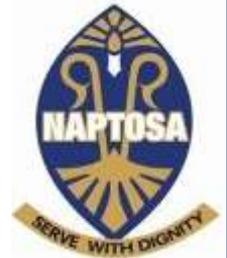




# NATIONAL NEWS FLASH



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TVET/CET COLLEGES

NNF 1 of 2021 16 January 2021

## RETURN TO WORK

Following the Deputy Minister of Basic Education's announcement on 15 January 2021, on the re-opening of schools for the 2021 academic year, NAPTOSA engaged the Department of Higher Education (DHET) to pronounce their plans since the situation in colleges is no different to that of schools. NAPTOSA is concerned about the safety of lecturers, support staff and students during the expected peak period of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

An urgent meeting between organized Labour and the employer was convened in the afternoon of 15 January 2021.

The employer presented a document on guidelines for return to work, intended to address concerns about the impact of the new variant of COVID-19 on both staff members and students. The document was accepted in principle with the following noted:

- The employer to ensure that COVID-19 Steering Committees are revived in Colleges and that proper minutes of meetings are kept.
- The employer to urgently develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on management and support of lecturers with comorbidities.
- Due to budgetary constraints, replacement of lecturers could pose a serious challenge.
- The employer to urgently develop clear guidelines for the replacement of those lecturers who cannot even work from home due to ill-health. The guidelines document must spell out how lecturers working from home will be assisted in the performance of their work.
- The academic calendar and the tuition/lecturing times would not be adjusted. Colleges will, however, be allowed to deviate in special and extraordinary circumstances but must do so in consultation with the relevant Regional Manager. Lecturing staff will therefore resume work from 18 January 2021.
- Enrolment and starting times of students will be staggered and extended.
- Under no circumstances will there be more than a 50% cohort of staff or students present on the premises. When classes commence, a staggered approach will be followed with online learning used to support students.
- Compliance with COVID-19 regulations of adjusted alert level 3 will under no circumstances be compromised. Colleges with infrastructure are encouraged to do online registrations, and remote teaching and learning are also encouraged.
- The Department should provide principles and guidelines, and not prescribe a one-size-fits all approach.
- N5 and N6 results were already received and N1 entry level was not dependent on results.

No guidelines were presented by the Department in respect of Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs) as these institutions follow programmes like that of the DBE in GET / FET.

Further meetings between Labour and the Department will be held to assess developments in the sector, with the next meeting scheduled for 01 February 2021.

It was agreed that Labour will assist with monitoring the situation at campuses.

**BASIL MANUEL**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**