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| State Conference of the Rectors and Presidents of the Higher Education Institutions in Berlin  The Chairwoman  Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin The President Unter den Linden 6 10099 Berlin | BERLIN |

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Press Release

Joint press release by the Senate Chancellery for Higher Education and Research and the State Conference of the Rectors and Presidents of the Higher Education Institutions in Berlin (LKRP)

In-person teaching and learning resume: key parameters are agreed for the 2021/2022 winter semester at Berlin’s universities and colleges

The Senate Chancellery for Higher Education and Research and the Berlin universities and colleges have agreed on key parameters for the upcoming 2021/2022 winter semester. After three semesters chiefly in online mode, the Berlin universities and colleges are now preparing for a winter semester in which teaching and learning is to predominantly take place once again in person. Protection against infection is to be ensured by means of established hygiene measures and testing, by achieving the highest possible vaccination rate, and through appropriate contact tracing. Only those who have been vaccinated, have recovered from a past infection or can present a negative test result can take advantage of the offerings from the universities on site and gain access to their services. Similar to at other educational institutions, the aim is to abolish the minimum distance of 1.5 metres between people, while strictly adhering to these protective measures, in order to ensure that the required space for in-person teaching and studying is available. The winter semester will begin on 1st October 2021 for the universities of applied sciences and on 18th October 2021 for the universities and art colleges. Some of the private colleges and universities will start their winter semester earlier.

The Infection Protection Ordinance of the state of Berlin has already not prescribed any fundamental restrictions to in-person teaching since mid-June of 2021. In view of the low incidence levels, the wide availability of testing opportunities and additional vaccination offers for university and college members, the universities and colleges have already been able to implement initial steps towards opening up their institutions in the summer semester. By means of established hygiene and testing concepts as well as additional targeted vaccination campaigns for students at the universities and colleges and in student halls of residence, the foundations have been laid for in-person teaching and in-person exams to become the norm in the winter semester. As before, digital teaching offerings may also be required to support the usual range of in-person offerings.

The following principles have been agreed for operations at state, private and denominational universities and colleges in the 2021/2022 winter semester:

* Courses and examinations may take place in person provided that protection and hygiene rules are observed. Depending on the conditions on site, the universities and colleges may limit the number of participants.
* University libraries will be allowed to offer lending services as well as open workstations and computer labs.
* Only those who have been vaccinated, who have recovered from a past infection or who can provide evidence of a negative test may take advantage of the offers of the universities and gain access to their services. The proof of the negative test result must not be more than 48 hours old.
* Like in other areas of the education sector, the aim is to be able to dispense with the general obligation to maintain a minimum distance of 1.5 metres between people during teaching and research activities at the universities and colleges, provided that the current occurrence of infection allows for this. A corresponding regulation is planned for the Infection Protection Measures Ordinance of the state of Berlin.
* It will in principle be mandatory to wear a mask in university and college buildings.
* Adequate pandemic prevention for the COVID-19 pandemic as well as crisis support will be ensured by responsible, coordinated action on the part of the university or college in question.
* For events that are carried out in person, the universities and colleges will ensure that appropriate documentation of attendees is maintained in order to enable contact tracing. Use of the Corona-Warn-App is also recommended.
* Specific requirements will apply for the arts and for sport in accordance with the regulations of the Berlin Infection Protection Measures Ordinance, as applicable at the time.
* The regulations of the SARS-CoV-2 Infection Protection Measures Ordinance of the state of Berlin, as amended, will apply regardless of the principles laid down in the guideline paper.

The agreed key parameters are recorded in a joint paper from the Senate Chancellery for Higher Education and Research and the Berlin universities and colleges, and are accessible online: (Link wird bei Versand eingefügt/link will be inserted when sent out).

At the beginning of September, within the scope of their joint task force, the universities and colleges and the Senate Chancellery for Higher Education and Research will assess whether there is a need for any adjustments based on the occurrence of infection as monitored at the time.

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