

**Subject:** COVID-19 UPDATE 44 – THE MOVE TO LEVEL TWO

**Date:** Friday, 28 August 2020 at 16:33:03 South Africa Standard Time

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

**To:** VCO News

Dear Colleagues

We have reached level 2 of the national lockdown and although infection rates are declining, the virus is still circulating. Please continue to [observe all COVID-19 protocols](#) (social distancing, wear a mask, no large gatherings and sanitise or wash your hands regularly and properly).

This week, Dr Blade Nzimande, the Minister of Higher Education and Training in a [speech](#) stipulated that universities are allowed to bring back up to two thirds of staff and students to campuses. In light of this announcement, the Senior Executive Team has agreed to allow more students and staff to return, as per the University's phased reopening plan.

### Implications for Students

In keeping with the new regulations and to ensure that we comply with the health and safety protocols set out in the amended Disaster Management Act and Regulations, some faculties will invite carefully selected cohorts of students to return to campus, to participate in a combination of contact and online teaching and learning programmes. Please check your student emails regularly for communication from your faculty. Should you not be invited to return to campus, please continue with online learning from home.

The resumption of some services will commence in a phased in manner, in line with the University's return to campus plans.

Students who are unable to study from home for various reasons may be brought back to residences on social justice grounds. The Dean of Student Affairs is managing this process carefully, as only two thirds of Wits' residences are allowed to be occupied, with the requisite social distancing and other protocols in place. Applications from students who applied to return are being carefully considered given the limited number of beds available and in compliance with health and safety protocols. Invitations to return will be issued during the course of next week.

### Implications for Staff

Employees, in consultation with their line managers, will continue to work from home where appropriate, and will return to campus if they are requested to do so by their line manager.

### Updated Term Dates

The latest [2020 term dates](#) and [2021 term dates](#) have been published.

### 2020 Term Dates

Activity	Date	Number of weekdays
Third and Fourth Teaching Blocks (including Faculty specific requirements which may mean curriculum covered in shorter or more extended period / mid-term break / field trips /study break / boot camps and labs)*	13 Jul-23 Oct	77 Days
Study Break / Extended teaching period in Science / Field trips / Boot camps	26 Oct-30 Oct	5 Days
Assessment period 1 **	02 Nov-27 Nov	20 Days
Assessment period 1 Science only	09 Nov-27 Nov	15 Days
Vacation	16 Dec	
* Academic calendar may be extended to allow for faculty specific additional teaching period as well as academic support for those cohorts of students identified by faculties so that they are eligible to be assessed in assessment period 2		
** Sit down and online assessments (to be determined by faculty)		

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**2021 Term Dates (including conclusion of 2020 academic calendar)**

The complete 2021 Almanac will be published in the coming weeks.

Activity	Date	Number of weekdays
Assessment period 2 (will include supplementary and deferred assessments)	11-25 Jan	11 Days
New and returning postgraduate student registration and orientation	15-19 Feb	5 Days
Term starts for new and returning postgraduate students	22 Feb	
Returning undergraduate students registration	22-27 Feb	6 Days
Welcome Day	28 Feb	
First year online and one-stop-shop registration and orientation	01 -05 Mar	5 Days
Term starts for undergraduate returning and first year students	08 Mar	
<b>Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Faculty of Health Sciences' term dates differ from those of the University and they may commence with lectures as early as the first working day in January.</li><li>Consult the University's website for more detailed information about dates of registration for different cohorts of students.</li></ul>		

**Number of COVID-**

**19 infections**

Two staff members and ten students reported testing positive for COVID-19 during the past week. These include staff members who are working from home. Affected staff members and students are self-isolating in line with government directives and University protocols.

No. of infections	21 – 28 August 2020	22 June – 28 August
Staff	2	98
Students	10	177

***The data provided in the table is based on the number of infections reported to the OHSE Office and the Campus Health and Wellness Centre.***

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of two staff members this week – Ms Gugulethu Khumalo, an employee in the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, and Ms Simangele Betty Nzima from the Services Department.

Ms Khumalo joined Wits in 2019 and assumed responsibility for all faculty-related academic administration for the School of Mining Engineering. She was well-known for her methodical approach to her work and her excellent organisational skills. Her integrity earned her the trust of her colleagues in a very short time and they recall how easily she integrated into the Wits environment. Prior to joining Wits, she worked at the University of Johannesburg in various positions.

Ms Nzima served Wits since 2014 and worked at the Wits Junction Residence Complex for almost six years until her untimely death. She was passionate about her duties and often assumed a motherly role as she cared for her colleagues and students. She enjoyed working as part of a team, was high-spirited and joyful, and enjoyed listening to ballads and gospel music. She is survived by her three sons and her extended family.

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of these colleagues. May they rest in peace.

**SENIOR EXECUTIVE TEAM**

**28 AUGUST 2020**