

12 October 2020

Dear Student

UFS MANAGEMENT EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT NUMBER OF POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES

The Free State is currently one of the provinces in the country with the highest percentage of new tests that turn out positive for COVID-19. This also impacts on the staff and students at the University of the Free State (UFS), as the number of positive cases on the campuses has increased considerably during the past few weeks.

The UFS experienced an increase of **47%** in the number of students who tested positive from Level 2 of the national lockdown to Level 1. During the past two days, an increase of 21% in positive student cases has been experienced. In the case of staff, an increase of **34%** in the number who tested positive occurred from Level 2 of the national lockdown to Level 1. Over the past few days, an increase of 11% in positive cases has been experienced.

1. Adherence to national protocols and regulations

The safety, health, and well-being of staff and students remain a priority. Therefore, the university management is concerned about the rise in positive cases and appeals to students to adhere to the national protocols and regulations issued by the Ministers of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Employment and Labour, Higher Education, Science and Innovation, and Health.

It is important to note that non-adherence to certain of the national protocols and regulations is a criminal offence and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment of up to six months. By not adhering to national protocols and regulations, our students are not only putting their own health at risk, but also the health of others.

2. Behaviour observed

The following behaviour has been observed among students who are attending classes on the campuses and those living in on-campus residences:

- Not adhering to the national COVID-19 curfew of **00:01 to 04:00**;
- Not adhering to social/physical distancing of 2 metres;
- Not wearing a mask while moving on the campuses, as well as in buildings;
- Dishonesty during the screening process;

- Not complying with isolation and quarantine guidelines; and
- Social behaviour outside the campuses (i.e. visiting friends, socialising in bars and/clubs where a large number of people are present, etc.).

Students are reminded that they may face disciplinary action if they do not adhere to the national COVID-19 protocols and regulations as issued by the different ministers. It is important that students be honest at all times during the screening process, as it has been observed that some students display some COVID-19-related symptoms but answer in the negative on the online screening app.

3. Enforcing the national COVID-19 curfew

The university will strictly enforce the national COVID-19 curfew of 00:01 to 04:00 to students living in on-campus residences as from 13 October 2020.

NO ENTRY/EXIT to the campuses will be allowed between 00:01 and 04:00. Entry to the campuses within the curfew time will only be allowed in exceptional cases, and in such cases, arrangements must be made with the residence head ahead of time.

4. Reporting positive COVID-19 cases

Students living in off-campus accommodation are requested not to come to the campuses if they are experiencing any COVID-19-related symptoms and to get tested as soon as possible.

In terms of the directives issued by the Minister of Employment and Labour, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, the UFS is required to report all COVID-19 positive cases to the Department of Labour, the Department of Health, and the Department of Higher Education and Training. All COVID-19 positive cases must thus be reported directly to Kopsie Health (johnr@ufs.ac.za) for further handling and reporting to the relevant government departments.

Those students who test positive will receive the necessary advice from their medical practitioner and they can also contact Kopsie Health for assistance.

