

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

23 February 2024

Dear students and staff

UPDATE ON UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

It is with great concern and extreme disappointment that we address the recent events of violent protests that have erupted within our university community. The acts of violence, intimidation, threats and attacks against individuals, as well as the damage to property, are utterly unacceptable and violate the values and principles of ENVISION2030.

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) unequivocally condemns such behaviour and we want to make it clear that the university will not tolerate any form of violence on our campuses. Those who are responsible for instigating or participating in these criminal, violent acts will be held accountable to the full extent of our disciplinary measures and the law.

Earlier this morning, the Executive Management Committee (EMC) and Senate Executive Committee (Senex) met to discuss the current upsurge in violent protests and the threats to the academic project at DUT. The joint meeting agreed to the matters detailed below.

LATE REGISTRATION

The late registration period ends today, Friday 23 February 2024. However, for those students who are awaiting the outcome of their registration appeals, we urge you to please take note of our communiqué which was circulated yesterday: [Late Registration Closing Dates 2024](#).

The half (50%) of book allowances, as per the NSFAS directive, will be distributed today to those NSFAS beneficiaries who have verified their accounts, as per the recent communication.

VIOLENT PROTEST ACTION

We extend our sincere apologies to all students, staff and visitors who were adversely affected by the violent protest action this week and to those who were victims of the misinformation spread by the protest leaders.

Your safety and well-being remain our top priority and it is distressing to see this being compromised for cheap political gain, by one specific student organisation. Additionally, we want to assure the university community that the management team is actively engaged in addressing the challenges related to the release and disbursement of allowances from NSFAS. We understand the importance of these funds for our students and our Finance, Financial Aid and Student Services teams are working tirelessly to resolve any related issues. We remind those students who have been contacted already to please update their banking details.

ATTACK AGAINST STAFF, STUDENTS AND VISITORS

We regret to inform you that six of our security officers were injured during the violent protest and two were seriously injured. Even more distressing was to learn about injuries to some patients visiting our clinics used for clinical training of our Faculty of Health Sciences students. We wish our injured colleagues and visitors a safe and successful recovery. Some of the suspects linked to these horrendous acts have since been identified and they will be held responsible for their role in the violent attacks against our colleagues.

SUSPENSION NOTICES

The university has already acted and issued suspension notices to some of the identified, violent protestors. A legal process has commenced and we are determined to ensure that there is the requisite consequence management for the protestors, who are complicit in this attack against the university, our students, staff and visitors.

COUNSELLING SERVICES

We urge staff and students who were traumatized following the violent attacks and intimidation, to please consider approaching our counselling and health unit for assistance. Students can click on this link for information on support related to counselling and health: [Student Counselling and Health](#). Staff are advised to engage with Employee Wellness via Human Capital Services (HCS) at ewp@dut.ac.za or by calling 0800 004 770.

INTERIM ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Due to the threats against the safety and well-being of our students and staff, EMC-Senex has decided to implement interim online teaching and learning, until further notice. If any DUT student requires assistance with online learning, they should contact their academic department for further guidance.

DUT REMAINS OPEN

DUT is not closing. Instead, we are temporarily suspending on-campus, in-person, face to face teaching and learning, following the violent protests. Therefore, we want to reiterate that DUT is migrating to temporary, online teaching and learning.

The university is open. DUT staff will remain at their workstations/offices and colleagues are required to be on campus.

The academic calendar continues via interim online teaching and learning and there is no shutdown. DUT remains operational and our teaching and learning will temporarily migrate online.

The interim online teaching and learning will be implemented from Monday, 26 February 2024. This will be applicable, until further notice, to all programmes on the seven DUT campuses.

For those who require access to laboratories for research purposes, please liaise with your academic department to arrange specific access.

DATA FOR INTERIM ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

The ICTS unit will email all students via DUT4life with an update regarding data for students. The data will be issued for students to access interim, online teaching and learning. It must be noted that data will be provided to all students, whether they are NSFAS recipients or not.

SRC STATEMENT

We would like to emphasise that the current spate of violent protest is not sanctioned by the DUT Student Representative Council (SRC). We maintain regular communication and engagement with the SRC to address valid concerns, as we jointly work towards ensuring a conducive academic environment for all students.

Last week, the SRC issued a statement where they clearly condemned the disruption of lectures. You can read the statement here: [SRC Statement 15 February 2024](#).

It has come to our attention that a rogue element within the political student movement is responsible for these disruptive, violent protests. They are determined to undermine and compromise the safety, security and academic progress of the vast majority of students who wish to continue with their studies, uninterrupted.

COST OF REPAIR

The cost to repair the damages caused by the protestors will be paid for by what would have been the 2024 budget allocation of the student committee and/or club that was responsible for the violent attacks. Additional costs of repair will be supplemented by the budget of the relevant clubs and societies.

CONCLUSION

We urge all members of our university community to remain calm, vigilant and focused as we navigate this challenging time. We continue to encourage constructive dialogue and engagement to resolve any grievances or concerns through peaceful means.

As always, we advise you to only access university statements via our official platforms. The reality is that misinformation is often spread on social media by protest leaders to promote their nefarious intentions, so we urge you to only take note of official DUT statements published via:

- DUT PinBoard (staff email system)
- DUT4life (student email accounts)
- DUT website (under Highlights, on the homepage)
- DUT staff portal
- DUT student portal

Together, let us reaffirm our commitment to a culture of respect, accountability, non-violence and academic excellence.

Sincerely

DUT Management team