



Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor

17 March 2020

Dear Student

RE: UNISA'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The university has been running a digital awareness campaign in the past weeks to empower staff and students to improve our hygiene in a bid to mitigate against the spread of the Covid-19 virus in our spaces.

As you know, the Government, in response to the rapid spread of the virus both nationally and internationally, announced drastic measures to help the country respond as comprehensively as possible to the Covid-19 pandemic. In line with this directive, the Management Committee (ManCom) has resolved to put in place special occupational health and safety measures to, amongst others; regulate university activities and events to mitigate against the possible spread of the Covid-19 virus as well as give effect and meaning to the measures adopted by Government in relation to the response to the spread of Covid-19.

The following are the key decisions taken by university management in this regard:

- All graduation ceremonies have been suspended until further notice.
- All shuttle services will be discontinued immediately.
- Gatherings of more than 100 persons on all university premises are prohibited, including visits to the Unisa Art Gallery.
- Students are strongly advised to study from home and are encouraged to submit their assignments online.
- All training sessions, especially of large groups, must stop immediately.
- All staff at the Department: Student Admissions and Registration (DSAR), security guards, cleaners and library staff at the front desk are directed to immediately wear masks and gloves, as they are rolled out and become available.
- All local and international travel is banned, unless special permission is granted by the Principal and Vice Chancellor.
- Any student or member of staff of the university and/or any person performing any function or rendering a service to the university and who has travelled internationally in the past three months is required to obtain and submit a medical certificate clearing such person of any infection of Covid-19 to the Executive Director/Executive Dean of the department or college in which such a person is involved with or rendering a service.

- Any student or staff member who may have been exposed to the risk of infection with Covid-19 and who will be required to attend to a mandatory 14-day period of observation may not attend any event or function of the university and/or report for duty.
- A service provider whose employees operate from the premises of the university may not allow such member(s) to be on university premises if such an employee is required to undergo a mandatory 14-day period observation period and/or there is a reasonable suspicion that such an employee was exposed to a risk of infection and/or is undergoing treatment.
- **Restaurants:** Only take-aways will be permitted and staff and students are strongly advised to maintain social distance.
- **Library services:** Social distance must be maintained at the seating and queuing environment and libraries will be open from 08h00 – 16h00 weekdays only.
- **Examinations:** The university is urgently looking at solutions in relation to health and safety measures at examination venues. These will be communicated once the logistics have been concluded.
- Staff and students are advised that the Muckleneuck Clinic (Unisa Main Campus) is not a designated testing facility; and are advised to go to Lancet laboratories, Steve Biko Hospital, Tembisa Hospital or Netcare for testing once symptoms of the virus appear.
- Staff wishing to access the services of Finance, Human Resources and Student and Admissions and Registration departments are directed to engage these departments electronically. These departments will be restricted to relevant staff members only.
- Staff who are marking scripts or developing tutorial material may work from home in agreement with and under electronic supervision of their line managers. The authority to determine the categories of staff who may not be required at their work stations or to work from home and/or from any other place for any given period as part of measures to mitigate the risk of infection lies with the Vice Principal: Operations and Facilities and the Vice Principal: Institutional Development, who may consult ManCom in determining such categories.

Further to these measures, the university has also established a high-level Special Health Coordinating Committee to coordinate all activities in terms of these measures, which is comprised of designated members of executive management, representatives of Organised Labour and the Senate Executive Committee.

Our collective effort as fellow Unisans and compatriots is going to be critical if we are to succeed in preventing and combatting this pandemic which is gripping the entire world.

I therefore urge all of you to give your full support and co-operation to the measures adopted by the university and our Government in relation to the Covid-19 virus.

Yours sincerely



Prof MS Makhanya
Principal and Vice Chancellor