

Hygiene/Safety Regulations for University Operations

(- Last updated: December 14, 2020 -)

The instructional period of the winter semester 2020/2021 started on November 2, 2020. In preparation for this, the regulations for university operations during the coronavirus pandemic have been revised, new developments taken into account and updates implemented where necessary.

Special hygiene and distance regulations apply for your workstations at the university, the place of work and the working hours. The pandemic plan adopted by the Senate on March 18, 2020, continues to apply; however, there is currently no “crisis” as defined in Section 7. The following regulations are an interpretation and reading of the regulations in the Second Ordinance on Temporary Containment Measures Due to the SARS-CoV-2 Virus and COVID-19 in the State of Brandenburg, adopted by the state of Brandenburg on Nov. 30, 2020.

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 1.50 meters, preferably 2 meters, must still be maintained for all activities without additional protective measures. When compliance is not possible in public spaces, face coverings are to be worn. 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 rooms is required. Regular cleaning and disinfection of contact surfaces (handrails in the stairwells, door handles, toilet seats) is ensured by the HGP in coordination with the cleaning companies. The respective notices with information for employees and students have already been put up.

The use of disinfectant is still considered of a lesser priority than the protective measures mentioned above and 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 to be observed

2) Teaching Operations

Courses requiring on-site attendance can only be conducted in compliance with the permitted maximum number of participants for the respective room: <http://www.hgp-potsdam.de/SW/corona/gebinfo.htm>. Deviations from the proposed furniture arrangements may only be made upon request and with the approval of the Occupational Safety Unit (<https://www.hgp-potsdam.de/sw/>).

Practical sports courses in higher education may take place.

Rooms must be entered and vacated in an orderly fashion and in compliance with distance regulations. The respective teaching staff members are to give instructions to that end. If possible, a one-way system (separate entrance/exit) should be applied.

For rooms in which windows can be opened, users are required to ensure that the room will be ventilated 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.](#)

Longer periods spent in the hallways are to be avoided.

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. The HGP is responsible for ensuring that the necessary air change rates are met. The share of recirculated air is set to zero.

Cleaning between courses carried out by HGP cleaning staff will not be necessary if course participants are given the opportunity to disinfect their workstation/desk themselves. For this purpose, dispensers with disinfectant and disposable towels are available at the entrances. Attention will be drawn to this using appropriate signs and teaching staff members will also point this out at the beginning of a course.

Until further notice, the wearing of a face covering 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. (See Section 19 (1) of the Second Ordinance on Temporary Containment Measures Due to the SARS-CoV-2 Virus and COVID-19 in the State of Brandenburg of Nov. 30, 2020.)

Teaching staff are exempt from the mask requirement in the lecture hall or seminar room, provided that they teach at a fixed location and maintain a distance of 2.5 meters from the students. Section 20 of the Containment Ordinance is applicable in this context.

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.

Work in natural sciences laboratories may be conducted in compliance with the established rules regarding distance, hygiene and the wearing of masks. Due to the existing technical particularities (in particular mechanical ventilation) or the associated hazards from chemicals, there may be special regulations with regard to the obligation to wear a mask.

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

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 community mask if minimum distances are observed in front of a fume hood. Persons in charge of supervision must wear an FFP2 mask in order to be able to intervene quickly (averting danger) within a 1.5 m radius.

3) Using Offices and Work Spaces

The applicable distance regulations of 1.5 meters, preferably 2 meters, are to be observed in offices and work spaces. Space requirements for workstations are based on the ASR 1.2. Occupational Safety Rules. It is of particular importance to air rooms at frequent intervals (see 2., ventilation). 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. In larger departments this can be delegated to a higher level in the hierarchy.

Sneeze guards can be ordered as a “Kleinauftrag” (small order), the on-site carpentry workshop can create custom builds.

The legal basis for ensuring occupational safety is provided by the [SARS-CoV-2 occupational safety regulations](#) published on August 20, 2020. It regulates, among other things, space requirements for the joint use of rooms.

Outdoors, the distance rules must be observed, in which case it is not necessary to wear a mask.

The nature of the face covering must be such as to reduce the spread of transmissible droplet particles during coughing, sneezing, speaking or breathing, regardless of any labeling or certified category of protection. 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., persons with disabilities) are governed by the applicable containment/handling ordinance.

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. The maximum number of participants and furnishing plans must be adhered to: <http://www.hgp-potsdam.de/SW/corona/gebinfo.htm>.

Deviations from the proposed furniture arrangements may only be made upon request and with the approval of the Occupational Safety Unit (<https://www.hgp-potsdam.de/sw/>).

For meetings that are part of the usual and routine communication within working groups, chairs or departments and where contact details are therefore known, no further contact records need to be kept. For meetings that are not part of routine business and/or with external parties, the traceability of possible chains of infection must be ensured by the organizer through documentation on the meeting participants (first and last name as well as telephone number or e-mail address). Data collected for this purpose must be deleted or destroyed after four weeks.

The same applies to study groups. Students will receive written instructions on this when booking a room. Documentation of the participants (first and last name as well as telephone number or e-mail address) is to be carried out and guaranteed by the organizer.

5) Using Sanitary Facilities

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

6) Hallways/Building Access Areas

Please wear a face covering in the corridors, hallways, elevators and stairwells of the University of Potsdam until further notice. This also applies when entering or leaving

lecture halls and seminar rooms.
Elevators may only be used alone and while wearing a face covering.

7) Public Access to the University

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. Appropriate physical barriers (acrylic glass screens) are provided in the relevant areas to protect employees that are in frequent contact with the public. Pens etc. are not provided for public use, and as far as possible, paper brochures will not be handed out.

In the entrance to 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.

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.

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 a cold must be assessed by a physician **before** going to work or performing duties at the university workplace; if the symptoms are unclear and no incapacity for work has been ascertained, work must be carried out from the home office for the time being. Further information on how to deal with suspected cases and infections can be found on the UP website and in the appendix of this concept.

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

For those returning from risk areas (students and employees), the valid version of the quarantine ordinance shall apply (see <https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/service/gesetze-und-verordnungen.html>).

Students in need of advice affected by this can contact corona-studium@uni-potsdam.de.

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 Division 3. 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 high-risk areas or 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 can be adapted to the current situation on a short-term basis.

Attachments:

Guidance for employees of the University of Potsdam

Potsdam, December 15, 2020

President
Prof. O. Günther, Ph.D.

Chancellor
K. Gerlof