

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

30 April 2021

Dear staff and students

DUT COVID-19 UPDATE

Sadly, it has come to the attention of the COVID-19 Response Task Team that a significant number of people in the DUT community are not complying with two of the compulsory and most effective COVID-19 precautions: to **wear a mask at all times** and to **keep a distance of 1.5 metres from other persons**.

These COVID-19 regulations were put in place by the South African government, and by DUT, for good reasons: they have been scientifically shown to drastically reduce the spread of COVID-19, a potentially deadly disease for some of us who become infected.

Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

Total number of people infected:	244	
Total number of staff (positive):	129	
Total number of students (positive):	115	
Total number of recoveries:	234	(112 students and 122 staff)
Total number of deaths:	10	(3 students and 7 staff)
Total number of active cases:	0	
Number of new infections:	0	(this week)
Number of new infections (staff):	0	(this week)
Number of new infections (students):	0	(this week)
Location of new infections: (DBN)	0	
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.

While South Africa has been enjoying lower infection and death rates recently, experts expect a third wave, or third significant resurgence in infections and deaths, in the near future. Globally, second and third waves of the COVID-19

pandemic appear more deadly. It is, therefore, a reasonable assumption to make that a third wave in South Africa could be more deadly, could lead to more severe illness, and could test the limits of our healthcare system.

It is clearly no time for us to drop our guard. In the opinion of some virologists, the record-breaking surge in COVID-19 infections and deaths currently being recorded in India is being driven partly by people relaxing their guard and failing to take precautions. The result of this and other factors was over one million positive cases recorded in just three days last week. We cannot allow this to happen in our country. Neither can we allow DUT to become a breeding ground for the virus.

It is for these reasons that the COVID-19 Response Task Team once again reminds staff and students of the **compulsory precautions** all members of the DUT community must take on campus and in residences:

- Stay 1.5 metres or more away from all other persons at all times on campus, in residence and in public.
- Wear a mask that covers your nose, mouth and chin at all times on campus, in residence and in public.
- Clean your hands by sanitising them at campus and venue entrances, and continue to wash / sanitise your hands regularly throughout the day. **Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.**

Because of the very serious risk posed by COVID-19, DUT reserves the right to impose, or cause to be imposed, the following **penalties for failure to observe the above precautions**:

- **Disciplinary action**, which could result in a fine, suspension or expulsion.
- **Criminal action**, which could result in a fine and/or a criminal record.

Please note the following important message about COVID-19 decontamination and cleaning

In line with scientific evidence, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is now discouraging the use of fogging/fumigation. Instead, after a room has been occupied by someone with COVID-19, the WHO recommends cleaning surfaces in the venue with soap and water, a bleach solution or 70 percent alcohol. This, they say, is sufficient to eliminate the virus.

DUT's dedicated COVID-19 cleaning and decontamination team will therefore no longer fog venues occupied by people with COVID-19. The team will, however, continue to clean and sanitise surfaces and touch points with 70 percent alcohol according to global recommendations.

Please observe the following daily COVID-19 protocol when coming to campus

Please be aware that only those students and staff members who have been invited to come onto campus, and who have a valid entry permit, will be granted access to campus. Registration is now closed.

1. Before coming to campus:

Please complete the **HealthCheck COVID-19 screening form** every day **before** leaving your place of residence. This form is to check for symptoms of COVID-19 and helps to prevent the disease from spreading. Please be completely honest in your responses to the questions before attempting to gain access to campus.

You can access the HealthCheck form in three ways:

- Dial HealthCheck on *134*832*2# (this is a free call).
- Go to: <https://healthcheck.higherhealth.ac.za>
- Add 0600 110 000 / <https://wa.me/27600110000?text=hi> (to your WhatsApp contacts).

If you get an **orange light** or a **red light**, please remain at your place of residence. For advice on how to proceed, please call the COVID-19 Hotline on 031 373 3760 or 031 373 2223 or email covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za or contact the DUT Student Health Clinic via WhatsApp on 067 370 4482 or 083 783 7057 during office hours. Please also keep your Head of Department, lecturer or Residence Advisor informed.

If you obtain a **green light** on HealthCheck, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, put on a mask covering your nose, mouth and chin, and proceed to campus.

2. When you reach the campus entrance, please:

- Allow the Security Officer to take your temperature. A higher than usual body temperature can be an indicator of fever, and fever can be a symptom of COVID-19.
- Show your student card, your entry permits, and your HealthCheck result to the Security Officer.
- Sanitise your hands at the entrance.
- Keep at least 1.5 metres away from other people to minimise transmission of COVID-19.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19

- If you suspect that you may be COVID-19 positive, or if you develop related symptoms, please contact the DUT Student Health Clinic via WhatsApp on 067 370 4482 or 083 783 7057 during office hours for medical advice from a professional nurse. If you live in residence, please inform your Residence Advisor immediately for advice. Please also inform your Head of Department or lecturer as soon as possible.
- If you develop severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, shortness of breath or high fever, please call the DUT Clinics as detailed above, during office hours on weekdays or call 0600 123 456 (via WhatsApp).
- Or call 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 assistance.
- If you are tested, please send your COVID-19 test results to your Head of Department or lecturer for forwarding to the COVID-19 hotline on covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za. If you have had COVID-19 and you have quarantined for 10 days, no negative test is required for you to return to campus.
- For 24-hour, toll-free mental health assistance, call the Higher Health national hotline on 0800 36 36 36 or SMS 43336.

For 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 or 031 373 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.

Teaching, learning and assessment

Please note that DUT is currently conducting blended learning and teaching, as well as assessments, remotely and not on campus. The only students who may be on campus are those who have been granted access to campus for the purposes of conducting laboratory practicals.

Finally, as a collective, we need to take joint responsibility for our own behaviour, as well as the behaviour of those close to us. If your colleague or classmate is not taking the necessary precautions, please gently remind them of the guidelines. You could be saving someone's life! Remember, a proportion of people infected with COVID-19 do not

experience any symptoms, but can still spread the disease. So please, stay safe by masking up, keeping your distance, and sanitising.

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
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