

UFS lifts required vaccination policy

The University of the Free State (UFS) has lifted its Covid-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy with immediate effect.



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“Since the declaration by the Government on 22 June 2022 that the Covid-19 regulations will be repealed, the UFS has conducted a risk assessment to determine the risk of exposure to staff and students. From the assessment, it was clear that the university’s Covid-19 infections are currently a low risk,” said Prof Francis Petersen, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the UFS.

Factors that contributed to this low risk include the following:

- No Covid-19 positive cases among UFS staff and students have been reported in the past month.
- The high number of vaccinations among UFS stakeholders. In addition, the current national immunity level of the total South African population is high.
- Certain faculties and postgraduate students are currently proceeding with hybrid/online learning, which minimises the risk of possible Covid-19 infections on the university’s three campuses.
- In its correspondence of 23 June 2022, the UFS urged all staff and students to continue wearing masks should they have comorbidities and/or symptoms of illness, thus safeguarding other stakeholders.

“We believe that Covid-19 no longer poses an immediate threat to the safety of our staff and students, and that the pandemic is at a stage where they should take responsibility for their own safety. This can be mainly ascribed to the success of the implementation of the policy. Staff and students who still wish to wear masks are urged to do so at their own discretion. Those who have not yet been vaccinated against the virus and have no known condition preventing them from doing so, are advised to get vaccinated for their own safety and protection,” said Prof Petersen.

The UFS Covid-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy was approved by the University Council on 26 November 2021 and implemented on 6 December 2021. The university commenced restricting unvaccinated individuals from accessing its campuses as of 14 February 2022.

“If the national regulatory environment with respect to Covid-19 is changing to such an extent that the policy needs to be re-implemented, the university’s executive management will act accordingly, and hence the Covid-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy remains a policy of the university as approved by the UFS Council on 26 November 2021,” said Prof Petersen.

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