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Policy Name/Title: COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy				
Policy Group(s):	Support Service Policies : Human Resources			
Type: Tick document category	Policy	X	Guideline	
	Procedure		Regulation	
UFS Statute or regulation reference number and date:	UFS Statute, Government Gazette, No 41399, 26 January of 2018 UFS Statute, Government Gazette, No 42337, 29 March 2019			
Relevant legislation and/or policy, codes of practice, professional authorities:	Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996 Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002 Regulations as per the Government Gazette, No 44700, 11 June 2021 Regulations as per the Government Gazette, No 45358, 22 October 2021 Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Disease Act 130 of 1993 Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000 Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000			
Relevant institutional policies/manuals	ERM Policy Employment Policy Leave Policy			
Consultation process To be verified and signed off before approval.	State the stakeholder group/s and/or structures consulted during the policy development or review process as follows: a) Special ERM Forum Meeting: 1 October 2021 b) Rectorate: 13 October 2021, 20 October 2021 c) University Management Committee: 18 October 2021 d) Institutional Forum: 25 October 2021 e) Executive Committee of Senate: 25 October 2021 f) Advised all employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers and students in writing that the University intends to implement a UFS COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy and invited representations			

		g) Executive Committee of Council: 28 October 2021 h) Student Services Committee of Council: 29 October 2021 i) Consultation with the ISRC j) HR Committee of Council: 2 November 2021 k) Senate: 2 November 2021 l) Council: 26 November 2021 m) UFS Digest: 29 November 2021			
Status		Approved as per minute nr: 1			
Coordinating owner		UMC Senior Director Human Resources			
Contact person		Senior Director Human Resources			
Certification of due process: To be verified and signed once approved by the relevant authority		Prof FW Petersen Rector and Vice-Chancellor		10 December 2021 Date	
Approval date	26 November 2021	Commencement date	6 December 2021	Review date	February 2023
REVISION HISTORY: Only applicable to amended or reviewed policies. Record details of amendments/revisions.					
Version number	Approved/Rescinded	Date	Approving Authority	Resolution Number (minutes number)	Date for next review (start date for review process)
N/A					
For office use only					
Policy Group (broad policy field)		Support Service Policies : Human Resources			
Subject (policy subfield)		COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy			
Reference Number		HR600/P/1.0/21.1			
Version Number		Version 1			
Keywords for Search Engine:		Covid-19 Policy, HR600, Policy			

POLICY STATEMENT	
1.Preamble/ background	<p>1.1 The UFS recognises the preliminary nature of all scientific knowledge, and that, in similarity with all other pandemic and viruses, the updating of knowledge will lead to an improved understanding of how to respond to such viruses scientifically and medically. As a University that follows the science, we will stay abreast of any changes and respond accordingly.</p> <p>1.2 The UFS introduces the COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy as part of its UFS Cares Programme and in line with the compact signed between all stakeholders during 2020.</p> <p>1.3 As part of the UFS COVID-19 facilitation process, the UFS undertakes to as far as reasonably possible embark on vaccination drives to inform stakeholders of the benefits of COVID-19 vaccinations, assist with information on COVID-19 vaccination sites, and provide transport to vaccination sites.</p> <p>1.4 Historically the UFS has been an Institution engaging primarily in face-to-face contact learning as part of its integral identity and institutional culture. This is an integral part of the UFS conditions of service, serving the UFS student community and ensuring academic integrity.</p> <p>1.5 This policy will apply for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic or until such time that the UFS Council resolves it has served its purpose.</p> <p>1.6 The two main bodies of stakeholders at the UFS who are impacted by this Policy are staff members and students. In respect of staff members, the UFS requires them to be on campus to perform their functions and responsibilities. The performance of these functions and responsibilities requires in-person contact with fellow-staff members, students and other third parties. Regarding students, the UFS is not a distant/remote learning university and its primary mode of instruction is done in person, in particular insofar as undergraduate courses are concerned. This entails regular face-to-face interaction with fellow-students, staff members and other third parties. UFS's approach is accordingly that Covid-19 vaccination is required for all staff members and students who enters its premises. The UFS recognises the right of individuals to object to vaccination on medical or constitutional grounds. The process and principles for consideration of application for exemption and requests for reasonable accommodation and are set out in this Policy.</p>
2. Purpose	<p>2.1 The UFS has decided to implement this COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy based on the Regulations as per the Government Gazette, No 44700, 11 June 2021.</p>

	<p>2.2 The UFS is obligated to comply with the Constitution, all applicable labour legislation, including the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Employment Equity Act and other Government Regulations, to create and maintain a safe work environment. With reference to students, the UFS owes them a duty of care to ensure a safe learning environment. While recognising sections 12 and 15 of the Constitution that protects individual constitutional rights, the UFS also recognises its collective greater good, health and wellbeing responsibility towards the UFS community, which must be balanced against these individual constitutional rights.</p> <p>2.3 Current research on the effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccinations indicates that vaccinated individuals are 50 percent less likely to infect third parties. Statistics show that individuals who received Covid-19 vaccinations are 98 percent less likely to become seriously ill or die due to a Covid-19 infection.</p> <p>2.4 The purpose of this Policy is accordingly to facilitate the vaccination of UFS employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contracts workers, and students to ensure their continued access to all UFS premises (subject to the stipulations related to the relevant lockdown level as periodically published by the government in the Government Gazette)</p> <p>2.5 It is further to establish a standard and uniform procedure for managing and applying the COVID-19 Regulations and required COVID-19 vaccinations at the UFS.</p> <p>2.6 The University recognises the importance of meeting its health and safety obligations within its campuses and towards its service providers, employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers and students.</p>
<p>3. Scope</p>	<p>3.1 The COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy will apply to all UFS employees, <i>ad hoc</i> contract appointees, prospective appointees, currently registered students, and future students and, insofar as this is applicable, will supplement the conditions of service of all UFS employees and <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers and admission rules for students.</p> <p>3.2 The UFS embarked on a due consultation process with all stakeholders and implementing this policy at the UFS is necessary for ensuring the health and safety of employees, <i>ad hoc</i> contract appointees and students. This policy constitutes a health and safety rule and supplements the UFS Conditions of Service or Student Admissions Rules.</p> <p>3.3 The UFS will issue separate directives as to how they will deal with external day visitors and service providers (who are not employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers or students) subject to compliance with the right of access to its property.</p>

<p>4. Definitions and abbreviations</p>	<p>4.1 “<i>Ad-hoc</i> contract workers” means all individuals who entered into a contractual agreement with the UFS to render a service, wherein they are compensated per hour worked by submission of periodic hourly claims.</p> <p>4.2 “Adverse Event” means any detrimental health event which happens after a person receives a vaccine. A health event is a symptom (something the patient experiences, e.g., headaches) or a sign (something a health practitioner notices about a patient, e.g., increased blood pressure).</p> <p>4.3 “BCEA” means Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997.</p> <p>4.4 “Common side effects” include pain at the injection site, fever, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, and diarrhoea.</p> <p>4.5 “Communication Platforms” means cloud-based platforms including but not limited to WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom and Microsoft Teams, that allow the University to enjoy communication services such as messaging, voice and video conferencing to its business applications and processes.</p> <p>4.6 “Comorbidities” means when more than one disease or condition is present in the same person at the same time.</p> <p>4.7 “Council” means the Council of the University established in terms of Section 27(4) of the Higher Education Act.</p> <p>4.8 “COVID-19” means the Coronavirus disease and or any other related strains which might occur in future.</p> <p>4.9 “COVID-19 PCR Test” means the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for COVID-19 is a molecular test that analyses your upper respiratory specimen, looking for genetic material (ribonucleic acid or RNA) of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Scientists use the PCR technology to amplify small amounts of RNA from specimens into deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), which is replicated until SARS-CoV-2 is detectable if present.</p> <p>4.10 “COVID-19 vaccines” means a vaccine that has been scientifically evaluated and recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and approved by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority to be effective in reducing the incidence of severe disease and death and likely to reduce SARS-CoV-2 viral transmission to contribute to the herding community. This will include any possible booster vaccinations prescribed by authorities. For more information on how the vaccine was developed, how it functions, and possible side effects, visit: https://bit.ly/3lx37iQ.</p> <p>4.11 “DMA” means the Disaster Management Act, No. 57 of 2002.</p>
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	<p>4.12 “Employee” means any person employed by the UFS in terms of a contract of employment. This will include all employees employed on indefinite, part-time or fixed-term contracts.</p> <p>4.13 “Essential Service” means a service, the interruption of which may endanger the life, personal safety or health of anyone, and includes the University’s Protection Services, Fire Fighting Services, Medical Services and any other emergency service within the context of managing any disaster declared in terms of the DMA.</p> <p>4.14 “Excessive chronic medication” means where multiple medicines are taken for different chronic medical conditions.</p> <p>4.15 “Exemptions” means where the Vaccination Exemption Committee (VEC) has granted an exception for any individual from the required vaccination prescription.</p> <p>4.16 Exemptions Appeals Committee or EAC means the UFS exemptions appeals committee for employees and students, as appointed by Rectorate.</p> <p>4.17 “HR” means the University’s Human Resources Department.</p> <p>4.18 “HRBP” means the Human Resources Business Partner who has been appointed to serve a specific Unit/Department/Faculty in terms of the HR shared service model.</p> <p>4.19 “Immune deficiency condition” means the medical condition that causes an insufficient immune system (for example, HIV, autoimmune disease, etc.).</p> <p>4.20 “Isolation” means the separation of a person or group of people known or reasonably believed to be infected with a communicable disease and potentially infectious from those who are not infected to prevent the spread of the communicable disease.</p> <p>4.21 “Line Manager” means the direct superior of an employee and/or <i>ad-hoc</i> contract worker.</p> <p>4.22 “Natural Immunity” means the exposure to a disease organism that triggers the immune system to produce antibodies to that disease. Exposure to the disease organism can occur through infection with the actual disease (resulting in natural immunity).</p> <p>4.23 “OHSA” means the Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993.</p>
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	<p>University's premises and the employee's home office from which he/she has been authorised to conduct work during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
<p>5. Guiding principles</p>	<p>The guiding principles for the implementation of this Policy are as follows:</p> <p>5.1 The UFS has traditionally been a close contact working environment, where instruction occurs primarily through face-to-face lecturing and learning, especially insofar as under-graduate courses are concerned. This requires a safe and caring environment for employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers and students. It would be impossible for the University to function in a sustainable manner if close contact is not viable.</p> <p>5.2 The UFS believes that it is not economically viable or practical to maintain social distancing indefinitely.</p> <p>5.3 As a predominantly residential University, the viability of consistent remote working and studying conditions is not aligned to the culture of the UFS. The UFS supports a blended learning approach, but a sole online learning platform is not viable. In addition, in many instances, students require access to the University's premises due to lack of adequate resources to support remote learning.</p> <p>5.4 The COVID-19 pandemic has placed a more pronounced obligation on the UFS to provide a safe working, studying, and living environment, especially for vulnerable employees or <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers who are advanced in age (60 years or older) and have comorbidities or underlying medical conditions, as they are more exposed to a higher risk of infection.</p> <p>5.5 Employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers and students should be provided with a safe environment to achieve academic outcomes.</p> <p>5.6 The UFS is required to take measures that are reasonably practicable to ensure that employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers and students are safe and protected. The operational requirements of the UFS entail that its employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers and students are regularly exposed to large groups and members of the public.</p> <p>5.7 The UFS believes that the collective greater good and wellbeing of the UFS community and the right to life and safety and security within the workplace and study environment ought to be given more weight than an individual's right to elect not to be vaccinated, subject, of course, to the exemptions which will be discussed below.</p> <p>5.8 Section 24 of the Constitution of South Africa indicates that everyone has the rights:</p>

	<p>5.8.1 To be in an environment that is not harmful to health and wellbeing.</p> <p>5.8.2 To have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations.</p> <p>5.9 The UFS is greatly concerned about the number of students and employees and <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 since the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID pandemic has resulted in numerous employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers and students having to be placed in quarantine, testing positive for COVID-19, dismissals for incapacity due to COVID-19 complications, and deaths.</p> <p>5.10 The UFS has the right to deny any person access to its property based on operational and safety reasons (subject to the stipulations related to the appropriate lockdown level as periodically published by the government in the Government Gazette).</p>
<p>6. Policy</p>	<p>6.1 General COVID-19 Workplace Regulations</p> <p>6.1.1 All UFS employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers, service providers, and students must maintain precautionary health measures as required between workers, service providers, and students within the workplace and in all common areas on the UFS premises.</p> <p>6.1.2 The UFS will ensure a sufficient supply of sanitisers provided to employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers and students and such sanitisers will be supplied at all entrances to buildings, elevators, and all communal areas.</p> <p>6.1.3 All stakeholders should apply proper ventilation in all UFS venues as and when possible.</p> <p>6.1.4 All employees will be supplied with the necessary PPE (facial masks excluded) based on an employee's job description and a risk assessment of the working environment.</p> <p>6.1.5 All employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers, service providers and students on the UFS campus are required to wear an N95 mask that must cover the nose and mouth for the duration of their presence on campus.</p> <p>6.1.6 All UFS employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers, service providers and students who are not vaccinated and who are in possession of an approved exemption will be required to complete a compulsory COVID-19 screening questionnaire before entering the UFS premises. In addition to this, all unvaccinated individuals wishing to access the UFS campus should have a valid permit and QR Code to access the premises. The UFS reserves the right to screen individuals on access as and when they deem it necessary.</p>

- 6.1.7 Any party who does not meet the requirements for access to the UFS precincts in the COVID-19 screening questionnaire will be referred to Kovsie Health, where they will be advised on appropriate steps that such an individual should follow. This will include Kovsie Health dictating who should go into quarantine or isolation and the periods connected thereto.
- 6.1.8 Unvaccinated and exempted individuals wishing to access the UFS campus must subject themselves, for screening, to the gate access personnel responsible for measuring their temperature and reviewing their access permits and QR Codes.
- 6.1.9 Any individual in breach of any of the above shall be liable to pay any such fine that the UFS Protection Services may issue and any possible action that might follow because of the non-adherence.
- 6.2 SARS COVID-19 PCR Testing**
- 6.2.1 Any employee, ad hoc contract worker or student who suspects that they might have contracted COVID-19 should immediately inform Kovsie Health and, in respect of employees and ad hoc contract workers, their relevant line manager. The employee, *ad-hoc* contract worker or student concerned will be required to undergo a SARS COVID-19 PCR test if recommended by Kovsie Health and remain in quarantine for 10 (ten) calendar days.
- 6.2.2 During the quarantine period, an employee or *ad-hoc* contract worker will be required to work from home. Should remote work be impossible or impractical for such an employee, such an individual must apply for special or sick leave.
- 6.2.3 Should individuals test positive for SARS COVID-19 PCR, they will be obligated to provide Kovsie Health with a copy of their test results. If such an individual is an employee or *ad-hoc* contract worker such a copy should also be supplied to the relevant line manager.
- 6.2.4 Individuals who test positive for SARS COVID-19 PCR will not be permitted to access the UFS campus before either receiving a SARS COVID-19 PCR negative test result or on expiry of the 10 (ten) day isolation period.
- 6.2.5 All UFS employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, and students must stay isolated for 10 (ten) calendar days after testing positive for SARS COVID-19.
- 6.2.6 UFS employees will obtain paid sick leave for the period of isolation (subject to their available sick leave allowance), which will be subject to submitting a SARS COVID-19 PCR positive result.
- 6.2.7 In terms of this policy, all UFS employees who should apply for leave have to follow the normal UFS leave application process.

6.3 COVID-19 Vaccination

- 6.3.1 All employees wanting to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination may do so during normal UFS working hours. Such arrangements will be subject to operational requirements and with the permission of the relevant line manager.
- 6.3.2 For these purposes, attendance at vaccination sites will be regarded as paid time off, and no leave application need to be submitted. However, a line manager will be able to request an employee or *ad-hoc* contract workers, to provide proof of vaccination to confirm that they obtained a COVID-19 vaccination. Should an employee or *ad-hoc* contract worker be unable to provide proof of vaccination, they may be requested (subject to the reasons provided) to apply for vacation or unpaid leave for the period of their absence. In the event of a misrepresentation, disciplinary action may follow.
- 6.3.3 As the UFS subsidises the medical aid costs of employees, the cost of vaccinations will be for the account of an employee and may be processed through the normal relevant medical aid channels. All *ad-hoc* contract workers are required to obtain vaccination at their own cost, and should they elect not to do so in the absence of an approved exemption, the UFS reserves the right to cancel the relevant service contract with the ad hoc contract worker concerned.
- 6.3.4 Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students of the UFS, who are not medical aid members, may obtain the COVID-19 vaccination free of charge at any designated Government facilities for vaccinations.
- 6.3.5 In accordance with the applicable protocols, individuals who obtain the vaccine must be observed by the relevant vaccination site staff members at the vaccination site for at least 15 minutes after vaccination.

6.4 Possible Adverse Event to COVID-19 Vaccination

- 6.4.1 All adverse events following within 28 (twenty-eight) days of a COVID-19 vaccination should be reported to Kopsie Health and the relevant vaccination site, as these instances must be investigated. Any such individuals must report these events as soon as possible.
- 6.4.2 Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students may seek free medical attention at Kopsie Health when developing any adverse event (effects) following vaccination. Free medical attention will only be provided within 7 (seven) days after vaccination and must be vaccine related.
- 6.4.3 On 15 April 2021, the Government amended the regulations under the DMA to provide for the COVID-19 Vaccine Injury No-Fault Compensation Scheme. Any employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students who have suffered harm, loss or damage caused by an

adverse event following a COVID-19 vaccination (which constitutes a “vaccine injury” for purposes of the regulations) may submit a claim to this compensation scheme and may be eligible for compensation. Claims will be assessed by a committee of experts who will determine if the COVID-19 vaccine caused such injury and whether the individual meets the requirements to submit a claim.

6.4.4 This Government Compensation Scheme will only cover rare and severe adverse effects (severe allergic reaction, blood clots etc.), which are highly uncommon.

6.4.5 In addition, the Compensation Commissioner issued a notice on 22 October 2021, in terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 130 of 1993 (COIDA), which provides for compensation in respect of COVID-19 side effects. In terms of this notice, employees will be covered by COIDA for injuries, illness or death as a result of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, where the employee is required by the employer to receive vaccination as an inherent requirement of the job, as determined by the employer’s risk assessment.

6.5 UFS stance on COVID-19 Vaccinations

6.5.1 The UFS wants to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all its stakeholders and wishes to return to function as a predominately face-to-face contact university. As the UFS is in sole control of granting and limiting the right of access to its property, the UFS has decided to make it a requirement for all UFS employees, and *ad-hoc* contract workers to be vaccinated to access its premises.

6.5.2 In addition to this, all UFS students will be expected to be vaccinated to ensure the health and safety of all UFS stakeholders. All students, whether in face-to-face classes, laboratories or through use of various computer venues, libraries, recreational venues, residences, cafeterias, sports facilities etc., will constantly be exposed or pose a risk to students, employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers by being present on campus.

6.5.3 As an additional measure to ensure the health and safety of all UFS stakeholders, the academic registration process will predominately take place online. Students who are not vaccinated by the COVID-19 vaccination deadline date, may register for the academic year but do so in the knowledge that they would have to be physically on campus to attend class, complete tests, examinations, and other assessments. Such attendance will only be possible if the student is fully vaccinated, subject to what is set out below.

6.5.4 To be allowed access to campus, students will be required to provide proof of a COVID-19 vaccination or documents supporting an acceptable ground for exemption (as per the application contained in the annexures) should they want to access the UFS campuses or facilities to comply with their study requirements.

6.5.5 In order to approach this decision rationally and reasonably, the UFS has decided to put the following measures in place.

6.6 Required Vaccinations

6.6.1 All UFS employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, and students wishing to access campus must vaccinate as they risk contracting and infecting others with COVID-19. This measure is essential to advance a safe environment for all employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, students, and service providers.

6.6.2 Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students who are not vaccinated, who do not have an approved exemption or deferral, and who do not have a SARS COVID-19 PCR negative result that is not older than a week will not be allowed access to the UFS Campuses or facilities.

6.6.3 Such employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers may approach their HRBP and/or line manager should they wish to be referred to an external UFS appointed counselling support service to address any related concerns. Employees may undergo a maximum of 4 (four) voluntary individual counselling sessions per person to address their reservations. These COVID-19 individual counselling sessions may take place during regular working hours.

6.6.4 All *ad-hoc* contract workers requiring voluntary individual counselling to address their concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccinations can contact the HR COVID-19 Compliance Officer to make these arrangements.

6.6.5 All UFS students may approach Kovsie Health if they require any information on the COVID-19 vaccination. Any UFS students with concerns regarding vaccinations may receive voluntary online individual counselling at any external UFS appointed counselling support service.

6.6.6 Students may undergo a maximum of 2 (two) voluntary individual counselling sessions per person to address their reservations.

6.7 Implementation

6.7.1 This Policy will take effect on approval and allow for a compliance period to enable employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students to obtain their vaccinations before enforcing compliance.

6.7.2 Employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers will be required to receive approved government vaccinations before 14 February 2022. Employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers should upload their proof of vaccination (including possible future booster vaccinations) unto the

UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening, as from 6 December 2021 or soon thereafter.

6.7.3 All employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students wishing to request exemption or deferral from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, will be required to comply with the following provisions, until their application (see clause 6.8) has been approved:

- a. Submit proof of a weekly SARS COVID-19 PCR test at their own cost, unto the UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening. These SARS COVID-19 PCR tests should be submitted weekly from 14 February 2022 by all employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students who have not been vaccinated. The UFS will communicate the acceptance of the COVID-19 PCR tests to applicants and to their line managers.
- b. These tests may be conducted during regular working hours (unless there is another reason for exemption approved by the relevant manager and VEC).
- c. Provide a SARS COVID-19 PCR negative test before returning to work following any travel for 24 hours or more. These tests may be obtained during regular working hours.

6.7.4 The UFS will appoint a COVID-19 Compliance Officer situated within HR to facilitate, advise, and aid parties to comply with this policy regarding all UFS employees.

6.7.5 Student Affairs will appoint COVID-19 Compliance Officers situated within Student Affairs to facilitate, advise, and aid parties to comply with this policy regarding all UFS students.

6.7.6 Any employee who requires voluntary individual counselling to enhance their understanding of the possible adverse event, functioning, or actual vaccination process can contact Kovsie Health. Should employees require any counselling regarding possible phobia of needles etc., they are welcome to attend voluntary individual counselling through any external UFS appointed counselling support service. Four sessions per employee will be offered.

6.7.7 All *ad-hoc* contract workers requiring voluntary counselling to address their concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccinations can contact the HR COVID-19 Compliance Officer.

6.8 Exemptions

6.8.1 The UFS recognises the existence of certain legally acceptable bases for refusing a COVID-19 vaccination and wishes to adhere to a process that protects all stakeholders' constitutional rights.

6.8.2 The UFS will *consider* the following exemptions:

6.8.2.1 Medical objections (Section 27 of the Constitution of South Africa):

6.8.2.1.1 For an employee, *ad-hoc* contract workers or student to successfully raise a medical objection, they will have to provide a letter/report from any registered medical practitioner indicating that the employee, *ad-hoc* contract workers, or student has a medical reason or risk justifying such an individual not to be vaccinated. Such a letter/report from a medical practitioner should contain the diagnosis and the prognosis of the individual, and any such individual must disclose the information to the UFS to qualify for an exemption. Students may have to obtain such a letter/report from the UFS campus doctor.

6.8.2.1.2 A medical objection may be raised based on the grounds set out in *Annexure A*.

6.8.2.1.3 Medical objections may include the following contraindications:

- a. Severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) after a previous dose or to a component of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- b. An immediate allergic reaction of any severity to a previous dose or known (diagnosed) allergy to a component of the COVID-19 vaccine.

6.8.2.1.4 Conditions for precaution and consideration before vaccination is required:

- a. Long COVID-19
- b. Bleeding disorders and Anticoagulation medication
- c. Female (18 and 49) with diagnosed blood clotting risk
- d. History of Myocarditis or Pericarditis
- e. Pregnancy or breastfeeding (only on the recommendation of a Gynaecologist)
- f. History of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (adult or child)
- g. History of Heparin-induce Thrombocytopenia
- h. Dermal fillers
- i. History of Guillain-Barré syndrome
- j. Immunosuppressive disorders (like HIV, cancer or being on immunosuppressive therapy)

6.8.2.1.5 Condition NOT considered as a contraindication or requires precautions is:

- a. Common allergies (pet, food, medication, etc.)

6.8.2.1.6 The UFS undertakes to keep all medical information secure and deal with it confidentially.

6.8.2.2 Religious objections (Section 15 of the Constitution of South Africa):

Should any employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers or students have a religious objection to receiving a COVID-19 vaccination, such an employee, *ad-hoc* contract workers or student should

obtain a declaration from their religious leader indicating the nature of the religion and the specific religious doctrine which supports the contention. The motivation provided should be plausible and accepted as an established doctrine within an existing religious grouping.

6.8.2.3 Natural Immunity objection:

6.8.2.3.1 Should any employee, *ad-hoc* contract workers, or students prove they have recently tested positive for SARS COVID-19 PCR test results, they may apply for a deferral exemption based on their natural immunity. Natural immunity may last for a maximum of three months. The current guidelines from the National Department of Health recommends that individuals who had COVID-19 should wait for a period of 30 days after recuperation from the illness before they should vaccinate.

6.8.2.3.2 Should an employee, *ad-hoc* contract workers or student want to extend this period of deferral by a further three months, they will be required to have a SARS COVID-19 PCR or an approved antibody blood test report. The UFS will accept either a pathology report and/or a South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) approved antibody test when accompanied by a report, which can be obtained from service providers (such as Clicks and Dischem). These tests must be conducted at an individuals' own cost, or are free at any government testing facility, to prove that COVID-19 antibodies are still present.

6.8.2.3.3 Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, or students who intend to rely on this exemption will have to provide UFS with a copy of their positive SARS COVID-19 SAHPRA approved antibody blood test report. Any such exemption will only defer or delay such an applicants' required vaccination deadline date. This objection will not be regarded as an absolute or permanent exemption to nullify the required vaccination obligation.

6.8.2.4 Other legally acceptable exemptions

Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, or students who believe that they have a legally acceptable exemption (including possible reasonable accommodation approved by their relevant manager) may apply for Exemption or deferral by completing Annexure D and attaching an affidavit detailing the grounds for their legal objection and the justification thereof.

6.8.2.5 Participants in SAHPRA approved clinic trials

Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, or students who are participants in any medically approved clinical trials, at an

accredited institution, compelling them not to be vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine, may apply for exemption or deferral. Such applicants should complete Annexure D and attach an affidavit detailing the grounds for their objection as well as a copy of the clinical trial participant cards, issued to them.

6.8.3 Any applicant who applied for an exemption or deferral from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine will be required to comply with clause 6.7.3 subject to the outcome of their application.

6.8.4 Any employee or *ad-hoc* contract worker applicant wishing to invoke any of the above exemptions will be required to submit the relevant Application for Exemption Form (as attached to this policy) and the supporting documents into the UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening from 6 December 2021 or soon thereafter. The relevant line manager will be informed of this correspondence to ensure a transparent process.

6.8.5 Any existing student or student planning to enrol for the first time from the 2022 academic year and who wishes to invoke any of the above exemptions will be required to submit the relevant Application for Exemption Form (as attached to this policy) to Student Affairs before the required vaccination deadline date.

6.8.6 Where an Application for Exemption Form requires an employee, *ad-hoc* contract worker, or student to obtain supporting documents or the signature of a duly appointed expert and/or religious leader to support the Application for Exemption Form, such obligation, and the costs thereof, will rest on the applicant. These applications will be dealt with based on the content of the application form and the supporting evidence provided.

6.8.7 As part of the Exemption process, an applicant will be provided with the option of attending voluntary individual counselling should they wish to do so.

6.8.8 If the UFS believes that the reasons provided in the Application for Exemption are not plausible, acceptable, or truthful, the UFS will be able to interrogate the reasons presented.

6.8.9 Whether the applicant is an employee, *ad-hoc* contract worker, and student, the HRBP or Student Affairs will refer such cases to either the Employee Vaccination Exemption Committee (Employee VEC) or the Student Vaccination Exemption Committee (Student VEC). The VEC will be a representative independent Committee that the UFS will appoint. The UFS will appoint a diverse Committee which will consist of a registered Medical Practitioner, the relevant COVID-19 Compliance Officer, a religious expert, a Psychologist, a legal expert and the relevant HRBP.

6.8.10 The VEC will be responsible for, where it deems necessary, inviting the employee, *ad-hoc* contract worker and the HRBP to a meeting where they may interrogate the content of the Application for Exemption and make a final determination on the matter.

6.8.11 Formal feedback will be given to the applicant, their line manager and the relevant HRBP regarding the decision and the reasons thereof. An applicant will be granted an opportunity to invoke his right to voluntary individual counselling based on the result of the VEC Committee.

6.8.12 The determination by the relevant VEC will be binding.

6.8.13 In the event that an application is successful, applicants, their line managers and the relevant HRBP will be informed. The individual concerned will be required to follow such health and safety protocols as may be prescribed from time to time, as well as such additional measures as may be deemed necessary in the circumstances, including, for example, the requirement to wear an N95 mask.

6.8.14 Should such an application be unsuccessful, applicants, their line managers and the relevant HRBP will be informed of the outcome and the reasons, therefore. Such an employee, *ad-hoc* contract worker or student will receive fourteen (14) calendar days to conclude voluntary individual counselling and submit their proof of vaccination or supply a weekly PCR negative test result. Employees may approach Kopsie Health or any external UFS appointed counselling support service.

6.8.15 Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers or students whose application for exemption was unsuccessful at the VEC may appeal such a decision. Such a decision should be directed to the UFS Exemptions Appeals Committee.

6.9 EXEMPTION APPEALS COMMITTEE (EAC)

1. The UFS will establish an Exemption Appeals Committee (EAC) to deal with all appeals concerning determinations made by the Vaccination Exemption Committee (VEC).

2. The process will entail the following:

2.1 Any individual who wants to appeal against the outcome of the Vaccination Exemption Committee must complete Annexure E and submit the application to the COVID-19 Compliance Officer within the Human Resources Department. Such applications must be submitted within five (5) working days after the Vaccination Exemption Committee's outcome has been communicated to an applicant.

2.2 The Covid-19 Compliance Officer will refer the application for appeal to the Exemption Appeals Committee within three (3) working days of receiving such application.

3. The applicant must provide the following documents to the Exemption Appeals Committee in support of the appeal:
 - a. A completed copy of Annexure E, indicating the basis for the appeal.
 - b. A copy of the decision of the Vaccination Exemption Committee and the reason, therefore.
 - c. Any supporting documentation and/or additional evidence supporting the application
4. The following will be regarded to be acceptable grounds for the submission of the appeal:
 - a. Inconsistent application of the policy.
 - b. Any personal or medical evidence provided to the Vaccination Exemption Committee and which the applicant feels was not considered. This evidence should directly relate to the initial exemption/deferral application motivation.
5. The Exemption Appeal Committee will deal with any such appeal on paper and will reconsider the fairness of the initial decision of the VEC.
6. The Exemption Appeal Committee will make a final declaration on the matter during a meeting, where the COVID-19 Compliance Officer within the Human Resources Department must be present and may consult with other experts in the field, should they wish to do so.
7. The COVID-19 Compliance officer within the Human Resources Department will be responsible for issuing applicants with a written outcome and the reasons, therefore, within ten (10) working days after the Exemption Appeal Committee meeting.
8. Applicants awaiting the outcome of the Exemption Appeal Committee will be required to comply with the policy provisions.
9. The outcome of the appeal process is final and binding on both parties.
10. All stakeholders are obligated to exhaust all internal procedures and avenues in this policy before embarking on any premature external dispute resolution or litigation.

6.10 Non-Compliance (only applicable to UFS employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers)

6.10.1 Employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers who are non-compliant with this policy, and who have no approved exemption, may be referred to voluntary individual counselling. UFS employees may be referred to an external UFS appointed counselling support service. Such individuals may undergo a maximum of 4 (four) voluntary individual counselling sessions to address any related concerns. All *ad-hoc* contract workers requiring voluntary individual counselling to address their concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccinations can contact the HR COVID-19 Compliance Officer.

6.10.2 Any employee or *ad-hoc* contract worker who declines vaccination, will be in breach of this Policy should there not be a ground for reasonable accommodation or if such an employee does not submit a weekly SARS COVID-19 PCR test in the appropriate circumstances.

6.10.3 Should an employee or an *ad-hoc* contract worker be unwilling to be vaccinated (in the absence of an acceptable exemption), such an employee or *ad-hoc* contract worker may:

6.10.3.1 Approach the direct line manager to enquire about the possibility of continued remote working or alternative reasonable accommodation on campus. This option can only be invoked and approved temporarily. Any accommodation must be done according to UFS policies and practices and will be subject to operational requirements and office space availability.

6.10.3.2 Be required to submit weekly SARS COVID-19 PCR test results. This expense will be for the account of the employee and/or *ad-hoc* contract workers as the incumbent has elected not to be vaccinated. Only if these results are negative, will the employee or *ad hoc* contract worker be granted access to campus. This provision does not apply to individuals with a legitimate reason for an exemption and/or deferral (unless there is another reason for exemption approved by relevant manager).

6.10.4 In dealing with non-compliance, the UFS reserves the right to put measures in place to deny a person entry into the UFS premises.

6.10.5 The UFS may consider an incumbent's job description, functions, and the operational requirements of the position.

6.10.6 Should an employee or *ad-hoc* contract worker fail to submit a weekly SARS COVID-19 PCR negative result pending the outcome of an exemption or deferral, or as a result of failing or refusing to be vaccinated, such an employee will be subject to corrective action in terms of UFS policies.

- 6.10.7 Unvaccinated individuals (who do not have an approved exemption from vaccination) without a weekly SARS COVID-19 PCR negative result may not be able to access campus and may not be able to perform their functions and responsibilities as per the UFS's conditions of service and the provisions of this policy. Such non-compliance may be regarded as posing a risk to the health and safety of the UFS community, insubordination and/or non-compliance with a lawful instruction, and the UFS's conditions of service.
- 6.10.8 On conclusion of any further engagement on a possible solution, employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers will receive fourteen (14) calendar days to conclude voluntary individual counselling and submit their proof of vaccination unto the UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening. Employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers should receive the prescribed number of vaccinations depending on the type of vaccination, and such proof should be uploaded. The UFS will provide individuals with a permanent QR Code and will alert their line managers of their status.
- 6.10.9 The UFS will engage in exploring viable and accommodative solutions should an employee or *ad-hoc* contract worker fail to supply proof of vaccination after the fourteen (14) calendar days has elapsed (unless the employee elects to provide weekly SARS COVID-19 PCR negative test results). Proof of vaccination should be uploaded onto the UFS website. Should any employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers fail to observe the provisions of this policy the UFS will consider all reasonable options available to attempt to accommodate such an individual. Should the matter remain unresolved the UFS may apply its institutional policies and/or rely on any contractual provisions at its disposal.
- 6.10.10 Should the employee and/or *ad-hoc* contract worker be unable to fulfil their duties (face-to-face lecturing, practical exams, student enquiries, public-facing services, attendance at work due to restrictions of access), and related activities (prohibition of boarding flights of certain airlines, attending international and national conferences and symposiums, accessing other countries for research purposes), based on their vaccination status, the employer may take steps to address the matter.
- 6.10.11 *Ad-hoc* contract workers who fail and/or refuse to comply with the requirement of receiving a COVID-19 vaccination or obtains an approved exemption may have their contracts reconsidered by the UFS.

6.11 Non-Compliance (applicable to students only)

6.11.1 Students who make themselves guilty of non-compliance in the absence of an approved Application for Exemption may be requested to attend voluntary individual counselling via any external UFS appointed counselling support service. Such students may undergo a maximum of 2 (two) voluntary individual counselling sessions per student to address any related concerns. All students will have fourteen (14) calendar days to comply with this provision.

6.11.2 Should a student still be unwilling to be vaccinated in the absence of an approved exemption or a weekly SARS COVID-19 PCR negative test result, such student will:

6.11.2.1 Not be granted access to the campus. In dealing with non-compliance, the UFS reserves the right to cancel such a students' UFS access card.

6.11.2.2 Not be admitted into the UFS residence, as the risk in shared residences and communal living will place fellow students at risk.

6.11.2.3 Be encouraged to consider online study options that may be available.

6.11.2.4 May as a last resort, choose to terminate their studies.

6.11.3 No students or former students will be allowed access to campus to attend in-person graduation ceremonies without displaying proof of vaccination unless they have an approved exemption or can produce a SARS COVID-19 PCR negative test result.

6.11.4 External graduation guests should produce a SARS COVID-19 PCR negative test result or proof of natural immunity (recent SARS COVID-19 positive test result not older than 3 (three) months or COVID-19 antibody test.

6.12 Prospective UFS appointees

6.12.1 The UFS will, as part of its standard employment application process, request all prospective appointees to indicate whether they have been vaccinated. Prospective appointees will be informed that they should provide proof of vaccination before the commencement of employment based on the UFS conditions of service unless they qualify for an exemption as per clause 6.8.

6.12.2 All prospective employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers must be supplied with a copy of the UFS COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy when an offer of employment is

made and should be advised of the exemption options at their disposal.

6.12.3 The requirement to vaccinate is a health and safety rule which will form part of the conditions of employment, and all appointees will be required to provide proof of vaccination or an approved exemption before the commencement of employment as this will be a suspensive condition of employment. The UFS may decide not to confirm an appointment, as the conditions of appointment would be deemed not complied with. The required documents must be submitted to the UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening.

6.12.4 Prospective appointees will include all external and internal applicants.

6.12.5 Should the University insource, any such insourced workers will also be regarded to be prospective UFS employees.

6.13 Liability

6.13.1 In terms of this COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy, the UFS considers COVID-19 vaccinations an operational requirement and a health and safety rule which supplements the service conditions of all UFS employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers. An individual thus still has the right of freedom of choice to remain employed subject to the employers' conditions, rules, and operational requirements. Insofar as students are concerned, individuals still have the right of freedom of choice to remain enrolled as a student at the UFS subject to the UFS's Student Admission Rules.

6.13.2 If an employee, *ad-hoc* contract worker, or student receives a vaccination, it is implied that they received such vaccination with informed consent. All individuals attending vaccination sites will be requested to complete an informed consent form at any such vaccination site. Any such decision to receive a vaccination will not deem the UFS liable for any possible side effects, medical conditions, or death that might occur as a result thereof.

6.13.3 The UFS will accept no civil liability for individuals who experience any adverse effects as provision is made in this Policy for individuals to apply for an exemption. Should any employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers or students meet the requirements for exemption, there is a positive obligation on the individual to apply for such an exemption.

6.13.4 As explained above, on 22 October 2021, the Compensation Commissioner published a Notice as per the Government Gazette, No. 45358, indicating that eligible employees will be able to submit their claims for adverse effects, after receipt of the Covid-19 vaccination, to the Compensation Commissioner in

	<p>terms of COIDA. Students and <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers may be eligible to claim from the compensation scheme established in terms of the DMA regulations, as explained further above.</p> <p>6.13.5 The UFS will not be liable for any reimbursement of fees, possible adverse effects, or prejudice, which any student may incur due to the non-adherence to any of the provisions in the Covid -19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy.</p> <p>6.14 Confidentiality</p> <p>6.14.1 Any documents provided by an individual in compliance with this Policy will be dealt with in a confidential manner and in accordance with the prescriptions of the Protection of Personal Information Act.</p>
7. Responsibility	Senior Director Human Resources and Executive Director Student Affairs

8. Accountability and Authority:	
8.1 Implementation:	ERM Office, Protection Services, Student Academic Services, Student Affairs, Kovsie Health, Line Managers and Business Partners.
8.2 Compliance:	ERM Office, Protection Services, Student Academic Services, Student Affairs Kovsie Health, Line Managers and Business Partners.
8.3 Monitoring and evaluation:	ERM Office, Protection Services, Student Academic Services, Student Affairs, Kovsie Health, Student Affairs, Line Managers and Business Partners.
8.4 Development/review:	Senior Director Human Resources, ERM Director
8.5 Approval authority:	Rectorate
8.6 Interpretation and advice:	ERM Director; ERM Specialists, Protection Services, Student Affairs and Business Partners.

9. Who should know this policy?	
All employees, <i>ad-hoc</i> contract workers, UFS students and service providers.	

10. Policy/procedure implementation plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Widely consult with all UFS stakeholders as per the consultation process on p1. 2. Obtain approval from all relevant UFS governance structures. 3. Inform all stakeholders that the UFS is implementing a COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy with effect from 14 February 2022. 4. Once Council approves, the Policy will be published in the UFS Digest.
11. Resources Required	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appointment of COVID-19 Compliance Officers to provide administrative support (Approval of an allowance for the additional work they will perform in accordance with this policy). 2. Appoint and constitute the respective VEC's (Employees and students).

	3. Support from Kovsie Health, CareWays and SADAG and Human Resources.
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12. Answers to FAQs	<p>1. How does the vaccine work? <i>(Answers provided by Dr Samantha Potgieter, an Infectious Disease Specialist).</i></p> <p>The vaccine works by producing antibodies against the COVID-19 virus. After getting vaccinated, if you are infected with the COVID-19 virus, these antibodies bind to the virus and stop it from replicating. “When you get infected with a disease such as COVID-19, natural antibodies are produced by the immune system to fight the disease. If you get infected again, the immune system will remember how to respond, and quickly destroy the virus. A vaccine can do the same, but without the risk of disease from natural infection. Vaccines work by imitating a bacteria or virus using either mRNA in the case of the COVID-19 vaccine or a dead or weakened version of the bacteria or virus. The vaccine raises the body’s alarm. It trains the body to recognise and fight the virus. When the body encounters the real-deal virus, it is primed and ready to fight for the body’s health.”</p> <p>2. Why should you get the vaccine? <i>(Answers provided by Dr Samantha Potgieter, an Infectious Disease Specialist).</i></p> <p>The vaccines are safe and effective, and the most compelling reasons for getting vaccinated are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect yourself from severe disease • To protect those around you who may be at risk of severe disease • To restore the social and economic platforms of the country and the world at large. • She said that while the vaccine does not prevent you from getting COVID-19, it offers better protection against the development of severe disease, and vaccinated people has a 50% less chance of spreading the virus. <p>3. What are the most common side effects? <i>(Answers provided by Dr Samantha Potgieter, an Infectious Disease Specialist).</i></p> <p>The most common side effects of the vaccine are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain at the injection site • Swollen lymph nodes • Fever • Fatigue • Headache • Myalgia (muscle pain) <p>4. Can the vaccine alter my DNA? <i>(Answers provided by Dr Samantha Potgieter, an Infectious Disease Specialist).</i></p>
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No, it goes nowhere near the nucleus of the cell.

5. What happens when you get COVID in between the first and second doses?

(Answers provided by Dr Samantha Potgieter, an Infectious Disease Specialist).

Some protection is conferred after the first dose, but maximum protection is conferred two weeks after the second dose. Vaccination is still advised. Patients who were between vaccinations still show better recovery results than those without.

6. What about natural immunity?

(Answers provided by Dr Samantha Potgieter, an Infectious Disease Specialist).

Natural immunity might confer better protection, but it runs the risk of severe disease. Yes, immunity can be gained through natural immunity, it can be gained through vaccination, and it can certainly be gained by combining the two.

7. What about long-term side effects?

(Answers provided by Dr Samantha Potgieter, an Infectious Disease Specialist).

Serious side effects that cause long-term health problems following any vaccination are rare, including the COVID-19 vaccination.

8. What if it is my personal choice not to get vaccinated?

Not getting vaccinated places your health and that of others at risk. Scientific evidence shows that vaccines are critical and effective in preventing COVID-19 infections. When a large proportion of the population of the country is vaccinated, community protection (herd immunity) against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus may in time be established. Vaccination is a safety measure that will allow the UFS community to safely return to face-to-face on-site teaching, learning, research, operations, and activities.

At the UFS, most teaching and learning occurs in large groups; students and certain staff live in residences, increasing the risk of infections and outbreaks. Reaching herd immunity can significantly reduce infections. The UFS is obligated to balance the collective right of the health and safety of the broader University community against individual rights.

9. What does this mean for me?

To ensure health and safety on campus and to work towards herd immunity at the UFS, the UFS requires all employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students to be vaccinated to meet their conditions of service and study requirements.

10. What will happen if I fail or refuse to vaccinate?

	<p>If no alternative accommodation is possible, an exit may be facilitated for all employees and ad-hoc contract workers in the absence of an approved exemption application. Students who fail to comply and for whom alternative accommodation is not possible may be deregistered.</p> <p>11. Is the UFS Required Vaccination Policy a breach of South African legislation?</p> <p>This UFS Policy complies with South African legislation as the South African law places primacy on the collective rights when upholding an individual's right, which may place the collective at risk. Clause 36 of the Constitution deals with the restriction of individual rights in protecting the collective greater good.</p>
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EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICY	
Performance Indicator(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. COVID-19 Compliance Officers are to submit the statistics regarding the vaccination compliance of all stakeholders regularly. 2. Statistics to be obtained from the partners' responsible for voluntary individual counselling as per the policy. 3. Statistics to be obtained from the respective VEC's to evaluate the functioning of the Committees and the percentage of the exemptions approved. 4. Provide the line managers and the relevant HRBP with timeous feedback on all submissions and decisions pertaining to this policy.

EXPLANATION ON CONTRAINDICATIONS

Covid-19 vaccination considerations (Contraindications and Precautions)

Contraindications:

A history of the following should be a contraindication to vaccination with COVID-19 vaccines:

- Severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) after a previous dose or to a component of the COVID-19 vaccine
- An immediate allergic reaction of any severity to a previous dose or known (diagnosed) allergy to a component of the COVID-19 vaccine

The culprits in components are **Polyethylene glycol (PEG)** in the Pfizer mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, and **polysorbate-80** is an ingredient in Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. PEG and polysorbate-80 are structurally related, and cross-reactive hypersensitivity between these compounds may occur. People with a contraindication to one of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines should not receive doses of either of the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna). However, people with a contraindication to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines may be able to receive Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine, **and vice versa**, provided specific measures are taken (see “precautions” below).

Neither vaccine contains **animal products or eggs**. They are suitable for vegans and are halaal. The rubber stoppers of the vaccine vials do not contain **latex**.

Precautions:

Long COVID-19:

Vaccination will add additional protection to the natural immunity you may already have. If you are seriously debilitated, still under active investigation, or if your condition has become worse more recently, you should consider delaying vaccination. This is to avoid confusing a reaction to the vaccine with any change in your condition.

Bleeding disorders and Anticoagulant medications (like warfarin and aspirin):

As with any injection, there is a small risk of bleeding at the injection site. If you are up to date with your scheduled international normalised ratio (INR) testing and your latest INR was below the upper threshold of your therapeutic range, you can receive the vaccination safely. The right size needle and prolonged pressure at the injection site will reduce the risk further, thus not being seen as a contraindication for vaccination. Inform the health practitioner administering the vaccine that you are taking these

medications so that they can take the necessary precautions in administering the vaccine.

Female between 18 and 49:

Women 18 through 49 years of age can receive any authorised COVID-19 vaccine. However, they should be informed of the rare but increased risk of thrombosis (blood clotting) with thrombocytopenia (low platelets) syndrome (TTS) after receipt of the **Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine**.

Males between 12 and 29:

Males 12 through 29 years of age can receive any authorised vaccine. However, people receiving an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (for example, the **Pfizer-BioNTech**), especially males in this age group and their parents/legal representative (when relevant), should be informed of the risk of developing myocarditis (an inflammation of the heart muscle) or pericarditis (inflammation of the lining around the heart) after receipt of an mRNA vaccine. Cases of myocarditis or pericarditis have occurred predominantly in males aged 12–29 years within a few days after receiving the second dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. The risk of developing either myocarditis or pericarditis is low. Males 12 through 29 are advised to avoid physical activity for at least 7 days after having received the vaccine.

History of myocarditis or pericarditis:

People who have a history of myocarditis or pericarditis unrelated to mRNA COVID-19 vaccination may receive any FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine after the episode of myocarditis or pericarditis has entirely resolved.

Had COVID-19 and treated with antibodies:

Vaccination should be offered to people regardless of history of prior symptomatic or asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection. There is no recommended minimal interval between infection and vaccination. However, vaccination should be deferred for at least 90 days if a patient received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent serum as a treatment for COVID-19. Until additional information becomes available, this is a precautionary measure to avoid interference of the antibody treatment with vaccine-induced immune responses.

Pregnant or breastfeeding (only on the recommendation of a Gynaecologist):

Vaccination is recommended for all people aged 12 years and older, including people that are:

- Pregnant
- Breastfeeding
- Trying to get pregnant now or who might become pregnant in the future.

A growing body of evidence on the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination indicates that the benefits of vaccination outweigh any known or potential risks of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy. If a person becomes pregnant following the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine that requires two doses (i.e., Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine), the second dose should be administered as indicated for the person to have maximum protection.

Pregnant, breastfeeding, and post-partum people 18 through 49 should be aware of the rare risk of TTS after receiving the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine and the availability of other authorised COVID-19 vaccines (i.e., mRNA vaccines).

Had multisystem inflammatory syndrome: child or adult:

Because current evidence suggests that the risk of SARS-CoV-2 reinfection is low in the months after initial infection, people with a history of MIS-C or MIS-A should consider delaying vaccination until they have recovered from their infection and for 90 days after the date of diagnosis of MIS-C or MIS-A.

History of heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT):

Although the cause of thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) associated with the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine is unclear, it appears to be similar to another rare immune-mediated syndrome, heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT). Until more information becomes available, experts advise that people with a history of an episode of an immune-mediated syndrome characterised by thrombosis and thrombocytopenia, such as HIT, should be offered another COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., mRNA vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech) if it has been 90 days or less since their illness resolved. After 90 days, patients may be vaccinated with any authorised COVID-19 vaccine.

Experts believe that the following factors **do not** make people more susceptible to TTS after receiving the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine. People with these conditions can be vaccinated with any authorised COVID-19 vaccine, including the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine:

- A prior history of venous thromboembolism
- Risk factors for venous thromboembolism (e.g., inherited or acquired thrombophilia including Factor V Leiden; prothrombin gene 20210A mutation; antiphospholipid syndrome; protein C, protein S or antithrombin deficiency
- A prior history of other types of thromboses not associated with thrombocytopenia
- Pregnancy, post-partum, or receipt of hormonal contraceptives (e.g., combined oral contraceptives, patch, ring).

Have dermal filters:

Authorised COVID-19 vaccines can be administered to people who have received injectable dermal fillers without contraindications or precautions for vaccination. Infrequently, these people might experience temporary swelling at or near the filler injection site (usually the face or lips) following the administration of a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. These people should be advised to contact their healthcare provider if swelling develops at or near the site of dermal filler following vaccination.

History of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS):

People with a history of GBS can receive any authorised COVID-19 vaccine. However, given the possible association between the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine and an increased risk of GBS, a patient with a history of GBS and their clinical team should discuss the availability of mRNA (Pfizer-BioNTech) vaccines to offer protection against COVID-19.

Immunosuppressive disorders (like HIV, cancer or being on immunosuppressant therapy):

Immunosuppressive disorders, including HIV, irrespective of CD4 count, are not medically a valid reason to decline vaccination. Like everyone who gets the vaccine, you must continue following the general COVID protection measures after vaccination.

No contraindication or Precautions:

Common Allergies:

Allergic reactions, including severe allergic reactions (to pets, venom, oral medication, environment, food, etc.), NOT related to vaccines, injectable therapies, or components of COVID-19 vaccines, are NOT contraindications or precautions to vaccination. However, individuals who have had severe allergic reactions to anything, regardless of cause, should be observed for 30 minutes after vaccination.

Vaccines and their ingredients

1) Johnson and Johnson vaccine:

- Sodium chloride
- Citric acid monohydrate buffer
- **Polysorbate 80**
- 2 hydroxypropyl- β -cyclodextrin (HBCD)
- Ethanol (absolute)
- Sodium hydroxide
- Water for injection

2) Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine:

- ALC-0315 = (4-hydroxybutyl) azanediyl) bis (hexane-6,1-diyl) bis(2-hexyldecanoate)
- ALC-0159 = 2-[(**polyethylene glycol**)-2000]-N,Nditetradecylacetamide
- 1,2-Distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine

- cholesterol
- potassium chloride
- potassium dihydrogen phosphate
- sodium chloride
- disodium hydrogen phosphate dihydrate
- sucrose
- water for injections

**APPLICATION FOR MEDICAL EXEMPTION, MEDICAL DEFERRAL, OR
PERSONAL DEFERRAL**

As set out in the **COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy** in the UFS’s continued effort to protect the safety of employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students, stakeholders, and the community, the UFS requires all employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, and UFS students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. All UFS employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, and students may apply for a medical and personal deferral. Such applications may be submitted from 6 December 2021. Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students should submit their Exemptions Application Forms unto the UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening.

All requests are pending until applicants receive notice of approval or denial. If no decision has been made by 14 February 2022, applicants must comply with the protective guidelines outlined in clause 6.7.3 of the Policy until a decision is made. Individuals who are denied an exemption shall have fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of notification of the decision to receive the vaccine (either a single dose vaccine or the first dose of the 2-dose vaccine). This will include any possible future booster vaccinations which Government may prescribe.

SECTION I

Name:	Surname:
Date of Birth:	
Position:	
Faculty/Department:	Line Manager:
Staff/Student Number:	
Email:	Phone Number:

Medical Exemptions or Deferrals: Should you believe that you have a medical reason that prevents you from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, you should:

Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students should submit their Exemptions Application Forms unto the UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening.

A registered medical practitioner should complete section II and provide you with supporting documentation during your consultation.

All requests will be reviewed by the Vaccination Exemption Committee (VEC) or the Student VEC, as applicable. The VEC committee reserves the right to confirm the information provided with a registered medical practitioner.

Personal Deferrals: Employees on sabbatical leave, employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers or students who are pregnant, breastfeeding, have natural COVID-19 immunity (due to a recent COVID infection), or any other lawful exemption ground must complete, sign, and submit their application and supporting documents unto the UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening. The UFS will advise or inform your line manager and the HRBP of any such applications received. Human Resources or Student Affairs may contact you for additional information regarding your request.

Please mark the appropriate option for your application:

- I am requesting a medical exemption from the COVID-19 vaccination.
- I am requesting a medical deferral from the COVID-19 vaccination.

Select a reason for personal deferral:

- I am currently on sabbatical leave and will not return until _____ (date).
- I am pregnant (only if recommended by Gynaecologist).

Anticipated Delivery Date: _____

- I am actively breastfeeding (only if recommended by Gynaecologist).

Planned end date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CONSENTS

I hereby acknowledge that should there be a need for the VEC Committee and Human Resources to contact my medical practitioner regarding my portrayed reasons preventing me from receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, my medical practitioner will be authorised to disclose my relevant medical information. I further acknowledge that if my request is approved, I will be exempted or deferred from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and I will be required to comply with the following provisions (except in the event of an approved deferral based on natural immunity):

- a. All individuals will be required to present a SARS COVID-19 negative PCR test result before returning to work following any travel for 24 hours or more.
- b. Be required to always wear an N95 mask (like all other individuals on campus) and/or take whatever additional measures as may be deemed appropriate in the circumstances.
- c. Be required to sanitise

(Updates to these requirements may be made based on Government COVID-19 regulations).

I agree to comply with these restrictions and accept the responsibility for compliance with all health and safety requirements that may be required from time to time.

I understand that by signing this form (if granted), my name and vaccination status will be shared, to the necessary extent and with those individuals duly authorised and required to have access to this information, to ensure compliance with the UFS's health and safety requirements.

I understand and assume the risks of non-vaccination. I understand that COVID-19 vaccination is required to protect me, co-employees, UFS students and stakeholders from COVID-19 and its complications, including severe illness and death.

I hereby agree to comply with all safety measures listed above and any other necessary and reasonable safety measures that may be required from time to time.

I acknowledge that I am aware of all current Covid-19 Vaccine Information and that if my request for an exemption/deferral is not approved, I will be required to comply with the provisions in this Policy.

Thus, done and signed at _____ on the _____ of _____ 20__.

APPLICANT

SECTION II: MEDICAL PRACTITIONER TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION

Step 1: Select the reason for exemption.

Y A documented history of severe or immediate-type allergic reaction to any ingredient of all currently available COVID-19 vaccine brands. List vaccine ingredient (s) the patient is allergic to:

Details: _____

Y There is a documented history of severe allergy or immediate-type hypersensitivity reaction to previous COVID-19 vaccination and a separate contraindication to all currently available COVID-19 vaccine brands.

Details: _____

Y For the J&J/Pfizer vaccine: A history of a specific heparin allergy known as heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT) may be a contraindication or reason to defer the vaccination.

Details: _____

Y Other- a medical condition that requires an employee, *ad-hoc* contract worker or student not to receive the vaccination or delay until a future date.

Details: _____

The following conditions are not considered medical contraindications to the COVID-19 vaccination but for which a deferral of the vaccination to a later date is being requested:

Υ Medication-induced immunocompromised states, especially when the medication is temporary, and the vaccine is predicted to have better efficacy with a future administration. Ideally, though, the vaccination should be given at least two weeks before initiating such immunosuppressive medications.

Details: _____

Υ Prior SARS COVID-19 PCR positive test: *If they test positive for SARS COVID- 19 PCR before their first vaccine or after the first vaccine but before the second vaccine, they should wait 10 (ten) days from the positive test (or 90 days after they received treatment with Monoclonal Antibody Infusion) and be fully recovered as before receiving the first or second dose as appropriate.*

Details: _____

Υ Upcoming surgery: If an individual is scheduled for an upcoming surgery, they should consult with the surgeon to determine if their vaccination should be scheduled later.

Details: (including when the individual should get vaccinated:

Note: The following conditions are **not** considered medical contraindications to COVID-19 vaccination:

- A history of allergy or anaphylaxis to foods, antibiotics, other oral medications, pets, venom, other environmental allergies, or non-COVID vaccines
- History of latex allergy
- Individuals who do not eat eggs or gelatin
- Family history of adverse vaccine reactions or autoimmune conditions
- Fear of needles or general avoidance of vaccine

Add any supporting data (please include any pertinent labs or studies, specialist notes, etc.)

Exemption is temporary and vaccination can be initiated at a date:

Anticipated duration of temporary exemption: _____

Practice Street Address:	
Postal Code:	
Phone Number:	Email Address:
Field of specialisation:	

Medical Registration Number: _____

I _____ (name), herewith declare that the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Medical Practitioners Signature: _____ Date: _____

Attention Medical Practitioner and Employee, *ad-hoc* contract worker or Student

ATTACH MEDICAL RECORDS

Please attach medical records or medical certificate indicating the contraindication/s for the patient receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Please note that the entire medical record is not required. Only the medical certificate of the healthcare provider demonstrating contraindications to the COVID-19 Vaccine is required.

APPLICATION FOR RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION

As set out in the **COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy** in our continued effort to ensure the protection and safety of our employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, students, stakeholders, and community, the UFS requires all employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, and UFS students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

UFS employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students may apply for religious exemption. Such applications may be submitted from 6 December 2021. Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students should submit their Exemptions Application Forms and supporting documents unto the UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening. The UFS will advise or inform your line manager and the HRBP of any such applications received.

All requests are pending until applicants receive notice of approval or denial. If no decision has been made by 14 February 2022, applicants must comply with the protective guidelines outlined in clause 6.7.3 of the Policy until a decision is made. Individuals who are denied an exemption shall have fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of notification of the decision to receive the vaccine (either a single dose vaccine or the first dose of the 2-dose vaccine).

SECTION I

Name:	Surname:
Date of Birth:	
Position:	
Faculty/Department:	Line Manager:
Staff/Student Number:	
Email:	Phone Number:

A sincerely held religious conviction:

- Should be **more than** a social, economic, or political philosophy.
- Should be an established religious doctrine of a recognised and existing religious congregation.
- Should **not** be solely a belief about vaccinations and one's personal preference.

In the below, please provide a personal statement detailing the basis for your vaccination objections, explaining why you are requesting the exemption, the religious principle(s) that guide your objection to vaccination, and the religious basis that prohibits the COVID-19 vaccination. Please attach a letter from your religious congregations' leader to support your application. The UFS may need to discuss the nature of your religious belief(s) and practice(s) with you or your religious leader(s) (if applicable). The UFS may also request additional supporting documentation if needed.

Please provide an explanation detailing any changes in your religion, belief, or personal observance or the reason(s) that you believe your religion, belief, or observance prevents you from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CONSENTS

I hereby acknowledge that the VEC Committee and Human Resources (employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers) or Student Affairs (students) can contact me as well as my religious leader regarding my portrayed reasons preventing me from receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, should it be required. I further acknowledge that if my request is approved, I will be exempted or deferred from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and I will be required to comply with the following provisions:

- a. Provide a SARS COVID-19 PCR test before returning to work following any travel for 24 hours or more.
- b. Be required to always wear an N95 mask (like all other individuals on campus) and/or take whatever additional measures as may be deemed appropriate in the circumstances.
- c. Be required to sanitise.

Updates to these requirements may be made based on Government COVID-19 regulations.

I agree to comply with these restrictions and accept the responsibility for compliance with all health and safety requirements that may be required from time to time.

I understand that by signing this form (if granted), my name and vaccination status will be shared, to the necessary extent and with those individuals duly authorised and required to have access to this information, to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements.

I understand and assume the risks of non-vaccination. I understand that COVID-19 vaccination is required to protect me, co-employees, UFS students and stakeholders from COVID-19 and its complications, including severe illness and death. I hereby agree to comply with all safety measures listed above and any other necessary and reasonable safety measures that may be required from time to time.

I acknowledge that I am aware of all current Covid-19 Vaccine Information and that if my request for an exemption/deferral is not approved, I will be required to comply with the provisions in this Policy.

Thus, done and signed at _____ on the _____ of _____ 20__.

APPLICANT

OTHER LEGALLY ACCEPTABLE EXEMPTIONS

As set out in the **COVID-19 Regulations and Required Vaccination Policy** in our continued effort to protect the safety of our employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, students, stakeholders, and community, the UFS requires all employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers, and UFS students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

UFS employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students may apply for other legally acceptable exemptions. Such applications may be submitted from 6 December 2021 or soon thereafter. Employees, *ad-hoc* contract workers and students should submit their Exemptions Application Forms and supporting documents unto the UFS website at the following link www.ufs.ac.za/covid19screening. The UFS will advise or inform your line manager and the HRBP of any such applications received.

All requests are pending until applicants receive notice of approval or denial. If no decision has been made by 14 February 2022, applicants must comply with the protective guidelines outlined in clause 6.7.3 of the Policy until a decision is made. I acknowledge that I am aware of all current Covid-19 Vaccine Information and that if my request for an exemption/deferral is not approved, I will be required to comply with the provisions in this Policy.

SECTION I

Name:	Surname:
Date of Birth:	
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Staff/Student Number:	

Any other exemption:

- This includes any legitimate ground an employee, *ad-hoc* contract worker or student wishes to rely on.
- Should **not** be solely a belief about vaccinations and one's personal preference.
- May include permission from HOD regarding reasonable accommodation.

I hereby confirm that the basis for my objection is:

Please attach a confirmatory affidavit detailing plausible reasons for your objection and Application for Exemption. Please provide an explanation detailing any changes in your personal observance or reason(s) that prevents you from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. The UFS may also request additional supporting documentation if needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONSENTS

I hereby acknowledge that the VEC Committee and Human Resources (employees and *ad-hoc* contract workers) or Student Affairs (students) can contact me regarding my portrayed reasons preventing me from receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, should it be required. I further acknowledge that if my request is approved, I will be exempted or deferred from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and I will be required to comply with the following provisions:

- a. Provide a SARS COVID-19 PCR test before returning to work following any travel for 24 hours or more.
- b. Be required to always wear an N95 mask (like all other individuals on campus) and/or take whatever additional measures as may be deemed appropriate in the circumstances.
- c. Be required to sanitise.

Updates to these requirements may be made based on Government COVID-19 regulations.

I agree to comply with these restrictions and accept the responsibility for compliance with all health and safety requirements that may be required from time to time.

I understand that by signing this form (if granted), my name and vaccination status will be shared, to the necessary extent and with those individuals duly authorised and required to have access to this information, to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements.

I understand and assume the risks of non-vaccination. I understand that COVID-19 vaccination is required to protect me, co-employees, UFS students and stakeholders from COVID-19 and its complications, including severe illness and death.

I hereby agree to comply with all safety measures listed above and any other necessary and reasonable safety measures that may be required from time to time.

I acknowledge that I am aware of all current Covid-19 Vaccine Information and that if my request for an exemption/deferral is not approved, I will be required to comply with the provisions in this Policy.

Thus, done and signed at _____ on the _____ of _____ 20__.

APPLICANT