

TRACKING OUR STEPS: NAVIGATING A WAY INTO A NEW FUTURE

It's not just about you, it's about others too...

20 January 2022

Council adopts the Vaccination Mandate (19 October 2021)

- Council approves the Senate recommendation for a vaccination mandate rule in terms of which a valid and acceptable form of evidence of COVID-19 vaccination with a vaccine that is approved by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) will be a condition for access to the campus in 2022.
- The vaccination requirement also applies as a condition for registration for all students, as well as for staff working on campus, service providers and visitors.
- A recommendation for an exemption application process and an alternative health status process for those who cannot take the vaccine on medical or other legitimate and justifiable grounds, is also approved.
- Where such applications are successful, the University will consider steps to mitigate risk, including the requirement to produce a negative COVID-19 test result on a weekly basis.
- The decision takes into account competing constitutional rights, including the individual right to bodily integrity, as well as various statutory provisions towards securing an effective face-to-face teaching and learning and research in a safe environment. The decision also considered a safe working environment.
- The Council's decision is shared with staff in a *TOPLIST* dated 21 October 2021.

Rhodes University preparations for full return to campus take shape (*TOPLIST* - 01 December 2021): Letter to staff and students goes out...

- Rhodes University community is reminded of the vaccination mandate rule towards a full return for staff and students to campus in 2022. This is one of the many ways in which the University is preparing itself for the new academic year.
- In addition to this communique, there is also a hassle-free guide (this includes Mandate Rule and process)
<https://www.ru.ac.za/registrationgateway/returningstudentsall/guidetohasslefreeregistration/>
- Although a hybrid approach, including face-to-face, online and blended approaches will be adopted for teaching and learning, all students are expected to be on campus and data will no longer be provided. This is unsustainable. Lecturers will also not cater for those students who will not be on campus.

Guidelines for all staff are issued in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans (*TOPLIST* - 07 December 2021)

- Staff members are requested to register their digital vaccination certificate or equivalent certification by 17 December 2021. Staff may register by emailing vaxstaff@ru.ac.za and attaching a copy of your vaccine certificate.
- Staff who have not yet vaccinated but intend to do so are urged to advise of their intentions and when they expect to be vaccinated.
- The process for staff who wish to apply for vaccine exemption to be sent out shortly.
- If a digital vaccination certificate is not received from a staff member and/or an intention to vaccinate, it would be assumed that you are not vaccinated and do not intend to get vaccinated. It is important to note that whilst no one will be forced to vaccinate, staff will only be permitted on campus if they comply with the Vaccination Mandate.
- Any staff member who comes onto campus who is not vaccinated and has not been given permission to be on campus by the Vaccination Exemption Committee will be putting the health and safety of other staff and students at risk and could face disciplinary action.
- All staff are expected to return physically to campus on 04 January 2022 unless they are on approved leave.
- Staff may not use the fact that they have not been vaccinated as a reason for not physically returning to work. If you are not on approved leave and cannot physically return to work then you will be on unpaid leave for a period.

Council approves Operational Framework for a Vaccine Mandate on 02 December 2021

- Council passes Operational Framework for a Vaccination Mandate (Includes link to https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zkdQuFNHmu9OnZkNikdyxNr-a_cFIVJ_/view – Dated 02 December 2021).
- The Council's decision is shared with staff in a *TOPLIST* dated 10 December 2021.

Vaccine Exemption Protocol is sent out in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans (*TOPLIST* - 11 December 2021)

- To return to the Rhodes University Campus in 2022, all staff and students are required to be vaccinated or be in possession of a Vaccine Exemption Certificate granted by the University Vaccine Exemption Committee.
- Employees and students who cannot be vaccinated on medical grounds or choose not to be vaccinated on religious grounds, **must apply for a Vaccine Exemption between 01 January and 01 March 2022.**
- If an exemption application is denied, staff and students can appeal to the Vaccine Exemption Appeals Committee.

Further guideline for staff who are not vaccinated is sent in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans (*TOPLIST* - 14 Dec 2021)

- If you are unvaccinated you are required to complete a prescribed form and email it to vaxstaff@ru.ac.za no later than the close of business on 04 January 2022.

- The purpose of this form is to enable the University to plan for HR processes as a result of your decision not to vaccinate. If you are not vaccinated, have not applied for vaccine exemption, and are not on approved annual leave (support staff) or approved leave of absence (academic staff) you shall be on unpaid leave effective 04 January 2022.

Recap of all communicate about the Vaccination Mandate is sent to staff (TOPLIST - 06 January 2022)

- The purpose of this communication is to remind staff of the protocol and processes communicated last year in respect of the full return of staff to the campus from 04 January 2022. Three Toplist communications were sent out in respect of the return of staff to work in 2022 – 07 December, 11 December and 14 December.

Communication about special exemptions is issued (TOPLIST - 07 January 2022)

- Staff who are unvaccinated due to a recent COVID-19 infection can apply for a temporary exemption to return to campus. These exemptions will be the equivalent of vaccination for up to 3 months following a positive COVID-19 test result.
- Staff are requested to email their pathology reports to vaxstaff@ru.ac.za and they will be sent a vaccine exemption application form to complete.

For more information including Return to Campus Plan 2022 visit:

Direct link: https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/vice-chancellor/documents/RHODES_UNIVERSITY_RETURN_TO_CAMPUS_PLAN_FOR_2022.pdf

A link to it also appears at the top of the www.ru.ac.za home page.

This public document is made up of different documents, comprising:

- Rhodes University Return to Campus Plan for 2022
 - Sections:
 - Registration
 - ResOps and Student Affairs
 - Teaching & Learning Continuity Plan
 - Research & Postgrad Continuity
 - Physical Return of Staff
 - Financial Sustainability
 - Annexures
 - An Analysis of Constitutional and Legislative Provisions and Approaches in other Universities
 - Risk Assessment of Full Return of Staff and Students
 - Implementation Plan for the Rhodes University Vaccination Mandate Framework – dated 12 October 2021
 - General Guide for 2022 FTENs and Transfer Students
 - FTENs 2022 FAQs
 - 2022 Parents' handbook

_____ ends///