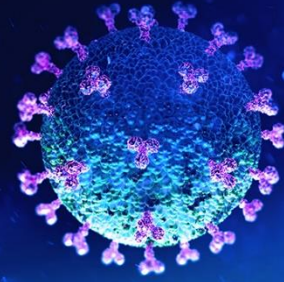




UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA - UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

**Find out more about UCT's approach
to COVID-19 on the UCT website**



17 June 2020

Return of researchers, postdoctoral fellows and research-based postgraduates to UCT campus

Following the recent update by Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng on [UCT developing a framework for returning to campus](#), the university is working on getting researchers, postdoctoral fellows and research-based postgraduates back to campus.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation, Professor Sue Harrison, said while many researchers and postgraduates have an urgent need to return to their laboratories and studios on campus, this has to be done with the appropriate health and safety precautions in place.

"If we allow this to happen too quickly, or if we allow more people to return than can be safely accommodated in our facilities in respect of physical and social distancing, we risk having an unsafe environment. We recognise that the community infection rates remain much higher in the Cape Town area and would not want UCT to fall into a cycle of again closing down operations and units that we have just reopened. The possibility of closing and re-opening may well result in the likelihood that many staff and students would be unable to complete their research and teaching commitments for the year," she said.

The Return to Research Task Team – which is led by Professor Harrison and comprises relevant members of the UCT executive, PASS departments, the Health Advisory Working Group and deputy deans for research – has decided on a set of principles and steps for the process of returning researchers and postgraduates to campus. The overarching principle is that UCT will keep numbers as low as possible, particularly through July and August 2020.

Every staff member and postgraduate returning to campus will need a formal letter of invitation and a permit for travel.

Researchers and postgraduates are scheduled to return in two tranches, subject to change according to national or provincial circumstances.

The first group aligns with Phase 2 of UCT's return to campus (Phase 1 was the return of final-year medical students), and is likely to start at the beginning of July:

- Staff and postdoctoral researchers in critical research areas that involve time-sensitive deliverables
- Master's and doctoral students who are reaching the end of their degrees and need access to facilities on campus such as studios, practice rooms and laboratories, and
- Technical support staff needed to support them.

The second group aligns with Phase 3 of UCT's return to campus (after August 2020) when the university hopes that the peak in the number of positive COVID-19 cases in the Western Cape would be on the decline:

- Honours students whose courses include significant research components
- Master's and doctoral researchers who are not yet reaching the end of their degrees but who need access to laboratories or studios
- [Read the full DVC Desk: Return of researchers, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduates to campus.](#)

ENDS

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