

UCT to finish 2020 academic year through remote teaching

In consultation with faculties and with student representatives, the University of Cape Town (UCT) executive has decided to finish the 2020 academic year through remote teaching. This decision, which implies a change in the academic calendar, has been approved by Senate and Council.



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Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Associate Professor Lis Lange, said: “The country is currently experiencing the predicted peak of Covid-19 infection and we are advised that another peak is likely to occur in August. We will not be able to maintain the necessary social distancing if we return to face-to-face teaching in campus lecture halls and other academic spaces in the fourth term. Nor will we be able to accommodate all students in residence under safe conditions.

“Taking this into account, as well as what we have learnt from the experience of remote teaching in Quarter 2, we are continuing the second semester of 2020 in the same way.”

The amended UCT calendar is aligned with the phased return of students, including those registered in performing arts courses and those needing to undertake practical blocks. The phased return will also continue, by invitation, for select groups of postgraduate research students who need to use on-campus facilities to complete their research projects, where this can be accommodated appropriately.

The Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment and the Faculty of Health Sciences are managing their calendars in a slightly different manner due to their specific requirements. However, they will also be teaching remotely.

“We are well aware that many students would prefer to return to university residences. We need to manage simultaneously students’ needs, health risks and the availability of safe spaces under lockdown conditions. Therefore, we will continue with a phased approach for the return of students, where possible or needed,” said Lange.

During September and October, different groups of students will be invited to return to campus to complete work in their courses. Some of these students will be invited to return to residences, while others, who did not live in residence accommodation earlier this year, will be invited to come back to campus. The identification of these students will be done centrally in collaboration with the faculties and the Department of Student Affairs. Within the next month, UCT will make specific announcements as to how this will take place.

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