

Information on Teaching in the 2021/22 Winter Semester (4)

Dear colleagues,

The new regulations on infection prevention for Bavarian universities are valid from 24 November. These include, for example, the 2G certificate for students in in-person courses (access only for vaccinated and recovered persons). In the period since the new regulations were announced, it has been possible to clarify many, although unfortunately not all, important relevant questions in intensive exchange with the Ministry of Science and the Arts. I can therefore now explain further procedures to you based on the current status. However, we can likely expect modifications and amendments in the very near future.

In-person courses, hybrid and online formats:

Given the current situation, a significant reduction in in-person teaching is unavoidable. Particularly courses with higher numbers of participants – above all larger to very large lectures – will no longer be held on site. At the same time, it is important to us to consult with the Bavarian universities as a whole and with the Ministry of Science as well as our university's "Teaching During Corona" task force (*Taskforce "Lehre in Corona-Zeiten"*) in order to maintain a certain leeway for the continuation of in-person or hybrid teaching with small groups up to a 7-day incidence rate of 1,000 for the city of Bamberg. This particularly pertains to practical and artistic courses that require special laboratory or work spaces at the university. Therefore, on behalf of the University Executive Board, I would like to ask you to carefully review (both independently and in exchange with your students) where you can switch your courses completely to an online format and where in-person teaching is indispensable. Please also keep in mind the special support needs of your students. When the local 7-day incidence rate exceeds 1,000, teaching must be completely converted to online formats. I would also like to pass on to you the request of the task force's student representatives that students who are only involved in virtual studies should not be overlooked by all of us and that teachers should remain approachable even in online teaching.

UnivIS: room reservations and course formats:

In UnivIS, your courses are still categorised as "Online", "Hybrid" oder "Präsenz". I would ask you to keep this categorisation up to date at all times. Please also update the format if you decide during the semester to switch a course to a different format for the remaining weeks. If you plan to offer your courses online only temporarily and will possibly return to an in-person format, please select "Hybrid". This also applies to the computer labs. Information on the creation of PC labs is available at www.uni-bamberg.de/rz/dienstleistungen/pc-pools/. Keeping the room reservation in UnivIS up to date is particularly important at this time, not least because it gives us an insight into the current status of possible in-person teaching when needed. On the weekend of 4/5 December 2021, all courses that are not designated as in-person or hybrid courses will be removed from the room schedules so that these can be kept up to date. The previous room reservation will be saved in UnivIS for the coming semester.

Student access to in-person courses:

Beginning Wednesday, 24 November 2021, only students who meet the 2G criterion will have access to in-person teaching. Unvaccinated or unrecovered students will be excluded. The same applies to international students who have been vaccinated with a vaccine that is not approved in the EU. However, students with a medical condition that precludes vaccination can continue to take advantage of the exemptions previously and currently in place. For students without access to in-person courses, digital alternatives are to be provided (in hybrid or also different asynchronous formats, depending on the possibility). Webcams, tripods and microphones can still be borrowed from the IT support team (Ms Schwiderski) for the implementation of hybrid teaching.

Access to libraries and archives:

The 2G rule applies for access to libraries and archives.

Examinations:

From now on, the 3G+ rule applies to participation in examinations. This means that in addition to vaccinated and recovered persons, only persons in possession of valid proof of a PCR test will be allowed to take part.

Corona legislation:

The Ministry has announced a bill to extend the Corona legislation that has been in effect for the last three semesters. This would allow the current 2021/22 winter semester not to count towards the standard programme durations and not to count towards BAföG deadlines.

Enforcement of “G regulations”:

It is not yet known how the “G characteristics” (vaccinated, recovered or tested status) will be monitored at the universities in the future, i.e. whether it will still be possible to carry out structured random checks. In any case, the checks of students by instructors will become increasingly important in the future. In concrete terms, this means that instructors must always reliably check the participants of their in-person courses for compliance with the G requirements.

Compliance with mask requirements:

Once again, I would like to draw your attention to our university's regulations stipulating that masks appropriate to current infection situations (currently FFP2 masks) must always be worn at all times during courses. This applies regardless of the room occupancy rate. Exceptions are only possible for persons teaching or giving presentations in compliance with the minimum distancing requirements and in individual cases specifically arranged with the university's safety officer, Ms. Ziegmann.

Online study period before Christmas:

Bavarian universities are currently coordinating a one to two-week online study period before Christmas. This would enable students to reduce contacts before visiting their families and would allow them to make travel plans more flexibly. I will inform you as soon as details on this decision are available. A possible exception could be that only practical and artistic courses that require special laboratory or work spaces at the universities would be approved for in-person sessions during this time.

I would like to conclude with some good news on a topic unrelated to the Corona issue, the successful establishment of an anti-discrimination office:

Anti-discrimination Office for university students and staff:

In July 2021, an anti-discrimination office dedicated to promoting a benevolent and cooperative working and study climate was established at the University of Bamberg. It is open to *all* university members and provides counselling and support in cases of discrimination, disadvantage and harassment – e.g. on the grounds of gender, age, sexual orientation, religion/faith, origin or disability.

The Anti-discrimination Office is located at the Erba in room WE5/03.083 and is barrier-free. The current contact person is Cindy Stroemel-Scheder (Email: antidiskriminierung@uni-bamberg.de; Telephone: 0951/863-1531). The Anti-discrimination Office is open on Thursdays from 2 to 4 p.m., on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and by appointment. You are welcome to make individual appointments. All conversations are strictly confidential and subject to professional secrecy. For more information on the topic of anti-discrimination at the University of Bamberg, please visit <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/antidiskriminierung/>.

In this particularly difficult situation for our university and our entire society, I thank you once again for the various ways you have shown your support. Without your cooperation, good solutions for the many challenges we face would be all but impossible. Above all, I wish you and your families continued good health.

Sincerely,

Stefan Hörmann