

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

05 March 2021

Dear staff and students

DUT COVID-19 UPDATE

President Cyril Ramaphosa and the South African scientific community have repeatedly warned the nation about the emergence of a variant of the COVID-19 virus, which spreads much more easily than the original form of the virus. The 501Y.V2 variant, as it is known, is highly virulent and produces more severe illnesses. The variant has now spread across all provinces in South Africa, as well globally to many other countries.

It is for these reasons that the COVID-19 Response Task Team urges all members of the DUT community to exercise extra restraint in terms of avoiding ALL gatherings, as well as strict compliance with the preventive measures and heightened awareness, reporting and surveillance. We all need to do everything we can to prevent a deadlier third wave of the pandemic, which is predicted in the second quarter of the year.

Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

Total number of people infected:	243
Total number of staff (positive):	129
Total number of students (positive):	114
Total number of recoveries:	230 (111 students and 119 staff)
Total number of deaths:	10 (3 students and 7 staff)
Total number of active cases:	3
Number of new infections:	3 (this week)
Number of new infections (staff):	3 (this week)
Number of new infections (students):	0 (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 wish our students and staff a safe return to good health.

Why do we need to wear masks during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Scientists have discovered that masks, while not 100% effective, work against COVID-19 by significantly reducing viral transmission between people. A correctly fitting mask removes a significant number of viruses and other germs from the air that we breathe, air that could contain droplets from a person infected with COVID-19.
- In addition, wearing a mask in public is compulsory in South Africa and at DUT. Please remember that failure to do so remains a criminal act and/or disciplinary offence which could lead to serious consequences. Please be responsible and wear your face mask.

This is how to properly wear a mask

- Before leaving your place of residence, wash/sanitise your hands thoroughly.
- Check your mask for holes or tears.
- Put on your mask using the ear elastics or head ties. Avoid touching the mask itself.
- Make sure that the mask securely covers your nose, mouth and chin.
- Wash/sanitise your hands once more.
- You may now safely leave home.
- Wash or sanitise your hands throughout the day.
- Change your mask if it gets dirty or wet.
- When you return to your place of residence, clean your hands and remove the mask using the loops or ties. If the mask is clean, you can store it in a clean plastic bag. Otherwise, wash your fabric mask in hot, soapy water.
- Then wash your hands once again.

What to avoid

- Avoid buffs or masks with valves. These can actually increase the chances of spreading COVID-19.
- Do not share masks with others.
- When talking to someone, don't pull your mask down or take it off.
- Avoid touching your mask while wearing it. If you do touch it, wash/sanitise your hands thoroughly.

Remember

- A mask only works when you wear it and wear it properly.
- A mask protects you, but it also protects your loved ones, your friends, and the wider community.
- We can all be part of the solution to COVID-19 if we wear a mask and take all other necessary precautions.



This is where to find further information and advice on COVID-19

- Visit the DUT COVID-19 webpage at <https://www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus/> for further information.
- For enquiries and advice on COVID-19, please email <covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za> or telephone the DUT COVID-19 Task Team's hotline during office hours on 031 373 3760 / 2223.
- After hours, staff and students may contact 0600 123 456 (via WhatsApp); or the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) Hotline on 0800 029 999; or telephone the COVID-19 National Call Centre on 012 337 1997.
- For free, 24-hour mental health support and advice, please call the Higher Health, toll-free hotline on 0800 36 36 36 or SMS 43336.

Teaching & Learning during the pandemic

The Executive Management Committee (EMC) and the Senate Executive Committee (Senex) have confirmed that all teaching and learning at DUT will follow a blended, online, multimodal format. This will be in effect until further notice. This decision takes into account your health and safety due to the current global pandemic.

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team



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