



19 October 2020

**Attention: All Editors
For Immediate Release**

RESPONSE PLAN TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK AT EAST LONDON CAMPUS

Following a joint media statement issued yesterday, 18th October, by the Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDoH) and the University of Fort Hare (UFH), several steps have been put in place to ensure a swift response to the Covid-19 outbreak and to curb its spread.

To date, the university has recorded 33 active cases in a space of a week. This number includes two staff members.

Immediate Interventions:

- Last Friday, with assistance received from the ECDoH, the university established a Covid-19 Investigation Team
- By Saturday, 17 October we had tested 422 students. Further tests for another 503 commenced today and will continue tomorrow. The National Health Laboratory Service has provided a mobile testing facility for this purpose.
- As the process of testing and contact tracing is underway, the East London campus has been declared a site under surveillance.
- Lockdown conditions in residences where some students have already tested positive have been instituted until all students have tested and received their results.
- Today ECDoH commenced a risk assessment of university residences in East London, where some students have tested positive and will complete the exercise tomorrow.
- The Alice campus isolation facility was visited by an Environmental Officer from Buffalo City Municipality as well as the Covid-19 Manager from Raymond Mhlaba sub-district. We are still awaiting a report on the outcome of the visit.
- The University is in the process of securing a quarantine site for the East London campus, in addition to the 134-bed quarantine and isolation facility in Alice. The Eastern Cape province is assisting with additional isolation and quarantine facilities in King William's Town.
- Staff and students are encouraged to observe national Covid-19 health and safety regulations to limit transmissions. This includes compulsory wearing of masks when in public and within university premises.
- Staff and students are encouraged to refrain from participating in social gatherings.
- University venue-based gatherings are not allowed and all meetings will continue to be held virtually
- Teaching and learning continues remotely.
- Staff and students with co-morbidities will continue to work remotely or stay in their residences.
- We will continue to be vigilant and encourage students to avoid putting themselves and others at risk. Our security personnel will ensure compliance with regulations and those who do not comply will face disciplinary action.

Management has expressed sincere gratitude to the ECDoH for the prompt response and ongoing professional guidance as we join hands to manage the outbreak. We are equally grateful to our internal Covid-19 Task Team and Management Response Committee for working around the clock to ensure the safety of staff and students on campus.

Ends.

Issued on behalf of Management by:

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