

COVID-19 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT LIFE CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS

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Preamble

As part of ensuring the business continuity of the North-West University as it relates to Student Life, the following revised COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures for Student Life Co-Curricular Activities, Programmes and Events¹ are provided.

1 Interpretation

This SOP must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the:

- 1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- 1.2 Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 (as amended);
- 1.3 Statute of the North-West University as promulgated from time to time;
- 1.4 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993²;
- 1.5 Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013;
- 1.6 NWU Strategy 2015-2025;
- 1.7 NWU Policy on Business Continuity (2021);
- 1.8 NWU Policy on Delegations, Assignments and Advocacy (2019);
- 1.9 Institutional Rules on Student Vaccinations (2021)³;
- 1.10 Relevant sectoral guidelines on the management of COVID-19, as well as any other national health-related legislation that may be promulgated from time to time;
- 1.11 Relevant policies and rules approved by the University Council; and
- 1.12 Any other relevant SOPs, guidelines and protocols as approved by the UMC, COVID-19 Response Team, and/or COVID-19 Transition Task Team managing the impact of COVID-19.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to:

- 2.1 Ensure the business continuity of the University as it pertains to **Student Life** and the creation of a vibrant student experience;
- 2.2 Provide a standardised framework and guidelines for the planning and execution of **Student Life** activities, programmes and events as done by students, student leaders and staff; and
- 2.3 Create a healthy and safe environment wherein **Student Life** activities, programmes and events can be planned and executed.

¹ Hereafter referred to as: the SOP.

² Hereafter referred to as: the OHS Act.

³ Hereafter referred to as: the Institutional Rules.

3 Health and Safety Risk Assessments

In accordance with the OHS Act and the Institutional Rules, the University reviewed and reassessed the baseline risk assessment by means of a Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (HIRA)⁴ focussed on student activities at the NWU, on 03 July 2022. This revised risk assessment identified instances where students engage with each other, staff and external stakeholders as part of the ongoing business of the University related to teaching, learning, research, community engagement, university residences, facilities and Student Life.

Based on the identified risks related to each activity, the revised HIRA provided specific standardised control measures that mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the business continuity of the University and promote the creation of a healthy and safe environment for students and staff. The identified risks and associated mitigating control measures as well as specific activity control measures relevant to instances where students engage with each other, staff and external stakeholders as it pertains to the Student Life environment inform the functioning of this SOP.

4 Scope of application

This SOP applies to Co-Curricular activities, programmes and events (hereafter referred to as: *Student Life Activities*) planned and executed by the Functional Areas of Student Life including: Campus Arts, Campus Health Care Centres, Campus Radio Stations, Campus Sport, High Performance Institutes, and Student Counselling and Development, as well as the Students' Representative Council (SRC), the Students' Campus Councils (SCCs), and the subordinate student leadership structures⁵. This SOP remains subject to existing protocols, rules and guidelines issued by the University that inform the management of COVID-19 in the environments of teaching, learning and research, university residences and catering services environment, and facilities and access management.

5 Definitions

Term	Definition
Community engagement	Community Engagement (CE) within this SOP refers specifically to CE which occurs within the Student Life environment and is not linked to a curriculum of an academic programme but rather to co-curricular programmes.
COVID-19	Refers to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 as a result of infection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
COVID-19 Vaccines (Vaccines)	Refers to the COVID-19 vaccines and booster vaccine doses that have been scientifically developed, evaluated and recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and registered or authorised by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to be effective in preventing severe disease and death as a result of COVID-19.
HIRA	Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
NWU	North-West University
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
Premises and/or facilities of the University	Refers to such premises and/or facilities which are owned, controlled or leased by the University, over which the University can practically execute access control measures which can enable the University to ensure adherence to the vaccination requirements and related SOPs and guidelines.
Residence Life	**Refer to definition on Student Life.
SARS-CoV-2	Refers to a novel respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan China in December 2019 and responsible for a global pandemic.
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
Student Life sub-environments	Refers to the areas of work where Student Life activities are presented namely: programmes, events and activities coordinated by the SRC, SCCs and subordinate student leadership structures, Residence Life, institutional and campus level events and/or programmes.
Student Leader	Refers to a member of the Students' Representative Council (SRC), the Students' Campus Councils (SCCs), and the subordinate student leadership structures established in accordance with paragraph 20 of the Constitution of the Students' Representative Council of the North-West University 2021 (SRC Constitution).
Student Life Activities	Refers to the programmes, activities, events, engagements, and initiatives that are planned, coordinated and executed by Student Life, which include the functional areas of: Campus Arts, Campus Health Care Centres, Campus Radio Stations, Campus Sport, Student Counselling and Development, and the High-Performance Institute. Student Life further includes the programmes, activities, events, engagements, and initiatives coordinated by the SRC, SCCs and/or its subordinate student leadership structures, as well as the co-curricular

⁴ First completed on 13 December 2021.

⁵ As established in paragraph 20 of the Constitution of the Students' Representative Council of the North-West University (2021).

Term	Definition
	programmes, activities, events, engagements and initiatives that occur within University Residences - referred to as <i>Residence Life</i> .
Student	In accordance with paragraph 70(1) of the Statute, a person is regarded as a student when such an individual has been admitted to the University and has been registered for a programme leading to the attainment of a qualification.
University Residences	Refers to a building that is under the control of the University for the purposes of housing students at the University. Such control includes building which are owned or leased by the University but does NOT include accredited accommodation.
Vaccination certificate	Refers to a certificate issued by the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) or a COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card issued by the National Department of Health (NDOH) or any other digital certificate issued outside the Republic and recognised by the NDOH.
Vaccinated / Vaccination	Refers to an individual who has received the requisite doses of a COVID-19 vaccination - fully vaccinated - and includes an additional dose and/or booster vaccine dose.

6 Roles and responsibilities

With the objective of ensuring business continuity as it pertains to Student Life, the following roles and responsibilities are provided:

6.1 Overall roles and responsibilities of the University

The University will -

- 6.1.1 Publish and communicate the revised COVID-19 HIRA for students, as well as this SOP and other related guidelines relevant to Student Life.
- 6.1.2 Duly delegate compliance officers and supervising compliance officers within the sub-environments of Student Life as it pertains to institutional and campus level Student Life Activities including the Functional Areas, Residence Life, and the SRC, SCCs and subordinate student leadership structures, thereby ensuring oversight and control of business continuity in an effective and practical manner.
- 6.1.3 Through delegated compliance officers ensure adherence to this SOP, the HIRA, and other relevant legislative prescripts, guidelines and protocols managing COVID-19, and report any non-compliance to such the supervising compliance officer.
- 6.1.4 Through managers, duly delegated compliance officers, risk facilitators and OHS representatives will conduct and participate in walkthrough inspections of facilities to identify potential health and safety risk areas, as well as ensuring the optimal usage of university facilities and premises.
- 6.1.5 Through managers, duly delegated compliance officers, risk facilitators and OHS representatives will communicate the outcome of above-mentioned inspections and identified risk areas and optimal usage of university facilities and premises.
- 6.1.6 Through managers and delegated compliance officers will ensure effective recordkeeping as required by the relevant legislation and directives, as well as internal policies, rules and protocols, of Student Life Activities, programmes and events that will be accessible for possible future investigations.

6.2 Overall roles and responsibilities of students

NWU students, participating in Student Life Activities will –

- 6.2.1 Adhere to this SOP, and related policies, rules and guidelines as approved by the University.
- 6.2.2 Report any non-compliance to this SOP and related SOPs and guidelines to the relevant compliance officer.
- 6.2.3 Promptly report any presentation of known COVID-19 symptoms to the Campus Health Care Centre and relevant staff members for assistance.

7 Delegation of compliance officers and supervising compliance officers

In accordance with the Policy on Delegations, Assignment and Agency –

- 7.1 Compliance officers are delegated for the relevant sub-environments of Student Life for the purposes ensuring effective and practical oversight of compliance to health and safety including COVID-19 related legislation, protocols and directives as it pertains to relevant Student Life Activities.
- 7.2 Supervising compliance officers are delegated for the relevant sub-environments of Student Life, with each compliance officer reporting to the relevant supervising compliance officer, as follows.

Table 2: Delegated Compliance Officers for Student Life Activities

SUB-ENVIRONMENT OF STUDENT LIFE	COMPLIANCE OFFICER		
	Compliance Officer	Supervising Compliance Officer	Campus Compliance Officer
Institutional-level Student Life	Executive Director: Student Life	Registrar	Relevant Campus Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Campus-level Student Life	Relevant Campus Director: Student Life	Executive Director: Student Life	Relevant Campus Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Functional Area	Relevant Line Manager	Relevant Campus Director: Student Life	Relevant Campus Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Residence Life	Relevant House Parent	Relevant Campus Director: Student Life	Relevant Campus Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Students' Representative Council	Executive Director: Student Life	Registrar	Relevant Campus Deputy Vice-Chancellor
SCCs and subordinate student leadership structures	Relevant Campus Director: Student Life	Executive Director: Student Life	Relevant Campus Deputy Vice-Chancellor

- 7.3 The authority delegated to compliance officers and supervising compliance officers cannot be delegated by the *delegatus* to another staff members and/or student.
- 7.4 To assist in the enabling the effective oversight function related to ensuring compliance to this SOP, compliance buddies may be identified for each of the sub-environments of Student Life, as agreed upon between the relevant compliance officer and supervising compliance officer.

8 Control measures identified as part of the HIRA on student activities

8.1 General compliance to National regulations

Informed by the revised HIRA on student activities, students are strongly encouraged to vaccinate against COVID-19 to reduce the consequence of severe illness and thereby reduce possible exposure risks to fellow students, staff and NWU community stakeholders with who students might engage.

8.2 Student Life Activities executed on NWU-controlled and/or owned premises

Subject to national legislation, regulations and directives, Student Life Activities executed on NWU controlled and/or owned premises and/or facilities, must be done in accordance with these protocols, as well the relevant protocols relating to the health and safety, including COVID-19 compliance management of facilities, university residences and access management of the University.

8.3 Community engagement as part of Student Life Activities

Community engagement as part Student Life Activities may be conducted provided that -

- 8.4.1 A risk-based assessment has been completed by the NWU based on the type of community engagement activity to be conducted, identifying the potential health and safety risks that the activity poses to student and staff participants and project beneficiaries and/or recipients.
- 8.4.2 Where relevant, the community engagement activity is conducted in accordance with the COVID-19 compliance measures put in place by the premises and/or facility where the community engagement activity is conducted, with this including health and safety measures put in place premises and/or facilities not limited to but including retirement centres, health care facilities, frail care facilities, orphanages, support centres, childhood development centres, etc.