

**Subject:** COVID-19 UPDATE 45 - POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS – ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Date:** Friday, 04 September 2020 at 16:43:06 South Africa Standard Time

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

**To:** VCO News

## **MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE TEAM**

### **Dear Colleagues**

We hope that you are well and healthy, and enjoying the return of the warm weather. As we prepare for the phased return of selected cohorts of students (as invited by faculties or the Dean of Students) and some employees (as requested by line managers), it is important for all members of the Wits community to be aware of Wits' latest COVID-19 policies and protocols as explained below.

Please remember that you should only return to campus if you receive an invitation and permit from your faculty or line manager. In the case of residences, the Office of the Dean of Students will issue invitations and permits for some students to return in this phase, in line with government regulations. If you do not receive an invitation to return to residence by Sunday evening, please continue with the academic programme online from home. Your name will remain on a waiting list and you will be notified as soon as space becomes available, or when the next phase commences.

### **COVID-19 Infections**

Two staff members and four students reported testing positive for COVID-19 during the past week. These include staff members who are working from home. This is out of a population of approximately 5 500 permanent staff and 37 500 students. Affected staff members and students are self-isolating in line with government directives and University protocols.

<b>No. of infections</b>	<b>28 Aug – 3 Sept 2020</b>	<b>Total Infections</b>
Staff	2	100
Students	4	181

### **The passing of Mr Themba Tshabalala**

We lost another long-standing member of the Wits community this week. We learnt earlier this week about the passing of Mr Themba Tshabalala, a Library Assistant at the Commerce Library. He will be sorely missed by all who interacted with him in the libraries and the greater Wits community. Mr Tshabalala has served Wits for over 22 years in various capacities. He joined the Wits Health Sciences Library in 1996 and was appointed as an Administrative Assistant in the Library's Finance and Administration Department in 1999, before taking up the post of Library Assistant in the Commerce Library in 2011. On behalf of the Wits community, we extend our heartfelt condolences to his friends and family, and those who knew him well. May he rest in peace.

### **SENIOR EXECUTIVE TEAM**

**4 SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **WITS' COVID-19 POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS**

The Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Management Directorate (OHS&E) would like to remind all staff and students of the approved [Wits COVID-19 policy](#), [Emergency Response Plan](#) and other associated protocols.

## 1. Risk assessment

- All managers, Heads of Schools (HoS), Section 16.2 Assignees, Directors and Supervisors (as appropriate) must complete a COVID-19 risk assessment for their respective School or entity and implement the necessary risk mitigation measures before the return of staff and students to their respective entities. A copy of the risk assessment must be sent to the School or Unit's respective OHS&E Officer. [Guidelines](#) to carry out the risk assessment are available from the OHS&E Directorate.

## 2. Relevant Forms

A [Reporting Form for Employees](#) must be completed for every staff member that contracts COVID-19, irrespective of whether the employee is working from home or on campus. The completed form must be sent to Jo-Anne Zastrau via [Dept-OHS-Admin@wits.ac.za](mailto:Dept-OHS-Admin@wits.ac.za). This form has prompts indicating which other University entities should be notified.

A [Reporting Form for Students](#) must be completed for every student that contracts COVID-19. This form can also be obtained from [Anna.Moloi@wits.ac.za](mailto:Anna.Moloi@wits.ac.za) from the Campus Health and Wellness Centre and must be returned to her once completed.

Line Managers and/or Supervisors are expected to investigate an infection incident involving an employee or student from their respective entity if the infected person was on the University's premises 10 days prior to being positively diagnosed. The infected person's HoS, Section 16.2 Assignee, Director or Supervisor must, during such an investigation, attempt to ascertain whether contraction of the virus arose out of or in the course of employment or during student activities while on the University's Precincts. They must complete the [COVID-19 Investigation Form](#) and send a copy of the completed form to the relevant OHS&E Officer. The form also includes prompts indicating which other University entities should be notified.

If an infected employee was on campus within a period of 10 days prior to being positively diagnosed and if there is evidence to suggest that the employee contracted COVID-19 arising out of and in the course of employment, then the infected person's HoS, Director, Supervisor or Section 16.2 assignee must fill in a [WCL1 form](#) and any other documents and send these to [Ntabiseng.Nzimande@wits.ac.za](mailto:Ntabiseng.Nzimande@wits.ac.za) and copy [Dept-OHS-Admin@wits.ac.za](mailto:Dept-OHS-Admin@wits.ac.za) so that the infection can be formally reported to the Compensation Commissioner.

## 3. Reporting Infections

- In order to manage infections, maintain record-keeping and fulfil all University and legislative and regulatory requirements, certain entities at the University must be informed about staff and student COVID-19 infections. These persons or entities may include, but are not limited to:

- The Line Manager or Supervisor must immediately be notified by the employee or student to enable the notification of other University entities and to investigate infection incidents;
- The Line Manager or Supervisor will inform the Human Resources Officer, Manager or Course Co-ordinator of the entity in which the person is employed or studies (to assist

with leave of absence arrangements and follow up);

- In the case of student infections, the Campus Health and Wellness Centre (CHWC) is to be notified by the Line Manager or Supervisor and/or the infected person in order to facilitate isolation arrangements if necessary, to record the infection and to follow-up with the infected person, as well as to provide information about isolation and quarantining. Student infections must be reported using the [student reporting form](#) and must be sent to CHWC via [anna.moloi@wits.ac.za](mailto:anna.moloi@wits.ac.za);
- In the case of staff infections, the OHS&E Directorate is to be notified by the Line Manager or Supervisor and/or the infected person using the employee reporting form. The OHS&E Directorate records infections in a central register and uses the information to report work-related infections to the relevant authorities (such as the Department of Employment and Labour, insurers and the Compensation Commissioner).
- Campus Protection Services is to be notified by the Line Manager or Supervisor and the CHWC to ensure that adequate access controls are implemented (i.e. CPS temporarily blocks the infected person's access card while the person completes the obligatory isolation or quarantine period and the card remains blocked until the recovered persons comply with the requirements to be permitted to return to Campus);
- Course coordinators in Schools (such as in the Faculty of Health Sciences) should be informed to facilitate the learning and/or tracking and isolation arrangements of infected and/or affected students;
- For students and staff in residences, Residence Managers should be notified in order for isolation or quarantine arrangements to be made.
- Cleaning services should be contacted in all instances where buildings and/or sections within buildings may potentially have been contaminated by an infected person and/or persons experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. The Services Directorate has a cleaning plan that can be obtained from the Director: Services by emailing [Israel.Mogomotsi@wits.ac.za](mailto:Israel.Mogomotsi@wits.ac.za).

#### **4. Confidentiality**

The above designated individuals and those who may be designated to manage operations and who have access to information about an infected person, must keep such information confidential.

#### **5. COVID-19 Symptoms**

In the event that a person on Campus experiences COVID-19 symptoms, this information must also be disclosed to the relevant Line Manager, Supervisor, Course Coordinator, the Campus

Health and Wellness Centre, Residence Manager or Campus Protection Services either by the affected employee or student or by any person observing such symptoms (this requirement is not only confined to positively diagnosed persons). The person must be isolated and the protocol for the management of COVID-19 events must be followed. A copy of this protocol can be obtained from Jo-Anne Zastrau by emailing [Dept-OHS-Admin@wits.ac.za](mailto:Dept-OHS-Admin@wits.ac.za).

## **6. Contact tracing**

- In the event that an infected or suspected infected person may have been in close contact with other persons on Campus, then efforts will be made by the University to trace or determine (with the assistance of the infected individual) whether any other persons were potentially exposed. It will be expected that the relevant entity or School in which such an infected person functions will assist in the tracing process. The University will contact any affected employee or student and inform them of the potential exposure so that they may take the necessary precautionary measures. The name of the employee or student that is suspected to be infected with the virus must not be disclosed.

## **7. Return to Campus Readiness Plan**

- The Human Resources team have developed a comprehensive Return to Campus Readiness Plan, which can be obtained from the Senior Director: Human Resources via [Kgomotso.Kasonkola@wits.ac.za](mailto:Kgomotso.Kasonkola@wits.ac.za).

## **8. Wits COVID-19 webpage**

An informative [COVID-19 webpage](#) reflects Wits' protocols as well as other useful COVID-19 information and [resources](#). Please read and share this content as appropriate.

## **9. COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan**

The latest version of the Wits [COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan](#) is available online and all entities must be aware of the content of this document.

## **10. COVID-19 Awareness Presentation:**

View the informative [COVID-19 Awareness Presentation](#) online.

### **CONTACT THE OHS&E OFFICE**

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the OHS&E Directorate via Jo-Anne Zastrau at [Dept-OHS-Admin@wits.ac.za](mailto:Dept-OHS-Admin@wits.ac.za) or the Director of OHS&E, Jonathan De Villiers via [Jonathan.DeVilliers@wits.ac.za](mailto:Jonathan.DeVilliers@wits.ac.za).

Thank you