

## UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

22 October 2021

Dear staff and students

### COVID-19 RESPONSE TASK TEAM WEEKLY UPDATE

Dear staff and students

The third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is officially over as infection and death rates have fallen substantially when compared to the past few months. This is good news. However, public health experts confirm that COVID-19 has not disappeared and that we are still facing a high probability of a fourth wave of the pandemic. How bad this fourth wave turns out to be is up to all of us. To **#SaveOurSummer** and to flatten the fourth wave, get your vaccine as soon as possible to ensure that you are fully vaccinated in time for the end-of-year holiday season. Importantly, continue to take the basic precautions of wearing a mask, social distancing and practising good hand hygiene.

### Towards a more “normal” 2022

If everyone gets vaccinated, DUT will be able to move towards increased contact learning and teaching sessions, as well as more physical events like graduation. A good example of how vaccination can open up our world once more was the recent football World Cup qualifying match between Bafana Bafana and Ethiopia, where fully vaccinated fans were allowed into the stadium free of charge. The practice of allowing event access to only fully vaccinated people is a worldwide trend that is likely to become commonplace, including here in South Africa.

### A public health emergency

Experts agree that COVID-19 remains a very serious public health emergency that requires decisive action by each one of us. Getting fully vaccinated not only prevents you, the individual, from developing severe illness, being hospitalised and possibly dying, it also drastically reduces the likelihood that you will spread COVID-19 to others. We in South Africa often live communally, both as extended families, in hostels and in university residences. Regardless of our age and state of health, we have a responsibility to vulnerable members of society, such as senior citizens and people with chronic illnesses, to get vaccinated for the common good.

### We are here to hear your fears

Many people have fears and questions about the vaccines. This is not surprising as the spread of misinformation continues at a rapid pace. The COVID-19 Response Task Team wishes to reassure the DUT community that the vaccines are safe and effective and we urge you to consult only reputable sources of information for answers to your vaccine questions.

Some social media platforms are overrun with vaccine misinformation. So much so that Facebook recently disabled 150000 user accounts that were spreading COVID-19 misinformation. Fake news can have deadly consequences.



# MYTH OR TRUTH?

## MYTH:

Ivermectin cures and prevents COVID.

## TRUTH:

Ivermectin has not been scientifically shown to be effective in treating or preventing COVID-19. It is not an approved COVID-19 medicine.

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Accurate, reliable vaccine information is available on the following sites:

- <https://www.gov.za/covid-19/vaccine/vaccine>
- <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/vaccine-updates/>
- <https://dut-cdn2.azureedge.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/CORONAVIRUS-AND-VACCINE-BOOKLET.pdf>

If you still have questions or concerns about the vaccines, please call the **DUT Isolempilo Clinic** and speak to our trained staff who are available to listen and assist you with evidence-based information. You should call **031 373 2223** during office hours or email [covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za](mailto:covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za) and Dr Stanley Onwubu will respond to you. Remember, according to the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights, everybody has the right to life and health. However, nobody has the right to infect others with COVID-19. No-one is safe until everyone is safe.

### Getting vaccinated at DUT is quick and easy

The DUT **#VaccinationThursdays** campaign continues to attract staff and students for vaccination against COVID-19. To receive your vaccination quickly and easily, please visit the DUT Isolempilo Clinic on the Steve Biko campus on Thursday from 08h30 to 15h00. You don't need an appointment. Just take your staff/student card and your ID.

The Clinic is currently administering the *Johnson & Johnson* vaccine but anyone who would prefer the Pfizer vaccine is welcome to call the Clinic during office hours on 031 373 2223 to make a firm appointment.

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## Pfizer second dose appointments

If you are due for your second dose of the Pfizer vaccine, please contact the Isolempilo Clinic during office hours on 031 373 2223 to make an appointment.

**#DUTGetYourJab**



# MYTH OR TRUTH?

## MYTH:

The COVID-19 vaccines are dangerous.

## TRUTH:

The vaccines work with minimal risk. In South Africa, over 13 million COVID-19 vaccines have been administered, and nobody has died as a result.

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

TOTAL NUMBER OF POSITIVE CASES:	313
TOTAL NUMBER OF STAFF WHO TESTED POSITIVE:	168
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO TESTED POSITIVE:	145
NUMBER OF NEW CASES TO REPORT:	0
NUMBER OF NEW CASES (Students):	0
NUMBER OF NEW CASES (Staff):	0
LOCATION OF NEW CASES:	0 Durban & 0 PMB
NUMBER OF RECOVERIES:	302 (141 students & 161 staff)
Total Number of Deaths:	11 (3 students & 8 staff)
Total Number of Active cases:	0 (0 students & 0 staff)
HAS CONTACT TRACING COMMENCED FOR NEW CASES:	No new reported cases this week.
HAS DISINFECTION OF AREAS COMMENCED FOR NEW CASES:	No new reported cases this week.

We are truly grateful that all of the active cases in the DUT community last week have had positive outcomes. We wish our colleagues and students a safe and successful recovery in the days ahead.

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In conclusion, please continue to play your part to **#SaveOurSummer** and to flatten the expected fourth wave of the pandemic by securely **wearing a mask** when out in public; **staying a minimum of 1.5 metres away** from all other persons and **cleaning your hands** frequently with soap and water or with a minimum 70% alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Most powerfully, we urge all members of the DUT community to please get fully vaccinated as soon as possible.

Together we can make a positive impact and help stop the spread of COVID-19. Please continue to follow the public health guidelines, act responsibly and don't hesitate, vaccinate!

Sincerely

**DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team**

**#DUTGetYourJab**



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