

## MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Dear Colleagues and Students

The University's executive management team has been monitoring the global [2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) outbreak since early January and is in regular contact with our professors in [the Faculty of Health Sciences](#) and at the [National Institute for Communicable Disease](#) to determine the best practices for managing the virus if it reaches the Wits community.

The Senior Executive Team has to date:

- Developed a detailed protocol to manage any reported case of the virus on campus. The Dean of Students, Mr [Jerome September](#), is the first point of contact for students whilst the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Advancement, Human Resources and Transformation, Professor [Ruksana Osman](#), is the first point of contact for staff members.
- Developed a University continuity plan that could be implemented if the University had to shut down for a short period.
- Monitored and engaged with staff and students who have travelled to and from high-risk areas.

At its upcoming meetings early next week, the Executive will discuss proposals from staff and students regarding the biometrics system, conference attendance and travel advice.

There are some standard hygiene practices to [protect against infection](#) and the further spread of this emerging infectious disease. These include:

Covering your nose and mouth when sneezing,

1. [Washing your hands thoroughly and regularly](#) with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand-rub. Learn from the Wits experts: <http://www.wits.ac.za/news/latest-news/opinion/2020/2020-03/yes-washing-our-hands-really-can-help-curb-the-spread-of-coronavirus.html>,
2. Refraining from touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth,
3. Keeping a safe social distance from people, and particularly anyone who is coughing and/or sneezing (1 – 2 metres),
4. Staying home if you feel unwell, and
5. Seeking medical help if you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

In case of an emergency related to the coronavirus, the **NICD hotline number is 0800 029 999**.

View a [live map](#) of the number of coronavirus cases documented worldwide.

The executive team will provide comprehensive advice and guidelines early next week.

Thank you

**OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**

**6 MARCH 2020**