

# Letter to parents and guardians of VUT students from the administrator

Issued by [Vaal University of Technology](#)

17 Jun 2020

Dear parents and guardians of the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) students,

I write this letter to share with you the latest developments regarding the university's reopening plan following the disruptions caused by the impact of Covid-19 pandemic to the academic programme and operations of the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) in the past few months.

With respect to the recovery of teaching and learning plan to complete the current academic year, we wish to assure you that the time allocated to teaching and learning will be recovered. Our academic team is working hard to ensure that the academic programme commences on 17-18 June.

The Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation informed the University on 10 June that they had finalized an arrangement with the telecommunication service providers to provide an appropriate amount of data for our students. The data packages vary slightly and they include 10 Gig daytime and 20 Gig data night owl allowance for use on university websites. The data will be available from 22 June 2020 at the latest.

We have pledged to support all students that require access to a laptop - on a loan scheme - in line with the Minister's announcement. There is a shortage of laptops in the country at present. However, we commenced with the purchase process of these in the middle of May, and have so far procured about 45% of the 16,000 laptops we require. The first set of laptops will be made available in the week of 22 June 2020, with the remainder of laptops expected to be provided within the next 4-5 weeks. The first set of laptops will be distributed to the first group of students as identified in our academic recovery plan.

Students will, therefore, be able to study remotely, and therefore be able to study from their current location or from their student accommodation. Laptops will be rolled out to students as these become available. Should students require laptops, they will be required to enter loan agreements, and thereafter the devices will be delivered to them. This will be communicated separately. Instructions to access Microsoft 365 and VUTela will be communicated.

We are firm that no student will be left behind, and as a result we are embarking on remote teaching and learning so that we can complete the 2020 academic year. Since we had no interruptions to the first term of our 2020 academic programme, our first goal is to complete the first semester at the end of August. We then plan to complete the second semester at the end of November. For students who are not able to do so, we are making provision for them to do so no later than the end of February 2021.

Students who have received notice that they can now return to our campuses should now do so. These are students who have received permits to travel to the university as issued by our Registrar. Kindly do take note that even among these students, those who do not need to return to our campuses are encouraged to study from home where possible.

For those students not designated to return to our campuses during Level 3 of the Covid-19 lockdown, remote learning will commence for a six-week remote teaching period on 22 July 2020. Kindly also take note that for these students there will be no contact classes and no contact consultations. Students will, however, be supported by their lecturers and by online tutors. We are firmly committed to supporting students to complete their studies. However, we also have a responsibility to ensure that the credibility and integrity of qualifications is not compromised.

Equally so, the safety and security of our students and staff remain our top priority. In this regard, we are in constant

consultation with various stakeholders in the health sector to ensure that regulations and other measures in term of all health and safety protocols are adhered to so that we can protect and save the lives of our staff and students.

Despite various challenges experienced by our sector, the University has continued to implement several steps that enable academically successful and deserving students to have a reasonable opportunity to access and succeed in higher education.

As a means to achieving this end, the University has out in place several measures to ensure that no student of the University is disadvantaged by the current Covid-19 pandemic nor deprived of the opportunity to realise their dream to complete their qualification.

Do rest assured that we are working with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the university takes its rightful place and standing in the higher education sector in South Africa, Africa and the world.

I thank you for entrusting us with the education of your children.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Ihron Rensburg**

Administrator

Vaal University of Technology

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**Vaal University of Technology**

Established in 2004, as the Vaal University of Technology (VUT), VUT originated as a College of Advanced Technical Education (1966-1979) and was later known as Vaal Triangle Technikon (1979-2003).

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