First Things First is an HIV counselling and testing campaign offered at higher education and training institutions.

Your institution may already offer routine HIV counselling and testing services. The First Things First campaign supplements these services, uniting tens of thousands of students and staff across the country to reject the stigma of HIV and test to know their status.

To know your status is the basis for caring for yourself, your loved ones, and the broader community. It is a necessary step towards treatment, care and support and preventing new infections.

To test HIV negative calls for behaviour to stay negative by taking care against HIV risk. Studies of our institutions show that this may include unprotected sex and drug and alcohol abuse. People who use illegal substances are at a greater risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV, while heavy drinking is associated with decreased condom use.

To test HIV positive calls for positive prevention measures to protect oneself further and others, and to be enrolled in treatment, care and support programmes.

All students and staff may volunteer to be tested. Men in particular are encouraged to come forward to test. Of the 190,000 students who tested during our “First Things First” programme last year, only 32% were men. This needs to change. Take responsibility to know your status.

The test is a quick finger-prick blood test and involves pre-test and post-test counselling by qualified counsellors. The results of the test are strictly confidential. Everyone who tests positive will be referred to on- or off-campus treatment, care and support services.

First Things First. Take responsibility to know your status. For the first time and again.
Why should you raise your finger?

IT’S PAINLESS
Just a finger prick.

IT’S CONFIDENTIAL
Only you and your healthcare worker know your status.

FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF
All students and staff may raise their finger and volunteer to test.

COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT
Qualified personnel support and counsel you before and after the test.

NO COST
The test is free and can prevent cost to the health and well-being of you and your loved ones.

First Things First is an HIV and General Health and Wellness testing programme, implemented by your institution with the support of the HEAIDS programme, the Department of Higher Education and Training and the Department of Health.