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COVID-19 STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

STUDENT WELLNESS SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

The Department of Student Affairs' Student Wellness Service (SWS) aims to provide support to students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The support includes providing COVID-19 prevention information prior to arrival on campus, along with symptom screening on arrival in residence.

All students should abide by all Department of Health and UCT regulations, procedures and protocols and take all necessary steps to minimise the possible spread of the COVID-19 virus.

1.2 COVID-19 PREVENTION AND PRECAUTIONS

Please adhere to these critical preventative measures:

- In public and shared spaces, always wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth.
- Wash hands.
- Don't touch your face.
- Keep 1.5 metres apart.
- Cover your cough.

It's also important to avoid the three C's, as overlapping factors increase the risk of infection in these situations:

1. Crowded places and social gatherings.
2. Close contact settings.
3. Confined and enclosed spaces.

1.3 COVID-19 RISK FACTORS

Please review these factors very carefully before deciding on whether to accept or decline your place on campus or in residence.

Individuals with any of the following conditions are at greater medical risk of contracting COVID-19:

- Uncontrolled diabetes mellitus
- Hypertension
- On immunosuppressant therapy (e.g. chronic oral steroids)
- HIV-positive and on treatment, but with poor adherence and not virally suppressed
- Pregnant women (post-delivery for 6 weeks) and breastfeeding women
- Unstable or complicated cardiac disease
- Chronic lung disease (uncontrolled asthma, COPD, active TB, post-TB structural damage, chronic bronchitis)
- Chronic liver disease with impaired liver function
- Chronic renal disease with impaired renal function
- Cancer and receiving chemotherapy or radiation therapy
- Bone marrow or organ transplants
- Morbid obesity (body mass index greater than 35)
- Over 60 years old

If you have any queries regarding this information, please contact us via one of the following channels:

- Contact the SWS Triage Line on 021 650 5620 and speak to the Clinical Nurse Practitioner.
- Contact your usual SWS practitioner through the [online booking platform](#).
- Email your query to sws@uct.ac.za.
- For mental health support and counselling, make a booking [on the SWS website](#) or [UCT Mobile app](#), or call the UCT Student Careline (0800 24 25 26).

Important:

Remember that all medical or psychological information discussed with clinicians and staff at SWS remains confidential, as is the case with all our consultations.

1.4 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON COVID-19 VULNERABILITY

Question	Answer
I have a chronic illness which is not included on the above list. Will I still be at higher risk than other people?	<p>Please consult your prescribing clinician/facility. Be sure to ask specifically in the context of returning to campus, clinical work, and living in a university residence.</p> <p>Should your prescribing physician not be available, please contact the SWS Triage nurse (021 650 5620) to discuss whether your illness or medication causes immunosuppression.</p>
What is “virally unsuppressed HIV”? I am on HIV medication. Will I be at risk?	<p>Generally, if you’re HIV positive but your most recent monitoring blood tests showed a CD4 count greater than 200 and you have an undetectable viral load, you are not regarded as high risk.</p> <p>Be sure to obtain advice from your prescribing clinician if you have recently developed any new symptoms or if you’ve not been taking your medication compliantly in recent months.</p>
What happens if I discover that I am pregnant when I am already in residence?	<p>If there is any chance that you could be pregnant, please take a pregnancy test before travelling to Cape Town or moving into residence.</p> <p>If you are already in residence when you find out you are pregnant, contact the clinician treating you or SWS (021 650 5620) for advice.</p>
How do I know if my heart condition is an “unstable or complicated cardiac disease”?	<p>Please consult your prescribing physician. Be sure to ask specifically in the context of returning to campus, clinical work, and living in a university residence.</p>
I have asthma. How do I know if it is poorly controlled or not?	<p>Your prescribing clinician will best advise you by looking at overall trends of your asthma management over time. They will also consider whether you have had asthma flare-ups over time and whether you were required to change your medication type or dosage.</p> <p>Should your prescribing physician not be available, please contact the SWS Triage nurse (021 650 5620) to discuss whether your illness or medication causes immunosuppression.</p>
I am younger than 30 years old. Does this	<p>Most young people who contract the virus experience a mild form of COVID-19. However, you should also consider your health in relation to the</p>

Question	Answer
mean that I am not at risk at all?	comorbidities listed above . If you are concerned, please consult a clinician or email sws@uct.ac.za for advice.

1.5 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: INFECTED WITH COVID-19 / CONTACT WITH INFECTED PERSON

FAQ	Suggestion
What is the definition of 'close contact'?	'Close contact' occurs when you've had face-to-face contact (closer than 1 metre), or have been in a closed space with a confirmed COVID-19 positive person for at least 15 minutes. This contact must have occurred while the positive person was still infectious – i.e., from two days before their symptoms started until 10 days after their symptoms began.
What should I do if I was in close contact or exposed to someone who may have COVID-19?	If you develop symptoms, quarantine in your room for 10 days. If you do not have symptoms, you don't need to isolate – but please wear a mask when you're around others. Very importantly, if the close contact tests positive, please go into quarantine for a total of 10 consecutive days – even if you don't have any symptoms.
What should I do if I was in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19?	Remain in self-quarantine at home and monitor yourself for symptoms using the COVID-19 symptom form available at http://housingonline.uct.ac.za . If the form is offline on that website, please visit the alternate link here . People who were in contact with you do not need to go into quarantine.
What happens if I'm diagnosed with COVID-19?	You are managed according to our standard procedures for dealing with positive cases . If you were in close contact with others in the two days before you were tested, or two days before your symptoms began, those individuals are at risk. The SWS COVID-19 team will contact them and advise them on symptoms screening and self-isolation.
What if multiple students are diagnosed with COVID-19?	If any UCT students or staff were in close contact with infected students, they are at risk. We will ask them to self-quarantine for a period of 10 days from the date of the infected student's test or symptom onset.
What if multiple students or staff are diagnosed with COVID-19?	Self-quarantine is required for anyone who was in close contact with the infected parties. If healthy / asymptomatic lecturers had casual contact with infected parties, they must suspend in-person teaching and cancel or postpone group gatherings. They may continue classes via online learning. Depending on the extent of the outbreak, the department / faculty / university may close.

1.6 STAY UPDATED

For the latest information on COVID-19 prevention and precautions please visit the National Institute for Communicable Diseases and Department of Health's COVID-19 portals:

- <https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19>
- <https://sacoronavirus.co.za>

Please also keep updated with information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, both in the news and at UCT.

PART 2: PROCEDURES BEFORE ARRIVING AT RESIDENCE

The section that follows details the process for returning to residence, which kicks off when SWS invites you to return.

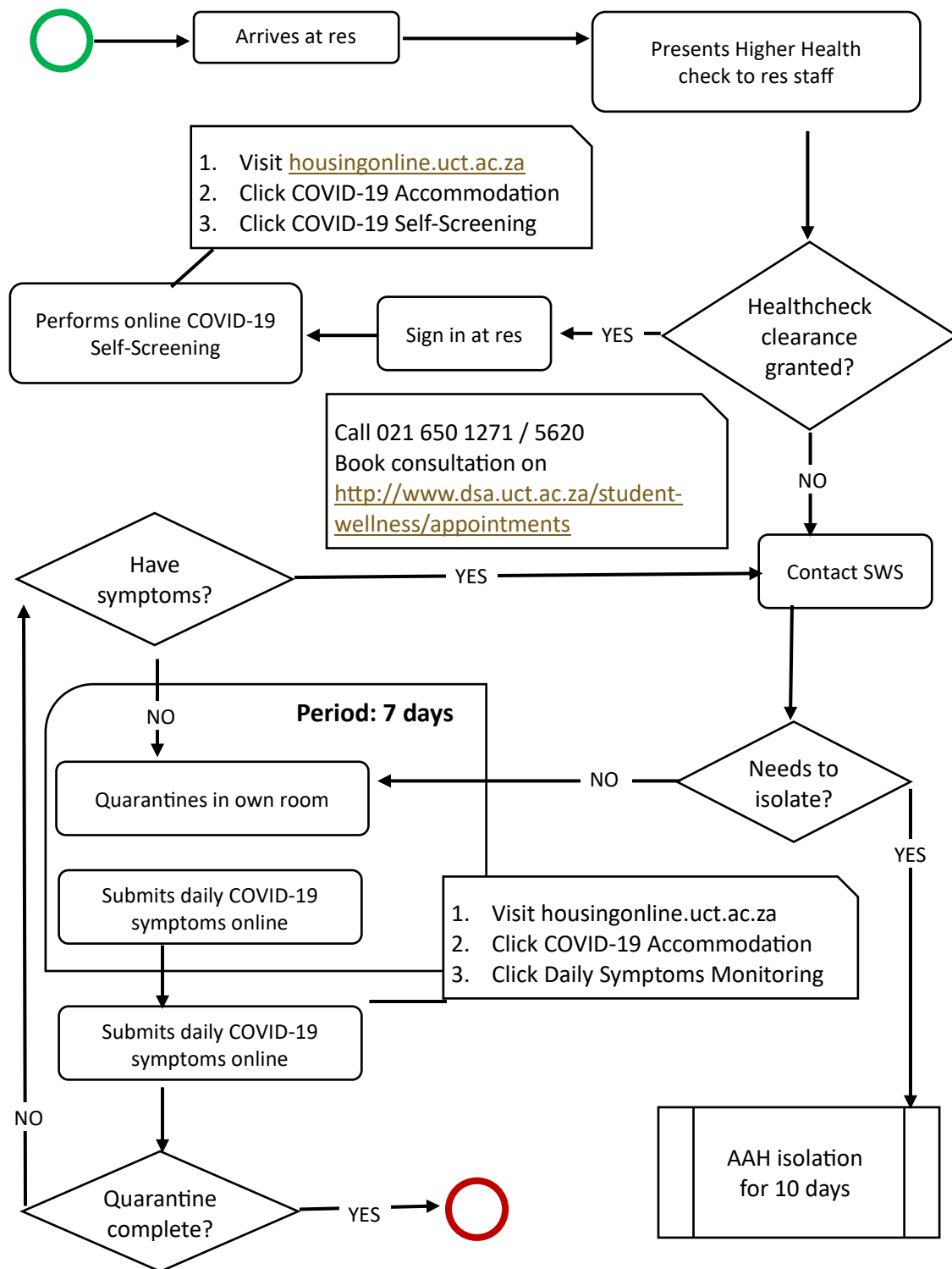
2.1 SHOULD I RETURN TO RESIDENCE?

Before deciding on whether to accept the invitation, go through the [list of risk factors](#) to help you assess whether you are more vulnerable to contracting the virus.

In addition, please consider the following:

- If you are ill from an acute medical illness, seek medical attention and try to delay your return until you are healthy again. This applies to *all* conditions – even those not related to respiratory tract infection.
- If you have just recovered from an acute illness, obtain medical advice on when you can travel. It may be better to inform your faculty and wait another few days before returning to campus.
- When in doubt about any health-related matter, seek health advice from a private medical practitioner or SWS (phone 021 650 5620 or [book online](#)) **before** returning to campus. **Please do not** wait until you're on campus to obtain health advice.
- If you have not been able to practice social distancing, or if you've participated in voluntary community activities where there was risk of exposure, note that you will need to inform SWS of this on your return to residence.

2.2 PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT KNOWN MEDICAL CONDITIONS

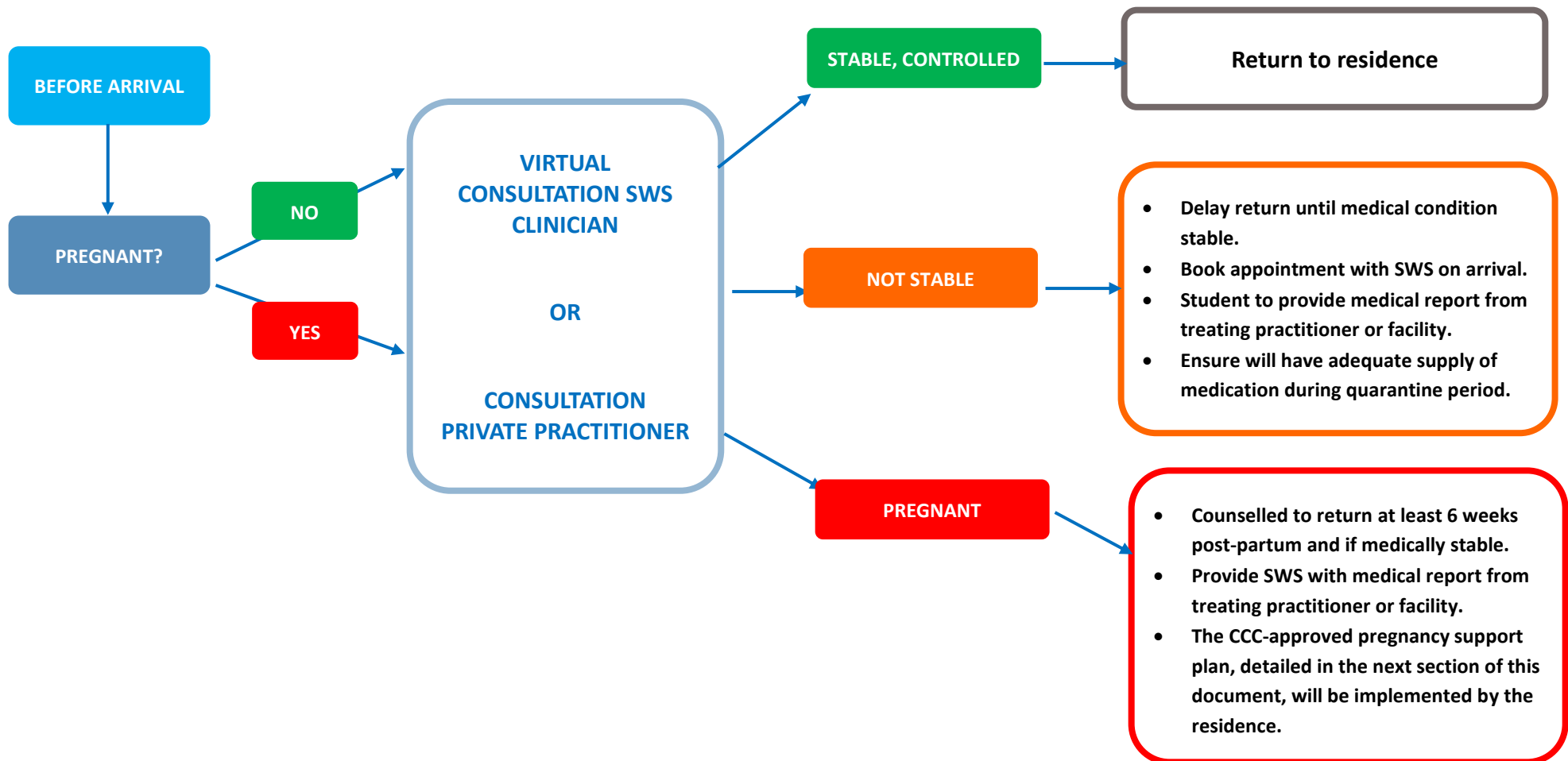


2.3 PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS WITH KNOWN MEDICAL CONDITIONS

SHRL invites the student to return to residence.

1. Students with a medical condition will get an automatic email to contact SWS on sws@uct.ac.za.
2. The student consults telephonically with the SWS COVID response Medical Officer (MO) and/or the Clinical Nurse Practitioner (CNP).
3. The MO or CNP assesses if the student's medical condition is stable – i.e., if the student is on treatment and stable, and if the student has enough medication to cover the (current 10-day) quarantine period.

2.3.1 SUMMARY OF PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS



**Arrives in residence - has a
medical condition / pregnant**

- Book an appointment with SWS on arrival.
 - Counselling about the risks of COVID and being in residence.
 - If pregnant SH&RL organise alternative accommodation to reduce risk of acquiring COVID.
-

**Pregnant student currently in
residence**

- Book an appointment with SWS.
- SH&RL will arrange alternative accommodation with the aim of reducing the risk of acquiring COVID.
- Student considers return to residence at least 6 weeks post-delivery (post-partum) and after student had made arrangements for the care of the baby if the student is not living in a designated student residence with family accommodation.

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We strongly recommend that pregnant students delay returning to the residence community until 6 weeks after delivery of the baby. Following this, students who wish to return to residence at least 6 weeks after delivery (post-partum) will be asked to provide a medical report from their health practitioner / health facility approving their return to a university residence, with a gynaecologist's letter of clearance, based on the post-delivery well-being of the student.

Students may access SWS counselling and psychological services through the online booking platform.

However, if pregnant students choose to return to residence anyway, prior to coming into residence, the student is counselled about the risks of severe disease during pregnancy and the increased risk of COVID-19 transmission in a residence, noting the limited primary care support SWS can offer to pregnant students in a residence.

Upon arrival at the residence:

1. The student must disclose their pregnancy to the SWS COVID response team.
2. The student will be screened as per the Student Support plan.
3. Residence staff will provide the student with temporary accommodation until alternative off-campus accommodation is identified.

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Where a student is already in residence and discovers they are pregnant, they will be advised of this protocol and the implementation thereof.

1. As soon as pregnancy status is known, the student MUST declare their expected date of delivery (EDD) and a copy of their gynaecologist's records to the SWS Medical Officer. This will enable SWS to make appropriate referrals and to facilitate emergency assistance if necessary.
2. The Residence team will facilitate the student's move to private off-campus accommodation as soon as possible. This is done to reduce the risk to the pregnant student and baby, while also providing a conducive environment for the mother and baby, and caregiver if applicable.
3. The student can consider a return to residence at least 6 weeks post-delivery (post-partum), provided that their gynaecologist sends a letter of clearance to the SWS Medical Officer.
4. If the student is not in a residence with family accommodation, the student must make personal arrangements for the care of the baby.

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All returning students will be placed under an obligatory 10-day self-quarantine in their residence rooms. ***The day of arrival is not included in this period, so the count begins from the day after arrival.***

Students are signed in as per residence protocols and proceed to their own rooms with instructions to self-screen for [COVID-19 symptoms](#). For the duration of the quarantine period, students must complete the [self-monitoring tool](#) before 12h00 (noon) daily.

Where students report symptoms (either on the day of arrival or during the subsequent quarantine period) the SWS COVID response team will contact the students. Students with COVID-19 symptoms will be placed in isolation at All Africa House (AAH).

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Students who break quarantine rules will have their self-quarantine period reset. Their new period will begin the day after the violation occurs.

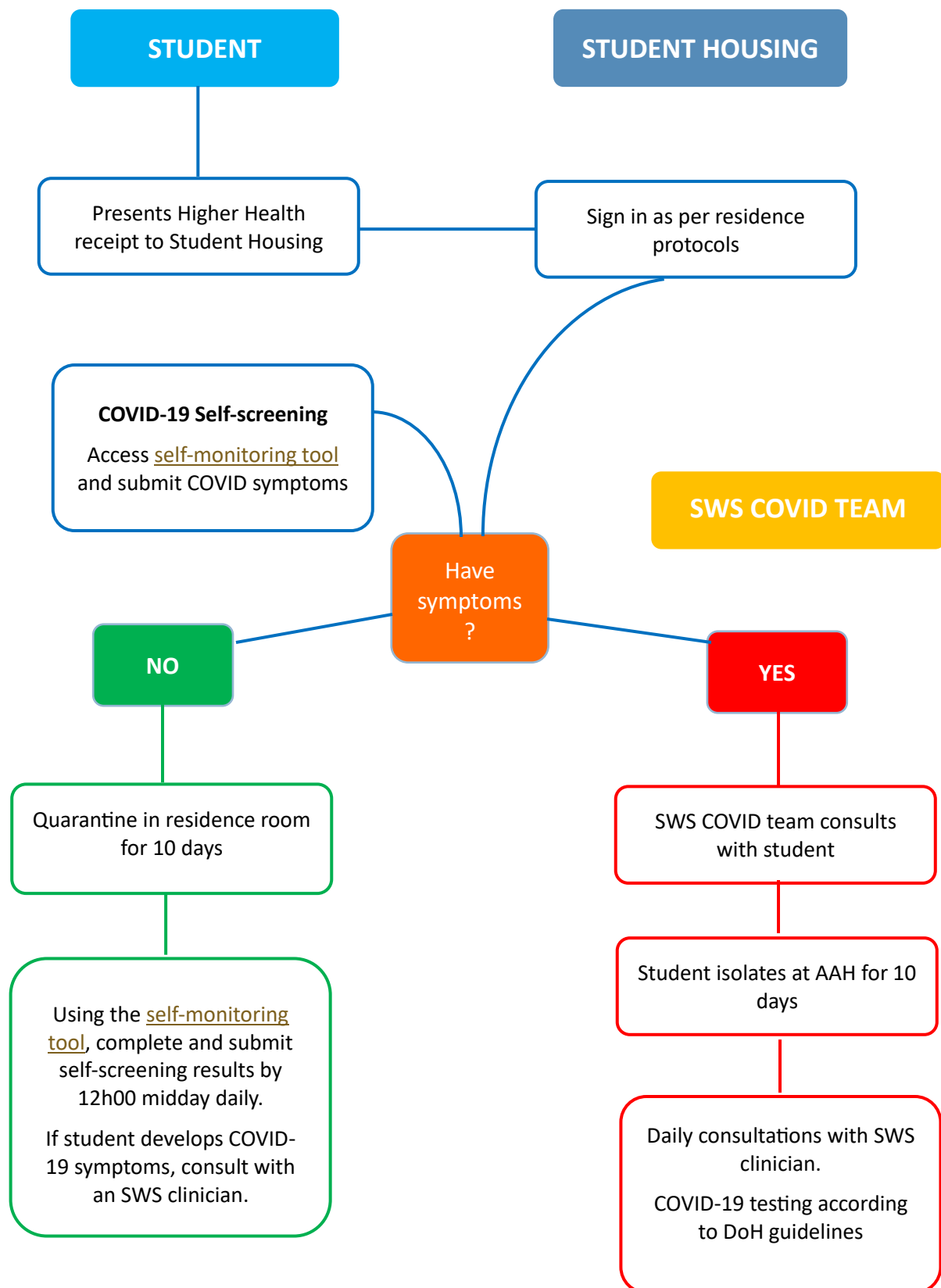
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You are considered to have COVID-19 symptoms if you have ° V' of the following:

- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- anosmia (partial or complete loss of the sense of smell)
- dysgeusia (distortion of the sense of taste)

Along with these symptoms, you may or may not experience other symptoms – such as fever, weakness, diarrhoea, or myalgia (muscle aches and pain).

3.3 PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS ARRIVING AT RESIDENCE (SUMMARY)



3.4 WHAT IF I SCREEN POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

Students will be managed by SWS clinical staff as per the SWS protocol for managing COVID-19 symptoms.

Students in a residence will be transferred to the UCT isolation facility at All Africa House for a period of 10 days. Students in private accommodation will self-isolate at home / in their private accommodation for a period of 10 days.

Category	Description	Actions
Low risk and no severe symptoms	This includes students younger than 55 years old, those with no pre-existing medical conditions, and those whose are normal with regard to breathing, level of consciousness, and mental state.	<p>Students will be in isolation for a period of 10 days from the date of symptom onset, or if tested for COVID-19, 10 days from the date of the test.</p> <p>Students in the UCT isolation facility will be monitored daily by a SWS nurse.</p> <p>Students will be referred for testing if they meet the Department of Health (DoH) criteria for testing.</p>
High risk and no severe symptoms	This includes students 55 years or older, with pre-existing medical condition(s), who are normal with regard to breathing, level of consciousness, and mental state.	<p>Students will be referred for testing as per the current DoH guidelines.</p> <p>Students who are medically stable will be in isolation for a period of 10 days from the date of symptom onset or the date of the test if asymptomatic.</p> <p>Students in the UCT isolation facility will be monitored daily by a SWS nurse.</p>
Severe COVID-19 symptoms	This includes students with severe symptoms – such as shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, altered mental state or reduced level of consciousness.	<p>Students will be assessed by a clinician and referred to hospital for further care and treatment.</p> <p>Students will be in isolation for a period of 10 days from the date their severe COVID-19 symptoms resolve.</p>

3.5 WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE UCT ISOLATION FACILITY (AAH)

Question	Answer
How do I get to the building?	We will provide transport to and from the facility.
What's in my room?	<p>You are provided with a secure and quiet room which is conducive to studying. You won't share bathroom or kitchen facilities.</p> <p>Clean bed towels are provided during your stay.</p>

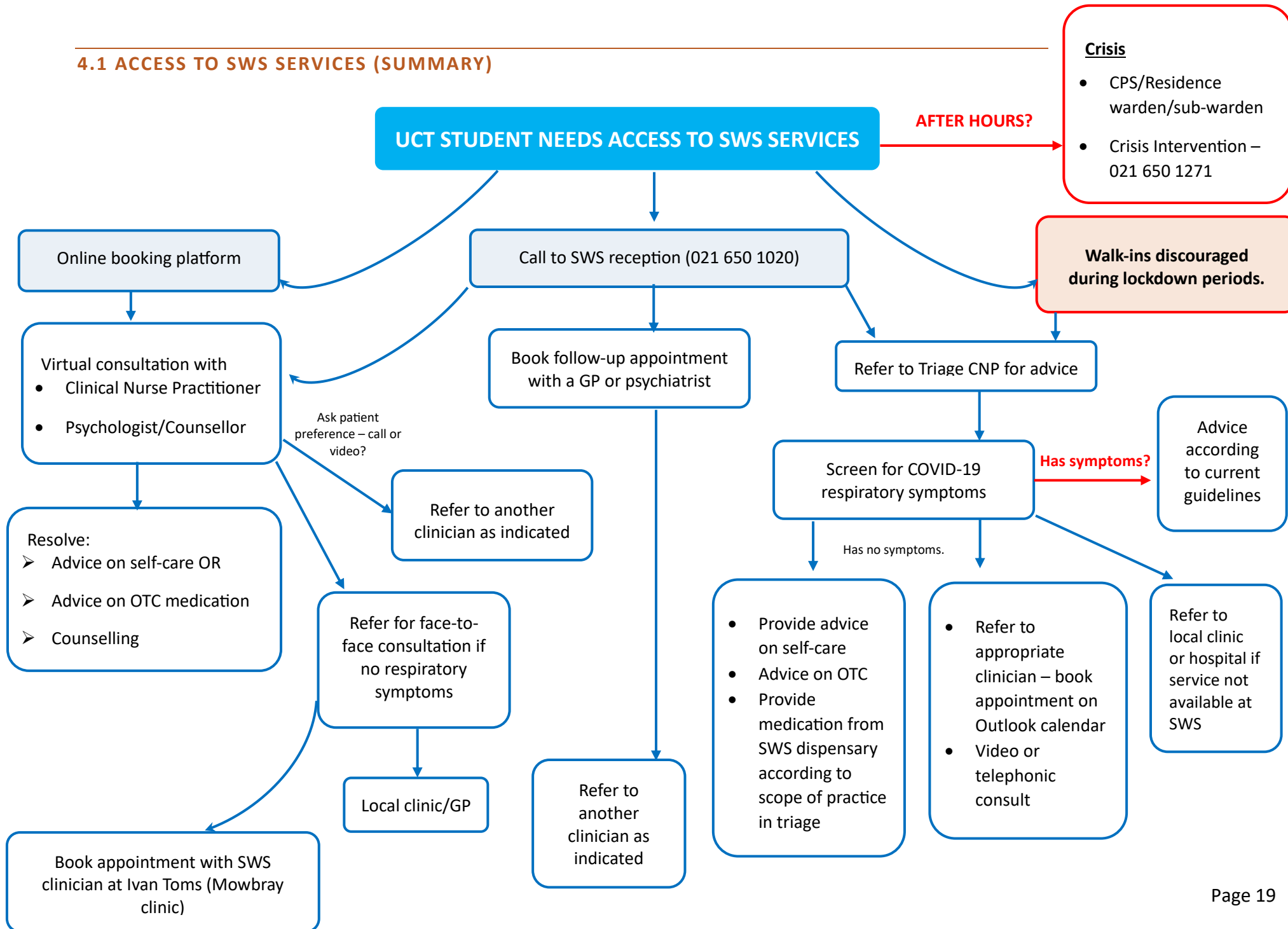
Question	Answer
	A telephone is provided for calling the 24-hour SWS COVID-19 line (021 650 1271) for reporting any issues.
What about food?	We provide you with meals for the duration of the isolation period.
Do I have to stay indoors at all times?	You may leave your room to use the outside quad area with prior arrangement with the nursing staff. Please maintain a physical distance of more than 2 metres from others and wear a surgical/medical mask when outside your room.
Is there a cleaning service?	No. You must clean your own room during your stay. We will provide you with the cleaning materials.
Any other rules I should know about?	No visitors will be allowed. Alcohol and drugs are also prohibited.
Will I have medical appointments?	The nursing staff will conduct daily telephone consultations with you and will provide medication to manage the mild symptoms.
Should I inform those I've had close contact with about my symptoms / diagnosis?	<p>Yes. And if you test positive for COVID-19, the isolation facility staff will get in touch with your close contacts to advise them. They will be asked to self-quarantine and monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms.</p> <p>Where the contacts are fellow UCT students, they must report any COVID-19 symptoms to the SWS staff. Close contacts of COVID-19 cases who develop symptoms will be managed according to the procedures described above.</p>

PART 4: GETTING HELP: ACCESS TO SWS SERVICES AND COVID-19 SCREENING AND TESTING

SWS is offering virtual consultations during COVID-19 pandemic. These are preferably telephonic or video consultations, but in cases where a face-to-face consultation is necessary, the procedure described in [section 4.2](#) will be followed.

All students will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before consultations.

4.1 ACCESS TO SWS SERVICES (SUMMARY)



4.2 PROTOCOLS FOR THE SWS MAIN CLINIC

The SWS main clinic (Ivan Toms building at 28 Rhodes Avenue, Mowbray) is designated as a **high-risk area**. As such, this protocol aims to protect staff and students from unnecessary risk of exposure to the Coronavirus.

4.2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

- To access the clinic, please schedule an appointment or make an online booking in advance. Only students with booked appointments will be allowed onto the property. **Walk-ins are discouraged during lockdown periods.**
- Student cars will NOT be allowed on the property except during rainy weather conditions.
- A maximum of eight students at a time will be granted access to the premises: four students in consultations with clinicians, along with four students in the waiting area.
- Students will not be able to access the property using their student cards. Reception staff will open the gate remotely for students who arrive for their scheduled appointments.
- All students must wear a mask that covers both the mouth and nose at all times. Students must also maintain physical distancing of at least two metres and follow prescribed hygiene measures at all times – such as proper coughing etiquette.
- If a student is sick on the day of their appointment, they need to stay in their room and contact SWS (021 650 1271 or 021 650 5620) to re-arrange the appointment.

4.2.2 SCREENING PROCEDURE FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

1. Students, staff, and all visitors must complete the [COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Healthcheck Higher Health app](#) before coming to SWS. Students with COVID-19 symptoms must inform SWS of this **before** arriving at the building.
2. For students with physical disabilities, access to the clinic will be made as easy as possible without compromising the health of staff and students.
3. Before entering the building, students with **booked appointments** will be directed to the dedicated screening area and wait at least 2 metres apart.
4. Students will be called by the screening SWS nurse and as they enter the building, they need to sanitise their hands.

4.2.3 APPOINTMENTS

- All appointment times must be strictly adhered to.
- Students at risk of severe disease (high risk) will be prioritised for face-to-face appointments.
- Students with respiratory or COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, runny nose, fever, chills, body aches, headaches) will NOT have a face-to-face consultation with SWS clinicians. These students must contact their usual clinician or the SWS Triage Line (021 650 5620 during office hours or 021 650 1271 at any time) to be advised.
- Students in reception will be seated two metres apart and will remain in the reception area until called by their clinician.
- Students who require access to the bathroom must use the designated student bathrooms and maintain a high hygiene standard. They must immediately wash their

hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and then dry them with the paper towels provided.

- After their appointments, students will leave the SWS main clinic via the reception area without socialising with any other students. They will then leave the property immediately via the main gate.

4.3 MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

For all SWS virtual counselling bookings, refer to the section on [accessing SWS services](#).

The Student Wellness Service Peer Counselling programme has a team of four peer counsellors who are postgraduate students. The programme provides intervention through individual counselling, along with other activities such as public health awareness effort and groupwork interventions.

The dynamic peer counsellors support students through four focus areas:

1. [Counselling](#)
2. [Social / emotional adjustment](#)
3. [Health and wellness](#)
4. [Academic support](#)

4.3.1 COUNSELLING

The peer counsellors are all UCT postgraduate students who have already completed a basic degree. They have qualified as social workers or registered counsellors and are registered and strictly bound by their professional boards' confidentiality.

Prior to the nationwide lockdown, the peer counsellors were based at the SWS main clinic in Mowbray from which the programme offered a combination of face-to-face and digital counselling. During the lockdown, the peer counsellors offer telephonic and online counselling, which can be booked via the [SWS website](#) or [UCT Mobile app](#).

A session with a peer counsellor is scheduled for 40 minutes. The peer counsellor listens and gives feedback to the student to help them better cope with the issues they're facing.

Students can talk to the peer counsellor about anything they want. Common themes and topics are academic concerns, relationship or family issues, adjustment difficulties, how to cope with anxiety or depressive symptoms, substance abuse, and sexuality issues. The peer counsellor offers short-term psychosocial interventions (1-8 sessions) and, if necessary, will also refer students to the multidisciplinary team of health care practitioners at SWS for other psychosocial interventions.

4.3.2 SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

We understand that adjusting to UCT is challenging enough, even without the context of COVID-19. As a result, students may struggle to adjust to various aspects of the new normal. These include:

- Living and working at home
- Restricted movement
- Online or distance learning
- Lack of social support

The peer counsellors help students to adjust, addressing various issues, such as:

- Academic (including avenues to academic support)
- Social
- Mental and emotional well-being
- Institutional adjustment (to UCT)
- Social support (connecting to others)

4.3.3 HEALTH AND WELLNESS

In collaboration with SWS's nurses and doctors, peer counsellors take a bio-psychosocial approach: they employ education and awareness to promote overall physical health and wellness for students.

The peer counsellors aim to provide a holistic service which includes a focus on physical health and well-being, along with a focus on disease prevention.

Peer counsellors encourage students to have balance between physical health, mental health, and academic demands. They also promote reproductive and sexual health, along with elements of gender-based violence awareness.

This is done through counsellors' consultations with students as well as talks, groups, and presentations at student events and in student spaces.

Visit the [UCT Peer Counsellors' Instagram page](#) for more information and to learn about upcoming seminars.

4.3.4 ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Peer Counsellors provide assist students with goal management, study skills, overall wellness, and self-care. They can also assist students with ADHD, ADD, and other challenges.

4.4 COVID-19 SCREENING AND TESTING

4.4.1 ONLINE AND TELEPHONIC SCREENING

SWS offers COVID-19 screening online via the [online booking system](#) or telephonically by contacting SWS Triage line (021 650 5620 during office hours) or SWS COVID-19 line (021 650 1271 at any time). No walk-in screening services are provided on UCT campuses.

4.4.2 UCT RESIDENCE-BASED SCREENING SITES

On arrival to residences and during the quarantine period, all students will monitor and record any COVID-19 symptoms on the [electronic self-monitoring tool](#). Then, before going to campus, all students must complete the daily COVID-19 symptom self-assessment health check ([Higher Health app](#)). This will be checked before entering campus.

Students with COVID-19 symptoms should call the SWS Triage line (021 650 5620 during office hours) or the DSA Students COVID-19 Hotline (021 650 1271 at any time). Students can also book a virtual appointment using the [SWS online booking platform](#).

Students who are screened positive for COVID-19 will be managed according to the latest NICD/DoH guidelines. Note that SWS does not conduct testing for COVID-19. Students will therefore be referred to their private medical practitioner or testing at a public testing site.

4.4.3 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TESTING SITES

Testing (single naso-pharyngeal or oro-pharyngeal swab) is available at Groote Schuur Hospital (phone 021 404 2003/4 or 021 404 2006/7). Ask the SWS staff for the hospital testing hours. Alternatively, refer to the [City of Cape Town public testing sites](#) listed below.

However, please do not go for testing without being referred and taking the necessary completed documentation. This will be completed by your healthcare professional (doctor or nurse). SWS clinicians will then refer you to the appropriate testing site, based on your place of residence, if you meet the National Department of Health COVID-19 criteria.

Please contact the facility before you go for testing, or call the following numbers for advice:

Facility	Number
NICD Hotline	0800 029 0999 / 0800 011 1132 or WhatsApp “Hi” to 060 102 3456
Western Cape Provincial hotline	021 928 4102
Student Wellness Triage line	021 650 5620 (office hours)
SWS COVID-19 line	021 650 1271 (after hours, weekends and holidays)

4.4.4 PRIVATE TESTING SITES

Several organisations conduct private testing. However, note that the cost of testing will be for your own account, or that of your medical aid where applicable. Please ensure that you are fully aware of the cost implications before testing at such an organisation.

- **Pathcare:** <https://www.pathcare.co.za/drs-portal/covid-19-patient-information>
- **Lancet laboratories:** <http://www.lancet.co.za/corona-virus-info-hub>
- **Ampath:** <https://www.ampath.co.za/covid-19-collection-sites>

4.4.5 PUBLIC TESTING SITES

Please contact your local clinic for more information on testing:

- [City of Cape Town facilities](#)
- [Western Cape Department of Health facilities](#)