

BOOKING OF VENUES, HOSTING OF EVENTS AND HAVING FACE TO FACE MEETINGS UNDER ADJUSTED RISK ALERT LEVEL 1

After a decline in the number of infections, South Africa moved to Level 1 in an adjusted format. The [National State of Disaster was extended to 15 May 2021](#) and we are anticipating a further extension in preparation for the predicted third wave. The [new Adjusted Risk Alert Level 1 Regulation](#) was published on 30 March 2021. It is legally possible to host, plan and execute some activities, opening buildings and making some facilities available, however, there remains an inherent risk in opening activities too soon with negative implications to infection levels.

It remains an ethical responsibility for SU to act in the best interest of its staff, the broader community, and to act with social solidarity.

Under the [Adjusted Risk Alert Level 1 regulations](#) that are in place until 15 May 2021 and will be operational as long as there is a National State of Disaster in place or until the current level is revoked or amended or until SA moves to a different level. Under Adjusted Risk Alert Level 1 all staff who can work from home should continue doing so unless it is essential for the institution that they return to campus. That decision should be taken within each environment, in consultation with line managers, and in terms of approved workplace plans and supporting documentation.

SU's overarching goals for 2021 are to complete the academic year successfully and to ensure the sustainability of the University, while at the same time prioritising the health and safety of our staff and students. Consequently, all events that may not contribute towards this goal should be postponed until later the year when it could be more appropriate.

On **student-related** activities note the following:

- No student events will be allowed unless it forms part of a **preapproved programme** that includes all necessary health protocols. A specific plan for the event must be drawn up. For the duration of the event a COVID-19 Compliance Officer, identified in the plan, must ensure that the approved plan is followed, and protocols are met. When these plans are drafted, students are encouraged to use a suitable outdoor venue as it lowers the risk of transmissions considerably. Please use the template below and note that the Senior Director: Student Affairs must sign off on these programmes for all events hosted for or by students on or off-campus.
- Please note that gatherings are **limited to 250 persons indoor and 500 outdoor or less irrespective of the venue size**. If the venue capacity is **less than 250 indoor or 500 outdoor then you may only accommodate 50% of the capacity of the venue whilst observing a distance of at least 1.5m from each other**.
- For on-campus events, you are required to draft a plan for the event to ensure that the protocols to reduce the risk of infection are in place. For events that happen off-campus, you need to check that the venue owner has an appropriate plan to mitigate the risk of infection.
- **When booking a venue remember that the Risk Alert Level may change in future and may not allow for the specific event to take place as it may not be aligned with the Risk Alert Level Regulations application at the time. Environments then run the risk of losing**

deposits so please ensure that you understand your position in law and that you have a contract in place to mitigate possible financial losses.

Please note the revised criteria and procedure to follow for any event, meeting and booking of venue for **staff** as set out below.

- Social gatherings are allowed under the Adjusted Risk Alert Level 1 Regulations, and events and gatherings must be planned and necessary to be hosted in person. Always consider an online event as the point of departure.
- When booking a venue remember that the Risk Alert Level may change in future and may not allow for the specific event to take place as it may not be aligned with the Risk Alert Level Regulations application at the time. Environments then run the risk of losing deposits so please ensure that you understand your position in law and that you have a contract in place to mitigate possible financial losses.
- We encourage staff members to use SU facilities to save on cost.
- The Adjusted Risk Alert Level 1 regulations state that an employer should “restrict face to face meetings” and that “gatherings at the workplace for work purposes are allowed, subject to strict adherence to all health protocols and social distancing measures”. When considering an in-person meeting the meeting may be held subject to the considerations below.
 - Consider why an online meeting, conference, event is not feasible, since this is the preferred method, but if there is a compelling reason as to why an in-person meeting, conference or event is required then ensure that protocols are implemented. In terms of the Risk Alert Level 1 Regulation employers must adopt measures to restrict face to face meetings. (Regulation 70(8)(c)).
 - Please note that gatherings at conferences, meetings, social and cultural are **limited to 250 persons indoor and 500 outdoor or less irrespective of the venue size**. If the venue capacity is **less than 250 indoor or 500 outdoor then you may only accommodate 50% of the capacity of the venue observing a distance of at least 1.5m from each other**.
 - For on-campus events, you are required to draft a plan for the event to ensure that the protocols to reduce the risk of infection are in place. For events that happen off-campus, you need to check that the venue owner has an appropriate plan to mitigate the risk of infection.

Consider the following before you book a venue:

- The first responsibility of an employer and line management must be to create a safe environment for staff. Although the capacity is set at 250 people or less indoors (including participants and staff already at the venue) and 500 outdoors, it’s more important to rather have a safe setup than have the numbers. Although 1.5m from each other is set out in the regulations we recommend that you follow this guideline to provide for a safe environment for attendees namely:
 - There are at least 1.5 m but preferably 2m distance between each individual;
 - All windows and doors remain open throughout;
 - All individual in the venue wear masks at all times;
 - Hand sanitisers are available on entry into the venue and

- That all individuals entering the venue are screened (preferably before they travel to the venue)– for internal meetings you may use the higherhealth screening tools [webform: healthcheck.higherhealth.ac.za]
- The health risks associated with hosting an in-person meeting, conference or event;
- The ability and capacity to mitigate the inherent health and associated risks;
- The composition of the persons that will be invited to attend the meeting, conference, event including, amongst others, their age and any comorbidities;
- The capacity and capability of the venue to be used to comply with the directions and regulations for, amongst others, social distancing;
- Conflicting use e.g. faculties requiring the venues for academic purposes by faculties, other SU units or third parties;

If you host an event, meeting or conference where people will be in physical attendance the following will apply:

- **250 is the maximum number of people indoor and 500 outdoor that may be** in physical attendance (**on or off campus**) except if the total capacity of the venue is less (please see above). **This must be approved by the Dean/Chief Director/Senior Director.** Please see the template below.
- A fully motivated request with reasons for having a face to face event/meeting/conference;
- The capacity of the venue;
- A detailed plan, including health measures for persons attending who are older than 60 and/or have comorbidities.

We suggest the following template for internal use by environments when arranging events/meeting/conference **250 or fewer people indoors and 500 outdoor** (unless the venue cannot accommodate these numbers, then only 50% of the capacity of the venue may be used if participants can be accommodated with physical distancing as indicated above) on-campus or off-campus:

Date of Event	
Location of Venue	
The total capacity of the venue	
50% capacity of venue	
Number of attendees	
Is it possible for individuals to sit/stand at least 1.5 but preferably 2m apart?	
Does the venue have good ventilation?	
Is the venue compliant with health regulations and protocols?	
Description of event	
Reasons for the face to face event/meeting/conference	

The motivation for face to face event/ meeting/ conference	
COVID-19 Compliance officer for the event (Name and Contact number)	
Approval by senior line management	

Please forward the completed template to dap@sun.ac.za after approval for overview and record purposes.