



NAS FACULTY PLANS: 2021

We hope you are keeping safe and healthy during this difficult time and that the final assessments for the 2020 academic year went well, as planned. As the UFS prepares for the closing of the festive season, we would like to take the opportunity to share information regarding the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Science's Teaching and Learning approach for the 2021 academic year.

The Faculty Management Committee has carefully deliberated on the return of all the students enrolled for modules in the faculty (including first year students), taking into account multiple factors, including:

- The nature of modules and the disciplines within the Faculty, and the challenges experienced in teaching practical and laboratory skills online without bringing students into laboratories and for other site-visits. The majority of modules offered by the NAS Faculty do require laboratory or practical work that might necessitate the return of students to their respective campus.
- Advice from experts against the large-scale return of students from across the country/world to campus.
- The national social distancing requirements limit the venue capacity on campus. The limited venue capacity will not permit lectures or tutorials to be offered in the traditional manner – and if they proceed, multiple offerings of each session will be required. The multiple offerings are not feasible from either a staff resourcing or a venue capacity perspective.
- Online teaching and learning can, therefore, serve as a substitute for some theoretical classes in selected modules and could replace campus-based teaching and learning for these modules. The Faculty, together with the UFS top management, have taken various steps to make devices and data available to students. The management in the Faculty realise that some students still experience extreme difficulties in managing to study away from the campus environment.

Accordingly, the Faculty Management Committee has resolved that all students will come back to campus to ensure proper learning and teaching engagement for 2021. Although all teaching in all modules for the theoretical part of the modules will continue in a blended online approach, specific weekly schedules of face to face classes will be provided and practicals will be conducted on campus in the laboratories or on site like the experimental farm, west-campus and other appropriate site locations.

Classes, examinations and registration

For all senior students, classes will start on 1 March 2021 and for first year students on 15 March 2021. For this purpose, you will have to be available full-time in Bloemfontein\Qwaqwa, depending on your campus location. Information on the registration procedure will be communicated by Student Academic Services. All senior students will participate in the two scheduled examinations, mid-year (June – July 2021) and final year-end examinations (October and November 2021). First year students will only have examinations in October - November 2021.

Permits

The permits received for 2020 will still be valid for entering in 2021. More information will be communicated on issuing of permits to 2021 first year students.





COVID-19

It should also be understood that certain things may change depending on COVID-19 developments and new government regulations. The NAS faculty will keep you informed regularly. Also check the UFS and Faculty website, as well as all social media platforms.

Thank you and kind regards

Best regards

Prof PD Vermeulen : **Dean: Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences**

