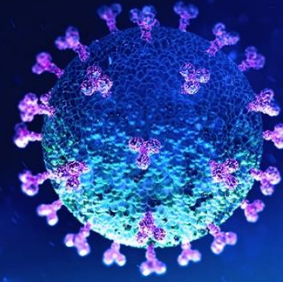




UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA - UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

**Find out more about UCT's approach
to COVID-19 on the UCT website**



22 March 2020

Teaching and learning to continue online at UCT

The University of Cape Town is moving teaching and learning online to continue the academic programme during the second term of teaching and learning.

The online plan applies to undergraduate students in the faculties of Commerce, Engineering and the Built Environment, Humanities, Law and Science.

"The state of disaster declared by President Cyril Ramaphosa forces all of us into new approaches to what we do, to help flatten the potential curve of infection. Even with suspended lectures and closed residences, the academic programme needs to continue," said Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Associate Professor Lis Lange.

To deliver the academic content planned for this year during this time of crisis, UCT has to move teaching and learning online.

"I know that this creates considerable anxiety among students because this is new and unexpected, and because some students are living in circumstances that will make it difficult to study and work online at home. We are dealing with all these issues to ensure that no one is left behind because of the need to teach remotely online. The information available indicates that we could be working online between three and five months," said Lange.

The UCT timeline for preparing for Term 2 is as follows:

- 1 April: by this date, students will be informed about how the term will be organised, including how assessments will take place.
- 6-9 April: The second term will start with four days of orientation online, to make sure students are connected, comfortable and ready to learn.
- 16 April: Actual teaching will begin.

UCT has already set up a Teaching Online Task Team, where all faculties are represented along with student representation. The Task Team has support from staff members in the

Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching and other units in the Centre for Higher Education Development, Student Wellness, the Disability Service, the libraries and the Information and Communication Technology Services.

The task's team's work has three parts:

- First, a focus on staff at faculty level, to prepare academics to teach online.
- Second, a focus on establishing the right type of communication with students to support them before they go online and during the process of learning online.
- Third, a focus on vulnerable students who might need extra help. This includes students with disabilities, students who are less familiar with computers and the internet as learning spaces, and those who need to learn in challenging social setups.

Recognising that access to data is an issue for some students, arrangements are being made for zero-rated mobile data to specific UCT online resources, to keep the costs of remote learning as low as possible. All online teaching will have low-tech options so that students with low-bandwidth connections can participate fully.

Provision will be made for students to have contact catch-up time if necessary. There are only exceptional cases in which UCT students do not have access to computers. UCT has provided laptop computers to all students on financial aid.

"We are facing not only COVID-19, but also the fourth industrial revolution, where technology will play a more central role. We recognise that there will be challenges for all of us in working this way. Together we are going to make a success out of this crisis," said Lange.

UCT is preparing a start-up pack for students' learning online experience, to be available by orientation week (6-9 April). The university is setting up the necessary infrastructure and services for students to have support during this time.

- **READ:** [The full communication by the DVC, Associate Professor Lis Lange.](#)

ENDS

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