



Institutional Rules on Student Vaccinations

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INSTITUTIONAL RULES ON STUDENT VACCINATIONS

Preamble

In order to realise the NWU's dream to be an "internationally recognised university in South Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care", the institution has included several strategic imperatives in its 2015 – 2025 Strategic Plan to deliver on a clearly differentiated student value proposition. From the NWU strategy, it is evident that every aspect of the University's business centres around our students and all services and programmes offered are aimed at creating an environment that is conducive to academic excellence, general wellbeing and enjoyment of our students.

It is against this background that the Council of the North-West University (NWU) has, in terms section 32(1)(b) of Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 as well as paragraphs 7(1)(c) and (d), 80 and 81 of the Statute of the NWU, approved the Institutional Rules on Student Vaccinations on 13 December 2021.

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Introduction

1 Interpretation, Scope and Application

- 1.1 These institutional rules on student vaccinations (hereafter referred to as “the rules”) must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the -
- 1.1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
 - 1.1.2 Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 (“the Act”);
 - 1.1.3 Statute of the NWU as promulgated from time to time (“the Statute”);
 - 1.1.4 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993;
 - 1.1.5 Disaster Management, Act 57 of 2002 and its regulations and/or directions;
 - 1.1.6 Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013;
 - 1.1.7 NWU Strategy 2015 – 2025;
 - 1.1.8 NWU Policy on Business Continuity;
 - 1.1.9 NWU Policy on Delegations, Assignments and Advocacy;
 - 1.1.10 Relevant sectoral guidelines on student vaccinations, as well as any other national health-related legislation that may be promulgated from time to time; and
 - 1.1.11 Any other relevant policies and rules approved by the by the University Council (“Council”).

2 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the rules is to provide for a regulatory framework to:–
- 2.1.1 Enable and support the capability of the NWU to continue the delivery of services and products within acceptable time frames at predefined capacity during periods of disruption as these might affect students;
 - 2.1.2 Take reasonable steps to create an environment conducive to the health and safety and general wellbeing of students, NWU staff with whom students interact, stakeholders where students conduct teaching, learning and research, as well as members of the public with whom students interact; and
 - 2.1.3 Guide the return and reintegration of students to the premises and facilities of the NWU in instances where an intervention or disruption resulted in temporary absence and/or vacation of students.

3 Principles

- 3.1 The following principles inform these rules, by means of which:
- 3.1.1 The NWU implements reasonable measures to create a safe and healthy environment within which University business can take place;
 - 3.1.2 The practical and effective reintegration of students to University premises and facilities is enabled in the instance where a temporary absence and/or vacation was endured;
 - 3.1.3 The Vice-Chancellor will reasonably ensure the development and implementation of protocols and procedures to give effect to these rules; and
 - 3.1.4 The NWU recognises the constitutional rights of its students in relation to amongst others, access to education, freedom of religion, belief and opinion, and bodily integrity.

4 Reporting

The registrar, executive director student life and deputy vice-chancellor teaching and learning report to the UMC, and other institutional committees and forums on matters related to the effective and efficient implementation of these rules.

5 Review

The registrar must, after consultation with the executive director student life, deputy vice-chancellor teaching and learning, the NWU Senate and the students' representative council, ensure the review of the rules as and when required and submit these rules to the Council for review, at least once in every three-year cycle.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK TOWARDS ENSURING NWU BUSINESS CONTINUITY

6 Assignment to the Vice-Chancellor or his/her delegate on the management response on matters relevant to the vaccination of students

In accordance with Para 7(1)(b) of the Statute, Council adopts these institutional rules for student vaccinations and assigns the management response to outbreaks, epidemics and/or pandemics, to the Vice-Chancellor or his/her delegate in accordance with the NWU Policy on Delegations, Assignments and Advocacy.

Pursuant to the above statement:

- 6.1 The Vice-Chancellor, after consultation with the Senate and the SRC, determines and declares the vaccination requirements in respect of students as it pertains to possible occupational health and safety risks impacting on the University's business continuity.
- 6.2 Considerations on the vaccination requirements in respect of students must act to the benefit of ensuring and enabling the business continuity of the University, based upon factual and reliable medical data and advice.
- 6.3 Vaccination requirements in respect of students must be formulated and implemented by the Vice-Chancellor or his/her delegate on a case-by-case basis depending on the threat that the outbreak, epidemic and/or pandemic presents.
- 6.4 Depending on the particular circumstances, vaccination requirements may provide for a differentiated approach informed by the relevant risks within the various environments of the University, including: teaching and learning, research, community engagement, student life and support services.

7 Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures on student vaccination requirements

- 7.1 The Vice-Chancellor or his/her delegate must, after consultation with the Senate and the SRC, develop and implement functional and practical guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) and oversee the effectiveness thereof.
- 7.2 These guidelines and SOPs must give effect to these rules by virtue of the implementation of vaccination requirements for students as and when required, and to the extent that the response to the outbreak, epidemic and/or pandemic changes.
- 7.3 Depending on the nature of student vaccination requirements, the NWU may:
 - 7.3.1 Provide specific and/or additional requirements for students; and
 - 7.3.2 Instate specific limitations and/or restrictions on students, provided that such requirements, limitations and/or restrictions –
 - 7.3.2.1 function in support of these rules; and
 - 7.3.2.2 seek to minimise the number of students who are non-complaint with these rules.
- 7.4 These guidelines and SOPs must provide for:
 - 7.4.1 The business continuity of the NWU within the various environments of its functioning, with a focus on ensuring the continuation of students' access to and participation in teaching, learning, research, community engagement, student life and support services;
 - 7.4.2 A clear distinction of roles and responsibilities in ensuring the implementation of such within the relevant University environment, and providing for additional delegations and/or assignments as would be practical in the relevant environment;
 - 7.4.3 Criteria and procedures that allow students to seek exemption from vaccination, as well as the mechanisms that will further guide exempted students' access to and participation in University business where possible;

- 7.4.4 Mechanisms that monitor and record the vaccination status and possible limitation measures as relevant to each student; and
- 7.4.5 A clear indication of possible consequences, and/or disciplinary measures, and/or remedies should a student be non-compliant with the relevant guidelines and SOPs.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON THE RETURN AND REINTEGRATION OF STUDENTS

8 Return and reintegration of students

These rules provide for the safe return and reintegration of students to the premises and facilities of the NWU in instances where an intervention by the UMC or a disruption related to an outbreak, epidemic and/or pandemic, subsequently resulted in a temporary absence and/or vacation.

8.1 In accordance with health and safety prescripts, the Vice-Chancellor must ensure management oversight of relevant processes and procedures on the following matters:

8.1.1 The completion of a defined health impact risk assessment;

8.1.2 All facilities are managed and utilised in a manner that allows for the optimal usage of, and access to such facilities, within the limitations identified through the relevant occupational health and safety risk assessments and pursuing the safe return and reintegration of students.

These include facilities used for:

8.1.2.1 Teaching, learning and research;

8.1.2.2 Student Life, sport, arts and culture, and co-curricular programmes;

8.1.2.3 Communal and general recreation;

8.1.2.4 Accommodation, University Residences (owned and leased) and Residence Life; and

8.1.2.5 Community engagement and student support services.

8.2 Appropriate mechanisms are implemented to determine students' needs and requirements to reintegrate to University premises, facilities and offerings; and

8.3 The necessary support structures are established and procedures implemented to assist students in preparing to return to campus premises and facilities.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON ENSURING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF STUDENTS

9 Health and safety of students

- 9.1 The NWU must establish programmes, campaigns and initiatives that provide information, create awareness and educate students on the relevant health and safety risks and considerations, as well as vaccination process, and consequences in instances of non-compliance to policies, guidelines and procedures.
- 9.2 Where required, training and orientation must be provided to students aimed at clarifying the implementation of the guidelines and SOPs that have been developed in accordance with these rules.
- 9.3 The NWU must reasonably provide primary health care services, psychosocial support and access to vaccination opportunities relevant to related health and safety risks and possible consequences to students.

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