

**UNIVERSITY STATEMENT**

21 May 2021

Dear Staff and Student

**COVID-19 RESPONSE TASK TEAM UPDATE**

This week, some provinces in South Africa declared that they had entered into a third wave of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This announcement followed a concerning increase in COVID-19 infections and positivity rate. We await a formal announcement from the Minister of Health in the days ahead.

The reality is that South Africa confirmed 3641 new cases yesterday, which takes our current number of active cases in the country to 37442. We also sadly recorded 61 deaths related to COVID-19 complications. So, in case you need to be reminded, now is not the time to relax and lower your guard. Your actions will either save lives or result in the further spread of COVID-19. You are still required to wear your face mask, to wash your hands with water and soap, to observe social and physical distancing guidelines and to avoid gathering in groups, especially in confined spaces. Please abide by the public health protocols.

Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

<b>Total number of people infected:</b>	<b>245</b>	
<b>Total number of staff (positive):</b>	<b>129</b>	
<b>Total number of students (positive):</b>	<b>116</b>	
<b>Total number of recoveries:</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>(112 students and 122 staff)</b>
<b>Total number of deaths:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>(3 students and 7 staff)</b>
<b>Total number of active cases:</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Number of new infections:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(this week)</b>
<b>Number of new infections (staff):</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(this week)</b>
<b>Number of new infections (students):</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(this week)</b>

Location of new infections: (DBN)	1
Location of new infections: (PMB)	0
Has contact tracing commenced:	Yes
Has physical disinfection commenced:	Yes

As you will notice from the figures provided, we have had one new confirmed case in the DUT community this week. We hope and pray that our student who tested positive, will make a safe and successful recovery.

After completing the Sisonke clinical trial that involved the vaccination of thousands of health care workers in the country, the Department of Health commenced with South Africa's official COVID-19 vaccination programme earlier this week. All health care workers who still require vaccination, as well as everyone aged 60 and above, are now eligible for vaccination and they are encouraged to register on the official South African COVID-19 Vaccination Programme registration portal at <https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za/#/>.

For further information on South Africa's vaccination programme and national roll-out, please visit <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/vaccine-updates/>.

**Getting vaccinated**, as well as always taking the non-pharmaceutical precautions of wearing a **mask**, keeping your **distance**, and **cleaning your hands**, remain the best ways of avoiding COVID-19, and importantly, serious complications and hospitalisation.

Although incorrect information about the COVID-19 vaccines is in circulation on social media and elsewhere, vaccines have saved millions of lives and prevented much suffering throughout the world. Incorrect information can lead to people being afraid of being vaccinated.

For correct information on the vaccine, please visit the South African government's vaccine page at <https://www.gov.za/covid-19/vaccine>. Here you will find credible and accurate information about the vaccines, about South Africa's vaccination strategy and a number of vaccine myths and facts.

## It's flu season

Now that the weather is cooler, cold and flu viruses are circulating together with the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Allergies are also common at this time of year. If you develop symptoms, it might be difficult to work out which virus is causing them.

In order to avoid confusion and unnecessary pressure on the health care system, it is useful for us to understand the differences between the symptoms of allergies, the common cold, flu and COVID-19, as they can overlap substantially.

Symptoms	COVID-19	Cold	Flu	Allergies
Fever	Common	Rare	Common	Sometimes
Cough	Common (usually dry)	Mild	Common (usually dry)	Sometimes
Loss of taste/smell	Sometimes	Common	Common	Common
Shortness of breath	Sometimes	x	x	Common
Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common	Sometimes
Aches/muscle pains	Sometimes	Mild	Common	x
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes	x
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
Chills/repeated shaking	Sometimes	Rare	Common	Sometimes
Diarrhea/vomiting	Rare	x	Sometimes (in children)	x
Swollen toes	Rare	x	x	x

Runny/stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing	x	Common	Sometimes	Common

Sources: CDC, WHO, American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

Anyone who has the opportunity to have a flu vaccination is encouraged to do so. Apart from reducing confusion between flu and COVID-19, and thereby reducing pressure on our health care system, having a flu vaccination can help protect you from a highly unpleasant and potentially life-threatening illness. Those with cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS and other high-risk conditions are particularly vulnerable to complications with flu, so getting vaccinated is highly recommended.

**If you think you may have COVID-19, this is what to do**

- Remain in your place of residence.
- Contact the DUT Clinics for advice (see below).
- Inform your Residence Advisor and/or Lecturer/HOD.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Treat your symptoms, for example, take paracetamol (such as Panado) for fever and pain. Please follow the recommended dosage on the package insert.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Cover your coughs, sneezes and yawns with your elbow, not your hand.
- Stay away from other people to prevent them from becoming infected.
- If you develop a high fever, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, contact your doctor, the DUT Clinics (see below) or the COVID-19 Hotline or WhatsApp lines (see below) for assistance.
- If you do get 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](mailto:covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za).

## Important contact numbers

- **DUT Clinics:** WhatsApp 067 370 4482 or 083 783 7057 (office hours).
- **COVID-19 Hotline:** 0800 029 999.
- **COVID-19 WhatsApp** number: 0600 12 3456.
- DUT's COVID-19 Response Task Team Hotline: 031 373 3760 or 031 373 2223 (office hours), or email [covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za](mailto:covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za).

## Further information and advice on COVID-19 can be found here ...

- ➔ Visit the DUT COVID-19 webpage at <https://www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus/>
- ➔ Visit the South African government's website at <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>

## Mental health support resources for students and staff

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it is causing considerable worry, concern and fear in many people. While these emotions are completely normal under the circumstances, if you are feeling overwhelmed and need someone to talk to, the following mental health resources are available to all DUT staff and students. Speaking to a trained psychologist can help you cope. Services are strictly confidential.

### Counselling services for students

Students are invited to make a booking to speak to a psychologist or social worker by emailing [Counsbookingdbn@dut.ac.za](mailto:Counsbookingdbn@dut.ac.za) (Durban) or [Counsellingpmb@dut.ac.za](mailto:Counsellingpmb@dut.ac.za) (Midlands). Counselling is being offered online during office hours.

### Counselling services for staff

Staff are invited to contact the Employee Wellness Programme for counselling and support by emailing [ewp@dut.ac.za](mailto:ewp@dut.ac.za). Counselling is being offered online during office hours.

## 24-hour mental health support services

For 24-hour assistance, seven days a week, you can call one of the following organisations for assistance:

**Higher Health National Hotline** on **0800 36 36 36** or **SMS 43336**.

**[South African Depression & Anxiety Group](#)** (SADAG) on **0800 12 13 14**.

**[Lifeline](#)** on **086 1 322 322**.

## For assistance with dependence on alcohol and/or other substances

If you are having difficulty with alcohol and/or drug dependence, please contact

The South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (**SANCA**) on **086 11 73422**.

## Daily COVID-19 protocol at DUT

Please note 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.



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### I. Before arriving on campus:

Please complete the **HealthCheck COVID-19 online form** every day, **before** leaving your place of residence. This online form is to screen for symptoms of COVID-19 and this process 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 to contacts.

If you get an orange light or a red light, please do not proceed to campus. Instead, please call the COVID-19 Hotline on 031 373 3760 or 031 373 2223 or email [covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za](mailto:covid-enquiries@dut.ac.za) for advice on what to do. Please also keep your Head of Department, lecturer or Residence Advisor informed. If you get a **green light** on HealthCheck, **wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, put on a mask** covering your nose, mouth and chin and then leave your place of residence.

## 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/staff card, your entry permit, and your HealthCheck result to the Security Officer.
- Sanitise your hands at the entrance.
- Keep a minimum distance of 1.5 metres away from other people.
- Please avoid shaking hands, fist bumps, hugging, kissing or any close contact with other people.
- DUT has a **#NoMaskNoEntry** policy: No entry will be granted to any person not wearing a mask which is securely covering the nose, mouth and chin.

## Mandatory COVID-19 precautions at DUT

Please take the following compulsory steps to help stop the spread of COVID-19 at DUT and beyond:

- **Wear a mask** that securely covers your nose, mouth and chin;
- Maintain a minimum **distance of 1.5 metres** between yourself and any other individual at DUT; and
- Sanitise your hands at entrances to campuses and venues.

Due to the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, failure by a student or staff member on DUT premises to take the above mandatory precautions may result in disciplinary and/or criminal action, which could result in a fine, suspension, expulsion and/or a criminal record.



We urge you to stay safe and remain alert. Please, wear your mask, wash your hands, observe social distancing, avoid large groups, clean frequently touched surface areas and where possible, you should use a minimum 70% alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Remember, we have a joint responsibility to save lives and to protect the health and wellbeing of the DUT community.

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team



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