

**UNIVERSITY STATEMENT**

11 June 2021

**COVID-19 RESPONSE TASK TEAM WEEKLY STATEMENT**

Dear staff and students

South Africa's daily COVID-19 infection rate has increased dramatically this week and on Wednesday night, we reported 8881 new cases in a 24-hour period. The positivity rate on Thursday was at 16%. Whilst Gauteng is currently the epicentre of the third wave of the pandemic, we should not be complacent. We have been advising you every week to remain alert, to take this pandemic seriously and to ensure that you abide by the COVID-19 protocols at all times. But even as South Africa surpassed the 1.7 million mark for confirmed cases, infection rates may be even higher than reported.

Yesterday, South Africa reported 9149 new cases. Sadly, 100 people passed on due to COVID-19 complications. Out of 222 countries and territories, South Africa is 8<sup>th</sup> in the world for new infections, 16<sup>th</sup> in the world for new deaths linked to COVID-19 and 25<sup>th</sup> in the world for serious/critical cases. So please, continue to take this seriously and do your best to save lives and to limit the spread of the virus.

Here are the latest COVID-19 statistics for DUT:

<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF POSITIVE CASES:</b>	247
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STAFF WHO TESTED POSITIVE:</b>	130
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO TESTED POSITIVE:</b>	117
<b>NUMBER OF NEW CASES TO REPORT:</b>	1
<b>NUMBER OF NEW CASES (Students):</b>	1
<b>NUMBER OF NEW CASES (Staff):</b>	0
<b>LOCATION OF NEW CASES, DURBAN /PIETERMARITZBURG:</b>	Durban 1 & PMB 0
<b>NUMBER OF RECOVERIES:</b>	235
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF DEATHS:</b>	10 (7 staff & 3 students)
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVE CASES:</b>	1 (0staff & 1 students)
<b>HAS CONTACT TRACING COMMENCED:</b>	Yes
<b>HAS DISINFECTION OF AREAS COMMENCED:</b>	Yes

We wish our students and staff a safe return to good health.

### **A third wave**

As we informed you last week, researchers at DUT's Institute for Water and Wastewater Technology (IWWT) are conducting COVID-19 surveillance by analysing wastewater from districts around eThekweni. The team is testing wastewater to assess the level of viral matter shed by both asymptomatic and symptomatic persons infected with COVID-19. These figures contrast with the official infection statistics, which mostly reflect only persons who are symptomatic. The conclusion is that we in the eThekweni region may already be experiencing a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, even if a third wave has not yet been officially declared in KZN.

For this reason, the DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team strongly advises all DUT staff and students to avoid all gatherings and face-to-face meetings at this time. It is also critical that we take the following mandatory precautions in public; and on DUT premises at all times:

- **wear a mask** covering nose and mouth;
- remain at least **1.5 metres away** from any other person;
- and **clean your hands** at DUT entrances and regularly throughout the day;
- When indoors, please ensure as much **ventilation** as possible by keeping windows and doors open.
- **Avoid large groups** and crowds of people.

It is up to each one of us as individuals and as members of a collective to do everything within our power to avoid the further spread of the disease; to save lives – our own and the lives of our family, friends, neighbours and colleagues.

### **DUT's vaccination programme continues**

This week the DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team's vaccination programme, running in partnership with the Department of Health and King Edward VIII Hospital, continued with its roll-out. Staff and students from various departments in the Faculty of Health Sciences, as well as staff members over the age of 60, were successfully vaccinated against COVID-19.

If you are a patient-facing student or staff member from the Faculty of Health Sciences, and you wish to get vaccinated, please contact your HOD for inclusion in the vaccination campaign. Staff members over the age of 60 who wish to be vaccinated are advised to contact the Employee Wellness Programme on [ewp@dut.ac.za](mailto:ewp@dut.ac.za) for referral for vaccination - or for further information on the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

The vaccination of qualifying DUT staff and students will continue next week, by appointment only.

## What to do if you think you may have COVID-19

- Remain in your place of residence.
- Contact the DUT Clinics for advice (see WhatsApp numbers below).
- Inform your Residence Advisor and/or Lecturer/HOD.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Treat your symptoms, eg take paracetamol (such as Panado) for fever and pain.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes 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).

### **Mental health support for students and staff is just a phone call away 24 hours a day**

The COVID-19 Response Task Team appeals to all students and staff who might be feeling depressed, overwhelmed or unable to cope to reach out for help. There are several services available to you from both DUT and other support organisations 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### **Counselling services for students**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, counselling is being offered online during office hours. 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). Should you have an emergency during office hours, please email one of these addresses, or contact the 24-hour mental health support services after 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 0861 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 08611 73422.

## 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).

## For information on the COVID-19 vaccines

- <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/vaccine-updates/>
- <https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19/what-you-need-to-know-about-vaccines-in-general/>

## 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.

### 1. 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:

**ENVISION2030**

transparency • honesty • integrity • respect • accountability  
fairness • professionalism • commitment • compassion • excellence

**THE** WORLD  
UNIVERSITY  
GRADINGS  
2021 TOP 500

- 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.

**Consult these trusted sources for further information on COVID-19 and vaccination**

- ➔ Visit the South African government's website at <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>. Visit the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) at <https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19/>
- ➔ Visit the DUT COVID-19 webpage at <https://www.dut.ac.za/coronavirus/>

Finally, the COVID-19 Response Task Team wishes to once again appeal to you to please avoid all gatherings, crowded and group events and in-person meetings, until otherwise advised. Please also observe the mandatory precautions at DUT: **wear a mask** securely covering your nose and mouth; **stay 1.5 metres away from all other persons; clean your hands** frequently with soap and water or with a minimum 70% alcohol-based sanitising solution; and get vaccinated against COVID-19 when it's your turn.

Please take care, and we wish you a safe week.

Sincerely

DUT COVID-19 Response Task Team