



10 February 2022

Dear UJ Staff member

Welcome to the 2022 academic year. In the words of this song sung by the UJ choir, we hope that "[everything beautiful resonates inside of \[you\]](#)...", an appropriate welcome, as we commence classes as we do on Valentine's Day, 14th of February.

As communicated in 2021, and with the changed circumstances of the pandemic, the UJ teaching and learning strategy was approved. In line with our strategic objective of teaching excellence, our task is to ensure that our students have a vibrant intellectual experience on our wonderful campuses. UJ students will be provided with on-campus, in-person teaching and provide and learning support using a **hybrid approach** (face-to-face classes and Blackboard engagement).

Each Faculty has submitted teaching and learning plans in line with the University's commitment to providing the best education possible to all our students. Consult your department / faculty¹ with any queries in this regard. We recognise also that our support and administrative staff have worked tirelessly to keep the engines of the University running. Together we can all make a difference.

In-person, face-to-face sessions are not elective, they are a required part of our teaching, and should be designed and facilitated to ensure that they are a meaningful element of the teaching and learning process. Valuable insights gleaned from the 2020-2021 experiences should inform our pedagogical practices and approach. In order to be prepared for any contingency (such as another 'wave' in the pandemic), the online learning management system (Blackboard) is to be integrated into the approach so that teaching can move quickly and effectively into that mode should the need arise.

We will all need to communicate clearly to students and tutors what is required of them and allow for a settling in period as they adapt to the new arrangements. Our communications must be unambiguous and take into account those students who are new to the University.

Mandatory vaccination sites

As you are aware, all campuses and facilities are [mandatory vaccination sites](#). Click on this link: [[mandatory vaccination](#)] for how to access campus. UJ will take appropriate

¹ Including the College of Business and Economics (CBE) as well as the Johannesburg Business School (JBS).

disciplinary measures against students and staff who break COVID-19 rules on campus. Read UJ's COVID-19 guidelines [here](#).

Support for teaching with technology

The [Centre for Academic Technologies](#) (CAT) supports staff in teaching and learning through the preparation and engagement on the use of innovative and advanced technologies. All staff are enrolled in the **UJ Online Teaching Toolkit (CM0002)** available under organisations on Blackboard. This online module is a toolkit for teaching and learning online, staff can all explore the easy search solution, FAQs section, explore the simulated learning design guide and participate in the interactive e-Learning activity list. CAT has a team of Instructional Designers who work with the faculties and the college across all campuses, [click here](#) to find out who to contact in your faculty/college for further support.

Teaching and Learning – adjusting to the newer new normal

For many students, including those returning, this may be their first time on campus. The adjustment to campus life for some will require that we provide additional support as they settle in and adapt. The return to face to face, in-classroom teaching with active and engaging online support and learning should better enable student success, assure assessment integrity, and allow students to experience university life. Faculties will ensure that the required safety precautions are in place.

Venues, venue bookings and timetable

The official 2022 campus-based lecturing timetables, published on the UJ Web in November 2021, remain in place, and the *assigned lecturing timetable (LTT) slots need to be adhered to* for these planned T&L activities (Class/Practical/Tutorial) *in order to avoid timetable clashes for students*. The venues assigned to these remain booked during the academic terms. Where the assigned venues are not large enough to accommodate the number of students, faculties will manage the contact tuition time with students. The University circular of 20 January 2022 refers: [VENUE BOOKINGS](#) – Semester 1: Impact of 2022 COVID-19 Lockdown Regulations and UJ as a Mandatory Vaccination Site

In laboratories and other facilities, students, postdoctoral research fellows and staff are required to wear masks at all times. Arrangements for space for physical distancing in specialist facilities should be made. Lab protocols should be clearly displayed and explained to all students. Cleaning Services will clean labs, lab equipment, shared computers and other equipment regularly. Microphones in venues will be cleaned specifically with isopropyl alcohol as regular sanitiser is not recommended for these. Computers and keyboards will also be cleaned by Cleaning Services with appropriate cleaners. Here is an interesting [article](#) on the aerosol and surface stability of the coronavirus.

COVID-19 Protocols

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must report on this link <https://ulink.uj.ac.za/views/staff/StaffCovidDisclosure1.aspx>. Campus Health professionals will contact them and advise further depending on the information received. According to the latest Adjusted Alert Level 1, the following will apply:

- Those who test positive with no symptoms do not have to isolate.

- If you test positive with symptoms, the isolation period has been reduced from 10 to 7 days.
- Contacts, i.e. those exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual, do not have to isolate unless they develop symptoms.

The implications of these will be applied in conjunction with Campus Health Service staff after individuals have reported their status.

Psychosocial Support

UJ values the mental health of staff and students and has put various support structures into place to assist. Life EHS is the external service provider that offers a wide range of counselling services for staff at no cost. Staff may contact them on 0800 004 770 to arrange counselling. Please refer students in need to [PsyCaD](#).

International Travel

Approval of international travel is to be done in accordance with pre-COVID-19 processes, i.e. by the relevant ELG member (or where relevant, officially delegated Senior Director). Complete the [online application](#) for travel insurance. Note that cover additional to that provided by the University will need to be arranged for separately.

As we head to the start of the academic year, I wish you everything of the best for a productive semester and thank you for the many ways in which you continue to contribute to the success of the University.

“What happens from here on out is unknown territory for anybody. There’s no map. We don’t find out what’s waiting for us around the next corner until we turn it.”
Haruki Murakami

The University has, with all of you, done its utmost to plan for a successful 2022 and we know that the students are in good hands. Remember to focus on your wellness as well as that of the students. Your wellbeing as you balance all the demands on your time: teaching, research, and personal obligations, is important. Although our campuses may not be the same as they were pre-COVID-19, our plans to return to campus, and the protocols and policies in place, will allow us to bring to life our vibrant university community.

Prof S Sinha

DVC Research and Internationalisation

Prof L Mpedi

DVC: Academic

Prof K Burger

Registrar