

University of Bonn - 53012 Bonn, Germany

To all
Deans and vice deans
managing directors
and institutes
professors and employees
at the University of Bonn

The Rector

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Bonn, 1/25/2021

Circular No. 12/2021
On-site examinations and courses during lockdown
(1/25/2021 – 2/14/2021)

Dear Sir or Madam,

This Circular provides information on the updated regulations for university operations during lockdown.

To protect students and instructors, the North Rhine-Westphalia Ordinance on Protection Against New Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 Infections (CoronaSchVO NRW) of 1/7/2021 as amended on 01/25/2021 and the General Decree by the North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs (GD) of 1/22/2021 impose the following provisions for **on-site courses and on-site examinations** during the period ending 2/14/2021. Please note that any courses or examinations to be held on-site based on these extraordinary regulations must be approved by the Rectorate. **Please send such requests via the responsible dean's office to the Provost at kanzler@uni-bonn.de.**

Courses, preparatory measures for examinations and examinations must still be held digitally if possible. The university will provide support to the extent possible for any that nevertheless have to be held on-site. **Another circular will be issued in timely fashion to inform you of the university regulations applicable starting 2/14/2021.**



On-site courses

- **On-site courses** are **only** permitted under **certain conditions** during the period indicated. Holding a course on-site is permitted if **not holding the course on-site would create serious disadvantages for the students, or it cannot be postponed.**
- Based on the reasoning in the GD, **serious disadvantages** can be assumed, in particular, for courses that must be held on-site because they rely on **special facilities or equipment or other general requirements** (e.g. laboratories, workspaces, dissection or treatment courses in the field of medicine) **and postponing the course could lengthen the period of study by a semester.** When deciding whether a postponement is possible, the usual procedures must be examined and adjusted if necessary to satisfy the hygiene and infection protection requirements. This includes, in particular, checking whether group sizes can be reduced and whether all available rooms are being used. Rooms available during semester breaks must also be taken into account. Making adjustments to procedures, however, assumes that curriculum postponements and organizational adjustments are also made.

This means the lecturer must check and indicate the following in writing in consultation with the dean of studies before a course:

- **Can the course be held digitally without resulting in serious disadvantages for the students?**
- **What room capacities are available for postponing the course?**
- **Can the course also be held during a semester break or in a following semester?**
- **Does postponing considerably lengthen the period of study, i.e. by an entire semester?**
- **Does the delay cause the registration deadline for a state examination that is only offered once a semester or once a year to be missed?**

On-site examinations and preparatory measures for examinations

Examinations and preparatory measures for examinations may only be held on-site if there are **legal or practical reasons why deferral** would be **unreasonable** for the student.

- With regard to **postponement** it must be determined whether the examination or preparatory measures cannot be completed on-site on time or during the current semester due to administrative reasons (related to staff or rooms).
- Deferral could be **unreasonable**, in particular, if it considerably lengthened the period of study.
- Based on the reasoning in the GD, permissible exceptions for **preparatory measures** can include thesis-related lab work that has already started if interrupting the work could lengthen the period of study or would cause unreasonable hardship. **Unreasonable hardship** would exist if lab work cannot be interrupted without losing results that have already been achieved, that is, if lab work would have to be fully repeated from the start after an interruption.

The following must be checked and indicated in writing for examinations:

- **Can the examination be held online? If not so, why not?**
- **Can the examination be postponed to a later date within the lecture period of winter semester 2020/21? Do the examination regulations for the examination stipulate a second examination date in winter semester 2020/21? Would postponement of the first examination date to a later time in winter semester 2020/21 negatively impact the schedule for the second examination date?**

Factors relevant when assessing postponement are administrative reasons such as necessary correction phases for the first examination date, registration deadlines for the second examination date and necessary preparation time for students between a failed examination and a resit. Equally, availability of rooms and staff are to be considered when deciding on postponement of an examination to a later point in the current winter semester 2020/21.

- Does postponing to a date in the current semester considerably lengthen the period of study, i.e. by an entire semester?
- Does the delay cause the registration deadline for a state examination that is only offered once a semester or once a year to be missed?

The following must be checked and indicated in writing for preparatory measures:

- Can the preparatory measure for an examination be held online? If not so, why not? Are special precautions necessary to carry out the preparatory measure for an examination (e.g. room equipment, labs, etc.)?
- Has the preparatory measure for an examination already started?
- Would interrupting the measure cause unreasonable hardship because the examination procedure has started and would have to be interrupted and practical work (e.g. lab work) that has already been performed would have to be repeated?

It must be ensured that all on-site courses and examinations as well as on-site preparatory measures take place in accordance with the coronavirus safety provisions and **hygiene and protection concepts** that have been prepared.

Approvals by the Rectorate for holding on-site courses and on-site preparatory measures for examinations until including 01/31/2021 will now automatically be extended until the end of the semester. It is not necessary to request an extension of the approval for holding on-site courses and on-site preparatory measures for examinations for winter semester 2020/21.

Further circulars regarding **wearing of masks/testing** and **remote work/childcare** are currently being prepared.

Sincerely,

Signed Professor Dr. Dr. h. c. Michael Hoch
Rector

Holger Gottschalk
Provost

