

GUIDELINES FOR CONTACT CLASSES AND TIMETABLING
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

VERSION 3.1

JULY 2020



These guidelines are based on Department of Health, Department of Employment and Labour and Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs Departments directives and what is known about the transmission and severity of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), at the date of this version. Guidance will be updated as the lockdown levels and regulations change and new information emerges.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Preamble | 2 |
| Procedures to be followed for contact classes | 3 |
| Physical distancing in the venue | 3 |
| Maximum number of students permitted in a venue | 4 |
| Class ratio for maintaining physical distancing in the venue | 4 |
| Class register for contact classes | 4 |
| Lecturing timetable process | 5 |
| Roles and responsibilities | 6 |
| Important Covid-19 information | 7 |
| Important contact information | 8 |
| Conclusion | 9 |
| References / Resources | 10 |
| Glossary of terms and abbreviations | 10 |

PREAMBLE

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the 2020 academic year. In a statement on the implementation of measures by the Post School Education Sector (PSET) in response to the COVID-19 outbreak on Saturday 23 May 2020, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Dr B.E. Nzimande, announced that teaching and learning (T&L) in higher education institutions will resume on 1 June 2020. Under Alert Level 3, a maximum of 33% of the student population were allowed to return to our campuses, delivery sites and residences - on condition that they can be safely accommodated and supported, in line with the health and safety protocols as directed by the Department. The DHET emphasised that each institution should develop their own specific guidelines in line with the DHET guidelines. The following cohorts of students were allowed to return to campus:

- Students in all years of study who require clinical training in their programmes (provided that the clinical training platforms have sufficient space and can accommodate them while adhering to the safety protocols).
- Students in the final year of their programmes, who are on a path to graduating in 2020.
- Final year students who require access to laboratories, technical equipment, data, connectivity and access to residence and private accommodation.
- Postgraduate (PG) students who require laboratory equipment and other technical equipment to undertake their studies.

As from 1 June, DUT commenced with offering remote multi-modal teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) across all levels of study. Blended TLA commenced on 17 June 2020 for students who returned to campus. Only registered students who fall within the category of cohorts listed above are allowed to be on campus for contact classes/lectures.

Given the current serious state of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical the University has strict guidelines for contact classes/lectures and adherence to these guidelines to prevent/limit the spread of the virus. Further, there has been confusion and uncertainty regarding guidelines for contact classes and issues with regard to timetabling.

Physical distancing is mandatory to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Venue space is always a premium even without social distancing. We therefore have maximised room loading while adhering to the 1.5metres physical distance. *Venue capacity is fixed at fifty (50) as per DHET national guidelines (2020:7).

Arising from the above, there is a need for a framework to guide staff and students with regard to contact classes/lectures and timetabling.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED FOR CONTACT CLASSES

- All venues remain locked by respective security guards assigned to various key points.
- Posters to raise awareness about the SARS-CoV-2 (coronavirus) pandemic and how to prevent the spread of Covid-19 must be placed in and around venues.
- All venues must have 1,5 metres demarcation lines outside the venue.
- When students arrive for classes, they are required to wait outside the venue using the 1.5 metres demarcation lines as guides for physical distancing.
- Once the lecturer arrives, the security guard opens the venue.
- It is mandatory for staff and students to wear face masks at all times.
- The entrance of each venue must be equipped with hand sanitizers.
- The lecturer and students must sanitize their hands prior to entering the venue.
- The lecturer is required to ensure that the required physical distancing of 1,5 metres is adhered to at all times during the class/lecture period.
- At the commencement of the class/lecture, the lecturer must take a class **roll call** to record student attendance and record students contact number for contact tracing. Students must respond appropriately to the lecturer when class **attendance roll calls** are being taken to acknowledge their attendance. The class register is essential for contact tracing purposes in event of COVID-19 positive cases being identified. **Class registers may not be passed from student to student to be completed** and must be safely stored and easily accessible by the HOD for record purposes and contact tracing purposes.
- At the end of the class/lecture, students are required to immediately vacate the venue. Students are not allowed to gather or form groups inside or outside the venue.
- Security personnel are required to monitor students at all times to ensure that they do not gather or form groups inside or outside the venue.
- Cleaning Services/personnel must be available immediately after the class/lecture ends to clean/sanitise/disinfect the venue, wipe door handles, seats and desk/tables and other frequently touched surfaces. Disinfection of venues shall take place in the morning and afternoon and in instances where venues are shared each time a new group of students occupies the venue.
- The security personnel must ensure the venue is locked and ready for the next class/lecture.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN THE VENUE

- DHET (2020:5) guidelines state that all stakeholders must ensure the physical space between one person and another person should be at least 1.5 metres at all times; 2 metres is considered safe.
- The physical space between students in the venue must be at least 1.5 metres at all times.
- The lecturer is required to ensure that the above required physical distancing is adhered to at all times.
- Facilities Management must demarcate seating in the venue to ensure that the physical distancing requirements are adhered to (viz block-off seating or mark seating, which cannot be used by students).

- A recommendation is that the HOD trains/guides lecturers and class representatives to ensure that the relevant health and safety protocols are followed in venues.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS PERMITTED IN A VENUE

- According to the DHET national guidelines (2020:7) **“large class teaching with more than 50 people in a venue is prohibited”**.
- The maximum number of students permitted in a venue is therefore 50.
- In preparation to resume contact classes, some of the Academic Departments who wanted to use venues simply divided bigger class groups into two or more groups and requested a venue change from a smaller to a bigger venue for physical distancing purposes, however there are cases where a class has 60 students in a 300 seater venue. Although this would comply with the physical distancing regulations, it still exceeds the maximum 50 which is against the DHET guidelines. A second scenario is a class group of 200 students. This group will need to be divided into four smaller groups and allocated into different periods slots. Consequently, the implications are that a lecturer will have to teach more periods on the same content and this will increase the workload. Further, should more Academic Departments decide to use the contact teaching method, this may result in a shortage of larger venues. Alternate venues should be considered and exam venues should be converted to lecture venues until we reach Lockdown level one.

CLASS RATIO FOR MAINTAINING PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN THE VENUE

- Class ratio refers to the number of students in a class versus the venue capacity. In order to maintain 1.5 metres physical distance, there is general consensus that the class ratio should be 1 is to 3, i.e. a class group with 30 students will need to be allocated in a 90 seater or bigger venue in order to observe physical distancing.

CLASS REGISTER FOR CONTACT CLASSES

- On the 30th of April 2020, Higher Health (2020:17) published guidelines on Post School Education and Training (PSET) management and response to Covid-19 outbreak; which stated that there is a need for recording attendance in classes to facilitate contact tracing of students should a need arise.
- The following mandatory procedure for class registers must be implemented:
 - Lecturer to print a class list from the ITS system which will include only registered students,
 - Ensure that only registered students are attending the class/lecture.
 - At the commencement of the class/lecture, the lecturer must take a class attendance **roll call and may not pass on the register to be completed by students.**

- Students must respond appropriately to the lecturer when class attendance roll calls are being taken to acknowledge their attendance.
- The class register is to be clearly marked with the following information: venue name, date and day and time of attendance.
- The class register is essential for tracing purposes in event of COVID-19 positive cases being identified.
- Class registers must be safely stored and easily accessible by the HOD for record purposes and contact tracing purposes.

LECTURING TIMETABLE PROCESS

- The first semester timetable is available on the University website via this link: <https://timetable.dut.ac.za/finder.xml>.
- If there is a need to make timetable changes, Timetable Coordinators are required to email their requests to the Timetabling Office (Mr Mandisi Mtshubungu - MandisiM@dut.ac.za or Mr Lucky Musawenkosi Luthuli - LuckyL@dut.ac.za).
- The timetables for 2nd semester are currently being prepared. Timetable Coordinators are therefore required to factor in a limit of 50 students per class group for contact classes (as per the DHET guidelines).
- Each Timetable Coordinator should consolidate his/her department's timetable plans and submit the following information to the Timetabling Office:
 - Clearly indicate all 2nd semester modules,
 - The number of students per class group,
 - Teaching method for each module; either online or contact class or both,
 - Number of teaching periods required.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Timetabling Office

- Drafting of the lecture timetables for the university,
- Attending to requests for timetable changes,
- Following the DHET recommended guidelines with regard to contact classes,
- Provide guidance to departments with regard to the new guidelines for timetable purposes.

Protection Services

- Opening and locking of venues,
- Ensuring social distancing outside lecture venues and on campus,
- Ensuring students and staff sanitise their hands prior to entering the venue,
- Conduct temperature checks for staff and students prior to entering the venue,
- Ensure students and staff are wearing a facemask at all times.

Academic Department

- Ensure proper record keeping and storage with regards to class registers,
- Ensure class registers have clearly marked class dates and venues names,
- Class register information will be critical for contact tracing purposes in the event of positive COVID-19 cases.

Lecturers

- Lecturer to print a class list from the ITS system which will include only registered students,
- Ensure that only registered students are attending the class/lecture.
- Using the ITS printed class list register,
- Take a **roll call** of students that are present for the class/lecture.
- The class register is to be clearly marked with the following information:
 - Venue name, date, day and time of attendance.
- Lecturers to assist with ensuring that students maintain 1.5 metres physical distancing in the lecture venue.

Facilities Management / Cleaning Services

- Responsible for sanitising and deep cleaning of the lecture venues before and after use,
- Keeping records on a daily basis of cleaning services conducted in each venue,
- Ensuring that venues are cleaned, sanitised and disinfected.
- Sanitising/disinfecting/wiping down of lift buttons, staircases and handles, door handles, etc.

Students

- Adhere to the COVID-19 guidelines for reducing the spread of COVID-19 (as indicated below “*What can I do to reduce my risk of catching coronavirus?*”).
- Students must wear a face mask at all times inside and outside the class,
- Ensure physical distancing at all times. Do not gather in groups or loiter around the campus.
- Students must respond appropriately to the lecturer when class attendance roll calls are being taken to acknowledge their attendance,
- Try to keep track of whom they have been in contact with.

DUT COVID Task Team

- Assist and provide information and guidance to staff and students with regard to all COVID-19 related matters.
- Provide scientific advice and ensure covid-19 rules and regulations are adhered to.
- Updating of the regulations for each lockdown stage.

IMPORTANT COVID-19 INFORMATION

All staff and students are reminded to complete the HealthCheck screening form before arriving on campus. The HealthCheck screening procedure must be used each day, before you arrive on campus. Please use this link to access the HealthCheck online screening form: <https://healthcheck.higherhealth.ac.za/>

For more information on the HealthCheck screening requirements, please use the web link below: <https://www.dut.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HealthCheck-Communique-Thursday-28-May-2020.pdf>

What Can I Do To Reduce My Risk Of Catching Coronavirus?

There are things you can do to help stop germs like coronavirus spreading:

1. Wear a face mask. Please remember that you must wear your face mask at all times whilst you are on campus or in public areas in residence.
2. Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds each time with soap and water or use hand sanitiser.
3. Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze. Then immediately bin the tissue, and wash your hands, or use a hand sanitiser.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
5. Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
6. Practice social distancing, reduce contact with others - no hugging and handshaking.
7. No sharing of food and beverage or containers.

COVID-19

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19



 Call the COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999
 Send 'hi' on Whatsapp to COVID-19 Connect: 060 012 3456
 Visit the website www.sacoronavirus.co.za

Refer to the DUT website for more detailed information regarding COVID-19

<https://www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus/>

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

For COVID-19 related questions and comments: covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za

Hotline and enquiries

For enquiries and advice on COVID-19, please telephone the COVID-19 Task Team's hotline during office hours on 031 373 3760 or email covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za

Protection Services (Security)

Durban campuses

- Team Leader: Mr Bonginkosi Khehla Lushaba on 0623190155 or 0780303024; the Office number is 031 373 2869
- Miss Silindile Ntombela on 060 876 3006

Midland campuses

- Team Leader: Mr Melusi Mhlongo on 072 553 9221 or at the Office on 033 845 8979
- Indumiso campus: Mr Jack Nduku on 072 311 8702
- Riverside campus: Mr Zuma on 072 586 8771

DUT Clinics are here to assist on all campuses

Durban

- Isolempilo Clinic: Steve Biko Campus, Gate 5, opposite the Sports Centre. Call 031 373 2223.
- Ritson Campus Clinic: Ritson Campus, next to the Hotel School. Call 031 373 6010.
- City Campus Clinic: City Campus, next to the Library. Call 031 373 6002.
- Brickfield Campus Clinic: Brickfield Campus, 2nd Floor. Call 031 373 3750 or 031 373 2223.

Midlands

- Indumiso Clinic: Call 033 845 8913/8966.
- Riverside Clinic: Call 033 845 8811/8812.

Mental Health Support for students:

Please contact Candice on candicel@dut.ac.za or Thokozani on thokozanis1@dut.ac.za. You can also call 031 373 2266 (Durban) or 033 845 8900/8828 (Midlands).

Please visit this webpage for more information on Student Counselling and Health at DUT: https://www.dut.ac.za/support_services/student_services_and_development/student_counselling_and_health/

Mental Health Support for Staff:

Please contact Ms Samantha Rajcoomar on rajcooms@dut.ac.za for counselling on various platforms. Or contact 031 373 2025 or email NobantuB@dut.ac.za

If you need a mask

If you're a student: Please contact your Residence Advisor if you are in res. If not in residence, please contact the Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Department on 031 373 2914/2769/2488/2245 (Durban) or contact Ms Phindiwe Yako on 033 845 8802 (Midlands).

If you're a staff member: Please contact your departmental Health and Safety Representative.

CONCLUSION

The Timetabling Office is in process of working with Academic Departments in preparation for the 2nd semester timetables. Departments are required to clearly indicate the number of students per class group, teaching method for each module; either online or contact class or both, and number of required periods. Thus, contact class guidelines are much needed as part of preparing the timetable until it is "finalised" and published on the University website.

Even though there are basic procedures currently being followed for contact classes, there is a need for institutional contact class guidelines to be developed and published. This will assist to build a common understanding across all Academic Departments, Timetabling Office and other Administrative Departments that complement teaching and learning to ensure that there is academic progress and all necessary health and safety protocols are adhered to.

REFERENCES / RESOURCES

- DUT Communiqué From DUT Covid-19 Response Task Team, 22 June 2020
- DUT University Statement, 29 May 2020, Update on University Operations
- DUT University Statement, 08 July 2020, Step-by step guide to control COVID-19 infections
- GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, 8 JUNE 2020, 4 No. 43414, Risk adjusted strategy for the COVID-19 pandemic for public and private higher education: Criteria for return to campuses
- Guidelines for Post School Education and Training (PSET) Institutions for management of and response to the COVID- 19 outbreak, 30 April 2020, HIGHER HEALTH, DHET, DOH, USAf, SACPO, NICD and SEAD (Nandi Siegfried and Tim Tucker)
- S Thakur, Draft report Supporting Facilities Manager at PSET

*Disaster Management Act 2002, Directive Dated 28 May 2020.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--|---|
| COVID-19 | A disease - usually a respiratory tract illness – caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus |
| CLASS REGISTER | A list of registered students which is printed from the ITS system |
| CLASS RATIO | Refers to number of students in a class versus the venue capacity |
| DUT | Durban University of Technology |
| DHET | Department of Higher Education and Training |
| EMC | Executive Management Committee |
| PHYSICAL DISTANCING/SOCIAL DISTANCING | Physical distancing (also known as social distancing) refers to a 1.5 meter space in between, two or more people, considered to be a safe standard to ensure that there is no physical contact and minimise the possible spread of Covid-19 |

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|--------------------|---|
| PG STUDENTS | Postgraduate students |
| PSET | Post School Education and Training |
| SARS-CoV-2 | A novel respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan China in December 2019 and responsible for a global pandemic |
| SENEX | Executive Committee of Senate |
| T&L | Teaching and learning |
| VENUE | Venue refer to a lecture venue or laboratory (As per DHET national guidelines on government gazette: volume 8, No.43414, Published on the 8th June 2020) |