COVID-19 Policy

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Preamble

Section 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 "OHSA" requires every employer to provide and maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of its employees. Similarly, the OHSA also imposes a duty on employees to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their fellow employees.

Information pertaining to COVID-19 is being provided by various authorities on a regular basis and it is important to ensure that updates are obtained and disseminated throughout the organisation. Official communication channels should be used to limit as far as possible, the sharing of information, the accuracy of which has not been appropriately verified with credible sources such as the World Health Organisation "WHO" and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases "NICD". Spreading unverified information may contribute to unnecessary panic, stigma and discrimination and undermine efforts to create social solidarity and cohesion in the face of this global health challenge.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe work and study environment for all employees, students, contractors, visitors, suppliers and members of the public (the UP Community) and to prevent the spread of "COVID-19".

2. Scope

This policy applies to the entire institution and its community and all members of the said community are required to follow its prescripts in the effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and secure, as far as possible, a healthy and safe work and study environment. It is important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions.

3. Consequences of non-compliance

If a member of the UP community breaches this policy, disciplinary action will be taken. Penalties for breach of the Policy may range from a verbal warning to dismissal in extreme cases.

4. Policy statement

The health and safety of the University of Pretoria (UP) community is the priority of the University and it will take all necessary steps to mitigate the risks to the community arising from possible exposure to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

5. How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is most likely to spread when there is close contact (1.5 metres or less) with an infected person. It is probable that the more extended the period of exposure to an infected person, the higher the risk of becoming infected. Contaminated droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes are the main means of transmission. There are two main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- Infection can be spread to people who are nearby as droplets are inhaled into the lungs.
- It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person who has been contaminated and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

6. Primary symptoms of COVID-19

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 to 21 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection (**Please note this list is not exhaustive**):
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath/difficulty in breathing
- Body aches
- Loss of smell
- Loss of taste
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Fatigue
- Weakness

Infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems such as those with Tuberculosis or HIV, older people and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung, kidney or liver disease. These chronic conditions are termed co-morbidities and those with co-morbidities are classified, along with women who are over 28 weeks pregnant and persons over the age of 60, as vulnerable persons.

Staff and students who have co-morbidities are encouraged to disclose these to the University. The information will be important in minimising their risk of exposure. All disclosures will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

7. What to do if you develop symptoms

People who contract COVID-19 may take anywhere from one to twenty-one days to develop symptoms. Thus, you should consult your healthcare provider if you present with any of the

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symptoms of COVID-19, even if you do not have a history of travel to a COVID-19 affected region or contact with an individual who has tested positive for the illness.

South African COVID 19 HOTLINE

08000 29999

If you present with symptoms of Corona Virus, please call the official COVID 19 HOTLINE before going to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. By calling the hotline, someone will be sent to test you where you are, which will limit the spread of the virus.

health
Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8. Hotline for the COVID-19 as per the Department of Health website

Employees should notify their line manager / supervisor and stay at home if they are sick and have been booked off. All employees should follow the University's sick leave policy in such situations. If the company has reason to suspect that an employee has been infected with COVID-19 or an employee becomes ill at work, the employer will request the employee to leave the workplace and seek medical treatment and/or testing immediately.

Students and staff who develop symptoms of COVID-19 whilst on a University campus should immediately contact the Control Room on the emergency number that appears on the back of the student or staff card. The number is manned 24/7 and the person on duty will advise the student or staff member of next steps. Students in residences or University accommodation should notify their Head of Residence.

9. Quarantine and working from home

In order to contain the spread of the virus, all persons who have had close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 should immediately inform their line manager or supervisor and self-quarantine at home for 14 days while monitoring themselves for symptoms. They may not attend the institution at any time. For purposes of this policy, close contact means that the employee was in face-to-face contact (i.e. within 1.5 metres) or in a closed space for more than 15 minutes with a person with COVID-19.

Students and staff who have not had direct contact with a person who tested positive but may have had indirect contact, may continue to attend campus as they are at a low risk of contracting COVID-19 and need not adjust their activities unless they develop symptoms, in which case they should immediately inform their line manager or supervisor and seek advice from their health practitioner.

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If one or more members of the UP community tests positive for COVID -19, UP must immediately consult local public health officials who will discuss the situation and commence contact tracing. Person who have been in direct contact with infected individual will self-quarantine as indicated above. The assessment of who is a close contact should be done on an individual basis and public health officials will advise on specific actions or precautions that should be taken. Administrators may contact the NICD public hotline 080 002 9999 who will refer the campus to appropriate authorities for advice.

The University will work with the relevant local or provincial department of health and other relevant authorities to communicate with the campus community with regards to the infection, in accordance with the institutional communication plan, maintaining the confidentiality of any infected person.

In severe cases, closure of all or some of the University facilities may be considered or, in less severe cases, social distancing measures may be increased and other mitigating measures introduced. Decisions with regards to the appropriate response will be made in consultation with health officials, bearing in mind that the health and safety of all members of the UP community remain the UP priority.

Where staff members are required to self-quarantine, the following principles apply:

• If the employee is able to work from home during this period, then there is no requirement to submit a sick leave or annual leave request. The employee can apply for official leave. The employee is, however, required to report daily to their line manager.
• Should the employee become sick during this period, then the sick leave policy will apply. If the employee's sick leave entitlement under the section is exhausted, management may submit an application for an illness benefit in terms of clause 4 of the Directive issued on 25 March 2020 on the COVID-19 Temporary Employer Relief Scheme under regulation 10(8) of the Regulations promulgated in terms of section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act.

10. Travel

Members of the UP Community are required to abide by the regulations with regards to travel, promulgated from time to time by the Government.

They are further encouraged to minimise permitted travel as far as possible to reduce their potential exposure to the virus. All non-essential travel, particularly on public transport, is discouraged. UP has taken steps to provide transportation where possible to preserve the health and safety of employees who may otherwise be forced to make use of public transport. Where public transport is unavoidable, members of the UP Community are encouraged to abide by all hygiene regulations with regards to sanitisation, social distancing and the like.

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11.   Meetings

Staff are encouraged to consider the following with regards to meetings:
- whether a face-to-face meeting or event is needed and whether or not it might be possible to host it by way of a teleconference or on an electronic platform;
- where a physical meeting is unavoidable, the number of participants in the meeting should be limited to the absolute minimum;
- facilities available in the venue to allow for hand sanitisation or hand washing before the meeting;
- ensuring that all delegates are seated at least one and a half meters apart;
- ensuring that the venue is well ventilated and does not make use of central air conditioning;
- recording and retaining the record of the names and contact details of all participants in the meeting for at least one month. This may be done through the completion of a register and will assist healthcare authorities in tracing those who have been exposed to COVID-19 if a participant does become ill with the virus shortly after meeting.
- informing all participants in the meeting if a participant should test positive for COVID-19 shortly after the meeting.

12.   Hygiene in the workplace

- All persons entering a UP campus must pre-screen themselves before coming to the campus.
- All persons accessing the campus will be temperature scanned before entry and no access will be granted to any person who has a temperature of 37.5 degrees C or who is not wearing a mask.
- Hand sanitisers will be available at all key entrances.
- Coughs and sneezes must be covered with a tissue and the tissue must be disposed of in a suitable waste bin.
- In the absence of a tissue, persons should cough or sneeze into their elbow.
- No hugging, shaking of hands or other close physical contact is permitted.
- Frequently touched objects, including workstations and surfaces, must be cleaned and disinfected using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe. Cleaning of the environment is an important measure in preventing the spread of the virus. It is easily destroyed by most common household cleaning agents. Thus, all surfaces that people come into contact with should be cleaned regularly. This is especially important in respect of communal areas and facilities such as toilets and other ablutions, high-contact areas such as toilet handles, taps, door handles, telephones, desk surfaces, staircase railings, lift buttons, light switches, window latches and the like.
- Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through but has spent very little time, for example, corridors, and which are not visibly contaminated do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.

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- If a person becomes ill in a work area of shared space, these should be specially cleaned and disinfected and all waste that has been in contact with the individual should be bagged and disposed of in accordance with Higher Health Guidelines.
- All persons should wash their hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating and after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 70% alcohol must be used.

13. Wearing face masks

The use of face masks covering the mouth and nose is compulsory, when in public, entering any building, premises, workspace and when utilising public transport. Persons without a face mask will not be permitted to enter the worksite, as required by Chapter 5(1) and 5(2) of the Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations (29 April 2020).

14. Seminars, training and conferences

Gatherings will be permitted in accordance with the restrictions imposed by prevailing lockdown regulations. No gatherings in excess of permitted numbers will be allowed. Where gatherings take place, all health and safety measures must be exercised. Seminars, training or conferences, should take place on electronic platforms as far as possible and staff and students are encouraged to limit their attendance of external seminars and training sessions and conferences that require physical attendance as far as possible. Roles and responsibilities:

UP COVID-19 Officer	The Registrar will be the UP COVID-19 Officer who will be supported by Compliance Managers on the various UP campuses so as to ensure compliance across the entire institution. The Compliance Officer and Managers will ensure the implementation of and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace, as required by Government Notice NO. 479 29 APRIL 2020 - 479 Disaster Management Act (57/2002): Covid-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces Covid-19 (C19 OHS), 2020 and the Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations of 29 April 2020 and 4 June 2020. A Workplace Safety Committee has been formed to assist, where necessary, with the implementation of and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace.
The Workplace Safety Committee	This Committee will be responsible to produce a Risk Assessment Plan for the institution and will work closely with the Operational Risk Committee which will, in turn, develop a plan for the phased in return of employees and students to the University

campuses in accordance with the risk-adjusted strategy for the re-opening of Higher Education Institutions.

15. Associated documents

Legislative documents:
- Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002
- Government Notice No. 479 29 APRIL 2020 - 479 Disaster Management Act (57/ 2002): Covid-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces Covid-19 (C19 OHS)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993.
- Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations (29 April 2020)

University policies:
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Disciplinary Code and Procedure
- Disciplinary Code for Students
- Leave Regulations

16. Policy life cycle

This policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines and accordingly will be updated if, and when, required.

17. Document metadata

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