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Updates from UCT ahead of the lockdown

Ahead of the countrywide COVID-19 lockdown, the University of Cape Town has provided updates on support services available for students and staff during these uncertain times, and on the university's operational plan during the period.

The UCT leadership is working hard to understand how to sensitively respond to the new environment created by COVID-19, said Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng. She emphasised that the leadership is committed to students' success, and concerned about the health and wellbeing of the hardworking staff members.

- **WATCH:** [Video message by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng.](#)

During these uncertain times, UCT remains committed to providing support even while staff and students are not on campus. The university acknowledges that that current national and global conditions may create some levels of stress and anxiety.

Among the support services that will continue being available are:

Student Financial Aid: staff are working offsite and focusing on finalising student funding for 2020, including submitting registration data to NSFAS to finalise 2020 funding; following up with NSFAS on outstanding funding decisions; and continuing to pay monthly allowances to students. Further services include providing backpay allowances for students who have received new NSFAS funding decisions; submitting and finalising funding appeals with NSFAS on behalf of senior students; and processing funding to eligible students' fee accounts.

Student Wellness Services (SWS): students can access certain SWS resources. SWS bookings can be made online, via email or on the UCT mobile app. Students can continue to access their therapists for counselling via telephone or Skype. The UCT Student Care Line continues to provide 24-hour telephonic counselling on 0800 24 25 26. Students can

seek medical advice by calling SWS on 021 650 5620. All SWS social workers will be available for telephonic psychosocial support.

Office for Inclusivity and Change services: services are continuing via virtual platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Skype for Business and Zoom. These services help to build and maintain unity and solidarity across UCT – all the more important during the lockdown. Critical services for disabled students continue, as does survivor support in the form of individual and group counselling which is being provided online.

Teaching and learning support: this will take place via the Remote Teaching series of webinars offered by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching.

- **READ:** [Full communication by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Transformation, Professor Loretta Feris.](#)
- **WATCH:** [Video message by Professor Feris.](#)

As part of the UCT operational plan, only essential services will remain operational on campus, but will be operating within strict protocols. These include security, Information and Communication Technology Services (ICTS), and maintenance.

ENDS

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