



International Academic Programmes Office

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IAPO
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC
PROGRAMMES OFFICE
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
THE WORLD AT UCT

MEMO 4 (COVID 19, level 3)

DATE: Wednesday 24 June 2020

TO: UCT Deans and Deputy Deans; Faculty Managers; Admissions department; Post Grad Office; Graduate School of Business (GSB) Admissions office; GSB

CC: DVC Sue Harrison; Registrar's Office, IAPO staff

FROM: Directorate- International Academic Programmes Office [IAPO]

SUBJECT: **VISA & IMMIGRATION**

- 1. FAQ's - Visa & Immigration, Registration & Pre-registration, Medical Aid**
- 2. Amendment of directions issued in terms of regulation 10(8) of the regulations made under section 27(2) of the DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT, 2002 (ACT NO. 57 of 2002). Amendments to Government Gazette 660 – updated Vol 664 No 43460 dated 10062020 and**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- A. Visa applications**
- B. Registration & Pre-registration**
- C. Medical aid cover**



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CONTENT

A. VISA APPLICATIONS

	page
1. I am still in South Africa and my visa has expired. What should I do?	3
2. My study visa is expiring; how do I apply for a renewal of my visa?	3
3. If my current visa is expiring or has expired, will I face any penalty for the late renewal of my visa?	3
4. I received an offer to study, how do I receive a letter of undertaking to apply for a study visa?	3
5. I have received a study offer but have not received the automated letter of undertaking to apply for a study visa. What do I do?	4
6. I applied for my visa renewal and my appointment to submit my documents was during the lockdown period; what do I do?	4
7. I submitted my visa renewal application before the lockdown, but my application is still pending; will I be allowed to stay in South Africa while waiting?	4
8. I am from a country on the COVID-19 high-risk list and I have been accepted to study at UCT; can I obtain a visa to travel to South Africa	4
9. UPDATED I am in South Africa on a Lesotho Special Permit which is expiring; what do I do?	5
10. UPDATED I am an asylum seeker and my permit has expired, what do I do?	5
11. UPDATED Will I need to complete the Form 20 process if I apply for my visa renewal only after current visa has expired?	5
12. Will I face any penalties or be deemed undesirable if I travel home on an expired visa (once its' officially permitted to do so)?	5
13. I am in South Africa on a visitor's visa as I had to meet with my supervisor. My visitor's visa is expiring soon and I'm not able to leave as my country's border has closed – what do I do?	5
14. I am on a work visa registered for part time studies. I want to change to a study visa: what is the process?	5
15. I have been studying at a different institution in South Africa. I received an offer for UCT and need to change my visa so that it is endorsed for study at UCT. What do I do?	6
16. NEW I returned to my home country before lockdown, how do I get a letter / permit to return to campus?	6
17. NEW When will International students, outside of South Africa be allowed back onto campus?	6
18. NEW Who is eligible to apply for a permit to travel?	6

B. REGISTRATION AND PRE-REGISTRATION

19. What is pre-registration?	6
20. What documents are required for pre-registration?	6
21. I am in South Africa, how do I pre-register during lockdown?	6
22. I received an offer to study; however, I am not able to travel to South Africa as I am from a high- risk country. I need to register, what do I do?	7
23. I am conducting my research in my home country and not required to be in South Africa; how can I pre-register and register?	7
24. I am in South Africa, my visa expired. Can I pre-register and register?	7

C. MEDICAL AID COVER

25. I have left South Africa because of COVID-19. Can I get a refund on my medical aid from Momentum Health?	8
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Sources: [Government Gazette No. 43414 Vol 652 Department of Higher Education And Training](#) and
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A. VISA APPLICATIONS

1. I am still in South Africa and my visa has expired. What should I do?

Holders of temporary residence visas which expired from 15 February 2020, who did not renew their visas before the lockdown, will not be declared illegal or prohibited persons. During the lockdown, the Department of Home Affairs is not receiving or adjudicating applications for visas and for permanent residence permits. Foreign nationals whose visas expired after* 15 February 2020 may reapply for their respective visas or relevant visa exemptions while in the Republic of South Africa, as soon as we arrive at a lockdown level at which such activities are allowed. They will not be required to apply for authorisation to remain in the country (Good Cause/ Form 20). You will need to apply through the Visa Facilitation Service once the restrictions are lifted and their offices are re-open. You will need to fulfil the application requirements to renew your visa.

*If your visa expired before 15 February 2020, please email fiona.erispe@uct.ac.za for more information. This will be dealt with on a case by case basis [NB! Please use the subject line: "My visa has expired before 15 Feb 2020"]

Regularly check Visa Facilitation Service [for updates on operations](#).

2. My study visa is expiring; how do I apply for a renewal of my visa?

Visa renewals cannot be applied for during the current level* of lockdown in South Africa, during which the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and the Visa Facilitation Service (VFS) are closed. Holders of temporary residence visas which expired after mid-February 2020 will not be declared illegal or prohibited persons. If your visa has expired after 15 February 2020, and you are still in South Africa, you may reapply for your respective visa or relevant visa exemption as soon as we arrive at a lockdown level at which such activities are allowed.

This temporary measure will remain valid until 31 July 2020 and applies only to foreign nationals who have been legally admitted into the Republic of South Africa. *It's not clear yet at what level these services will be reopened.

3. If my current visa is expiring or has expired, will I face any penalty for the late renewal of my visa?

If you hold a temporary residence visa that expired after 15 February 2020, and did not renew your visa before the lockdown, you will not be declared an illegal or prohibited person. You may re-apply for your respective visa or relevant visa exemption while in South Africa, immediately after the lockdown (or as soon as we arrive at a lockdown level at which such activities are allowed) has been lifted and will not face any penalty, provided you apply for your visa renewal as soon as possible after the lockdown period. Usually when someone applies to renew their visa after their current visa has expired, they first need to apply for a Form 20 concession to renew their visa because their existing visa has already expired. However, this process is waived, and you do not need to go through the Form 20 process, a concession that is valid until 31 July 2020.

4. I received an offer to study, how do I receive a letter of undertaking to apply for a study visa?

The letter of undertaking is system generated and is released after the conditional/firm offer is sent from the faculty office to which you applied for a study place.



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We advise that you check your email (including the spam/junk folder) for the study offer and letter of undertaking: The letter of undertaking will be sent from noreply@uct.ac.za and the subject header is Letter of Undertaking for Visa.

The body of the email communication guides you with information on the visa application, tuition fees, medical aid, housing and relevant term dates. The letter of undertaking will be attached to this email, and will be coded **UCTB84.pdf**

5. I have received a study offer but have not received the automated letter of undertaking to apply for a study visa. What do I do?

Email iapo@uct.ac.za with the subject header Letter of Undertaking. Provide the following in your email:

1. study offer letter from the UCT faculty office
2. a copy of your passport bio page
3. full name(s) as it appears in your passport
4. surname as it appears in your passport
5. student number
6. programme name
7. programme duration
8. start and end date of programme
9. city, country of application
10. confirmation of which visa type you are applying for

Note: your request for a letter will take 3-5 working days to be processed. Thank you for your patience.

6. I applied for my visa renewal and my appointment to submit my documents was during the lockdown period; what do I do?

If your visa expired after 15 February 2020 and you had an appointment in South Africa to renew your visa through the Visa Facilitation Service that fell within the lockdown period, you should reschedule your appointment to the soonest available date after the lockdown has been lifted and the VFS re - opens for bookings.

7. I submitted my visa renewal application before the lockdown, but my application is still pending; will I be allowed to stay in South Africa while waiting?

If you submitted your visa renewal application in South Africa before the lockdown and it has now expired, but your visa renewal application is still pending, you will be allowed to work, study or conduct business after the lockdown (or as soon as we arrive at a lockdown level at which such activities are allowed) while waiting for the outcome of your visa renewal application.

8. I am from a country on the COVID-19 high-risk list and I have been accepted to study at UCT; can I obtain a visa to travel to South Africa?

Our borders are currently closed for travel to South Africa. Visas issued to nationals of high -risk countries who were outside South Africa as of 15 March 2020 were revoked, in line with the directions issued by the department in terms of the Disaster Management Act 2002. Unfortunately, these visas remain revoked. When we reach the lockdown level when these services have resumed and when borders open, you would have to submit a new application for a visa.

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9. I am in South Africa on a Lesotho Special Permit which has expired; what do I do?

A Lesotho Special Permit lawfully issued in terms of section 31(2)(b) of the Immigration Act, 2002 (Act No. 13 of 2002) which has expired *is deemed to have been extended* up to and including 31 July 2020.

10. I am an asylum seeker or have refugee status and my permit has expired, what do I do?

An asylum seeker permits lawfully issued in terms of section 22 of the Refugees Act, 1998 (Act No. 130 of 1998) and a refugee status granted in terms of section 24 of the Refugees Act, 1998, which expired from 15 March 2020, or is to expire or which status *is deemed to have been extended* up to and including 31 July 2020.

11. Will I face any penalties or be deemed undesirable if I travel home on an expired visa (once it's officially permitted to do so)?

A person whose visa has expired from 15 March 2020 and has remained in the Republic during the period of the national state of *disaster will not be declared an undesirable person* in terms of the Immigration Act, 2002 upon leaving the Republic during the period of the national state of disaster up to and including 31 July 2020. Any declaration of undesirability that has been issued to any person who departed the Republic on or after 15 March 2020 is hereby set aside.

12. Will I face any penalties or be deemed undesirable if I travel home on an expired visa (once it's officially permitted to do so)?

Those who opt to return to their countries of origin or residence after the lockdown instead of renewing their visa in the Republic of South Africa will not be declared undesirable on departure.

13. I am in South Africa on a visitor's visa as I had to meet with my supervisor. My visitor's visa is expiring soon and I'm not able to leave as my country's border has closed – what do I do?

You can stay in South Africa during this period of lockdown. As soon as we arrive at a lockdown level at which such activities are allowed, you may either apply to renew your visa for a further 3 months or return to your country of origin or residence. Those who opt to return to their countries of origin or residence after the lockdown instead of renewing their visa in South Africa, will not be declared undesirable on departure.

14. I am on a work visa registered for part time studies. I want to change to a study visa: what is the process?

An application for change of visa status or conditions is not allowed. To apply for a different visa category, you will be required to travel back home after the lockdown period (or as soon as we arrive at a lockdown level at which such activities are allowed) and submit your visa application from your home country.

15. I have been studying at a different institution in South Africa. I received an offer for UCT and need to change my visa so that it is endorsed for study at UCT. What do I do?

An application for change of visa conditions is not allowed. This means no student may be admitted to study at any institution other than the one for which they were issued a visa. You cannot be endorsed for study at UCT.

16. I am International student, I returned to my home country before lockdown, how do I get a letter / permit to return to campus?

There is no authorization or permit that currently allows university students to travel from across the border or internationally into South Africa as our borders remain closed.

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17. When will International students, outside of South Africa be allowed back onto campus?

Referencing the Government Gazette [Department Of Higher Education And Training- Risk adjusted strategy for the return of students to campuses/ delivery sites for teaching and learning...Pages 7-8](#)

International students who returned to their home countries during the lockdown will only be permitted to return to campuses when Level 1 of the strategy is announced. These international students will be supported through remote learning support until they return. Tailored catch up plans will be implemented when they return.

Page 9 of the document states – under Level 1 International students who were residing outside of the country during the lockdown period may return (provided that international travel is permitted).

18. Who is eligible to apply for a permit to travel and what is the process?

The issuing of permits to travel is ONLY between Provinces within South Africa. If you have received an offer to return, this Permit is completed and stamped by the authorised person at the university who issued the invitation to return.

B. REGISTRATION & PRE-REGISTRATION

19. What is pre-registration?

Pre-registration is a fee and visa clearance process that takes place in person. All international students and researchers registered at UCT must be pre -registered prior to registration.

20. What documents are required for pre-registration?

You will need the following:

1. passport containing valid permit for studies at UCT (i.e. study visa) and entry stamp (received at the port of entry upon arrival)
2. proof of South African medical aid cover (the medical aid must be registered with the Council of South African Medical Schemes). The duration of cover must be for the full year of study (i.e. until 31 December 2020). This requirement is specific for holders of study visas.
3. proof of payment of fees or sponsorship
4. photocopies of all the above.

21. I am in South Africa, how do I pre-register during lockdown?

We will facilitate remote pre-registration during the lockdown period. Pre-registration is a visa and fee clearance process that must be completed prior to registration. Only once both visa and fee clearance holds are lifted from your student profile, will you be able to register. For assistance with pre-registration, please provide us with the following:

For visa clearance, write to prereg@uct.ac.za with original certified copies of the following:

1. Passport bio page
2. Visa page
3. Proof of medical aid from a South African medical aid scheme – if you are a holder of a study visa
4. Confirmation from your UCT faculty office that they will process the remote registration, once you have been pre-registered

For fees clearance, write to iapo-finance@uct.ac.za with proof of payment of bursary/ award letter. You will be notified once you have been pre-registered and cleared for registration.



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Note: As soon as we arrive at a lockdown level at which such activities are allowed, you will be required to bring your actual passport containing your visa to the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO) for verification and capturing. IAPO is situated on level 3 in the Masingene Building on Middle Campus, Cross Campus Road, Rondebosch, Cape Town.

22. I received an offer to study; however, I am not able to travel to South Africa as I am from a high-risk country. I need to register, what do I do?

As an international student/researcher, in order to be registered, you need to pre-register first. This is a visa and fee clearance process which must be completed prior to registration. Only once both visa and fee clearance holds are lifted from your student profile, will you be able to register. For help with pre-registration, you need to obtain visa and fees clearance:

For visa clearance, write to prereg@uct.ac.za with original certified copies of the following:

1. passport bio page
2. visa page
3. proof of medical aid from a South African medical aid scheme – if you are a holder of a study visa
4. confirmation from your UCT faculty office that they will process the remote registration, once you have been pre-registered

For fees clearance, write to iapo-finance@uct.ac.za with proof of payment of bursary/award letter or the proof of payment receipt issued by the bank.

You will be notified once you have been pre-registered and cleared for registration.

Note: Once the travel bans related to the COVID-19 pandemic have lifted, and you can travel to South Africa, you will be required to bring your actual passport containing your visa to the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO) for verification and capturing. IAPO is situated on level 3 in the Masingene Building on Middle Campus, Cross Campus Road, Rondebosch, Cape Town.

23. I am conducting my research in my home country and not required to be in South Africa; how can I pre-register and register?

We can facilitate remote pre-registration. Pre-registration is a visa and fee clearance process that must be completed before registration. If you are not completing your studies in South Africa in 2020, you are not required to have a study visa.

For pre-registration, write to prereg@uct.ac.za with the following:

1. passport bio page -
2. letter from your academic department and/or supervisor (on a letterhead), confirming that you will be completing your studies outside of South Africa. The letter should include your full name(s) and surname; student number; programme information and duration of studies
3. proof of fee payment

You will be notified once you have been pre-registered and cleared for registration.

24. I am in South Africa, my visa expired. Can I pre-register and register?

All visas and Permits that expired after February 15 are considered valid. You will be permitted to pre-register and register if your visa expired after 15 Feb 2020. You will be expected to meet all other pre-registration requirements. You will be expected to renew your visa immediately once the Department announces that

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they are open to receive applications and provide proof to IAPO of the application. See question 18 for the pre-registration requirements.

C. MEDICAL AID COVER

25. I have left South Africa because of COVID-19. Can I get a refund on my medical aid from Momentum Health?

Full-degree students who have returned temporarily to their home countries because of the pandemic will not be eligible for a refund for the period they are out of the country. Medical aid schemes for students are structured to run over the duration of the study visa and residence in South Africa, rather than being products that can be switched on and off for short periods of time. You will be covered by your medical aid scheme for emergency cover for 90 days while out of South Africa. Further information can be found [here](#) (select Lifestyle benefits for more detail).