

Hygiene/Safety Regulations for University Operations

(- Last updated: April 4, 2022 -)

A sense of relaxation in dealing with and fighting against COVID-19 has become palpable. Nevertheless, the pandemic is not over. Special hygiene and distance regulations continue to apply for your workstations at the university, the place of work, and the working hours.

The following regulations apply to all areas and departments of the university and to all persons who are at the university, e.g. also to guests who visit the library. For further up-to-date information on individual issues, please refer to the university's website: <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/presse/press/latest-news/coronavirus>.

1) Hygiene Regulations

In general, a minimum distance of at least 1.5 meters must still be maintained for all activities without additional protective measures. If fixed seats are offered, the minimum distance can be reduced to 1 meter (exceptions for teaching operations, see below). When compliance is not possible in public spaces, at least medical-grade masks are to be worn.

Section 2 of the [current Corona-ArbSchV](#) (SARS Cov-2 Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance) lists basic protective measures for occupational infection protection; the basic protection also includes the wearing of masks, as this is an effective means of infection protection. Individual risk assessments, as required by Section 2 of the [Corona-ArbSchV](#), result in an obligation to wear masks in many settings anyway. Wearing a mask helps to create so-called intrinsic safety, that is, a safety that comes from within.

Necessary surgical/FFP2 masks are available to employees through the Occupational Safety Unit of the University of Potsdam.

Exceptions are only possible for work processes where this cannot be implemented (e.g. experiments in the laboratory for practical courses) with corresponding additional protective measures (use of personal protective equipment).

Furthermore, frequent hand washing and airing of the rooms is still required. Regular cleaning and disinfection of contact surfaces (handrails in the stairwells, door handles, toilet seats) is ensured by the HGP-UP in coordination with the cleaning companies. The respective notices with information for employees and students have been put up.

The use of disinfectant by our employees is still considered of a lesser priority than the protective measures mentioned above. Disinfectant will only be issued in consultation with the Occupational Safety Unit.

The general [hygiene rules and recommendations of the Robert Koch Institute](#) and the Federal Center for Health Education on the prevention of infections are still to be observed.

2) Teaching Operations

On-site, face-to-face **courses** are possible with a maximum number of attendees determined in accordance with the room capacity. There is a mask mandate in place for everyone; at least a medical mask, but we recommend an FFP2 mask. If the nature of the educational or (further) training measure makes it impossible to wear a mask, the mask mandate will not apply.

Practical sports courses in higher education may take place in compliance with the respective regulations of the sports facility.

Rooms must be entered and vacated in an orderly fashion and in compliance with the distance

regulations. The teaching staff members / persons in charge of the course are to give instructions to that end. If possible, a one-way system (separate entrance/exit) should be implemented.

For rooms in which windows can be opened, users are required to ensure that the room will be aired thoroughly for short periods at frequent intervals by opening the windows as wide as possible. Rooms should be aired out in this manner for 5 to 15 minutes as frequently as possible. Suggestions on ventilation times can be found in the [statement of the Commission for Indoor Air Hygiene at the German Environment Agency](#).

If outside temperatures permit, courses should be held (in whole or in part) with open windows. At the very least before and after a course, the room must be aired out for at least 10 minutes with both windows and doors wide open.

Rooms in which windows cannot be opened must have a ventilation system installed as a prerequisite for use. HGP-UP is responsible for ensuring that the necessary air change rates are met. The share of recirculated air is to be set to zero.

Mobile air cleaners can only be purchased in individual cases after a risk assessment based on the specific circumstances and are the exception. Further information can be found on an [information page on mobile air cleaners \(MLR\)](#) on the intranet.

Until further notice, the wearing of a medical mask is mandatory in all university buildings of the University of Potsdam. This also applies to lecture halls, seminar rooms (also during the courses), laboratories, libraries and computer labs.

Special arrangements (e.g. in the laboratory) are possible after a risk assessment has been carried out and must be reviewed by the Occupational Safety Unit. Due to the existing technical particularities for laboratory operations (in particular mechanical ventilation) or the associated hazards from chemicals, there may be special regulations with regard to the obligation to wear a respirator.

In preparative chemistry laboratories, the mask mandate can be waived if wearing a medical mask would cause additional laboratory-related dangers. This may be the case if personal protective equipment is negatively affected by the respirator.

Laboratories generally have an air exchange rate of eight times per hour and are therefore considered to be very well ventilated in terms of infection control. A fume hood is operated with a laminar air flow that retains vapors and aerosols or transports them away with the exhaust air. Air around the fume hood that might be contaminated with the virus will be sucked out thanks to a continued air flow. It is possible to dispense with the wearing of a respirator if minimum distances are observed in front of a fume hood. Persons in charge of supervision must wear an FFP2 mask (or equivalent) in order to be able to intervene quickly (averting danger).

3) Using Offices and Work Spaces

The applicable distance regulations of at least 1.5 meters are to be observed in offices and work spaces. The minimum sizes for workstations in accordance with Occupational Safety Rule 1.2 must be applied. It is of particular importance to air rooms at frequent intervals. Furthermore, where this is required due to the nature of the premises or work organization, technical and/or organizational measures are to be implemented to protect against infection, for example, physical barriers (sneeze guards) or the introduction of shifts by adjusting working hours or working from home.

The heads of the faculties, divisions, and institutions shall define appropriate guidelines for their area of responsibility.

The necessity of wearing a medical mask / FFP2 or equivalent mask arises analogously to point 2 on the basis of the [Corona-ArbSchV](#). The employer (management, heads of division,

executives) has to organize / provide these. The Occupational Safety Unit can help with regard to procurement.

If distance rules cannot be observed outdoors, a mask must also be worn in this situation.

The nature of the respirator must be such as to reduce the spread of transmissible droplet particles during coughing, sneezing, speaking or breathing. For optimal effectiveness, it is important that the face covering fits correctly. It must fit snugly over the mouth and nose and be changed when it becomes wet. You can find further information on this on the websites of the Occupational Safety Unit (Intranet).

- [What are FFP 2 masks?](#)
- [Directive on FFP 2 masks,](#)
- [Information leaflet on time limits for wearing face coverings,](#) and
- Information leaflet on [respiratory protection and prevention.](#)

Exceptions to the mask mandate (e.g., for persons with disabilities) are governed by the applicable ordinance on basic measures for infection protection.

4) Meetings and Study Groups

Where possible and appropriate, video conferencing systems should continue to be used for meetings.

On-site face-to-face meetings are to be conducted in accordance with the above-mentioned distance and hygiene regulations.

5) Using Sanitary Facilities

Regulations for offices and work spaces also apply to sanitary facilities.

6) Hallways/Building Access Areas

Longer periods spent in the hallways are to be avoided.

Please wear a surgical mask, FFP2 mask or equivalent in the corridors, hallways, elevators and stairwells of the University of Potsdam until further notice. Justifications for deviation from the mandatory wearing of a specified mask at the university are available in section 2) above. This also applies when entering or leaving lecture halls and seminar rooms. Elevators may only be used alone and while wearing a medical mask.

7) Public Access / Other Events

Public access is to be organized with infection protection in mind. One possible measure to be implemented is the definition of office hours or the use of fixed appointments. Advisory services can also be offered via telephone or e-mail or online. Appropriate physical barriers (acrylic glass screens) are provided in the relevant areas to protect employees that are in frequent contact with the public. Writing utensils etc. are not provided for public use, and as far as possible, paper brochures will not be handed out.

In entrance areas frequented by the public, barriers, e.g. stretch belt barriers, must be installed to prevent uncontrolled access. When installing barriers, the Occupational Safety Unit must be involved to address building code concerns, fire protection in particular.

The approval of external events in the broadest sense related to research/teaching, medicine, as well as ministry events at the university require case-by-case evaluations and decisions by the university management.

Internships and information events for groups of school students at the University of Potsdam are not possible until further notice. Internships that are part of teaching and research (e.g. in didactics) are exempt from this rule.

8) Work Equipment/Workstations

In general, work equipment and tools are only to be used by one individual. If this is not possible for organizational or other operational reasons, they must be cleaned or disinfected before being passed on or used by other persons. For the purpose of intermittent cleaning/disinfection, the employees are provided with appropriate cleaning and disinfectant products by the Occupational Safety Unit upon request.

9) Illness/Suspected Illness

Symptoms of the common cold must be assessed by a physician **before** going to your workplace at the university/ attending a course. If the symptoms are unclear and no incapacity for work has been ascertained, employees must work from their home office for the time being after consulting their supervisor. Both employees and students with the above-mentioned symptoms must adhere to the orientation guide for citizens by the Robert Koch Institute (see appendix to this concept).

Further information is available on the websites of the [Federal Ministry of Health](#).

10) Returning to the University after Traveling (on Holiday)

For those returning from what is known as risk areas (students and employees), the valid version of the Ordinance on Coronavirus Entry Regulations (CoronaEinreiseV) shall apply (see <https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/service/gesetze-und-verordnungen.html>).

Should university employees stay in a COVID-19 risk area, they must inform the head of their department of this fact before returning to their workplace. The heads of department and supervisors have the right to ask whether employees have been to a COVID 19 risk area.

In such cases, the current guidelines for dealing with returnees from COVID-19 risk areas as published on the UP website must also be observed.

11) Business Trips

In order to carry out and obtain approval for business trips, please observe the respective information or publications of the Division of Human Resources and Legal Affairs. Furthermore, the guidelines of the Robert Koch Institute with regard to the designation of risk areas published by the RKI shall apply. Business trips to areas of variants of concern as defined by the RKI will generally not be approved until further notice. Business trips to areas with travel warnings from the German Foreign Office are generally not eligible for approval.

12) Dining Halls/Cafeterias

The Studentenwerk Potsdam (Association for Student Affairs) provides information on access to dining halls and cafeterias and the regulations that apply there.

13) General Legal Provisions

The regulations of the Federal Government, the State of Brandenburg, and the City of Potsdam relating to the control and containment of the coronavirus shall apply in their respective versions. Student and employee representatives will be included within the framework of the applicable legal provisions.

14) Closing Provisions

The defined measures will be adapted to the current situation on a short-term basis.

Appendix: Orientation guidelines (tips on how to deal with suspected cases)

Potsdam, April 4, 2022

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