

28 June 2021

MEASURES IMPLEMENTED DURING ADJUSTED LEVEL 4 OF THE NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

The announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 27 June 2021 that the country will move to an adjusted Level 4 of the national lockdown for the next two weeks – as from 28 June 2021 until 11 July 2021 – was welcomed by the management of the University of the Free State (UFS). The severity of COVID-19 – particularly the highly contagious Delta variant and the third wave that the country is currently experiencing – has affected the university community in many ways.

Safety, health, and well-being remain the university management's primary concern; for this reason, mitigation strategies were put in place on 13 May 2021 to curb the spread of the pandemic. However, it has now become imperative to introduce further measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) of the university met today, and the following measures were implemented with immediate effect and until further notice:

1. ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

1.1 Mid-year examination

The UFS is currently in the last phase of the face-to-face (F2F) mid-year examination, which is scheduled to be concluded by the end of this week (2 July 2021), if not already completed. The majority of students are writing online examinations or assessments, with a small number of students writing face-to-face exams.

The F2F examinations yet to be completed this week will continue with the necessary COVID-19 protocols firmly in place and will be concluded by 2 July 2021. Online examinations and continuous online assessments will continue as planned.

Alternative arrangements are being made for the writing of the additional and ad hoc examinations; this will in most cases take place after 12 July 2021 when the second semester commences.

Further detail will be provided to students by the respective faculties as it becomes available.

1.2 Clinical training, service learning and community engagement activities

These training activities will continue as normal as they are seen as essential services and is mostly limited to the Faculties of Health Sciences and Law.

1.3 Use of library, computer laboratories and 24-hour study venues

All libraries, computer laboratories, and the 24-hour study venues will remain open during this week for the purpose of the examination and will close on 2 July 2021 until further notice. No on-campus ICT support will be available from this week until further notice; the Helpdesk can be contacted in this regard on 051 401 2000.

2. STAFF

Line managers are encouraged to allow staff who can work from home during adjusted lockdown Level 4 to do so, and to only request staff to work on campus if absolutely necessary, except for staff who cannot perform their work remotely. This will be applicable to all *essential services staff, and support staff who render administrative services in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

***Essential services:** University Estates, Clinic, Kopsie Health, Housing and Residence Affairs, internal catering delivery services, ICT Services, Procurement and Stores, Protection Services, Financial Aid and Card Division.

No F2F meetings of more than **four persons** are permitted, with proper distancing.

3. ON-CAMPUS RESIDENCE ACCOMMODATION

Students living in on-campus residences will not be required to evacuate their respective residences during this time (including the mid-year recess period). Those students who will remain in the residences must apply to the Department of Housing and Residence Affairs (HRA) as per the normal procedure and with reference to communication already sent to them by HRA.

Link for applications: https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider32/housing-and-residence-affairs-documents/2020/junior/application-form---holiday-accommodation.pdf?sfvrsn=d1286d20_2

Kindly send completed applications forms to: <mailto:ResApplications@ufs.ac.za>

4. CAMPUS ACCESS PERMITS

No new campus access permits will be issued to any student during this time, as current permits are valid until 31 July 2021. The students concerned do have access to the campus as per the blended learning plan, as released for F2F teaching and examination.

5. SECURITY AND CAMPUS ACCESS

Strict control and protocols for access are adhered to at all access gates to the campuses. This includes completing an online COVID-19 screening questionnaire before visiting the campus, presenting a QR code at the gate, presenting an access permit and a valid staff or student card to access the campus.

5.1 Bloemfontein Campus

Access to the campus can be obtained through three gates – the rest will be closed:

- **Main gate (Gate 1)**

Vehicle gates and turnstiles will be operational on a 24/7 basis, but access will only be granted to authorised staff and students within the curfew hours for adjusted lockdown Level 4.

- **Medical gate (Gate 3)**

Vehicle gates and turnstiles will also be operational on a 24/7 basis, but access will be strictly managed under the same conditions as those applicable to the main gate. Campus access permits issued by the Free State Department of Health will still be applicable, and the same will also apply to staff from the National Health Laboratory Service.

- **Visitors Centre gate (Gate 5)**

The vehicle gate will be closed, and only the turnstile will be operational and manned. Access will also be strictly controlled, and only those in possession of a valid permit, access card, and QR code will be allowed to enter the campus.

5.2 Qwaqwa Campus

Authorised students and staff will be granted access through the main gate, subject to compliance with all the requirements applicable to the Bloemfontein Campus.

5.3 South Campus

Authorised students and staff will be granted access through the main gate, subject to compliance with all the requirements applicable to the Bloemfontein Campus.

5.4 Enforcement of COVID-19 protocols

COVID-19 monitors, supported by security staff, will ensure adherence to protocols (including curfew hours). Students living on campus in the residences will need to adhere to the newly stated curfew time of 21:00. Loitering will not be allowed.

5.5 Visitors and service providers

No visitors will be allowed to enter the campus; only service providers and contractors requiring access to provide assistance to the UFS will be allowed on a need-to-have basis.