

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

09 December 2021

Dear staff and students

Council decision on policy choices regarding the vaccination of staff and students

As you know, South Africa is currently battling a fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the University urges all members of the DUT community (staff, students, alumni, visitors and service providers, and others so associated) to get fully vaccinated. As much as vaccination may have its inadequacies and antagonists, it's unfortunately, the only scientifically confirmed and effective mechanism we have so far to defend ourselves.

A university is a citadel of reason, facts and evidence, which it uses to pursue truth. Yes, truth may be ephemeral, sometimes. But, until there are contrary facts and evidence, and alternative scientific truths, that suggest vaccines are not protective against COVID-19, that is all that humanity has. The University's *raison d'être* would dissipate when it chooses willy-nilly to be anti-facts, anti-evidence and anti-science. We need to leave a DUT whose nature, role and essence will continue to be felt for generations to come.

Noting a number of internal consultations with relevant structures at DUT, at its meeting held on Saturday, 04 December 2021, the DUT Council approved, with effect from **01 January 2021**, the "*Policy choices on vaccination of staff and students*", and we must add, alumni, visitors, and service providers. This policy affords all members of the university community their individual freedom of choice. It is predicated on the following inter-related principles, namely rights and privileges that are to be kept in balance with responsibilities and obligations and, ultimately, consequences of individual choices. As we all know, even our constitution does not accord absolute and unfettered rights, but obligations and consequences, too.



CHOICE 1

For each member of the DUT community to access any of the DUT campuses, they must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. With this in mind, DUT will establish campus-based vaccination centres and we will facilitate access to hospital-based vaccination services for the entire DUT community to be vaccinated.

CHOICE 2

If a member of the DUT community as defined above does not wish to vaccinate, they must then continue with online activities and services. If they are required to be on campus, they must undertake a COVID-19 PCR test 48 hours prior to being on campus and that test must be negative. These PCR tests will help to ensure that all members of the DUT community are protected. Payment for these PCR tests will rest with the individuals concerned, noting the principles referred to above and furthermore, the wide-ranging educational campaigns that have been conducted followed by a series of DUT campus-based vaccination centres, funded by DUT and supported by the KZN Department of Health.



CHOICE 3

If a member of the DUT community refuses to be fully vaccinated and to provide a negative COVID-19 PCR test result when they may be required to be on campus, then they must continue with online based activities and services; in which case, should there be practical sessions, laboratory sessions and other academic and non-academic work that requires physical attendance, the principles referred to above shall apply, including facing the consequences of the individual choices.

There are several procedures and guidelines that various domains within the University will produce between next week and the start of January 2022 on how this policy will be implemented. A joint EMC-Senex meeting will take place on Tuesday, 14 December 2021 to initiate this very complex process.

Please stay safe continue and to mask up, follow the social and physical distancing guidelines, implement good hand hygiene practices and please avoid crowds and gatherings during this fourth wave of the pandemic.

Sincerely

Dr MJ Nkonoane

Registrar and Secretary to Council

