

2021 Risk-Adjusted Level 3 Student Return to Campus Plan

Issued: 26 February 2021

The following outlines the risk-adjusted strategy for a phased return of students in March for the 2021 academic year under adjusted lockdown level 3. The plan concentrates on balancing the limitation of people density on campus with the need for specific categories of students to be on campus. The plan applies only to the first teaching term (15 March to 23 April), including orientation week (starting 6 March). National lockdown regulations as well as monitoring trends on the local impact of the virus will guide the plan for the second and subsequent teaching terms.

Identified groups of students will come back to campus by **invitation only**. Permits will be issued to students to access the campus from a particular date, and the strict Covid-19 preventative measures already in place on campus to keep students and staff safe and to curb the spread of the virus, must be adhered to (see the web link at the end of this document). Adherence to these precautionary measures is mandatory. Failure to adhere to them will not only place you at risk (in terms of health and disciplinary action) but will compromise the entire Rhodes University community and the surrounding Makhanda community.

Return permits will only be issued to students who have completed their registration for 2021.

Herewith the return to campus schedule for March 2021:

1. First Time Entering First Year Students:

- a. Students already resident in Makhanda and not in University residence will arrive on campus on 5 March to receive student cards and laptops if they have indicated and met the requirements to receive one.
- b. Students in residence on campus as well as those travelling from outside of Makhanda will arrive on campus on 6 March to receive student cards and laptops if they have indicated and met the requirements to receive one.

2. **All continuing students who have course-based** studies will study online or on a remote basis except for students taking identified courses where laboratory and practical work is imperative or specialised equipment is used, or subject to requirements by their respective professional bodies which require them to be on campus. Note that most departments have adapted practical programs to run online for the first teaching term, or have postponed practical components until the start of the second teaching term. Where continuing students are able to work remotely, they should continue to do so.

Students taking the following courses may return to the campus in term one:

- a. Students registered for the following first year courses may return to the campus from 15 March 2021 (permits will be issued across 12 – 14 March for students in residence within this group):

Chemistry 1
BEd 1
Drama 1
Fine Art Practice 1A and 1B
IMS 1 (African Ensembles, Western Art, Jazz)
Mathematics 101 and 102
Sound Technology 1

- b. Students taking the following 2nd, 3rd and 4th year courses may return to the campus from 15 March 2021 (permits will be issued across 12 – 14 March for students in residence within this group):

Fine Art Practice 2A, 2B, 3 and 4
IMS 2, 3 and 4
Journalism and Media Studies 4
Pharmacy 4
Sound Technology 2

- c. Students taking the following postgraduate courses may return to the campus from 15 March 2021 (permits will be issued across 12 – 14 March for students in residence within this group):

HDAC- PGDip(Accounting)
HONS in Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Botany, Chemistry,
Environmental Science, Geography, HKE, Ichthyology,
Mathematics, Microbiology, Physics-Electronics, Statistics,
Zoology-Entomology
HONS Financial Accounting
HONS Drama and Music
Masters in Clinical & Counselling Psychology
Masters in Drama
Masters in Fine Art
MCom (Financial Markets)
MMUS (Performance)
PDEM fulltime students only
PGBA full time students only
PGDip JRN
PGDip (Taxation)

3. Students taking the following 2nd and 3rd year courses may return to the campus from 7 April 2021 (students in residence may arrive on campus on 6 April):

Drama 2
Drama 3
Journalism and Media Studies 3

4. **Research-based postgraduate students** taking a degree by thesis should continue to work remotely where this can be profitably achieved, and will continue to receive mobile data in the first quarter. Thesis-based students who are unable to make progress remotely and require laboratories, field sites, university facilities and physical work spaces, are able to return to the University, provided that their work space is fully prepared for Covid-19 precautions. Supervisors should notify the office of the DVC:R&I (dvc.research@ru.ac.za) with the names and student numbers of students in this category who need to have access to the campus. New campus access permits for the 2021 academic year for this category of students will be needed from 15 March 2021.

5. Students who were assessed as the more serious cases of **social justice returners** from 2020, and are eligible to return in 2021, will be invited back onto the campus. Further social justice appeals will not be considered at this stage, but will be considered at the end of March once the initial cohorts of students indicated above have returned and provided that the pandemic and lockdown conditions make this possible. Appeals should be addressed at that time to returnquery@ru.ac.za.

6. **International students** will be subject to the same return arrangements as South African students, and may engage with the International Office for further assistance on internationaloffice@ru.ac.za.

7. Certain categories of **student leaders** will be invited back to support students both on campus and remotely. They will be notified by the relevant University division into which their leadership work falls, and they will also be required to hold a campus access permit.

Remote/online teaching and learning delivery will continue until the health risk posed by the Covid-19 pandemic has sufficiently receded for face-to-face teaching and learning to resume. Students who are allowed back onto campus for specific programs requiring a physical presence should be aware that their courses will not necessarily be presented in a physical modality. Returning students will not be able to engage in social activities, and will be required to abide by all health and physical distancing rules pertaining to the level for the Sarah Baartman region, as well as all University protocols.

Return to campus will be by University invitation only. No student will be allowed to return to campus of their own accord. All returning students will be individually notified. Students whose immune system is compromised are advised to engage with the University at the point at which they are notified to return to campus.

All other students must await notification of an institutional invitation before they may return to the campus, whether as an Oppidan or in University residence. Students will not be allowed back on campus for any reason other than indicated in the categories above.

Students who are not yet invited back to campus will continue to receive mobile bundles until such time as the university is in a position to welcome them back onto the campus. Students who receive permits for access to campus will no longer receive mobile data bundles, unless they are unable to return to the campus due to medically certified comorbidities. Oppidans with access to campus are reminded that information resources hosted on the campus (including RUCONNECTED, ROSS, and local library resources) continue to be zero rated for mobile data access, which facilitates anytime access to these resources including during curfew hours.

All students returning to campus will be required to make use of the Higher Health daily health assessment online app, and abide by all health and safety protocols. On first arrival, students must report to the Health Care Centre for screening before continuing on to their residences or departments.

[https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/cvrtt/documents/Framework_for_the_management_of_the_return_of_students\(Health&Safety\).pdf](https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/cvrtt/documents/Framework_for_the_management_of_the_return_of_students(Health&Safety).pdf)