Regulations for research, teaching and administration in transitional operations

May 08, 2020

Basic regulations

The University of Siegen still aims to continue to slow down the spread of the corona virus and protect students and staff as far as possible. However, the development of the infection in the past few weeks, allows the University to move from the phase of minimal operations to a phase of transitional operations. This expressly does not mean that research, teaching and administration can resume their activities on site, at the university without any restrictions, but it is possible to further reduce these restrictions. The exact regulations, which are implemented according to the specifications of the Robert Koch Institute, are described below; they will apply until June 07, 2020.

Protective measures: Distance and mouth-and nose cover

A safety distance of 1.5 meters must always be maintained between all people on university premises; this also applies to the public spaces (hallways etc.). Whenever it is not possible to maintain the safety distance, all people have to wear a suitable mouth-and-nose cover. A mouth-and-nose cover must also be carried for outdoor spaces, so that it can be worn at all times, if the safety distance of at least 1.5 meters cannot be maintained with certainty. University leadership recommends to wear a mouth-and-nose cover on all routes with corresponding public traffic (on foot in the opposite direction).

This rule applies to all working, teaching and examination contexts without exception. For examinations, oral examinations, business meetings, etc. this means, for example, that the mouth-and-nose cover can be taken off as soon as everyone is sitting in their place with a distance of at least 1.5 meters between them and that they will not leave this place. Whenever this cannot be guaranteed or cannot be guaranteed with certainty, wearing a mouth-and-nose cover is obligatory.

All members of the University are obliged to wear a mouth-and nose cover (mask). Please note that it is not possible to attend courses or take part in examinations, or perform any other activity or service without a mouth-and-nose cover. Employees may be equipped by the University in justified exceptional cases (in this case, please contact Department 1.1 - Occupational Health and Safety). To avoid misunderstandings, however, it should be noted that this possibility does not apply to everyday needs arising from work, teaching and examination contexts.

Guests at the University of Siegen, e.g. external service providers, participants in project meetings etc. are also obliged to carry a mouth-and-nose cover. The contact persons of these guests are urgently requested to inform them about this requirement in order to ensure that the guests are allowed to enter university premises. All members of the university are obliged to compile lists of names of guests and to record contact times in order to be able to trace chains of infection, if necessary.
Protective measures: Work places

Working in an individual office without public access

Activities in an individual office without public access are generally considered unproblematic. Nevertheless, in order to reduce the number of potential contacts in the workplace, superiors and supervisors review which assigned tasks can reasonably be completed from home. Where this possibility exists, suitable tasks should be temporarily transferred to work from home and all other tasks should be completed in the office. The existing service agreement on alternating working remotely is temporarily extended in this respect. All parties involved ensure to the best of their knowledge and ability that the applicable legal norms are observed, in particular with regard to occupational health and safety as well as data protection.

Working in an individual office with public access

In this case, all tasks should be carried out from home, wherever possible. The following applies to tasks in the office:

- Generally, public access is to be minimized, other means of contact (e-mail, telephone, video conferences) are preferable. Therefore, a sign should be placed on the office door stating "Office hours by appointment only" and/or "Please knock" containing a reference to alternative contact details. Please use the university's templates, which are available at https://www.uni-siegen.de/corona/personal/#vorlagen.
- The room must be aired at least for 5-10 minutes every hour.
- Especially in the case of more frequent public access (e.g. issuing documents, advising or payment offices), it is recommended to use sideboards, tables etc. as a barrier. Where this is not possible and where there is no possibility of switching to another room (e.g. meeting room), the installation of a mobile partition can be considered as "spit protection".

Working in offices with more than one workplace

Generally, the rules for working in an individual office with public access apply accordingly. If it is not possible to maintain the minimum distance in a normal sitting posture (e.g. two desks are directly opposite each other and there is no distance of at least 1.5 m between the heads when the sitting posture is slightly bent forward), the following measures should be checked:

- Can the desks be pulled further apart without restricting the seating areas to less than a meter?
- Is it possible to introduce a shift system, in which people work alternately from home and in the office?
- Especially for part-time employees: Is there a possibility that peoples work at different times?
- Can alternative rooms be used (e.g. vacancies due to holidays, illness etc.)?

Other areas of activity: Committee meetings, business meetings, job interviews and other activities such as laboratory work, work in workshops and on construction sites

For the organization of committee meetings and business meetings, please refer to the current version of the Guidelines for the Organization of Committee Meetings. These can be accessed via the
following link: https://www.uni-siegen.de/corona/download/20-05-08_anpassung_leitfaden_fuer_gremiensitzungen-final.pdf. (in German only)

For all other activities, including job interviews, the rules described under "Protective measures: Mouth-and-nose cover" and "Protective measures: Work places" apply.

**Protective measures: Miscellaneous**

All members of the University of Siegen and all guests are urgently requested to comply with the known protective measures: Keep your distance (at least 1.5 meters), wash and disinfect your hands regularly, cough and sneeze into a paper handkerchief or in the crook of your arm. Please also follow the marked routes.

The commute to university is the responsibility of all university members. However, University leadership urgently requests that all necessary protective measures be taken, e.g. when using public transport.

Since working, teaching and examining in accordance with the protective measures is new and unfamiliar to all university members, there will surely be occasional uncertainties regarding the implementation of the requirements. On behalf of University leadership, staff members of the Security Department will be available on university premises as contact persons and will support the implementation of the measures.

**Diseases and risk groups**

People with respiratory symptoms (unless a doctor has diagnosed a cold, for example) or fever should generally not stay on the premises of the University of Siegen. Students and all other members of the University are asked to report any proven coronavirus infections to the Department 1.1 - Occupational Health and Safety (SG1_1@zv.uni-siegen.de), so that the University can identify contact persons as quickly as possible.

Particularly in the cases mentioned below, there is generally an increased risk of a more severe course of the disease in the case of infection with coronavirus:

- Cardiovascular diseases requiring therapy (e.g. cardiac insufficiency, coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, other vascular diseases such as stroke etc.)
- Chronic lung diseases (e.g. asthma and COPD)
- Chronic liver diseases
- Renal diseases
- Oncological diseases (especially active tumor diseases or those in remission)
- For post-transplantation care (e.g. heart, lung, kidney, bone marrow, liver, etc.)
- Diabetes mellitus type 1 and type 2
- Weakened immune system (e.g. due to a disease associated with an immune deficiency or through the regular intake of medication, which can influence and reduce immune defense, such as cortisone)
- Age 65 and over
- Obesity with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 kg/m² and higher

If there is uncertainty about the presence of a pre-existing condition, medical advice should be sought.
Teaching staff, research assistants and technical and administrative staff who belong to a risk group or who live in a household with at-risk patients should, as a matter of principle, not perform any in-classroom activities until further notice. Medical proof of the affiliation (of a household member) to a risk group does not have to be provided. However, employees are obliged to inform their supervisors and to agree on suitable measures for working from home. In the event that an in-classroom session or examination cannot be held because the teaching staff or examiner belongs to a risk group, the person responsible (usually the professor) must arrange for a substitute.

Teaching staff, research assistants and technical and administrative staff who belong to a risk group but wish to carry out in-classroom activities nevertheless, decide this on their own responsibility, after consultation with their family doctor, if necessary. Questions of organizing work must be clarified in advance with the respective superior.

Courses

Courses should continue to be held in digital formats in order to keep the number of people present on the university campuses as low as possible. In-classroom courses should therefore only take place to a minimal extent, even though in-classroom courses can be held again to a limited extent from May 13 onwards, without requiring specific justification or approval.

With the possibility of conducting in-classroom courses, all teaching staff is obliged to carefully review whether and when these are really necessary. For didactic reasons, direct discussion among and with students is certainly often the first choice for teaching, but in many cases it is also associated with disadvantages for students: Many students have no choice but to look after their own children at home; timetables alternate between online and in-classroom courses and students cannot be at home and at the place of study at the same time or in quick succession; and even if this were possible, it would require a lot of travel time to and from the university on potentially crowded public transport.

Taking these aspects into account, if in-classroom courses are conducted, they should be offered preferentially to first-year students in order to make it easier for them to begin their studies at the university.

The following rules must be observed for all in-classroom courses:

The maximum number of participants in a course is limited to 20 students being simultaneously there and is also determined - in coordination with the Office of Public Order (Ordnungsamt) of the city of Siegen - by the number of seats in the classroom: in each room, the seats that may be occupied are marked; this serves to maintain the minimum distance of 1.5 meters. Places that are not marked are expressly not allowed to be occupied. The University will draw up a room-related list of use by May 13, which will indicate how many students may be in the room booked for a course. This number depends not only on the size of the room but also on its layout. Usually, only 15 to 25 percent of the room capacity will be available.

All lecturers must familiarize themselves with the conditions in the designated classrooms before the first in-classroom session of their course in order to adapt the courses to the respective spatial conditions. If necessary, the scope of in-classroom teaching (in consultation with the person responsible for the degree program and the Dean of Studies) must be reduced and a balance between in-classroom teaching and suitable alternative teaching content or teaching formats must be offered in order to reduce group sizes. A division of participants of a course into groups with
different attendance times is only possible if this does not lead to overlaps with other courses relevant to the participants (e.g. "violation" of the time window model in teaching training)

The following rules still apply, but are listed here again for the sake of completeness:

As a rule, courses should be held in such a way that they finish at the originally planned time (e.g. the end of the lecture period of the summer semester).

Until June 01, 2020, courses in lecture halls will not be taught as in-classroom courses but, for example, with the help of digital media. From June 8 to 28, 2020, the lecture halls listed in the Rectorate’s decision of April 17, 2020 cannot be used for in-classroom teaching.

Teaching staff are obliged to compile lists of names of participants in each session of the in-classroom courses in order to be able to trace chains of infection, if necessary.

If an in-classroom course cannot be attended by students, because they belong to a risk group (see above), University leadership assumes that these students will be offered alternative formats for the delivery of the course work and, if applicable, the examination. Information for teaching staff who belong to a risk group can be found below under "Diseases and Risk Groups”.

If you have any questions regarding the implementation of courses, please contact the Prorector for Education, Prof.’in Dr. Alexandra Nonnenmacher, prorektorat-bildung@uni-siegen.de.

Examinations

The following applies to those examinations from the winter semester 2019/20 which have to be made up for and are organized centrally: The examinations will continue to be made up for in the period from June 8 to 28 June, 2020. In coordination with the Office of Public Order (Ordnungsamt) of the city of Siegen, a central spatial plan was drawn up to ensure that the minimum distance of 1.5 meters is observed.

Wearing a mouth-and-nose cover will be compulsory during entry and exit to and from the examinations: further planning details on the course of these examinations will be announced as soon as possible.

Other examinations may be carried out from May 13 onwards without specific justification or authorization. For examinations that are organized individually, the rules stated above under "Protective measures: Mouth-and-nose cover” must be observed. In the case of examinations with several participants, it must be ensured that no crowds, queues, etc. form at the entrance and exit of the room, which would make it difficult to maintain the minimum distance of 1.5 meters. Spectators at examinations, e.g. in the context of disputation, can still only be included via video conference.

Several individual or small group examinations in succession, e.g. oral examinations, must also be organized in such a way that as few students as possible meet in waiting areas. The safety distance of 1.5 meters must be maintained by a suitable allocation of places. If examinations take place in rooms, in which the places to be occupied are marked (see "Courses"), only these places shall be selected.

If students are unable to attend an in-classroom examination, because they belong to a risk group (see above), University leadership assumes that these students will be offered alternative formats for
the examination. Instructions for teaching staff, who belong to a risk group can be found above under "Diseases and Risk Groups".

The examiners are also obliged to draw up lists of the names of the participants in each examination in order to be able to trace chains of infection, if necessary.

The dates planned in June to make up for the cancelled examinations of the winter semester 2019/20 and the dates planned in July for the examinations of the first examination phase of the summer semester 2020 remain valid; these examinations cannot be moved forward.

If you have any questions regarding the organization of examinations, please contact the Prorector for Education, Prof.'in Dr. Alexandra Nonnenmacher, prorektorat-bildung@uni-siegen.de.

University Library

The University Library will continue to operate the ordering and lending system in the form in which it has been operating since May 04, 2020 until further notice. Media can be ordered via the online catalogue and can be picked up in the Weidenauer Straße (TB-W) or in the Unteres Schloss (TB-US) after receiving an e-mail notification of availability. Further information can be found under https://www.ub.uni-siegen.de.

Depending on further developments, the University Library is also preparing to operate all its sites as reference libraries. It will be announced when library rooms can be made available as student learning spaces.

Service units for students, e.g. Examination Offices, Internship Offices, Registrar’s Office

Service units for students can open again from May 13, 2020 onwards. The specific regulations of the different service units with regard to opening hours, appointment arrangements, adherence to the minimum number of students, etc. will be communicated to the students by appropriate means, e.g. via the website or upon individual request.

It is still commonplace that all suitable tasks are temporarily transferred to work from home. The decision on the exact date of opening to the public, on the modalities and on the deployment of employees is made by the supervisors in consultation with the employees. The above-mentioned rules on "Diseases and risk groups" and "Protective measures: Workplaces" must be observed when planning.

All services are obliged to compile lists of names of contacts and to record contact times in order to be able to trace chains of infection, if necessary.

Dining Halls and Cafeterias

The dining halls and cafeterias of the Studierendenwerk remain closed until further notice. If necessary, meals can be procured from the vending machines, which will be put back into operation. If there is a significant demand, an interim solution will also be established by means of a snack cart/food truck.