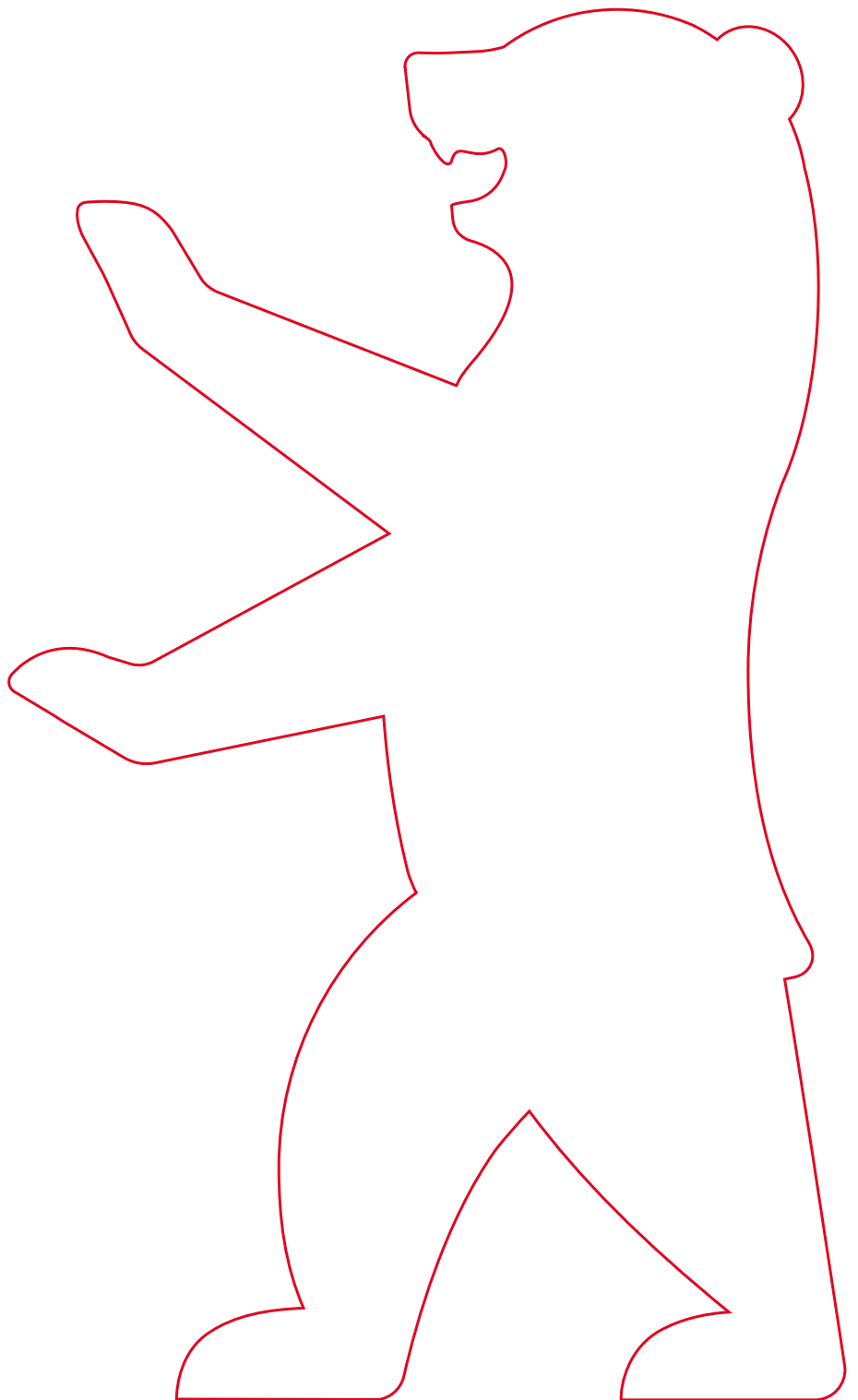


BERLIN



Berlin's Phased Plan for the Operation of Universities under Pandemic Conditions



**BRAIN CITY
BERLIN**

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Initial situation

Objectives

- Enable a wide range of research and teaching activities to be carried out
- Ensure the health of students and employees, avoiding negative outcomes
- Support good learning; as much in-person teaching as possible, as much online teaching as necessary
- Protect the financial health of the universities
- Contribute to Berlin having a low rate of infection

Given the tension between planning certainty (for decision-makers, employees, teachers and students) and the necessary degree of flexibility, a phased plan, based on the state of Berlin's coronavirus traffic light system, is being created in order to be able to react quickly and appropriately to any changes in the infection situation in the city. The phased plan is not an operational instrument for reacting to specific developments at individual universities. Relevant scenarios, processes and specific actions must be described and implemented individually by the universities. The phased plan can only serve as a framework for orientation.

Initial situation

The Senate Chancellery – Higher Education and Research set up a taskforce under the leadership of Permanent Secretary Steffen Krach on 11 March 2020, in which representatives of public, private and denominational universities, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, the Studierendenwerk and the non-university research institutes regularly discuss the effects of the pandemic and the necessary measures, with the goal of developing a coordinated approach at the various academic and research institutes in the state of Berlin.

Berlin's public, private and denominational universities have been in restricted operation since 11 May 2020 due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Classes are generally being held online until 30 September 2020. Research libraries, canteens and the Botanical Garden are being allowed to reopen, albeit with certain restrictions.

Winter semester 2020/21 will be conducted, to the extent allowed by the way the pandemic develops, as a mixture of in-person teaching (as much as possible) and online teaching (as much as necessary).

The basis of the phased plan is the policies for the operation of state, private and denominational universities under pandemic conditions. They define which measures are to be taken and followed for the university activities of teaching, administration and research. These measures are aimed equally at prevention, protection from infection and infection tracking.

They form the framework for the protection and hygiene plans of the universities, which then implement the guidelines on an institution-specific basis and on their own responsibility. The phased plan builds on the policies and supports the universities of the state of Berlin in their ability to react quickly, in a coordinated manner and in accordance with their own pandemic plans to the changing infection situation in the city.

Policies

For the operation of public, private and denominational universities under pandemic conditions the following policies apply:

1. Classes and examinations may take place **in-person**, taking into consideration safety and hygiene rules, and to the extent that developments in the occurrence of infection permit this.
2. The access of **traffic flows** of people in the institutions is to be directed using appropriate measures, e.g. one-way systems and markings which show the direction of movement.
3. The **social distancing rule of 1.5 metres** continues to apply. The following exception applies, subject to the necessary consent of the Senate Department for Health, Long-Term Care and Gender Equality: the minimum distance of 1.5 metres can be reduced if the group consists of 25 people or fewer, the group's composition remains constant (fixed year cohorts) and the students have in-person teaching only with this group. Special minimum distance rules for specific artistic activities (e.g. dance, drama and playing musical instruments) remain unaffected by this.
4. In universities, it is **mandatory** to wear a mask that covers nose and mouth on the pathways that people follow and in communal areas in buildings (e.g. in corridors and in foyers). Wearing a mask that covers nose and mouth is **strongly recommended in classes and examinations and may be made mandatory, depending on the situation**. The obligation/recommendation to wear a mask that covers nose and mouth does not apply to individuals who cannot wear a face mask because of a health impairment or a disability. Proof of this must be provided on request.
5. Adequate **ventilation** of rooms is to be established as an essential measure in combating a pandemic, even when outside temperatures drop in autumn and winter. The greatest possible use must be made of any existing opportunities to allow as much fresh air as possible into the buildings.
6. **Notices regarding distancing and hygiene rules** must be posted so they are clearly visible. Hand hygiene continues to be essential. Institution-related measures regulate the hygiene plans of the universities, e.g. the regular cleaning of certain surfaces and areas.
7. There is **defined management responsibility** with regard to Covid-19 (quick and proper reaction on becoming aware of cases of Covid-19). This includes the description and documentation of procedures to contain occurrences of infection at the universities as part of their pandemic or hygiene plans; this must be publicly accessible for all members of the university (university website) (see Chapter 4).

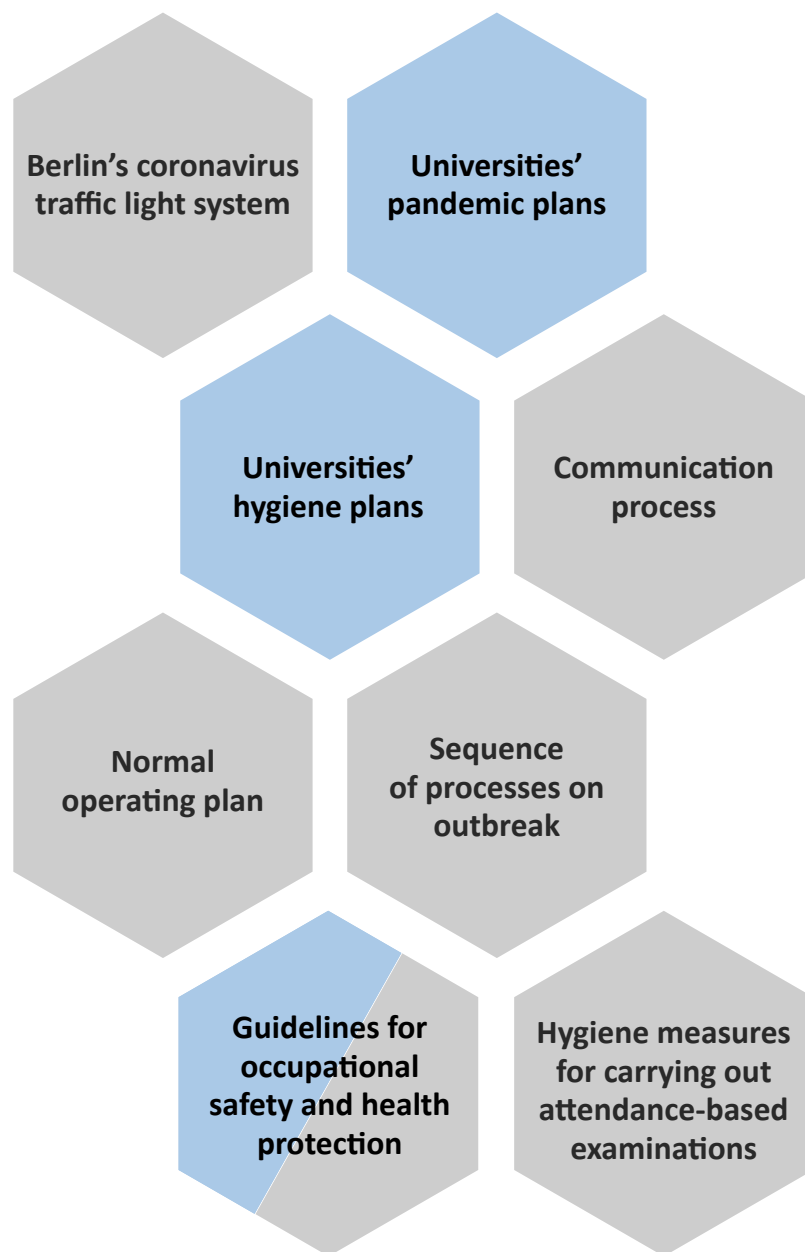
8. Attendance documentation must be kept for events that are held in-person. The **attendance documentation** must contain the following information: first name and family name, telephone number, full address or email address, time of attendance and, if applicable, seat or table number. The data are to be kept for a period of four weeks and handed over to the appropriate authorities on request. The attendance documentation must be deleted or destroyed after the retention period has expired.
9. It is in addition recommended that the Corona-App be used.
10. If employees/students show **symptoms** of a respiratory disease or other symptoms that are compatible with Covid-19, they should act according to the procedures described in the annex. The universities make this possible through appropriate organizational measures.
11. **Singing together** in closed rooms is only allowed if the hygiene and infection protection standards set out in the **general hygiene plan of the Senate Department responsible for culture** are observed.
12. Special requirements and minimum distance regulations for certain artistic activities (e.g. dance, drama, playing musical instruments) and sports apply notwithstanding the stipulations in these policies.
13. The regulations of the **SARS-CoV-2 Infection Protection Ordinance** of the state of Berlin as amended apply notwithstanding the stipulations of these policies.

Observance of these policies should contribute to ensuring that in-person activities can be carried out at universities under pandemic conditions and, at the same time, that the risk of infection can be reduced as far as possible. In addition to legal considerations related to protection from infection, and epidemiological considerations, weight has also been given to societal and social aspects in order to balance concerns about health protection against individual civil liberties. There is a risk of transmission or contagion in the case of physical social contact, particularly if several people are in a closed room that is inadequately ventilated. Measures are therefore being taken to reduce the known risk of transmission and consequently to contribute to the containment of the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g. social distancing, masks that cover nose and mouth, ventilation, hygiene). In addition, there are measures taken in the event of infection to ensure that individuals can be quickly identified and their contacts can be traced in order to prevent further infections and the spread of Covid-19.

Berlin's phased plan

Building blocks of the phased plan

The phased plan brings together various existing regulations and agreements as building blocks. Some documents apply to all universities. Some documents apply to all universities.



- Apply to all universities
- Institution-specific

Application of the phased plan and decision tree

Entering into one of the three phases or switching between phases is based on the coronavirus traffic light system of the state of Berlin and its decision tree. The following decision process therefore applies to the phased plan:

If the state's coronavirus traffic light turns yellow, the existing taskforce is convened by the Permanent Secretary for Higher Education and Research and advises on the measures described in Phase 2.

If the state's coronavirus traffic light turns red, the potential measures of Phase 2 must be implemented.

The entry of all public, private and denominational universities into Phase 3 of the phased plan (on-site emergency operations) is anchored in the relevant infection control regulations of the state of Berlin.

A series of infections may, however, occur at a single university, which then makes entry into Phase 2 or 3 necessary. The universities define the appropriate processes and procedures for containment for such a case.

Coronavirus traffic light system of the state of Berlin

The Senate Department for Health, Long-Term Care and Gender Equality publishes the current indicators of the coronavirus traffic light system to allow assessment of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in Berlin.

<https://www.berlin.de/corona/lagebericht/>

Reproduction number "R"

R-value < 1.1 = green

R-value at least three times in a row ≥ 1.1 = yellow

R-value at least three times in a row ≤ 1.2 = red

Incidence of new infections per week

Number < 20 per 100,000 inhabitants = green

Number ≥ 20 per 100,000 inhabitants = yellow

Number ≥ 30 per 100,000 inhabitants = red

Percentage of beds in intensive care units needed for Covid-19 patients

Percentage $< 15\%$ = green

Percentage $\geq 15\%$ = yellow

Percentage $\geq 25\%$ = red

The indicators are presented weekly to the Senate by the Senate Department for Health, Long-Term Care and Gender Equality for discussion about possible areas for action.

Universities

The universities may open for teaching, administration and research, as well as for visits by members of the public.

Classes/In-person formats

Classes take place online and in-person. The organization of in-person classes is done by taking into account the number of people along with the size of the room. The maximum number of people per room is to be calculated on the basis of its area and the minimum distance of 1.5 metres and may not be exceeded. Subject to the agreement of the Senate Department for Health, Long-Term Care and Gender Equality, the minimum distance of 1.5 metres may be reduced if the group consists of 25 people or fewer, the group's composition remains constant (fixed year cohorts) and the students have in-person teaching only with this group.

Wearing a mask covering both mouth and nose is very strongly recommended. The university may make wearing a mask mandatory in special situations.

Examinations

Both online and attendance-based examinations are allowed. The organization of attendance-based examinations is done by taking into account the number of people along with the size of the room. The maximum number of people per room is to be calculated on the basis of its area and the minimum distance of 1.5 metres and may not be exceeded. Wearing a face mask covering both mouth and nose is very strongly recommended.

The Charité's policy for hygiene measures when carrying out attendance-based examinations applies.

Libraries

Research libraries may open, subject to the restriction and management of the number of visitors on the basis of the sizes of the available rooms. The maximum number of people per room is to be calculated on the basis of its area and the minimum distance of 1.5 metres and may not be exceeded.

Visitors are required to wear a mask covering both mouth and nose if they are not in their seat.

Canteens

Canteens and cafeterias of the Studierendenwerk may open. Food and drinks may be offered for pick-up or may be consumed at tables. Seating in closed rooms is to be arranged in such a way that the minimum distance of 1.5 metres is maintained between people sitting at different tables. Groups of up to six people at one table may sit less than 1.5 metres apart.

The obligation to wear a mask covering both mouth and nose applies to staff who are in contact with guests, and to guests who are not in their seat.

Attendance documentation must be kept for contact tracing according to infection protection regulations.

University sport

The regulations on sporting activity in the SARS-CoV-2 Infection Protection Ordinance as amended apply to the running of university sports.

Universities

Universities may open for teaching, administration and research. They examine possible restrictions on public traffic.

Classes/In-person formats

Classes take place online and in-person. If the incidence of infection increases, the universities investigate reducing the number of in-person classes. In-person teaching is offered in particular for those practical formats that essentially cannot be delivered online. Examples are laboratory or workshop sessions, training involving contact with patients at universities, or artistic teaching at colleges of the arts or music. The organization of in-person classes is done by taking into consideration the number of people along with the size of the room. The maximum number of people per room is to be calculated on the basis of its area and the minimum distance of 1.5 metres and may not be exceeded. Should the Senate Department for Health, Long-Term Care and Gender Equality have approved a reduction of the minimum distance (see Policy 3), the university checks whether the exception can be maintained. Wearing a mask covering both mouth and nose is mandatory in classes.

Examinations

Online and attendance-based examinations are allowed. The organization of attendance-based examinations is done by taking into consideration the number of people along with the size of the room. The maximum number of people per room is to be calculated on the basis of its area and the minimum distance of 1.5 metres and may not be exceeded. The Charité's policy for hygiene measures when carrying out attendance-based examinations applies. Wearing a face mask covering both mouth and nose is mandatory.

Libraries

Research libraries may open, subject to the restriction and management of the number of visitors on the basis of the sizes of the available rooms. The maximum number of people per room is to be calculated on the basis of its area and the minimum distance of 1.5 metres and may not be exceeded. Consideration is given to placing restrictions on in-person service.

Visitors are required to wear a mask covering both mouth and nose if they are not in their seat.

Canteens

Canteens and cafeterias of the Studierendenwerk may open. They consider whether the consumption of food and drink at tables should be restricted. Food and drinks may be offered for pick-up. Seating in closed rooms is to be arranged in such a way that the minimum distance of 1.5 metres is maintained between people sitting at different tables. Groups of up to six people at one table may sit less than 1.5 metres apart.

The obligation to wear a mask covering both mouth and nose applies to staff who are in contact with guests, and to guests who are not in their seat.

Attendance documentation must be kept for contact tracing according to infection protection regulations.

University sport

The regulations on sporting activity in the SARS-CoV-2 Infection Protection Ordinance as amended apply to the running of university sports.

Universities

State, private and denominational universities, including their institutions, may not open for in-person academic activities and may not open to the public. The universities can, within the framework of their house rules, grant limited access to individuals when the case justifies this. Exceptions can be made by institutions within the framework of their house rules when the institutions are involved in treating patients with Covid-19 or when scientific working groups are involved in research on Covid-19.

Classes/Practical sessions

In principle, in-person classes may not be carried out. In-person teaching may be offered for those practical formats that essentially cannot be delivered online. Examples are laboratory or workshop sessions, training involving contact with patients, or artistic teaching at colleges of the arts or music. Wearing a mask covering both mouth and nose is mandatory in practical classes where in-person teaching is being done.

Examinations

In principle, attendance-based examinations may not be conducted. Universities can conduct attendance-based admission and final examinations, provided they cannot be replaced by online formats and the requirements of the current version of the SARS-CoV-2 Infection Protection Ordinance do not preclude this.

Libraries

Research libraries may not open to the public. Online services can be offered.

Canteens

Canteens of the Studierendenwerk may not open.

University sport

The regulations on sporting activity in the SARS-CoV-2 Infection Protection Ordinance as amended apply to the running of university sports.

Procedures in the event of an outbreak at a university

According to policy 7 of the policies for the operation of universities under pandemic conditions, universities must have **defined management responsibility** with regard to Covid-19, which allows them to react quickly and correctly on becoming aware of cases of Covid-19. This includes the description and documentation of procedures to contain occurrences of infection at the universities as part of their pandemic or hygiene plans; this must be accessible to all members of the university (university website). The universities should describe processes for at least the following three scenarios.

Scenario A: Occurrence of a case involving unprotected contact with other students/employees

The university is informed of the positive test of a student or employee by the health department responsible. The health department requests documentation of those involved in the particular circumstances; contacts are traced solely by the health department after the attendance documentation has been provided.

As a supporting measure, the universities examine whether teaching for the groups of students who had contact with the Covid-19 patient should switch to online mode.

If it is not possible to clearly allocate the individual to one or more groups, the universities can implement further measures in coordination with the health department, or call on employees, teachers and students to take special measures (e.g. a voluntary and personal diary of symptoms, a contact diary). The procedures and processes required for this, along with specific instructions on how to act as well as the names of persons who can be contacted, are part of the universities' pandemic plans, which are publicly accessible.

Scenario B: An outbreak has occurred, i.e. several students/employees of the university have Covid-19 at the same time and in the same location

The health department responsible will determine individual measures, which is its responsibility.

As a supporting measure, the universities themselves should, for example, and at their own discretion, take the measures described in Scenario A. The procedures and processes required for this, along with specific instructions on how to act as well as the names of persons who can be contacted, are part of the universities' pandemic plans, which are publicly accessible.

The university considers moving by itself from Phase 1 to Phase 2.

Scenario C: Many students/employees fall ill at different times and locations at the university (due to their individual environments), i.e. the endemic level of the university is above the level of the state of Berlin

The university defines criteria on the basis of which it moves by itself to Phase 2. In line with its pandemic plans, it implements those measures described in Phase 2 as measures to be considered (e.g. mandatory wearing of masks covering both mouth and nose also in classes, distancing rules, restrictions on in-person teaching). In-person operations must be halted, depending on the situation and the extent of the illnesses.



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