

**Subject:** COVID-19 UPDATE 42 – THE PHASED RETURN OF STUDENTS AND STAFF TO CAMPUSES

**Date:** Monday, 17 August 2020 at 17:16:14 South Africa Standard Time

**From:** Shirona Patel on behalf of VCO News

**To:** VCO News

Dear Colleagues and Students

Over the weekend President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that South Africa would be moving to a level 2 lockdown from midnight, on 17 August 2020 (tonight), but warned that whilst we are making progress in reducing infections, we still need to be cautious, and to work remotely as far as possible. He also indicated that the country has the fifth-highest number of infections globally, and that there is a chance of a resurgence of the disease.

In his weekly newsletter, he added: “We now need to manage this risk and ensure that the gains we have made thus far in containing the pandemic’s spread are not reversed. The greatest threat to the health of our nation right now is complacency.”

### **Phased return of students and staff**

In the wake of the President’s announcement and other government directives, including the prohibition of gatherings of more than 50 people, the prevention of international travel, and the need to maintain social distancing, the University is carefully planning for the phased return of specific cohorts of students and staff to our campuses over a period of time. Other considerations, including our infrastructure, residence and services capabilities, will inform the phased reopening plan.

***It is envisaged that we will continue with an expanded hybrid model (contact and online teaching). Faculties, Schools and Divisions are currently determining exactly which cohort of students and staff will be required to return, and by when. This will be shared with the University community within the next ten days, along with the recalibrated 2020 almanac. For now, the academic programme continues as is.***

### **No room for complacency**

Whilst lockdown restrictions may be relaxed, the coronavirus will still be with us for many months to come. Wits’ protocols remain in place, and only students and staff with the requisite permits and permissions will be allowed entry to campuses.

Remember to always:

- complete the online screening every day via the Wits Screening App before entering campus,
- wear a cloth mask over your face and nose (and the relevant PPE in special contexts),
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth,
- practise physical distancing from others,
- wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds, and dry them properly,
- cough or sneeze into your elbow, and
- sanitise surfaces on a regular basis.

Access more resources, posters and videos via this link: <https://www.wits.ac.za/covid19/wits-resources/>.

Please take care of yourself and your loved ones.

**SENIOR EXECUTIVE TEAM**

**17 AUGUST 2020**