

## General information and frequently asked questions (FAQs) about COVID-19 and student life at Stellenbosch University

### **Guiding principles**

Our approach is to make use of the best available scientific knowledge about the transmission of COVID-19. In the process, we rely on the advice of our Medical Advisory Committee that makes use of various experts in the field. For the most up to date information, visit

<http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Pages/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Disease-2019.aspx>.

1. The measures to effectively stop the transmission of the virus are:
  - a. Meet others outdoors (being outdoors reduces the possibility of transfer by 20x)
  - b. When indoors and in the presence of others, ensure adequate ventilation
  - c. Always keep a distance of 1,5 m from others
  - d. Wear a mask in the presence of others, in confined spaces or in public spaces
  - e. Sanitise your hands by washing regularly with soap and water or an appropriate hand sanitiser
  - f. Limit the number of people at gatherings
  - g. Limit the number of gatherings
  - h. Clean surfaces before and after use
  
2. When deciding on whether a person should self-isolate, we keep in mind the following three questions:
  - a. Does the person present with symptoms of COVID-19?
  - b. Did the person have a high risk (close) contact?
  - c. Does the person have a yellow or red screen on the HigherHealth tool?

It is helpful to carefully think what presents a high risk (close) contact. Thinking about it would help you to understand that a person can, with relative ease, avoid such situations. It allows for enough room to function effectively in a community. A high-risk (close) contact is defined as being **closer than 1,5 metres** to, or sharing a closed space with, a **confirmed COVID-19 case between 2 days before until 10 days after symptom onset, for 15 minutes or longer**, while **not wearing a mask**.

HigherHealth is a collaborative effort of all the universities in South Africa to deal with health-related issues on campuses. HigherHealth developed a screening tool that both staff and students complete, and that gives immediate feedback to the person completing it. Students and staff are required to complete it daily and will be asked to show the feedback

from the tool in the form of a green screen that appeared on their device. The screening of a person is recorded by HigherHealth and the information is shared with National Health. The tool also gives immediate advice to the person that completed it on what actions to take. The tool can be accessed via:

- Website: <https://healthcheck.higherhealth.ac.za>
3. Although staff members and student leadership of student communities provide leadership about the health measures in place, it is the responsibility of every person at SU to take co-responsibility for applying the measures. In doing this, the responsibility of persons whilst at SU is the same requirement and responsibility for persons in all South African communities.
  4. Every student community in a residence has repeated conversations to help them to understand how to handle different situations, and how measures are applied in their immediate environment. Students will be informed in their student communities of how self-isolation will be dealt with in their specific community. This depends on the specific infrastructure of specific buildings.

***Frequently asked questions from student communities:***

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
What measures will be in place to ensure that shared student spaces are cleaned?	<p>The staff members of the cleaning companies are well trained in cleaning protocols of common areas such as bathrooms, common rooms and kitchens. Students will also be able to clean surfaces before they use it and after they have used it.</p> <p>When there are students that self-isolate, the necessary arrangements will be made with the students in the immediate area. Where possible the students that self-isolate will use separate showers and bathrooms.</p> <p>The cleaning of surfaces kills the virus effectively.</p>
What safety measures are in place/ or have to be followed in shared rooms and shared spaces?	<p>Students will be required to wear masks when they are in any common areas in the residence. Common areas will have a designated maximum number of persons that can be there at any time. Students are encourage to meet outdoors.</p> <p>Adequate ventilation is important and it will be promoted.</p>
Will there be dividers in all double rooms?	The medical advisory committee considered the use of dividers and the measures to ensure health in double rooms include adequate ventilation, social distance, the limitation of students in the room (visitors). Dividers will not contribute to stop the transmission of the virus.
Will someone that has tested positive be quarantined in the same rooms as someone that has been in contact with a	In the isolation areas the rooms are not meant to be shared. The situation will be dealt in accordance with the advice of Campus Health.

positive person and now needs to isolate?	
Will residence meal times be staggered to facilitate spacing during meals	The use of dining halls will make use of all the health measures listed above.
How will peak times for classes be managed in terms of exiting residences, to ensure compliance?	The way students leave the residences does not lead to high-risk close contacts. Students are also aware of what is necessary and it will be easy to avoid crowding that leads to high risk. (See the definition of high-risk close contact.)
Will the Residence Rules specifically prevent visitors or not?	The Residence Rules do not allow for visitors at the moment.
Will there be a process and/or logging when someone stays out overnight or a particular period of time?	When students stay out overnight, or for a longer period, the students are still required to complete the HigherHealth Tool and reactions are guided by the three indicators: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Symptoms</li> <li>2. High-risk close contacts</li> <li>3. Feedback from HigherHealth tool</li> </ol>
If students fail to show a seven day screening and need to share a room when they arrive back on campus, what is the process?	The idea of the seven day screening on the HigherHealth tool is to get students in the rhythm to do so. At the moment a seven day quarantine when students arrive does not add anything to curb transmission. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One of the leadership takes the time to explain to the arriving student that it is really important to complete the daily screening and that they will have to do it anyway.</li> <li>2. Take them through the HigherHealth Screening and make sure they return a green screen. If not, the student will immediately be referred to one of the isolating rooms.</li> <li>3. If the student does return a green screen on the HigherHealth the student can then move into the double room. Explain to the student that it is now a time of heightened awareness and that they should check in with their mentor daily to monitor for any symptoms.</li> </ol>
What if it becomes known that students did attend external camps/ large group gatherings and roommates feel uncomfortable to share a room?	We are again guided by the three principles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the student present with symptoms?</li> <li>2. Did the student have a high risk (close) contact?</li> <li>3. Does the student have a yellow or red screen on the HigherHealth tool?</li> </ol>

	<p>The feeling of unease by roommates are not enough reason to move rooms. There are other options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ask the student returning whether they have proof of completing the HigherHealth Tool over the during the time they were at the event.</li> <li>2) Advise the students to keep the room ventilated and that they should rather dress warmly than close the window. They would be adequately protected where they wear masks, keep a distance of 1,5 m and avoid a high risk close contact. Explain that a high risk close contact is where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A high-risk (close) contact is defined as being <b>closer than 1,5 metres</b> to, or sharing a closed space with, a <b>confirmed COVID-19 case between 2 days before until 10 days after symptom onset</b>, for <b>15 minutes or longer</b>, while <b>not wearing a mask</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3) Let the roommates work through the document to guide roommate conversations.</li> </ol>
<p>Do we keep to the “one person help you to move in”-rule rule” and further restrict parent access to residence? What will be the process for senior student returns?</p>	<p>The process for students moving in is that where there is not many newcomers in your residence at a given time, because you spread the moving in time over a few days then two persons would be allowed to help the student move in. Provided that there are no more than two persons in the room at the same time.</p> <p>When two roommates arrive at the same time, let them co-ordinate on the principle of no more than two persons at the room in the same time.</p> <p>When senior students return only one person per student allowed to help them move in. No more than two persons in the room at the same time.</p>
<p>What will be the criteria for the lockdown of a whole residence? In what circumstances will that be necessary and how do we facilitate such a process? What will we need to have in place in our residences / PSO houses?</p>	<p>A residence will lockdown when a cluster of cases is detected in a residence, or there is a high number of positive cases and there are several cases of high risk (close) contacts identified. The exact number of cases to reach such a conclusion will differ for different circumstances. It is the provincial or national health authorities that will advise such a course of action and the implementation will be in co-operation with advice from Campus Health.</p>
<p>Is there a preferred strategy for communicating about confirmed cases in the residence? Who should be informed and how do we deal with confidentiality in a larger residence structure?</p>	<p>When we have confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the residence. This matter is communicated by the residence head only. The residence head gives information on the confirmed case (no reason to mention the name in a general notification), and re-assures students that the necessary protocols are being followed and it is expected of the students to be aware and to assist the student</p>

	community within the protocols. They will be kept up to date and Campus Health is informed and will initiate a process of contact tracing. Give the contact details of Campus Health.
Will there be a University curfew even if level 3 restrictions change?	For the time being, SU will keep to the curfew hours of 23:00-05:00. The situation will be reviewed in the future. We do not foresee that we will, for the foreseeable future, go to a curfew to later than 24:00-05:00.
Who will manage the signing of a Code of Conduct for students entering residence and will res heads be able to access this record?	The signing of the Code of Conduct will become a measure that is centrally done at registration. Remember that the Code of Conduct forms part of the general expectation of students and it does not mean that if you have not signed the code of conduct that you are not bound by it.
What if students request to go home for self-isolation or quarantine?	If students request to go home for their self-isolation time then we welcome it. Their move through the residence is of course subject to all the health protocols.
Are there criteria for accepting private COVID-19 testing results as motivation to shorten isolation period?	The residence management will follow the guidelines of Campus Health. If Campus Health indicates that a student should self-isolate, then it is expected that the student should self-isolate. A private test might be information to be considered by Campus Health, but a private COVID test that returns a negative test is not of itself a reason to shorten the self-isolation period.