

29 May 2020

RE-INTEGRATION PLAN: RETURN OF STAFF AND STUDENTS TO ALL CAMPUSES FROM 1 JUNE 2020

In line with the announcement of Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation on 23 May 2020 regarding the implementation of measures by the post-school education sector in response to the COVID-19 epidemic under Level 3 of the national lockdown, the University of the Free State (UFS) has put measures in place to re-integrate staff and students on campus from 1 June 2020.

The re-integration plan is based on a phased approach, the principle of social/physical distancing, as well as the fact that a maximum of 33% of the university's staff and student population can be allowed on campus during Level 3 of the national lockdown as per the national directive.

The safety, health, and well-being of staff and students and saving lives remain the university's priority to limit the possibility of spreading COVID-19 on the campus.

1 STAFF ARRANGEMENTS

Dates	Category	Frequency	Remarks
From 1 June 2020	*Essential services, University Estates, Clinic, Kopsie Health, HRA, internal catering delivery services, ICT Services, Procurement and Stores, Protection Services and other divisions as approved by Rectorate, and as per lists approved by the relevant Rectorate member.	Daily. The number of employees required to return is dictated by the need to support the number of returning students and as required by the operational demands of the relevant departments. (Line managers will inform staff who must report for work as of 1 June 2020.)	The principle of physical distancing must be applied, including during lunch and tea breaks. Staggered starting and finishing times may be applied, where necessary.

Dates	Category	Frequency	Remarks
From 1 June 2020	ALL ACADEMIC, LABORATORY OR TECHNICAL STAFF required to support the academic programme, as per lists approved by the Vice-Rector: Academic.	As required per academic timetable requirements.	<p>All other academic staff not directly involved in the teaching and learning of returning students, should continue to work from home.</p> <p>The line manager must ensure that appropriate work schedules are in place and that deliverables are met.</p> <p>Staff working from home must be available at all times during working hours. Staff may be called back to campus within 24 hours, should the need arise.</p> <p>Staff may visit the campus between 11:00 and 14:00 on 1 and 2 June 2020 to collect belongings from their offices. The prescribed protocols in terms of access to campus, wearing a mask, and physical distancing must be adhered to. A request must be made to the relevant line manager, who will supply a consolidated list to the Senior Director: Human Resources to issue a permit for the once-off access to campus.</p>
From 1 June 2020	ALL SUPPORT STAFF who are supporting the Academic Project, including the Department of Student Counselling and Development; Financial Aid Office; Student Finance, Employee Relations, etc., and as per lists approved by the relevant Rectorate member.	<p>Daily. As per requirements, and as advised directly by line managers.</p> <p>Some staff may be required to work rotationally in different weeks during the lockdown period to bring about a balance and to be within the</p>	<p>Other support staff should continue to work from home.</p> <p>The line manager must ensure that appropriate work schedules are in place and that deliverables are met.</p>

Dates	Category	Frequency	Remarks
		limits of the 1/3 rd requirements. (Line managers will inform staff who must report for work as of 1 June 2020.)	Staff working from home must be available at all times during working hours. Staff may be called back to campus within 24 hours should the need arise. Staff may visit the campus between 11:00 and 14:00 on 1 and 2 June 2020 to collect belongings from their offices. The prescribed protocols in terms of access to campus, wearing a mask, and physical distancing must be adhered to. A request must be made to the relevant line manager, who will supply a consolidated list to the Senior Director: Human Resources to issue a permit for the once-off access to campus.

NOTE:

- **Definition of Essential Service:**

Essential services are the categories of staff, inclusive of those in the Faculty of Health Sciences, who have received permission from the UFS to work during the national lockdown. These staff members will continue working, as was the case during the Level 5 national lockdown.

- **Vulnerable staff members:**

The UFS is required – from its records and by consultation and declaration consistent with the law – to establish the identity of any vulnerable or high-risk staff, especially those with low immune response and co-morbidities, and to determine safe work programmes for them based on these factors. It would be safer for such staff members to work predominantly from home where they are less exposed to other persons and environments. The university will not have records of all such risks. While the university cannot insist on the declaration of low immune

response and co-morbidity of individual staff members, it is in their own interest as well as that of the UFS that such vulnerabilities are identified.

Accordingly, any staff member with such vulnerability to infection is requested to inform the Senior Director: Human Resources directly so that work-from-home arrangements can be made; if this is not possible, leave arrangements will be considered. Staff members in this category will, however, be required to disclose the fact that they have an underlying health issue that could negatively impact their health should they contract the COVID-19 virus; this must, however, be supported by a medical certificate.

- **Staff older than 60 years:**

Employees older than 60 years will be allowed to work from home.

- **Staff with minor children:**

Line managers must take cognisance of the fact that staff members with minor children will not be able to return to campus in all cases, due to the phased opening of schools - they must be accommodated as far as possible.

- **Permit to enter campus:**

Line managers will plan and advise the relevant employees of the exact date when they should be back on campus. In terms of the *Disaster Management Act, 2002: (Act no 57 of 2002): Determination of Alert Levels and Hotspots* issued on 28 May 2020, staff members and students will only be allowed to return to campus if they have the necessary permit issued by the head of the institution or his/her delegate. This letter can be produced electronically or in hard copy when entering the campus. Protection Services will not allow any staff or student to enter the campus without this evidence.

The Department of Protection Services is mandated to develop and implement security protocols that are in line with the national lockdown regulations. A detailed security plan for the return of students and staff has been developed and the following salient points of the plan are important to note:

- Access to the campus will only be granted to staff, students, contractors, and tenants who are in possession of a valid Level 3 access authorisation letter.
- The authorisation letter and access card must be presented to the security officers each time an authorised person arrives at any of the UFS premises.

- The wearing of the mask when entering any of the UFS premises is compulsory, as well as the wearing thereof while on UFS premises.
- Each person entering the campus will be subjected to a temperature screening process according to the UFS screening protocol.
- A '**no authorisation letter, no access**' principle has been adopted.
- A '**no mask, no access**' principle has also been adopted.

It must be noted that *permits previously issued will no longer be valid* as the previous regulations were repealed.

- **Staff availability and proximity to campus:**

A line manager may request an employee to return to campus during normal working hours if deemed necessary. In this case, it is requested that employees should remain at their normal residences. If an employee intends to be away from their normal residence, this may hinder their ability to return to campus when required, and hence the line manager may then request the employee to take vacation leave.

- **Workers of service providers:**

These arrangements are also applicable to the designated workers of outsourced service providers for cleaning, residences, gardening, sports, and Protection Services on the designated list. It will, however, be the responsibility of the service providers to provide letters to their employees, based on a letter that will be provided to the service providers, stating that they are required to perform services at the UFS.

- **Leave:**

Staff members can opt to take some of their compulsory non-accumulative leave during this time in consultation with their line managers, especially those who are not required to be on campus to support the academic programme during Level 3 of the national lockdown.

2 CAMPUS ACCESS

Access to the campuses can be obtained through the following gates:

Bloemfontein Campus:

- Main Gate (Gate 1): Operational 24/7. Access will only be granted between 20:00 to 05:00 in line with the UFS curfew protocol. Only emergency vehicles such as critical maintenance, ambulances and the fire services will be granted access after 20:00.
- Medical Gate (Gate 3): Operational 24/7 for staff members working in the Faculty of Health Sciences.
- Visitors Centre (Gate 5): Operational 06:00-18:00 daily during weekdays (pedestrian gate only).
- Security Operational Centre is operational 24/7 and can be reached at 051 401 2911/2634.

Qwaqwa Campus:

- Main Gate: Operational 24/7. Access will only be granted between 20:00 to 05:00 in line with the UFS curfew protocol. Only emergency vehicles such as critical maintenance, ambulances and the fire services will be granted access after 20:00.
- Security Operational Centre is operational 24/7 and can be reached at 058 718 5334/5162/5150/5259.

South Campus:

- Main Gate: Operational 24/7. Access will only be granted between 20:00 to 05:00 in line with the UFS curfew protocol. Only emergency vehicles such as critical maintenance, fire services, the police and ambulances will be granted after 20:00.
- Security Operational Centre is operational 24/7 and can be reached at 051 505 1217.

More information about access to the campuses and security measures is available in the UFS Campus Security Plan: https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/default-source/covid19/ufs-security-plan---the-return-of-staff-and-students_29-may-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=163c9421_2

3 SCREENING

All staff members, students, and visitors must complete the COVID-19 online screening questionnaire at www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening. A QR code will be emailed to the staff member/student/visitor, which will be scanned at entrance gates to the campus. Temperature measuring at the gate will also form part of the screening process. A green token will allow

you on campus and a red token will refer you to the On-Campus Screening Point (OCSP); these tokens are only valid for 24 hours. Those staff members (and their families) residing on the campuses or entering the campus must complete the COVID-19 online screening questionnaire and do temperature measurement on a daily basis.

Students staying in residences must also complete the COVID-19 online screening questionnaire as well as their temperature measurements on a daily basis. Residence heads must ensure that these processes are performed as prescribed.

Staff members should not report for work if they are sick or have symptoms associated with COVID-19; they should take sick leave in terms of *Section 22 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.*

4 RETURN OF STUDENTS TO THE CAMPUS

As from 1 June 2020, the university will follow a staggered, phased-in approach for the return of students, which is based on the principle of a maximum of 33% of the staff and student population that can be allowed on the campus during lockdown Level 3. Phase one of this approach was implemented from 11 May 2020, when final-year students in the MB ChB programme were allowed to return to campus as per the national directive.

The next cohort of students who will be returning to campus is final-year students in Nursing and the Allied Health Sciences. These students will receive letters from the Faculty of Health Sciences in due course to enable their return to campus in the first week of June 2020. Thereafter, all Health Sciences students with a clinical rotation component will be expected to arrive in the second week of June 2020. Other cohorts of students who will receive permits to return to campus before the end of June 2020, are undergraduate and postgraduate students in programmes where laboratory and practical work is needed, as well as students in honours and postgraduate diploma programmes.

The re-integration process will also focus on **final-year** students registered in programmes associated with a professional body, and students in exit-level modules to be completed in 2020, as well as students who need a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) component in order to complete their qualification. These students will be expected to arrive on campus during the first week of July 2020.

The final return date will be communicated to each individual student by the respective faculties.

Data has shown that there is a small number of students who are not active on Blackboard and/or who have not received an electronic device from the UFS. These students have been identified and will be invited to return to campus by the end of June 2020 for further online learning. In the case of the Qwaqwa Campus, faculties have identified approximately 3 000 students in this category – printed material will be sent to their home addresses. Students with disabilities in all the mentioned categories, as well as those identified as challenged, have been prioritised, and will be contacted by the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS).

International students who are returning to campus will be screened and quarantined in identified government facilities as per the national regulation. Students who cross inter-provincial borders and those who reside in hotspots as stipulated in the national regulations, must adhere to the university's screening protocols and complete the COVID-19 online screening questionnaire (www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening) on a daily basis before accessing the campus. If such students show symptoms of COVID-19, they must self-isolate and be tested.

- ***The full re-integration of students is dependent on national directives on the lifting of the lockdown levels.***

In Level 3 of the national lockdown, students identified as per the academic programmes, may move back into residences where applicable. The residence heads will communicate to those students who may return. Only students who have a permit to enter the campus and a confirmation to return to the residence will be granted access to the residences. These students must adhere to the compulsory daily screening protocols.

Lecturers and academic heads must ensure that the principle of physical distancing applies in the laboratories and lecturing venues. Our Occupational Health and Safety, as well as the Protection Services divisions will monitor this, and where there are deviations, they will advise the relevant dean/head/lecturer to immediately make the necessary adjustment. No violation of this principle will be allowed. It is therefore important that this is well planned, and that students are informed by the relevant department.

The Health and Wellness Centre, Kopsie Counselling, and the services departments will continue with e-health, mental, and wellness advocacy platforms for ongoing educational processes to the university public and the general society on measures to obviate susceptibility to COVID-19 or its spread.

5 WEARING OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The use of cloth/fabric face masks as an additional preventative measure is compulsory as from 1 May 2020. In support of this, the UFS will make two washable cloth masks available to all staff members free of charge. This means that all staff members who enter the university campuses **must** wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth, including when moving around on the campus grounds and in the buildings. These masks can be ordered by departments through the e-procurement system from the university stores: Item ID SS00930048. Line managers in departments will co-ordinate this.

6 SOCIAL/PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Strict adherence to protective behaviour guidelines (i.e. social-distancing protocols, hand hygiene, masking, cough/sneeze etiquette, etc.) is essential.

7 MEETINGS/INTERACTIONS

The principle of social and physical distancing will be strictly adhered to. Face-to-face meetings should be avoided; Skype or Microsoft Teams meetings from offices are encouraged instead of having it in a meeting venue.

No more than four people may attend a face-to-face meeting, in which case the prescribed distance of TWO metres must be adhered to.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE

Hand-washing facilities with soap will be made available for pedestrians at all entrances of the campuses.

Persons travelling to the campus by vehicle should, if required, make use of hand-washing facilities with soap in ablution facilities.

Hand-sanitiser stations will be available at high-use entry and exit points in buildings on campuses, especially the library, computer centres (including residences), and large lecture halls.

Bathrooms will be stocked with hand soap (dispensers), paper towels or working dryers.

The cleaning section will check that all existing posters with instructions on hand washing/hand rubbing are still in place and put up additional ones where there are none.

The cleaning section will provide additional bins.

The cleaning cycle of ablution facilities will be increased – our cleaning team will redirect resources accordingly.

Only dedicated bins clearly marked and placed at strategic points on the campuses should be used for the disposal of PPE such as masks and/or gloves.

9 VISITORS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

It is advisable that meetings with external stakeholders take place electronically or remotely.

Only visitors who have pre-arranged with employees or departments will be granted access.

Service providers and visitors to the campus will be required to complete the online screening questionnaire (www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening) before visiting the campuses.

All visitors entering the campuses must wear face masks that cover the nose and mouth during their time on the campus.

These arrangements are also applicable to the designated workers of outsourced service providers for cleaning, residences, gardening, sports, and Protection Services on the designated list. It will, however, be the responsibility of the service providers to provide letters to their employees, based on a letter that will be provided to the service providers, stating that they are required to perform services at the UFS.

10 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Staff using public transport must use hand sanitiser on entering and leaving the public transport and must wear a cloth face mask all the time while in public transport or walking to and from the public transport.