

Smoke- and Tobacco-free Campus Initiative: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

From 1 January 2019, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences' Tygerberg Campus will become a 100% smoke- and tobacco-free zone. We answer a few frequently asked questions about this initiative. For more info, follow the #FMHSmobutts hashtag on social media.

Why is the Tygerberg Campus becoming a smoke and tobacco-free campus?

Despite public health campaigns and various forms of legislation, smoking remains the leading avoidable cause of death worldwide – also in South Africa.

The use of, and exposure to, tobacco affects both the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals, increasing the risk of developing cancer, ischaemic heart disease, respiratory conditions (including pneumonia, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma), as well as stroke and aortic aneurysm. It increases medical costs and decreases productivity, and, on average, smokers die 10 years earlier than non-smokers.

Smoking of tobacco and related products are also harmful to non-smokers and the environment. Exposure to second-hand smoke has been shown to be incredibly harmful, and many institutions have therefore moved towards becoming tobacco-free in order to protect the health of its staff and visitors. In doing so, the health of all persons working, studying and visiting the institution is respected and protected, thereby encouraging improved productivity and overall health and performance.

Implementing tobacco-free policies have been shown to decrease smoking behaviour, improve the air quality, decrease pollution and create a healthier and more attractive workplace.

The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) of Stellenbosch University recognises a responsibility to both its staff and students to provide a healthy, safe environment on campus. In fact, the Faculty views the health and wellness of its staff and students as an important part of its goal to create a people-centred environment where health and well-being is promoted.

In addition, in its very essence and nature, the work done at the FMHS is aimed at maintaining and promoting health, wellness and quality of life of all people. This includes the promotion of good life habits such as not smoking or using tobacco or other drugs. The Faculty also prides itself on setting an example, and encourages its staff and students to become change agents in and to society.

With this in mind, the Dean's Management Team (DMT) made the decision, after consultation with the Faculty Board, to move the Faculty towards becoming a smoke- and tobacco-free campus in January 2019. A Tobacco-Free Campus Committee was established in 2015 with the view to investigate the issue and to draft Smoke- and Tobacco-free Campus Regulations for approval. These regulations were approved by the Rector's Management Team in April 2018.

Stellenbosch University as a whole is also currently revising its tobacco use and smoking policy, and the national draft of the '*Control of Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery Systems Bill, 2018*' is currently open for comments. International developments such as the [Tobacco-Free Campus Initiative](#) in the USA provides strong support that this is a move in the right direction and in line with international trends.

Are other university campuses also becoming tobacco-free?

It isn't clear at this stage whether there are other campuses in South Africa with this status. We are most definitely one of the first campuses in the country to go this route (if not *the* first).

Internationally, there's a growing trend for campuses to introduce smoke- and tobacco-free policies. The United States, in particular, is leading this movement. In November 2017, there were at least 2,082 campuses in the United States that were 100% smoke free.

Of these:

- 1,743 (83.7%) were 100% tobacco free
- 1,658 (79.6%) prohibited the use of e-cigarettes / vaping anywhere on campus
- 854 (41%) of these campuses explicitly prohibited hookah (hubbly bubbly) use

How do these regulations fit into the South African legislative environment?

In South Africa, any institution or workplace has a legal right and the authority to prohibit smoking or to provide designated smoking areas, as per the '*Notice relating to smoking of tobacco products in public places (Act No. R. 975, 2000)*'. This states the following: "Any employer, owner, licensee, lessee or person in control of any public place or part of a public place may totally prohibit smoking in that place".

The Tobacco Products Control Act furthermore provides for the protection of non-smokers. In 2012, the Constitutional Court dismissed an appeal by British American Tobacco who sued the Minister of Health, claiming that the Tobacco Product Control Act was unconstitutional. The court found that the hazards of smoking far outweigh the interests of smokers, and that South Africa is obliged to observe the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

The employer (in this case Stellenbosch University) is under no obligation to facilitate the addiction of the smoker to the drug nicotine, just as it's under no obligation to facilitate the addiction of any employee who may be addicted to for example alcohol or narcotics.

The Stellenbosch University Smoking Policy says that smoking is prohibited at all times in, among a list of other places, any specific area which the University in its discretion has formally designated a no-smoking zone.

Who will be affected by the new regulations?

The new campus regulations apply to all staff members (permanent, temporary or ad hoc), students, contractors, sub-contractors and their employees, vendors operating on the campus grounds, consultants, visiting workers, volunteers, patients, leaseholders, members of the public and visitors to the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences who physically enter the Tygerberg Campus of Stellenbosch University, regardless of the purpose of their visit.

All of the above-mentioned parties have a responsibility to comply with the regulations.

What is considered a tobacco product and is therefore prohibited on the Tygerberg Campus?

From 1 January 2019, the Tygerberg Campus will become a 100% smoke- and tobacco-free zone.

To "smoke" means to inhale, exhale, hold or otherwise have control over an ignited tobacco product or a heated, but not ignited, tobacco product that produces an emission of any sort, or operate or otherwise have control over an electronic delivery system that produces an emission of any sort. All forms of smoking will be prohibited on campus.

"Tobacco product" means a product containing tobacco or an extract of tobacco leaves (such as nicotine) that is intended for human consumption. The tobacco products that will be prohibited on campus include the following:

- Cigarettes
- Cigarettes
- Cigars
- Pipes
- Water pipes (hookas, hubbly bubbly, okka pipes)
- Bidi
- Kreteks
- Smokeless tobacco
- Chewing tobacco
- Snus
- Snuff
- Electronic nicotine and non-nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes or vaping systems)
- Any other nicotine delivery device

The list does not include any food, drug or device that contains nicotine to which the Medicines and Related Substances Act, 1965 (Act No. 101 of 1965) applies. For example, it excludes nicotine patches or gum.

Why are e-cigarettes included in the regulations?

In recent years, the rate of electronic (e-cigarette) use has increased sharply as e-cigarettes have gained popularity among smokers and non-smokers, including young adults.

But, despite its popularity, e-cigarettes have not been fully studied. This means that we don't yet fully understand the potential risks of e-cigarettes or how much nicotine or other potentially harmful chemicals are being inhaled during their use.

The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences recognises a responsibility to both its staff and students to provide a healthy, safe environment on campus, which is why e-cigarettes have also been included in the new Smoke- and Tobacco-free Campus Regulations.

Is there anywhere I can smoke or use tobacco on campus?

No. There will be no designated smoking areas on campus. Staff and students who would like to smoke during their time at the Faculty will therefore need to move off campus to do so.

Research has shown that establishing designated smoking areas in a smoke-free zone undermines tobacco-free policies, and that campuses with full smoke-free policies have more success with adherence than campuses where smoking is allowed in certain areas. Smoking zones and perimeter policies haven't been found to be effective or enforceable.

In addition, smoking shelters are expensive to construct and maintain. Instead of making these costly additions to the property, the Faculty has provided funding to help students and staff who would like to stop smoking or who would like to access nicotine replacement therapy. These services can be accessed through the Stellenbosch University Campus Health Service.

Can I smoke or use tobacco in my car?

No. Smoking in private vehicles parked on campus property is also prohibited under the policy. You won't be allowed to smoke in cars parked on campus-owned streets or in campus parking areas or garages.

How will the campus deal with staff or students who continue to smoke on campus?

No staff member or student will be forced to stop smoking or be victimised if they would like to continue being a smoker or tobacco user outside of campus.

However, as is the case with all official University policies and regulations, all employees, students and visitors to the Tygerberg Campus will be expected to comply with the Smoke- and Tobacco-free Regulations from 1 January 2019.

Normal disciplinary procedures for non-compliance of official University policies will apply to those individuals who contravene the regulations. If someone is found smoking on the Tygerberg Campus:

- They will be informed or reminded about the Smoke- and Tobacco-free Regulations and asked to refrain from smoking (a first warning).
- If the instruction to stop smoking is refused, or the action is repeated by the individual, a second verbal warning will be issued and the matter will be reported to the relevant line management or student structures (a second warning).
- A repeat offence reported to the line management or student structures will lead to a written reprimand (a third warning).
- Any further offences will lead to official disciplinary action in terms of existing staff and student disciplinary processes for non-adherence to any faculty policy or regulation. Visitors to the campus will be escorted off the premises and blocked from any future access to the property.

If I choose to smoke or use tobacco and don't have enough time to step off campus, what am I supposed to do?

The Faculty acknowledges that smoking and tobacco-use is addictive and that smokers might find it difficult to stop smoking. For this reason, Campus Health Services (in conjunction with the Wellness Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences) will provide staff and students with the appropriate support to either quit smoking or to get through the day.

This support includes:

- Consultations and follow-ups with Campus Health Services at the Tygerberg Student Centre.
- Counselling provided to individuals expressing the will to quit smoking.
- Smoking cessation medication and materials, as well as nicotine replacement therapy.

What should I do if I see someone smoking on University grounds?

Inform or remind the person about the Smoke- and Tobacco-free Regulations and ask them to refrain from smoking.

If the instruction to stop smoking is refused, or the action is repeated by the individual, it's important to report the matter to the relevant line management or student structures.

If, for example, the person is a student in a campus residence, you're advised to report the matter to the House Committee. If the person is a colleague, report the matter to the staff member's manager.

Do I have to quit using tobacco?

No, no-one will be forced to stop smoking or be victimised if they'd like to continue being a smoker or tobacco user.

However, all employees, students, contractors and visitors will be expected to comply with the policy from 1 January 2019 by not smoking or using tobacco products on campus property.

What resources are available to help me stop using tobacco products?

The Faculty acknowledges that smoking and tobacco use is addictive and that smokers might find it difficult to stop smoking. We will therefore ensure that these individuals have access to support after implementation of the policy on 1 January 2019.

Staff and students who would like to stop smoking will have Faculty-funded access to smoking-cessation resources. This will be offered through the Stellenbosch University Campus Health Service.

For individuals who aren't ready to quit, but who may have a hard time getting through the day without smoking, nicotine replacement therapy (e.g. nicotine gum or spray) will be available for free on a first-come-first-served basis through Campus Health Services.

Will the regulations affect the hiring of staff?

No. The new regulations will not affect the hiring of staff.

Current and future staff members will not be asked about their smoking habits or be screened for tobacco use. No current or future staff members or students will be forced to stop smoking or be victimised if they would like to continue being a smoker or tobacco user.

However, all staff will be expected to comply with the regulations, as is the case with all official policies and regulations. Therefore, all prospective staff members will be informed of the regulations and it will be expected that they adhere to the regulations should they be employed at the faculty.

It's the future employee's own decision whether to accept a position at a Faculty that is smoke- and tobacco-free. Staff and students are also expected to align themselves with the vision and mission of the Faculty in terms of its commitment to fostering a people-centred institutional culture that advances health and wellness.

Need help quitting?

We're here to assist. Visit Tygerberg Campus Health Services for an assessment, counselling and access to smoking-cessation tools, including medication and/or nicotine-replacement therapy. Campus Health Services are situated on the 2nd floor of the Tygerberg Student Centre. Alternatively, call +27 21 938 9590 to book an appointment. Let's be tobacco free!