoronavirus.co.za> for more information about COVID-19. Please empower yourself with knowledge to stop the spread of the disease and to save more lives and please remember, if you have not done so already, get vaccinated!

Wishing you a safe and successful second semester.

Sincerely

DUT Management team

