

HIV and AIDS Policy

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1. Purpose

Despite the significant advances in preventing, treating and managing HIV and AIDS since the start of the epidemic, it continues to have an impact on, and pose risks to, South Africa and the rest of the world. As a university that is based in the country and region most adversely affected by the epidemic, this policy is required to guide the institutional response to, and management of, HIV and AIDS.

2. Organisational scope

This policy is applicable to all staff employed by the University and to students during their period of study at the University of Pretoria.

3. Policy statement

UP actively strives to ensure the relatively low infection rate amongst students is maintained and continues to seek new ways to lower student and staff vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. The

University of Pretoria (UP) is regarded as a leader in the HIV and AIDS field through its innovative programmes and services for staff and students, community engagement, teaching and academic scholarship. It thus remains critical that UP sustains its HIV and AIDS response by strengthening and sustaining existing programmes.

4. Definitions/Abbreviations

AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CSA&G:	The Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender, a standalone centre within the Faculty of Humanities that works across and with the nine faculties and support services.
DSA:	Department of Student Affairs
EAP@UP:	Employee Assistance Programme at the University of Pretoria
HIV:	The Human Immune-deficiency Virus that causes AIDS
PEP:	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
SHS:	Student Health Services
TARG:	Tuks AIDS Reference Group
VCT:	Voluntary Counselling and Testing for HIV

5. General principles

No staff member or student living with HIV or AIDS shall suffer from any form of unfair discrimination by the University on account of his/her actual or perceived HIV or AIDS status.

Members of staff and students living with HIV and AIDS, their partners, families and friends shall be accorded the same respect as persons diagnosed with other chronic, terminal or life-threatening conditions.

Members of staff and students living with HIV and AIDS shall have the same rights, responsibilities, opportunities and obligations as other members of staff and students.

Where appropriate, people from all sectors of the University, including those living with HIV and AIDS, should be involved in the development of all prevention, intervention and care programmes, specifically guided by the Tuks AIDS Reference Group (TARG).

The principle of confidentiality applies to the HIV and AIDS status and all other personal information of any member of staff or student. If a breach or suspected breach of confidentiality occurs, it must be reported to the Registrar immediately. Breaching the duty of confidentiality, or failing to report a breach or suspected breach of confidentiality shall be regarded as a serious offence.

HIV-related stigma remains high in the many communities from which the staff and students are drawn. This policy will recognise and address HIV-related stigma which often occurs in relation to sexual minorities, xenophobia and people with disabilities.

6. Goal and objectives

6.1 Education and prevention

The University ensures that access to a sustainable HIV and AIDS education, prevention, treatment, care and support programme is available in all faculties and across the campuses of the University. This programme reaches all academic and non-academic staff (including, where feasible, contract staff), and students in their undergraduate and postgraduate years of study.

The University strives to raise the level of understanding of HIV and AIDS in all aspects of the work of the institution. This includes budget and executive management decisions, curriculum innovation, staff and student education and counselling, and community-based programmes.

The University identifies and disseminates the available resources to be used across its campuses in HIV and AIDS education, prevention and care programmes.

The University supports the development of voluntary counselling, testing and support programmes and ensures that staff and students are able to access these services during normal working hours.

The University, through public sector programmes and partners, ensures adequate access to an adequate supply of male and female condoms on all UP campuses when available from its suppliers.

Access to voluntary HIV counselling and testing (VCT) for students is available at the Student Health Service (SHS) and at the Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender (CSA&G). Access to VCT for members of staff (including contract staff) is available at the CSA&G (pending ongoing external funding support for the service).

The University strives to create a safe environment on its campuses and sites of engagement (community engagement and research) and challenges the racial, cultural and patriarchal attitudes and behaviours that contribute to inequality, vulnerability and the risk of HIV infection. It remains committed to addressing aspects of institutional culture that might increase vulnerability to HIV in staff and students.

Staff and students at possible risk of occupational exposure to HIV (e.g. Health Sciences), should be trained on universal precautions to minimise their risk of exposure. Should potential risk of HIV exposure occur during the conduct of official UP duties, studies or sites of employment, study or community engagement, sufficient protocol and support structures will be in place to facilitate access to post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to minimise risk of infection. For members of staff, the OHS policy and The Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993 will also apply.

6.2 Care, treatment and support

By providing education, counselling and support, the University strives to ensure that those who are not infected with HIV can remain so.

The University creates an environment in which members of staff and students who are living with HIV and AIDS, or who have family members that have HIV and AIDS, feel confident to reveal their status and receive appropriate support and counselling if required. It remains committed to addressing aspects of institutional culture which might increase vulnerability to HIV-related stigma in staff and students who are living with or affected by HIV.

The University facilitates the provision of care for members of staff and students who are living with HIV and AIDS by appointing trained staff in the SHS, DSA, CSA&G, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP@UP) and the Human Resources Department.

Where appropriate and/or needed, the University facilitates access to HIV and AIDS treatment, management and support programmes through partnerships with public and private service providers.

The University strives to equip staff and students to be able to live and work in communities where high rates of HIV infection and AIDS-related illnesses and deaths occur. In the event of the death of a colleague or peer, the University provides support and bereavement counselling to staff and students.

6.3 Research

The University fosters a research ethos with regard to HIV and AIDS and the social, economic, political and human rights issues that affect the development of the epidemic, as well as an effective response to it.

The University strives to stimulate critical debate on HIV and AIDS issues through national and international exchanges, collaboration, research, and academic seminars.

Members of staff and students are encouraged to undertake research on HIV and AIDS and, where appropriate, apply for support for their research.

The University strives to develop a strong publication record on the topic of HIV and AIDS and related contextual matters.

6.4 Teaching and learning

Connecting teaching and learning to research, by developing an inquiry-led curriculum, is essential in the context of HIV and AIDS. Academic staff members are encouraged to develop and teach innovative curricula on HIV and AIDS and related contextual matters.

6.5 Management

The University ensures that all members of staff are familiar with the HIV and AIDS policy and the legislation that governs HIV and AIDS in the workplace.

The University is proactive in determining any changes that might be required in terms of student admission, staff recruitment and the structure of the teaching terms, examinations and other activities as a result of the impact of this epidemic.

7. Associated documents

UP recognises that the application of its policy must occur within the framework of the existing South African HIV and AIDS-related legislation.

Such legislation includes, but is not limited to, the following acts and code:

- The Constitution of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996
- The Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998
- The Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1996
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993
- The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, No. 130 of 1993
- The Code of Good Practice, 1 December 2000, relating to key aspects of the approach to the handling of HIV/AIDS
- The National Health Act, No. 16 of 2006
- The Protection of Personal Information Act, No.4 of 2013

8. Responsibility for implementation

The Executive, Deans, CSA&G, Department of Human Resources (including EAP@UP), DSA (including Student Support and Student Health Services) and TARG.

9. Policy life cycle

This policy should be reviewed every four years, but sooner in the event of changes in relevant legislation or institutional context and programmes.

10. Document metadata

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