



## News from the UP – Easter-Update - Unilist e-mail from Prof. Oliver Günther – 08 April 2020

Dear university members,

The current emergency on-site operations (partial lockdown) have proven effective and will be maintained until further notice. You still have access to our premises, but only if urgent tasks in research, teaching and administration require it AND the hygiene and distance regulations can be observed and therefore no additional health hazard is to be expected. Our sports facilities will remain closed for the time being, as team sports in particular are, of course, not possible at the moment. The examinations for the 2019/20 winter semester have been largely carried out as far as possible, in some cases in new formats. Should you still have exams pending, please contact the teaching staff responsible to discuss further procedures.

The summer semester 2020 will take place, initially with the exclusive use of formats that do not require physical presence, i.e. digital teaching and learning methods. Dear students, please take advantage of this offer! And use this strange time without distractions for your own academic work, for exam preparation and for writing your term papers and final theses. Even though the summer semester is taking place, federal legislation is currently in preparation to extend the relevant deadlines according to WissZeitVG (Fixed-Term Employment in Science Act), BAFÖG (Federal Training Assistance Act) etc. by one semester. A semester on leave of absence is therefore not necessarily advisable; if necessary, please seek advice.

The use of digital teaching and learning platforms undoubtedly raises questions regarding data protection and security. Tools such as Whatsapp, Zoom, Webex or Skype are widely used, but in many respects they do not meet our personal expectations when it comes to the protection of our privacy. However, we would ask you to be pragmatic for the time being. For the winter semester, the university is currently preparing various software procurements for which privacy and security will be important selection criteria.

Dear students, if you find yourself in existential financial difficulties, please contact the social counseling service of the Studentenwerk (Potsdam's Association for Student Affairs). Since their resources are of course limited, the Deutsches Studentenwerk (German National Association for Student Affairs - DSW) is currently working with federal policymakers on finding more comprehensive solutions, such as a social fund for students.

In case of psychological problems, a whole range of counselling services can be recommended, even though this list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- the Psychosocial Counseling Service of the Studentenwerk
- the university group Nightline Potsdam
- the emergency hotline of the Jewish Community as well as the offers of the Jewish Student Community Hillel (Netanel Olhoeft: +49 152 3366 9315, German/English/Hebrew); Martin Kujawa: + 49 171 944 3098, German/Polish)
- the pastoral counselor of the Catholic Student Community Potsdam, Ms. Eva Wawrzyniak: +49 157 73024379, daily 10am - 11pm, German/English/French

The renowned international research association DynaMORE studies the psychological mechanisms underlying the management of crises such as the current one. DynaMORE is still looking for further participants for its corona-related survey DynaCORE (completely anonymous, approx. 15 minutes): [www.bit.ly/DynaCORE-C](http://www.bit.ly/DynaCORE-C).

And finally we would also like to mention the student volunteering initiative "Studentisches Ehrenamt" of the Association of German Student Initiatives (Verband Deutscher Studierendeninitiativen e. V. – VDSI). If you, dear students, are interested in volunteering in the context of the corona crisis, please contact the VDSI, +49 157 70256967, [www.vdsi.org](http://www.vdsi.org).

Happy Easter holidays to you and your loved ones despite the adverse circumstances!

Kind regards,  
Olivier Günther