



# Official Bulletin 76/2021

**Directive on Hygiene and Infection  
Protection Measures for On-Site  
Professional Activities to Maintain the  
University's Operations under Conditions of  
Coronavirus**

**as of 16. September 2021**

**Universität zu Köln**



**Duty of inspection and right of objection:**

In accordance with Section 12 of the Higher Education Act of North Rhine- Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG NRW), procedural or validity violations of higher education law, other applying regulations or other forms of autonomous university law can no longer be asserted after one year has expired since the publication of these Guidelines. Exceptions can be made if

1. the Guidelines were not published in the prescribed manner,
2. the Rectorate has in advance objected to the decision of the committee responsible for ratification,
3. flaws in form and procedure have been asserted against the University in advance describing the violated legal provision and fact causing the flaw, or
4. upon publication, the legal consequences of the limitation period for inspection and objection were not clarified.

**P U B L I S H I N G   I N F O R M A T I O N**

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**DISCLAIMER: THIS TRANSLATION OF 'Richtlinie über die Hygiene- und Schutzmaßnahmen bei der Berufsausübung in Präsenz im Corona-Betrieb der Universität' IS NOT LEGALLY BINDING.**

# **Directive on Hygiene and Infection Protection Measures for On-Site Professional Activities to Maintain the University's Operations under Conditions of Coronavirus**

## **(Hygiene and Protection Directive – Professional Activities)**

**as of 16.9.2021**

Pursuant to Section 16 subsection 1 sentence 1 of the Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG NRW) in the version of the Amended Higher Education Act (Hochschulzukunftsgesetz – HZG NRW) of 16 September 2014 (Official Gazette of North Rhine-Westphalia p. 547), last amended by Article 10 of the Act on the Consistent and Solidarity-Based Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic in North Rhine-Westphalia and on the Adaptation of State Legislation with Regard to the Effects of a Pandemic of 14 April 2020 (Official Gazette of North Rhine-Westphalia p. 218b), the Rectorate of the University of Cologne has issued the following Directive by resolution of 31.08.2021:

### **Section 1**

#### **Object and Scope of Application**

(1) This Directive presents the regulatory situation (predominantly according to state law) relevant to professional activities (outside courses and examinations) and embeds university-specific regulations within it. The University shall announce organizational details concerning its implementation on its website and through its other communication channels.

(2) It shall apply

1. In all buildings and rooms used by the University.
2. For operations at the University including events of any kind, with the exception of courses and examinations or libraries.
3. For university staff.
4. For other members and affiliates as well as visitors, insofar as they are participating in university operations outside courses and examinations, in particular as members of university committees or as researchers integrated in the University's

research structures at locations according to No. 1; in this respect, they shall be deemed university staff for the purposes of this Directive.

5. For the staff of other institutions (e.g. affiliated institutes) if their activities cannot be delineated from the University's activities in terms of space or organization. For the purposes of this Directive, they shall be deemed university staff.

(3) The regulations of the Faculty of Medicine and/or University Hospital Cologne shall apply for clinical staff working in healthcare.

(4) For university staff working on the premises of University Hospital Cologne – e.g. in buildings used by both hospital and university staff – the University's regulations shall apply, in particular those concerning occupational safety and risk assessment as well as for official travel and its authorization; however, exclusively the regulations of University Hospital Cologne shall apply in the following circumstances:

1. Measures in the event of a coronavirus infection (especially contact management).
2. Holding of meetings/sessions.

## **Section 2**

### **Principles**

Professional activities at the University by university staff, in particular on-site work in offices, workshops and research laboratories as well as meetings, sessions and other professional events, are governed by the applicable regulations of the Federal Government and the State of North Rhine-Westphalia as well as the provisions of this Directive.

## **Section 3**

### **Working from Home**

Working from home is the general rule at the University until 31.12.2021. Irrespective thereof, work shall be performed on site if necessary for official purposes. Working on site is also permissible at the request of the employee in consultation with the respective supervisor. The supervisor shall make and justify the decision regarding on-site work and instruct staff accordingly.

## **Section 4**

### **Preparing Professional Activities in Indoor Areas**

(1) When organizing professional activities on site where staff come together with other people (including work-related events), supervisors shall take into account occupational safety regulations on coronavirus infection protection. In all laboratory activities, especially those involving hazardous substances, biological substances, genetically engineered organisms and radioactive substances, the protection measures against the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus must not conflict with protection measures otherwise necessary and usual. In cases of doubt, consulting Staff Unit 02.2 is recommended.

(2) The concerns of persons who might be affected by a severe SARS-CoV-2 infection and who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons shall be taken into account in an appropriate manner and on a case-by-case basis upon presentation of a respective medical certificate. The same shall apply in the event that the person lives in the same household as a person at high risk or is in regular contact with them, for example because they are responsible for that person's care.

(3) Supervisors shall take all appropriate technical and organizational measures to reduce work-related personal contacts in enclosed spaces or outdoors; this applies in particular for committee and other meetings as well as other in-person gatherings in which staff participate. The simultaneous permanent use of rooms, especially offices, by several persons shall be reduced to the minimum necessary for university operations.

## **Section 5**

### **Conducting Professional Activities in Indoor Areas**

(1) General hygiene rules (especially good hand hygiene, coughing/sneezing etiquette) shall be observed at all times. Reducing personal contact, keeping a distance of 1.5 metres and wearing a medical mask are recommended – insofar as these measures are not prescribed below or otherwise compulsory.

(2) If, during professional activities, several people come together in indoor spaces with visitor and customer traffic (including students), in vehicles or similar, at least a medical mask must be worn in these places. In exceptional cases, it is possible for staff to dispense with wearing a mask in such places with visitor and customer traffic in the following circumstances:

a) The minimum distance of 1.5 metres can be safely maintained

or

b) Only vaccinated staff come together

or

- c) Only vaccinated or tested staff come together at fixed workplaces or in fixed teams, insofar as the wearing of masks is not required for reasons of occupational safety (for example because of activities with high aerosol emissions).

In rooms without visitor and customer traffic used purely for internal purposes, sentences 1 and 2 shall apply as recommendations. For professional events, subsection 3 applies.

(3) At least a medical mask must be worn at professional events (committee and other meetings, academic festivities, own conferences also on external premises, etc.; only the Directive on Hygiene and Infection Protection Measures for Courses and Examinations applies for courses and examinations), conferences, congresses held indoors at the University.

At events with a maximum of 15 participants, the organizers may, in exceptional cases, permit the wearing of a mask to be dispensed with at fixed seating or standing places if either there is a minimum distance of 1.5 metres between seats or all persons have been vaccinated or tested. In addition, it is possible to dispense with wearing a mask at professional events with fixed seating or standing places in the following circumstances:

1. By persons giving a lecture, talk or other type of presentation, provided they are at least 1.5 metres away from other persons.
2. When eating and drinking if this is absolutely necessary.
3. When communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing.
4. By persons who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons; the existence of medical reasons shall be proven by means of a medical certificate, which must be presented on request; they shall keep a distance of 1.5 metres from other participants.

Irrespective of this, only persons who have been vaccinated or tested may participate in an event.

The respective event organizers are responsible for ensuring adherence to the above-mentioned requirements.

## **Section 6**

### **Ventilation**

(1) All rooms shall be ventilated regularly and sufficiently by their users.

(2) Rooms used for more than 20 persons should have permanent technical ventilation with filters or a good supply of fresh air. If this is not possible, these rooms must allow for the following window ventilation:

- a) It must be possible to open the windows fully; in rooms that are regularly used by only one person alone, tilt ventilation is sufficient.

- b) Rooms must be ventilated by opening windows fully at the beginning of activities and then at regular intervals. Recommended intervals are a maximum of 60 minutes in offices and no more than 20 minutes in course and meeting rooms.
- c) A ventilation time of 3 to 10 minutes is recommended.
- d) Meeting and examination/lecture rooms shall additionally be ventilated before use, especially if other persons have used the room previously.

The chairpersons of committee and other meetings shall ensure such window ventilation if there is no permanent technical ventilation.

## **Section 7**

### **Cleaning**

If possible, workplaces and equipment (e.g. pens, keyboards, telephones, headsets, levers) should not be used by several persons. If this is not possible, it is recommended that the new user cleans them first before using them. Insofar as workplaces, equipment or other objects are used by several persons in such a way that common contact surfaces can become wetted with saliva droplets, it is recommended that they are not used by another person until the following day at the earliest or after they have been cleaned with a commercially available household cleaning agent; users can be involved in such cleaning procedures. Compliance is generally the responsibility of staff and users; they are urged to do so at regular intervals by the supervisor. In the event of irregularities, the supervisor shall notify Division 5.

## **Section 8**

### **Official Travel**

(1) Official travel and study visits within Germany and to international risk areas are subject to approval. The respective supervisor shall decide on such applications.

(2) Official travel to international high-risk areas or areas of variants of concern can only be approved by way of exception if the individual case demonstrates that there is an unavoidable necessity. Corresponding applications shall be submitted to the respective superior (Rector or Chancellor) via the respective supervisor.

## **Section 9**

### **Conduct in the Event of a Suspected Coronavirus Infection, Coronavirus Infection and Quarantine**

(1) All staff suspecting or uncertain about a possible coronavirus infection – e.g. cough, fever, cold, loss of smell or taste – shall have this checked professionally without delay (e.g. by a doctor or through a rapid antigen/PCR test). Staff shall notify their supervisor and the HR administrator responsible for them. Staff whose health permits shall work from home during this time; the supervisor shall make this possible, insofar as official duties permit.

(2) Staff obliged to quarantine by law or who have been instructed to do so by a public authority shall report this to their HR administrator and their supervisor.

(3) Attention is herewith drawn to the existing house bans regarding a suspected coronavirus infection (subsection 1) or quarantine.

## **Section 10**

### **Term of Validity**

This Directive shall enter into force on the day following its announcement and remain valid until 31.03.2022.

Cologne, 16.9.2021

The Rector  
of the University of Cologne

Professor Axel Freimuth