



## COMMUNIQUÉ TO THE CUT COMMUNITY

### FOLLOW-UP: MEASURES IMPLEMENTED RELATED TO THE COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS

18 MARCH 2020

2020 #7

#### Dear CUT Community

My communiqué of 16 March 2020 has reference. The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation announced that “*all post-school institutions will be closed for early recess with effect from tomorrow, the 18th March 2020*”. They will reopen after the Easter weekend, on April 15”. “*This is not a shutdown of universities, but it is an early recess, which in the main means the suspension of academic activities and lectures*”. This is in line with our earlier decision that the recess commenced on Wednesday, 18 March 2020.

As the CUT community, we are committed to work together in solidarity and unity to restrain the spread of the COVID-19 (the coronavirus). As you may be aware, and as communicated by our government and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), we are now in the *containment phase* of COVID-19 (the coronavirus), and all of us should practice social distancing, to minimise the spread of the virus in our joint commitment to reduce the risk related to the *community transmission phase*.

**With this in mind, Management, in collaboration with the CUT Incident Management Task Team (IMTT) related to COVID-19, consisting of all stakeholders and experts at the university, agreed on the following measures with immediate effect:**

- ❖ The recess period of 18 to 29 March 2020 is extended until Tuesday, 14 April 2020, and the university will reopen on 15 April 2020, at this stage.
- ❖ All contact sessions for undergraduate students, and students in the Advanced Diplomas, Honours and Postgraduate Diploma programmes, which include lectures, tests and laboratory-based work, are suspended for this period.
- ❖ All university residences are to be vacated by Saturday morning, 21 March 2020, at the latest. Students that are unable to vacate due to financial restrictions should please contact the Registrar.
- ❖ The academic activities for all students will commence online from Monday, 30 March 2020 until Tuesday, 14 April 2020. Lecturers will engage with students via eThuto, and students should please access the learning platform regularly. This is an attempt to be proactive and to ensure that we use the extended recess time effectively, due to the uncertainty related to the rest of the 2020 academic year. We are aware that some of our students may not have online access. Telkom has already declared zero rated data, which means that Telkom users can access eThuto via [www.cut.ac.za](http://www.cut.ac.za) for free. Attempts are ongoing to bring the other data companies on board soonest.
- ❖ Work-integrated learning programmes may be suspended by either the employer or the student, in consultation with the relevant faculty.

- ❖ Masters' and doctorate students may continue with their research activities, on condition that they are never more than five (5) persons in a group or a laboratory. The Supervisors and Promoters of M & D students should ensure that measures are implemented to protect the safety and well-being of this cohort of students.
- ❖ These arrangements will have an impact on the operations of the university. In order to minimise the risks, all staff will work flexy hours, or where possible from home, during the periods of 19 to 20 March 2020; and 30 March 2020 to 14 April 2020, to allow staff to continue supporting our students with the online academic activities, while practicing social distancing. The relevant Line Managers will guide these work arrangements.
- ❖ Related to the period of 23 to 27 March 2020, and contrary to what was communicated in my communiqué of 16 March 2020, special leave will now also be granted to all staff for this period, which will be processed by the Human Resources Department. During this period (23 to 27 March 2020), the campuses will undergo a deep cleaning and disinfection of all buildings. All employees are requested to ensure that their working spaces and offices are cleared, and that valuables and personal belongings are stowed away. The latter also has reference to confidential documents. Essential services of the university, such as Protection Services, will continue during the week of 23 to 27 March 2020.
- ❖ At this stage, the June main assessments and the sickness, special and reassessments will be postponed, which will most probably affect the July recess period. The revised dates will be communicated at a later stage.

Please note that the above-mentioned is dependable on the situation related to COVID-19. The university continuously enhances and updates our Business Continuity Planning (BCP) to ensure that we have sufficient strategies in place to tackle this threat and the risks facing our CUT community and the country. We will continue to meet with all role-players during this period to assess the situation. Further communication related to the arrangements from 15 April 2020 and onwards will be communicated as we assess the situation.

**The following measures declared in my communiqué of 16 March 2020, are reiterated:**

- ❖ To place an embargo on inbound and outbound international travel by staff, students and visitors, effective from 16 March 2020 until the end of June 2020.
- ❖ In line with the national call, all national events related to conferences, seminars, symposia, workshops and events to be hosted by the university that will result in inbound visitors, will be cancelled, effective from 16 March 2020 until the end of June 2020.
- ❖ To postpone the autumn graduation ceremonies that were scheduled to take place from 17 to 22 April 2020 to a date later in the year, which is still to be determined. The Registrar will engage with the graduates on how to access their graduation certificates.
- ❖ To enhance our stringent hygiene measures implemented across our campuses, including residences, lecture halls, laboratories, offices and ablution facilities.
- ❖ To place students and staff who have travelled to high-risk countries since 14 February 2020 into self-quarantine for a 14-day period, and, if some of the symptoms are detected, such individuals are required to undergo compulsory testing. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation identified the high-risk countries on 17 March 2020 as Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, Germany, the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Switzerland and the People's Republic of China. This decision will be implemented by the

relevant Line Managers who are 16.2 appointees in line with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

- ❖ We have already initiated immediate and ongoing communication with CUT students who are currently on exchange programmes abroad, and further measures will be implemented, where required.
- ❖ Our Communications Strategy will be further strengthened, and the awareness campaign embarked upon amongst the CUT community on how to prevent the spread of the virus, and to ensure the well-being of all, will be further enhanced.

Furthermore, both the Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses' Primary Healthcare Clinics are on high alert, and have implemented all actions prescribed by the National Department of Health (NDoH) as well as the Free State Department of Health. Affected and infected students and employees are to find assistance immediately. **What to do if you suspect you are infected with the coronavirus:**

- ❖ Report it to the National hotline: 080002999
- ❖ Report to your doctor, clinic or nearest medical facility. The preferred method is to do so via a phone call.
- ❖ If you are unable to reach any of the above, contact ER24 at 084124.
- ❖ Medical facilities around Mangaung are: MediClinic, Rosepark, Universitas, Pelonomi, Busamed or local clinics.
- ❖ Medical facilities around Welkom are: MediClinic, Bongani Hospital, or local clinics.
- ❖ Notify your line manager at CUT via phone. Do not physically engage.
- ❖ Consult the CUT Information hub on coronavirus: <https://www.cut.ac.za/coronavirus>

As the health and well-being of our staff and students are our highest priority at CUT, we remain confident that these additional measures, which include minimising physical contact with other people, will assist to contain the spread of this virus.

Please take care of your general well-being. I trust that you will respond positively to these additional measures, and that we as the CUT Team, in collaboration with our fellow South Africans and international students, will overcome this crisis.

May you all be blessed! E se e ka Ramasedi a ka le hlohonolofatsa! Mag julle almal geseënd wees!

**Prof. Henk de Jager**

Vice-Chancellor and Principal  
(18 March 2020)