

3 February 2021

**COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: RESEARCH AND
CHAIRPERSON OF RETURN TO CAMPUS TASK TEAM**

PHASED-IN RETURN OF STUDENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY

Dear Staff and Students

It is clear that the global threat of COVID-19 continues to be with us, thus requiring the University to adopt an approach of abundant caution in returning students to limited campus activities. This approach aims to ensure that many of the measures to help minimise the health risks remain in place for the protection of our students, staff and their families.

The University will thus be implementing a staggered approach to phase-in the re-opening of limited on-campus academic activities and related return of registered students, to campus and/or residences. This strategy will be informed by various considerations including:

- The public health risks pertaining to COVID-19 infections;
- The criteria set out in Government Gazette No. 43414 released on 8 June 2020;
- Ongoing relevant Government pronouncements and regulations;
- The academic programme and sessional dates for 2021; and
- Consideration of other factors relevant to the University's particular context.

Under the current COVID-19 Alert level 3, an estimated 13,000 registered students will be permitted to return to campus, including residences. The following categories of students have been confirmed for return to campus:

1. Registered Research Masters and PhD students in programmes requiring access to laboratory equipment;
2. Registered returning students in programmes requiring clinical training;
3. Registered final year students in programmes requiring access to laboratory equipment;
4. Registered first entry undergraduate students;
5. Students appointed as laboratory demonstrators to support the returning students;
6. Registered returning students who, during 2020, were identified by the University as not being able to access Moodle;
7. Registered students with disabilities;
8. Registered Student Representative Council Executives;
9. Registered Campus Representative Councils (CRCs);
10. Registered Residence assistants (RAs) and Residence Life Officers (RLOs);

Students who are at high risk of infection due to health issues, including co-morbidities, are encouraged not to return to campus, but rather, to continue with remote online learning. There will be no contact teaching and learning on campus (i.e. physical

lectures), except for limited laboratory practicals. We encourage all students who are able to study online to continue to do so and not return to campus.

The staggered approach for the return of eligible **registered students** is as follows:

Earliest Return Dates	Eligible Group of REGISTERED Students who will receive an invitation to return
29 January	1. Masters and PhD students in programmes requiring access to laboratory equipment.
05 February	2. Returning students in programmes requiring clinical training.
08 February	3. Student Representative Council Executive. 4. Campus Representative Councils (CRCs).
19 February	5. Residence assistants (RAs) and Residence Life Officers (RLOs). 6. Students appointed as laboratory demonstrators to support eligible returning students.
26 February	7. Final year students in programmes requiring access to laboratory equipment.
5 March	8. Returning students identified in 2020 as not being able to access Moodle. 9. Returning students with disabilities.
19 March	10. New first year undergraduate students.

Colleges will be contacting individual **registered students** from these above-mentioned groups, over the course of the next few weeks to inform them of their eligibility to return to campus, as well as their specific campus return date.

If you have not been contacted, please note that you must not return to campus. There will be very strict regulations regarding access to the campuses and residences, and therefore students that are not in possession of a 2021 UKZN Student Access Permit will not be allowed access. In addition, students that are not registered for residence will not be allowed access to residences and should not expect to be assisted in this regard.

The Colleges will be staggering the return to campus, and students must take note of the dates provided on their invitation letters for return to campus. Due to health and safety measures, and ensuring compliance with regulations, students may not necessarily be accommodated in the residence that they were allocated to previously. Eligible students will be informed of their assigned residences. Students returning to University managed residences (both owned and leased) will be required to self-isolate for a period of 14 days on returning to the residence. Further details on health screening and training of students on health and safety etiquette will follow in a subsequent communiqué next week.

Once students are contacted by the Colleges and have been informed that they are eligible to return, they will have to apply for their 2021 UKZN Student Access Permit on forms.ukzn.ac.za. Please note that access to the permit application system is linked to being invited back to campus/residence.

We look forward to welcoming our students back to campus; however, we must emphasise that the return to campus will come with the expectation of a strong sense of personal and community responsibility, particularly with respect to compliance with regulations and adherence to health and safety protocols. Every student returning to campus will have to consent and adhere to a strict code of conduct. Further details in this regard will be shared in the coming days.

Issued by

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