



Vaal University of Technology

Your world to a better future



Globally some workers are working from home (remotely) as the global economy becomes more digitized due to the availability of requisite internet technology.

For many companies, working from home is embedded in their business strategy and offers global competitiveness. The development of internet technology, more powerful devices and cloud based data storage has enabled and accelerated the working from home by many more companies.

Recently the corona virus pandemic has forced more companies to consider the option of working from home for many of the workers in order to avoid the spread of the virus. For these companies, this development may be considered an emergency disaster management strategy to reduce the Covid-19 spread but for the future it may be integrated into the company Business Strategy.

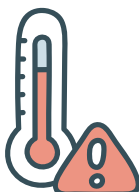


During the Covid-19 lockdown, VUT was also confronted with the provision of service and hence many employees worked from their home or remotely. Therefore, there is a need for Vaal University of Technology to develop guidelines for both Managers and Employees for primarily navigating the Covid-19 phase as a Business Continuity Strategy as well as driving the Business Strategy in the long term. It ensures that the work continues to be done under lockdown conditions.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A STAFF MEMBER IS INFECTED BY



- Whether the employee is at home or at work, s/he must immediately report to the employer if they feel sick and have the following Covid-19 symptoms: **BODY ACHES, LOSS OF SMELL OR TASTE, NAUSEA, VOMITING, DIARRHEA, FATIGUE, WEAKNESS AND TIREDNESS.**
- The Covid-19 team representative will immediately isolate the employee and arrange for screening, surveillance, medical examination and testing.
- If after testing, the employee is found to be positive, the area (building) or work office must be cordoned off.
- VUT will arrange for the disinfection of the area and prohibit any occupation or use for 3 days.
- If the employee is at home, s/he should NOT come to work but should immediately self-isolate until s/he is seen by medical practitioner for screening and testing.
- The employee must then inform his/her line manager and HR and apply for sick leave.
- Related sick leave will be based on the guidelines provided by government and on the University's aligned practice notes.
- The institution will immediately investigate the cause of infection including control failure.
- All employees should be screened and if necessary tested. Those at risk should self-isolate for 14 days whilst continuing to observe the personal hygiene protocols: wearing of face mask, social distancing, cough etiquette, sanitization, washing your hands regularly and avoiding contact with other people.
- The employee must report to the Employer and also call the following hotline numbers for further assistance: **Telephone: 0800 02999. WhatsApp Number: 0600 123456.**
- A review of the risk assessment levels will be undertaken to ensure that the necessary controls are in place.
- If an employee contracts Covid-19 as a result of occupational exposure, the institution must administratively assist the employee to lodge a claim for compensation in terms of the Compensation and Occupational Injuries and Disease Act (1993).
- VUT will inform both the Department of Health and the Department of Labour about the Covid-19 infection.
- An employee should only be allowed back to work after testing negative and being cleared by medical examination.
- On return to work, the VUT will continue to monitor the employee for symptoms and ensure the observance of basic Covid-19 hygiene protocols.
- VUT will provide administrative support for contact tracing and tracking measures according to the Department of Labour protocol.



CORMORBIDITIES AND INFECTED EMPLOYEES

Population Groups at Risk of Contracting Severe COVID-19

The conditions listed below have been identified and endorsed by the Department of Health as medical conditions for which, if declared uncontrollable, employees should be permitted to work from home.

It is important to appreciate that in general that those with mild disease which is well controlled are unlikely to have adverse outcomes from COVID 19 and are at lower risk.

Table 1: Risk Factors for Severe COVID-19

RISK FACTOR	DETAIL	DEFINITION
Age	People 60 years and older	Aged 60 years or older.
People of all ages with the following underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled:		
<i>Cardiovascular Disease:</i>	Moderate/ Severe Hypertension	Moderate hypertension: systolic BP 160-179mmHg and/or diastolic BP 100-109 mmHg. Severe hypertension: systolic BP \geq 180 mmHg and/or diastolic BP \geq 110 mmHg.
	Congestive cardiac failure or other serious cardiovascular disease.	Confirmed clinical diagnosis of congestive cardiac failure or other serious cardiovascular disease.
	Cerebrovascular disease, including stroke and transient ischemic attack.	Confirmed clinical diagnosis of cerebrovascular disease.
<i>Respiratory Disease:</i>	Pulmonary Tuberculosis – untreated or in early treatment	People who have not completed the intensive phase or first two months of treatment in line with the National Department of Health Standard Treatment Guidelines.
	Moderate to severe asthma.	Asthma which requires treatment with high dose inhaled corticosteroids plus a second controller (and/or systemic corticosteroids) to prevent it from becoming ‘uncontrolled’ or which remains ‘uncontrolled’ despite this therapy.
	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).	Confirmed clinical diagnosis of COPD
	Other severe chronic lung pathology, including cystic fibrosis and bronchiectasis.	Confirmed clinical diagnosis – irrespective of severity.
<i>Kidney Disease:</i>	Chronic Kidney Disease.	eGFR < 45
<i>Pregnancy:</i>	Third trimester pregnancy.	Estimated to be further than week 27 of pregnancy
<i>Immunosuppression:</i>	Poorly controlled type II Diabetes Mellitus.	HBA1c \geq 7.5% within last 6 months
	Cancer undergoing active treatment.	Currently undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy
	Human Immunodeficiency Virus with advanced immunosuppression.	HIV positive persons with CD4 count <200 cells/mm ³ who are ART-naïve or who initiated ART within last 3 months
	Chronic immunosuppressant use.	Chronic use of corticosteroids of >20mg prednisone per day or equivalent, methotrexate, biologicals or other immune suppressants.
	Transplant.	On chronic immune suppressants.
<i>Metabolic syndrome:</i>	Severe obesity.	Body mass index (MBI) of 40 and higher.

DECLARATIONS

Should an employee fall under the high risk groups, due to any of the above conditions, s/he is required to contact the following Human Resources practitioners for assistance with completing the necessary medical declaration forms.

- » Kerileng Sharp
- » Thembi Mashiloane
- » Joanne Mbaiwa

Employees must produce a Doctor’s note to support the medical declaration. VUT reserves the right to refer the employee to its own University Doctor for assessment.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any false declarations by employees .

While VUT will endeavour to do everything possible to protect its employees and keep the work environment safe, employees are expected to do their part and take responsibility of their safety and well being, at work, home and in their communities.

