Corona Pandemic FAQs

As of 18 March 2020

Questions and answers
On teaching and studying at Mannheim University of Applied Sciences

Guiding principle of the university:
As far as the general situation allows, students should be given the opportunity to acquire the 30 credits provided and take the necessary assessments. At the end of their studies, students should have been given the opportunity to take their assessments on time.

The requirements change daily, so these rules can also change at short notice.

Presence at the university
Are students allowed to come to the university?
Students are generally not allowed to come to the university. Activities that are relevant to assessment and that require specific facilities at the University and that cannot be paused are excluded. The dean makes the decision, possibly after consultation with relevant people, such as laboratory managers.

Are the secretariats and offices still open?
The secretariats and offices remain (virtually) occupied. Contact must be made by phone or email.

Can a teacher hold a physical presence consultation or talk to supervise student research or theses?
No, this is no longer possible due to the current situation.

Can thesis colloquia be held?
Colloquia are to be carried out via web conferences or to be postponed to a time after the suspension of studies period. In the first case, the students should have the opportunity to practice presentation via web conferences in advance.
Can theses be postponed?
In principle, the submission of the theses and semester projects will not be postponed for the time that the course is discontinued, though an extension of the time that the course is suspended is possible. The extension can be applied for in the usual way (digitally).

Can laboratory internships continue to be carried out?
Laboratory internships are currently not available.

Can students use the pool rooms?
Students are generally not allowed to come to the university. The dean decides on any exceptions.

**Online classes**

Can online events be held at all?
Online events can be held and have the same status as lectures / seminars etc. without the obligation to attend. The relevant laws must be complied with (data protection, copyright).

Can live streams be offered at any time?
Live streams of lectures may only be carried out in the designated times in the course schedule.

Can students be asked to register for a course in Moodle?
This is part of "normal" accessibility even in "normal" times. The students were asked centrally to enrol in the respective Moodle courses, new students were also asked to do so by letter. The teachers are asked to create a course for each course, at least to ensure communication.

Are students obliged to take the online content into account?
Ultimately, the students themselves are responsible for the preparation for assessments, in particular the preparation of course content for examinations. In this sense, online content has the same worth as lecture content.

Can teachers be reached online?
If the teachers do not hold “live” online meetings, they must ensure that they can be reached (e-mail, telephone, Moodle). Student inquiries about Moodle will be forwarded to the teachers by email.

Which online tools can I use without any problems with regard to data protection?

Moodle, clousi (joint filing and editing of documents) and recordings of sound and images (without students) are possible. Web conferences (the services of the DFN, https://webconf.vc.dfn.de and https://conf.dfn.de and alfaview.com AlfaView Free Plus are recommended) enable anonymous dial-in. Free tools (Google Hangout, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack, Webex) generally do not meet the requirements, so special attention should be paid concerning personally-sensitive student data.

What internet connection is required of students?

As a rule, students have no internet volume limit, though in exceptional situations, students may only have mobile internet (LTE) with a corresponding volume limit. Students should be informed about larger files (e.g. videos) so that they can plan the download if necessary.

Is special software available for students for online teaching (e.g. CAD software)?

Access to software that was purchased in and for laboratories cannot currently be provided to students for home use; procurement would not be appropriate in view of the probably temporary limited exceptional situation. This requires pragmatic solutions and flexibility in the requirements.

How can I get large documents, e.g. scanning articles to publish them in Moodle?

Most of the secretariats have combination printers and scanners that can also be used to scan larger documents as PDF files.

Questions about exams

Will the examinations be held this semester?

It is currently planned that examinations take place as usual, possibly without using the first week of the examination period, which can then still be used for teaching. Examinations may also take place at the beginning of the new semester.

Will all examinations be conducted as planned?
The teachers are required to find suitable alternative forms of assessment for the current situation, both for written examinations and for coursework, to be approved by the examination committees in accordance with the study and examination regulations. It should be noted that there will probably be special requirements for the examinations in summer (e.g. students sitting a larger distance from each other).

How should semester and final thesis projects be submitted?
For the duration of the suspension of study at the University, the work must also be submitted as a PDF document, possibly with a ZIP archive for the attachment, via Moodle or email. The electronically documented receipt is the time of delivery.

How are deadlines for recognition and mandatory study advice dealt with etc.?
In the interest of the students the deadlines should be interpreted generously.

How should internship semesters and theses in companies which close because of the pandemic or thesis in which start late in companies because of the pandemic be dealt with?
The examination committees are asked to consider these matters benevolently and to decide on a case-by-case basis.

How are students abroad dealt with?
The dean's offices are asked to identify the students who are abroad and to recommend that they carefully review their personal situation and decide for themselves whether they want to cancel and return to Germany or complete the semester on site. In the event of a termination, the examination committees should find an accommodating arrangement.

How are mandatory field trips in companies dealt with?
Mandatory excursions should be postponed or replaced by equivalent services.

Are all elective modules offered?
A choice of compulsory elective modules can be made via Moodle. Even for courses provided online, the minimum number of participants is five (five people who have registered for the course and intend to take the assessment).

Work in the faculty
How do the teachers get support?

Given the current situation, we need a flexible support network. There is also a video studio that can be used for instructional recording. In principle, each faculty should identify one, preferably two, “key users” who agree to help the teachers.

Tutors who have an existing contract should be used to offer support online to the students. HiWi contracts that have not yet been concluded are currently to be withheld and reconsidered.

What if the equipment the teachers have is not sufficient to create appropriate online elements?

Most PCs and laptops already have a microphone and camera. If not, it is advisable to rent or buy a webcam, as well as a good microphone (tip: get a PC spider right away, this can also be used very well for online meetings). A pen-based device is not essential, but it can be useful.

The equipment is to be financed by the faculties.

Are freelance lecturers equipped with equipment?

Most lecturers have suitable equipment. If this is not the case, the faculty can lend a device, or a colleague can assist with the provision of content (administering the Moodle course). Using the video studio is also a solution.

How are the online elements billed?

Both full-time lecturers and freelance lecturers are billed as they are for on-site courses. From a university perspective, the level of competence achieved by the students counts. It is assumed that the teachers set the same competence objectives for online teaching as for classroom teaching.

How are postponed block seminars dealt with (post-quarantine postponement)?

Of course, postponements are not unproblematic as there will inevitably be space constraints. If it is unavoidable, off-peak times at the university should be explored before external premises are rented.

Any additional rental is to be financed by the faculty.

How to deal with meetings and committees?

Physical presence sessions and meetings are to be reduced to the absolute minimum. Faculty council meetings, examination committee meetings, meetings of student
committees etc. are to be carried out virtually to maintain the functioning of the university. Resolutions are to be passed by written circulation process.

Currently we have no proven cases here at the university. All the measures outlined serve to avert risk.

We will keep you up to date. Inform yourself using this website, which is continuously updated.