

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

06 November 2020

Dear staff and students

UPDATE: COVID-19

The National Coronavirus Command Council will be meeting soon, to assess the state of the pandemic in South Africa. President Ramaphosa is expected to address the nation next week, to update us on the “State of Disaster.” Currently, SARS-CoV-2 continues to spread in our country and sadly, to claim more lives. Therefore, we urge you to please follow the public health guidelines and to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

Globally, more than 49.1 million people have now been infected – this was 45.4 million, seven days ago. Yesterday, South Africa confirmed 1866 new infections. Last night, our country was 42nd in the world for new daily infections and remains 9th in the world for total recoveries. Unfortunately, 92 people passed on in South Africa yesterday, from COVID-19 related conditions. We must work together to fight this disease. Please continue to wear your face mask, practice social and physical distancing, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, use a 70% alcohol-based hand sanitiser and regularly disinfect frequently touched surface areas.

Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

Total number of people infected:	112
Total number of staff (positive):	52
Total number of students (positive)	60
Total number of recoveries:	106 (57 students and 49 staff)
Total number of deaths:	2 (1 student and 1 staff)
Total number of active cases:	4
Total number of new infections:	3 (this week)
Number of new infections (staff):	2 (this week)
Number of new infections (students):	1 (this week)
Location of new infections: (DBN)	3
Location of new infections: (PMB)	0
Has contact tracing commenced:	Yes
Has physical disinfection commenced:	Yes

We pray for the safe return to good health for the members of the DUT community who are currently fighting this disease.

The President and his Cabinet have asked the nation to remain focused as we battle COVID-19. Following the Cabinet meeting this week, government announced that they are “concerned that some people are behaving recklessly and irresponsibly as if COVID-19 no longer exists. Cabinet calls on all people in South Africa to continue adhering to the health protocols of practising social distancing, wearing masks in public and washing our hands with water and soap or an alcohol-based sanitiser, and avoiding large gatherings. Such consistent considerate behaviour remains the greatest defence in protecting ourselves and others against the virus. Our responsible actions will ensure we minimise the rates of infections whilst we continue to rebuild our economy.” (Cabinet statement: 04 November 2020, www.gcis.gov.za)

The DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team supports Cabinet’s call for responsible and considerate behaviour in our country and we ask all DUT staff and students to help minimize the rate of infection and to save lives in South Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had physical and mental effects on a number of people. If you are experiencing depression, anxiety or any other emotional difficulties, please reach out for assistance. Free, compassionate counselling and support is available to DUT staff and students as follows:

1. If you are a **student** and need mental health support, please contact Candice on candice@dut.ac.za or Thokozani on thokozanis1@dut.ac.za for online counselling. You can also call 031 373 2266 in Durban or 033 845 8900/8828 in the Midlands.
2. Students should also visit this webpage on the DUT website for more information on Student Counselling and Health: https://www.dut.ac.za/support_services/student_services_and_development/student_counselling_and_health/
3. If you are a **staff** member, please feel free to email Samantha on rajcooms@dut.ac.za for counselling on various platforms. You can also call 031 373 2025 or email NobantuB@dut.ac.za for assistance.
4. Mental health support is available 24 hours a day to both students and staff. Please call the tollfree Higher Health national hotline on 0800 36 36 36 or SMS 43336.

To avoid congestion and delays at our campus entrances, please ensure that you always complete the **HealthCheck** online screening form **before** arriving on campus. There are three ways for you to access the online form:

- a. <https://healthcheck.higherhealth.ac.za>
- b. WhatsApp to contacts: 0600 110 000 / <https://wa.me/27600110000?text=hi>
- c. Dial in to HealthCheck tollfree on *134*832*2#

You can only proceed to enter campus when you have received the **green light** after completing the online form. Please show your device, permit and student/staff card to the campus security team at the entrance gate and you will then be given access to our campus. Kindly remember that the HealthCheck online form must be completed for each daily visit/attendance on campus.

Please view the DUT COVID-19 webpage by clicking on this link: <https://www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus/>

COVID-19 protocols are still in place at DUT

Although South Africa is currently on Alert Level 1, there is still a very strong possibility of an increase in the rate of infections. The DUT community must continue to take the COVID-19 pandemic very seriously. For this reason, we want to remind you that the following rules still apply:

- Always wear a mask on campus and in communal areas in residence.
- Please keep a minimum of 1.5 metres away from other people and avoid large groups.
- Thoroughly wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with water and soap.
- Sanitise frequently touched surface areas.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Sneeze, cough or yawn into your bent elbow, even if you are using a mask.

Thank you for your continued efforts in helping to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. We realise that the pandemic has disrupted our world. So please remain alert and do everything within your ability to stay safe, to wear your mask, to wash your hands, to protect your family and friends and to save lives...

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team
