

MEDIA RELEASE

COVID-19: PSA condemns University of Venda's decision to implement mandatory vaccination policy in 2022

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EMBARGO None

Enquiries communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) condemns the decision by of the University of Venda to implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy in 2022 whereby students and employees who are not vaccinated will not be allowed on campus from 1 January 2022.

This 'no vaccination certificate, no entry' regulation to force students and employees to vaccinate violates their constitutional rights to fair labour practice and the right to education. It is a shame that in a country that prides itself in democracy and freedom, public entities are acting in a manner that infringes on the rights of its citizens. Whilst the PSA acknowledges the impact of the pandemic, the Union equally values the rights of individuals not to vaccinate for a variety of reasons, including concerns about side effects of the vaccine.

History has shown that the coercion of people does not yield good results and it forces people to react when they feel oppressed by those in power. The PSA is thus concerned that this decision may result in unrest that will impact on the academic year and could fuel more infections owing to congestion.

The PSA encourages education and awareness to allow for informed decisions. In a democratic country, until legislation is amended to reflect the majority choice, the PSA will ensure that its members rights are protected.

The PSA respects the Constitution and legislation governing employment in the public sector and regards the University's decision as misplaced. The PSA, as representative Union if University employees, thus calls on the University of Venda to reconsider this decision. The Minister of Higher Education is furthermore requested to intervene as a matter of urgency to prevent the ripple effects that such an unconstitutional decision may have.

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