

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

16 March 2020

Dear staff and students

UPDATE: COVID-19

Earlier this afternoon, members of the Executive Management Team, the Executive Committee of Senate and the COVID-19 Task Team, met to discuss DUT's response to the current coronavirus outbreak and the associated risks to the University community.

Following the various consultations with the relevant experts, the University would like to confirm the following:

I. RECESS PERIOD:

The University will be on first term recess with immediate effect. The recess period will be in effect from Tuesday 17 March 2020 and the second term will commence on Tuesday 14 April 2020. If there are further changes, you will be notified via the official channels.

Whilst residences will continue to remain open for now, the Dean of Students will be developing a set of protocols that will apply to students in residence. This will be communicated to students in due course. The residences will remain open, for students who wish to remain in their accommodation, until Friday 3 April 2020.

The Senior Director of Human Resources will advise all staff about the leave protocols during this extended recess period. This will be communicated to staff in due course. Staff are expected to attend to their workstations and the normal leave policy will apply over this extended recess period.

We remind all stakeholders that the University has not shutdown.

2. TRAVEL:

All in-bound and out-bound international travel, *via* land, sea or air, will be suspended until further notice. Protocols will be provided in terms of visitors/guests who have recently arrived from foreign destinations.

All domestic travel is strongly discouraged. If domestic travel is essential, please liaise with your relevant Sector Executive before confirming domestic travel.

Staff are requested to inform their Head of Department, in writing, before departure, about their private travel arrangements. The University urges staff to strongly reconsider any personal travel plans for the months ahead.

A protocol related to staff who have travelled internationally, despite the risks, will be developed by the Director of International Education and Partnerships and this will be shared with the University community in the days ahead.

All individuals who have travelled internationally within the past three weeks should self-isolate for a period of 14 days. Heads of Department to monitor this situation and report to their Sector Executive.

3. GRADUATION:

All graduation ceremonies in April and May will be cancelled. The relevant University Faculty Officers will liaise with all graduates regarding the receipt of their individual certificates.

4. PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS:

Student placements in health facilities, schools and in Workplace Integrated Learning (WIL) positions, will be suspended with immediate effect. The DUT academic clinics aligned to the Faculty of Health Sciences for training and research purposes, will also be closed until further notice. This does not affect the Student Health and Counselling Department who offer regular services for other health related matters.

5. SANITIZERS AND PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES:

The University will procure and position alcohol-based hand sanitizers at strategic points on campus and in residence. Additional precautionary measures will be implemented to manage the entrances to all campuses in Durban and the Midlands.

6. INCIDENT MANAGEMENT:

All staff and students who are feeling ill and think that they may have been in contact with a person diagnosed with Covid-19 or be infected by Covid-19, we urge you to please contact the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) on their toll-free phone number **0800 02 99 99** - and then, seek urgent medical attention. Please remember to call ahead before visiting your doctor, clinic and/or hospital.

7. MASS/GROUP GATHERINGS AND MEETINGS:

All mass/group gatherings and community events on campus and in residence will be cancelled. All events that were scheduled in a confined space will be prohibited until further notice.

As previously advised, you must take into consideration that COVID-19 can spread from person to person. This usually happens through respiratory droplets - when someone with the virus coughs or sneezes, and you breathe it in. Most often, you need to be close to the person (within 6 feet) for it to spread this way. It might be possible to also get COVID-19 by touching a surface, or object, that has the virus on it and then, by touching your own mouth, nose or even your eyes.

Common Signs of the infection:

1. Respiratory symptoms.
2. High Fever.
3. Cough.
4. Shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.
5. Severe cases of the infection can cause pneumonia.
6. Severe acute respiratory syndrome.
7. Kidney failure.



We urge you to please adhere to the following advice:

1. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing, sneezing or yawning. You can use a tissue or your forearm/elbow. Avoid sneezing or coughing into your hands. Remember to wash your hands as soon as possible afterwards. Safely dispose of the tissue immediately.
2. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness.
3. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
4. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

5. Stay at home when you are sick and try and keep your distance from others at home.
6. Try to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces regularly.
7. If you present with any of the symptoms, call the NICD 24-hour toll-free phone line on **0800029999** and seek medical attention. Remember, to contact your healthcare provider before visiting them for medical assistance related to Covid 19.

As you know, the situation with Covid-19 is evolving daily. The decisions announced in this communiqué will be reviewed and further announcements will be made in the near future. We also urge you to please be aware of the misinformation and fake news related to Covid-19, that is currently doing the rounds social media. Please ensure that you verify your sources and fact check before sharing information.

Sincerely

DUT Management



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
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