

Summer semester – latest news – Uni-list-e-mail from Prof. Andreas Musil, 23 April 2020

Dear colleagues, dear students,

Many decisions have been made in the last few days that also significantly affect teaching and studies. On the federal level, there is the [joint federal government-Länder resolution](#) from April 15, 2020; on the state level, there is the ensuing [SARS-CoV-2 containment decree](#) from April 17, 2020; and on the university level, we have the continuation of the emergency on-site operations until and including May 3, 2020. I would therefore like to inform you about the central aspects resulting from this, knowing that many of them will also only have a short half-life. That is why I would like to ask you to continue consulting the [FAQ website](#) on a regular basis.

On-site examinations and practical courses

The federal government and the Länder have agreed that, subject to special hygiene and protective measures, universities are once again authorized to conduct on-site examinations and offer practical courses requiring special laboratories and work areas. Starting on May 4, 2020, the University of Potsdam will offer both. The time until then will be used to establish the necessary framework conditions. Neither examinations nor practical courses may take place at the University of Potsdam without a room evaluation and consultation with the Occupational Safety division/BSO. We will inform you as soon as possible about the specific procedures to be followed.

Examinations that were planned in an online format can, of course, take place as scheduled.

On-site teaching

Until further notice, all courses will take place online. Please use the offers for online teaching including didactic documents, webinars, etc. at: <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/zfq/lehre-und-medien/online-lehre-2020>.

As mentioned above, the only exceptions to online teaching are some laboratory courses and music courses, if a mutually agreed evaluation of the premises has been conducted. On-site teaching for other courses is not yet possible. Practical sports events are still expressly excluded from on-site teaching. Excursions, practical field work courses etc. may not be carried out until further notice if they are to take place in the public space and thus fall under the rules established in the containment decree referring to the public space.

Practical school training and practical semesters

Due to school closures, practical school training in the 2020 summer semester will take a significantly different course than regularly scheduled. A large-scale return to normal operations is not yet in sight. The supervising teaching staff will decide whether alternative activities (e.g. in online teaching or in schools that offer emergency services for key workers) will be recognized. The Center for Teacher Training and Educational Research ZeLB offers further information on the current procedures here: <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/zelb/zelb-entdecken/aktuelles>.

Libraries

The joint federal government-Länder resolution also makes provisions for the re-opening of libraries (provided that hygiene requirements can be met). We are currently coordinating things with libraries in Berlin. As soon as we know when libraries can be re-opened, we will inform you.

Zoom and other campus licenses

By now, [the campus license for Zoom](https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/zim/angebote-loesungen/software-campuslizenzen) (video conferencing) has been made available. This means that courses can now take place in a synchronous manner. However, the advantages of asynchronous teaching should also be considered. Therefore, additional Camtasia licenses have been purchased (video creation). In the near future there will also be a campus license for Microsoft Office 365. For further information on existing campus licenses, please visit: <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/zim/angebote-loesungen/software-campuslizenzen>

Recognition of the summer semester

As a matter of principle, students who are not able to obtain all their credits due to the corona pandemic should not be disadvantaged with regard to regulations that, for example, refer to a standard period of study. However, some of these decisions have to be taken on a nationwide basis or regulated in federal laws, which are still under discussion. The Ministries of Justice are currently seeking a coordinated approach to the State Examinations in Law.

Other decisions can be made directly at the University of Potsdam. This applies, for example, to the regulations concerning the time limits for examinations, according to which students who have reached twice the standard period of study lose the right to take the examination and are invited to attend departmental advising sessions. In this matter, the decision has been made that the summer semester will not be counted when determining the time limits for examinations. The specific implementation of the decision is still under review. The specifications will then be published on the [FAQ website](#). Please feel free to direct any questions in this regard to the Director of the Division of Student Affairs, Dr. Sabina Bieber.

Application for master's degree programs for the winter semester 2020/21

The application process for Master's degree programs has started as planned on April 1, 2020 via uni-assist. Currently, we are considering how to react to the fact that, due to the pandemic, not all required credits and documents may be available before the given application deadline. As soon as more details become available on this issue, the [FAQ website](#) will be updated.

Evaluation of courses taught

In this unusual summer semester, the evaluation of teaching is to play a particularly important role. Therefore, a new formative evaluation procedure is currently being developed in addition to SET.UP. This can be used as an alternative or supplement to SET.UP. On the one hand, it provides teaching staff with the opportunity to ask for student feedback and expectations right at the beginning of the semester. On the other hand, it is also possible to obtain some intermediate feedback in the further course of the semester. You can learn more about this in a [webinar](#).

I would ask you not to let the small steps we can currently take towards a gradual restoration of normalcy become too big too quickly. If they do, these concessions may well be withdrawn even faster. Let us therefore gradually find our way back to the university life we are accustomed to – together, calmly, considerately and patiently.

Kind regards,

Prof. Dr. Andreas Musil
Vice President for Teaching and Studies