

## UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

07 May 2025

Dear staff and students

### UPDATE ON CAMPUS OPERATIONS, SECURITY AND NSFAS ALLOWANCES

Members of the Executive Management Committee (EMC) and the Senate Executive Committee (Senex) convened to deliberate on campus operations following recent violent protests in Durban.

The University is very concerned by the violent protests and disruptions caused this week. Whilst we understand the concerns related to the payment of allowances to qualifying students, there is no need for protestors to invade campus, disrupt operations, damage property, threaten and intimidate staff, students and guests. We thank our Protection Services Unit and the law enforcement agencies for their help to stabilise the situation and secure the campus.

### VIOLENT PROTESTS

There is a group of approximately 50 masked individuals who are central to the chaos, violence and disruptions. Yesterday, the protesting mob fired two gunshots and also attacked and injured security officers. This is unacceptable and cannot be condoned. Law enforcement officers recovered two spent cartridges on the scene at the ML Sultan campus and the police retained the used ammunition as evidence. The university reminds all staff, students and guests that weapons are not allowed on campus.

Earlier today, the protestors resumed their violent protest and injured a staff member. Police arrested one of the attackers after she was successfully identified. We apologise to our colleagues and students who were affected by the protests and traumatised by the violence and intimidation. Equally disturbing was the negative impact on students who were writing tests and having assessments that were disrupted by protestors.

### ALLOWANCES

It must be noted that by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) deadline of 02 April 2025, DUT had successfully uploaded 23464 registration templates to the NSFAS system. An additional 634 templates were uploaded on 03 April 2025, as the system remained open on that day. However, after 03 April 2025, a further 1037 registration templates could not be submitted due to the closure of the NSFAS system.

During a meeting held on 11 April 2025 between NSFAS and the Financial Aid Practitioners of South Africa (FAPSA), attendees were informed that the closure of the system was due to budgetary constraints. This was already confirmed by Mr Thilivhali Mukondeleli, the NSFAS Senior Manager responsible for university support, during his communication on 02 April 2025.

On 25 April 2025, DUT submitted a memorandum to NSFAS, as per their request, outlining the valid reasons for the delay in registering a total of 1671 students. However, no response or acknowledgement has been received from NSFAS to date.

These are the reasons we provided for the delay in submitting the registration template of 1671 students:

1. Students whose appeal outcomes, from NSFAS, came after the closure of the system.
2. Late confirmation of the lease agreements from Xiquel Group, NSFAS accredited company, for students in Private Accommodation.
3. Students whose funding applications were finalised by NSFAS.
4. Students flagged as duplicate registration by NSFAS because they are registered at more than one institution.

NSFAS had indicated that allowances would be paid to the university on Friday, 02 May 2025, however, payment was only received on Tuesday, 06 May 2025. Once the funds were received, the university processed the payment of allowances to qualifying students. This ensured that the payment of allowances to qualifying students was within the accepted time-frame of the 7<sup>th</sup> day of each month.

## COMMUNICATION TO AFFECTED STUDENTS

On Monday 05 May 2025, the Financial Aid Unit communicated directly with the 1671 affected students (1037 not uploaded and 634 uploaded late), informing them of their exclusion from the May allowance payment and providing a clear explanation. Regrettably, this communication was subsequently circulated on social media platforms and resulted in NSFAS issuing a public statement, without first engaging with, or responding to, DUT's memorandum dated 25 April 2025.

We are disappointed that NSFAS apportioned blame, without liaising with DUT to seek further clarity. However, we will continue to actively reach out to NSFAS to resolve the misunderstanding and to clarify the facts related to the payment of allowances for qualifying students.



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## CAMPUS OPERATIONS

Considering the violent protests this week and the resultant concern for the safety and security of staff, students and guests, the university will **temporarily suspend all academic activities**, on all seven campuses, from **Thursday, 08 May 2025**. The residences will remain open. The **university is not closed** and staff will remain at their workstations. The DUT Open Week exhibition for high school learners will continue on the Steve Biko campus this week.

Please note that the **academic programme** for all seven campuses will **resume on Monday, 12 May 2025**.

The university reminds all staff and students to only rely on official statements and communiqués that are published on the DUT website and/or via the university's internal communication platforms, which includes the DUT PinBoard (staff email system) and DUT4life (student email account).

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