

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

17 December 2021

Dear Staff and Students

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to interfere with normal procedures of the University, a special EMC/Senex meeting was held on 14th December 2021 to discuss a number of operational issues affecting the core business of the University in preparation of the 2022 academic year and return to campus plans.

TEACHING AND LEARNING:

DUT will continue to offer online and blended teaching and learning. Permits to access the campus will only be granted only to students who require access to practical laboratories as well as those students with conditions at home that are not conducive for learning. Students will be permitted to be on camps provided they meet the criteria of the Policy Choices on Vaccination of Staff and students, which was approved by the University Council on 4 December 2021 <https://www.dut.ac.za/dut-statement-council-decision-on-policy-choices-regarding-the-vaccination-of-staff-and-students/>.

2022 STUDENT REGISTRATION:

Registration for all students will start on Monday, 10 January until 11 February 2022 inclusive of weekends. Classes for 2022 are scheduled to commence on Monday 14 February 2022. The QG17 error for returning students has been resolved. With South Africa likely to still be facing the 4th Wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University encourages online registration for all students (new and returning). Registration timetable will be available on the DUT website soon. The link to follow for more information on online registration is: [Application and Registration Information 2022 \(dut.ac.za\)](#) . Returning and new students are encouraged to adhere to the newly approved policy choices on vaccination of staff and students that was approved by Council on 4 December 2021, <https://www.dut.ac.za/dut-statement-council-decision-on-policy-choices-regarding-the-vaccination-of-staff-and-students> .

STUDENT HOUSING:

Eligible new and returning students will be placed in University residences upon producing proof of vaccination as per choice 1 and permit to return in line with the 2022 Teaching and Learning Plan. Those students who opt for choice 2 and 3 will be barred from residences despite their eligibility to return and may continue with online learning. Residence Advisors are obliged to produce proof of vaccination for continuation of tenure.

DUT has to ensure that there is safe provision of conducive living and learning environments at all times for contact services. This can be achieved by elimination of any possible 'nosocomial infections' guaranteed through vaccination and strict adherence to non-pharmaceutical COVID-19 protocols. Thus student Housing and Res Life are not amenable to Choice 2 and 3 for successful service delivery to students.

RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND ENTREPREUNERSHIP:

DUT relies heavily on contract research and contract work based on external funding with our quad helix partners. We also have to deliver on UCDG commitments especially around staff capacity building programmes. In the entrepreneurship space there are cases where DUT's Students and Staff are expected to participate in person – both at national and international level. However, whilst more of our people are getting vaccinated, there is still the risk of the pandemic on health and wellbeing. Hence academic exchanges, travel for both international and national conferences will be permitted under certain conditions stipulated in the **COVID-19 protocols for Research, Innovation and Academic Exchanges (see Appendix I)**.

COVID-19 RESPONSE TASK TEAM:

Based on the development of new variants and growing number of infections, the DUT COVID-19 task team has developed the following for the 2022 academic year:

- Mass vaccination campaigns (including booster doses) for large cohorts of students and staff during the peak periods of possible on-campus registration, orientation and beginning of lectures.
- Routine weekly Thursday Vaccinations at the Student Health Services Clinic.
- Ad-hoc vaccinations at the King Edward Hospital.

The primary vaccination centre in Durban, will continue to be at the Steve Biko Clinic for the weekly vaccination services and the Hotel School for mass vaccination campaigns. In partnership with the wellness centres on both campuses and the departmental health and safety representatives, the COVID-19 Response task team continues to motivate and encourage vaccination among staff and students.

COUNCIL DECISION ON VACCINATION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS:

Noting a number of internal consultations with relevant structures at DUT, at its meeting held on Saturday, 04 December 2021, the DUT Council approved, with effect from 01 January 2021, the “Policy choices on vaccination of staff and students”, and we must add, alumni, visitors, and service providers. This policy affords all members of the university community their individual freedom of choice. It is predicated on the following inter-related principles, namely rights and privileges that are to be kept in balance with responsibilities and obligations and, ultimately, consequences of individual choices. As we all know, even our constitution does not accord absolute and unfettered rights, but obligations and consequences, too. The policy can be accessed on the following link: <https://www.dut.ac.za/dut-statement-council-decision-on-policy-choices-regarding-the-vaccination-of-staff-and-students/>.

DUT Management urges all staff, students, alumni and the entire university community to follow COVID-19 protocols at all times. Wear your face mask at all times in public areas, no gathering of groups and maintain social distancing. Sanitise and wash your hands at all times. Practice personal hygiene at all times.

DUT wishes you all a happy and safe festive season.

Sincerely
DUT Management



ANNEXURE I – PERMITTED CATEGORIES AND CONDITIONS FOR RESEARCHERS, INNOVATORS & ENTREPRENEURS

The following categories will be permitted under Adjusted Level I regulations, under the respective conditions as listed, and as approved by the relevant Executive. It will also be expected that staff and students applying for these categories provide additional proof with their motivation that:

- (i) they have been fully vaccinated before undertaking any international travel. This has implications for minimizing associated risks on the University should they contract the COVID-19 virus;
- (ii) that the host institution/organiser is willing to receive them and there is an invitation letter to that effect;
- (iii) they will not hold DUT liable for their falling ill from the pandemic, since the University itself is not encouraging international travel where it is possible to have virtual engagements and where there is no practical components of work involved;
- (iv) the source of the grant is confirmed and the motivation clearly indicates implications/risks associated with forfeiting the grant, e.g. NRF, European Union and Erasmus+, etc. (v) that the quarantine period is taken into account especially where short term visits are concerned (to consider value for money or avoid wasteful expenditure); long-term visits of course would be exempted from this bullet (i.e. periods of 1 month or more).

**So far, the Funders are expecting Grant Holders to commit to the funds and ensure researchers comply with the grant conditions. Motivations for these are approved on an ad hoc basis based on the grant conditions. EMC/SENEX needs to rather have an in principle approval for such cases as long as the Executive in Charge examines the motivation taking in to account all aspects and potential risks. In some cases, where it is practically impossible to travel, those funds will have to be redirected/reprioritised or forfeited as per the funder approval of the necessary motivations. DUT travel grants also not committed by the 30th of October, must be reprioritised to support other research running costs.

CATEGORIES TO CONSIDER

1. International travel based on conditions (i) – (iv) above and in line with national COVID19 regulations and DUT COVID-19 protocols;
2. National travel in line with national COVID-19 regulations and DUT COVID-19 protocols;
3. Postgraduate students and researchers who need to return to campus for research and practical work as permitted by the relevant Line Managers as long as they have proof of being vaccinated; or adhere to the newly approved policy choices on vaccination of staff and students that was approved by Council on 4 December 2021.
4. Entrepreneurial and Innovation students enrolled or undertaking practical training programmes e.g. creative and design thinking, ideation, agribusiness training, 3D printing (PLMCC and Luban Workshop) and other practical incubation sessions. This category will be limited to 50% of the venue capacity. Participants for in person sessions must show proof of **being fully vaccinated (for in person sessions)** or adhere to the newly approved policy choices on vaccination of staff and students that was approved by Council on 4 December 2021.

