

Regulations for University Operations at Bielefeld University during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Organizational decree dated 23 March 2020

Updated version dated 26 February 2021, in force from 1 March 2021

Bielefeld University has once again been in a state of “**reduced basic operations**” since 16 December 2020 in response to the spread of the Coronavirus, and in accordance with the decisions made by Chancellor Merkel and the minister presidents of the federal states from 16 December 2020; 5 January 2021; 19 January 2021; and 10 February 2021. The goal here is to make these measures as far reaching as possible in order to both reduce the risk of infection while also ensuring that university operations continue to function to the extent needed.

This Organizational Degree has been updated on the basis of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia dated 22 February 2021; the General Order of the Ministry of Labour, Health, and Social Affairs dated 24 February 2021; the SARS-CoV-2 Occupational Health and Safety Ordinance dated 21 January 2021; the Coronavirus Ordinance on Travel Entry from 30 January 2021; and the Quarantine Ordinance of North Rhine-Westphalia dated 12 February 2021. This Organizational Decree summarizes the current measures at Bielefeld University.

All measures continue to pursue the goal of safeguarding the health of students, instructors, researchers, and technical and administrative staff.

In principle, and independent of the following contingency plan, the following still applies:

- A minimum of 1.5 meters social distancing must be maintained between all individuals.
- **The only exceptions to observing minimum social distancing requirements** include e.g. mandatory meetings for professional or educational purposes.
- In addition to the requirement to maintain social distancing, **wearing a face mask is also required in all university buildings**. (Exceptions include wearing a mask in staff offices and other workplaces provided that adequate social distancing is observed and for individuals with a medical certificate exempting them from wearing a mask.) At permitted courses and examinations held in person for students, wearing a medical-grade mask is required of all those in attendance even if social distancing is maintained. (Exceptions exist for individuals with a medical certificate exempting them from wearing a mask, practical sport courses, laboratory activities, and music instruction). Wearing a medical-grade mask is also required when going to the library (e.g. students/researchers/external visitors).

- Wearing a high-quality mask (surgical mask or an FFP2 mask) is required in work settings in which social distancing of at least 1.5 meters cannot be maintained between individuals, or if other protective measures (such as appropriate partitioning with Plexiglass) are not available (see point IV.3).
- Individuals with respiratory symptoms or fever (unless medically cleared as having another etiology) are as a rule not allowed on the university campus.

Contingency Plan for Additional Temporary Measures to Protect against Infection with SARS-CoV-2

I. Organizational Aspects

Since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, the crisis team at Bielefeld University, headed by the Chancellor, has been planning and coordinating the implementation of additional infection control measures, verifying their effectiveness, and coordinating with representatives of various university groups.

The Vice-Rector for Education and Teaching and the leadership of the Department for University Study and Teaching have been responsible for the development of these measures for education and teaching, as well as coordination with the deans of studies.

Supervisors are responsible for implementing these measures in their respective areas of responsibility, as well as informing and instructing their staff accordingly (see point III.5).

Staff, students, guests, and external companies are required to comply with these measures.

II. University Operations during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Based on the current version of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia dated 22 February 2021, and in conjunction with the General Order of the Ministry of Labour, Health, and Social Affairs of 24 February 2021, the following regulations govern the organization of courses, examinations, and other academic events at institutions of higher learning:

Academic conferences and events **are not allowed to be held in presence.**

Committee meetings must comply with the guidelines for running internal university committee meetings and appointment committees during the coronavirus pandemic (see https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/verwaltung/dezernat-sl/wahlen/doks/2020-12-01_Handlungsleitfaden_Gremiensitzungen_und_Wahlen.pdf). In-person committee meetings may be attended by a maximum of 20 individuals. For committee meetings with more than 20 attendees, approval must be obtained from the public health authorities of the city of Bielefeld. Applications must include a valid rationale for why the meeting should be held in person.

For more on conducting meetings and working sessions at the university, see below.

1. Regulations for Studying and Teaching

a) Winter Semester 2020/2021

Teaching and examinations will continue to be held online in accordance with the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance of North Rhine-Westphalia, which will currently be in force through 7 March 2021, and the General Order of the Ministry of Labour, Health, and Social Affairs.

Teaching and Practical Courses

For **online courses**, the digital formats and tools that have already been developed and implemented can be used.

Presence-based courses are only permitted as exceptions on a case-by-case basis – and only if they cannot be held in person without seriously disadvantaging students or cannot be postponed to a later date. A serious disadvantage applies in particular to courses that must be conducted in person because they need to be held in specific locations, require special equipment, or have other special requirements (such as laboratory-based courses), **and** at the same time, postponing the course would lead to a considerable delay in students' progress towards their degree. A delay of even just one semester is sufficient cause here. Under these requirements, laboratory practicals that cannot be carried out online and cannot be postponed are permitted.

Proof of fulfilling the above-mentioned requirements (i.e. serious disadvantage) must be provided and documented. No more than 50 people are allowed to attend in-person courses and all hygiene regulations must be followed. The hygiene protection concepts are to be utilized by the organizers. The actual number of participants allowed in specific rooms depends on the size of the room, and this information can be found in the hygiene protection plans. For courses allowed to be held in person on the basis of exception, names must be registered and possibly also seat locations in order to enable public health authorities to conduct contact tracing if necessary. For more on registration of contact information during teaching and practical courses, see point III.1.

The respective courses should be taken from eKVV and posted. eKVV also contains information on whether the course will be held in person or online, or a combination of the two formats. In special cases, it may be possible to postpone planned courses into the semester break. Courses on Saturdays are also permitted.

Oral and Written Exams

As a rule, oral and written examinations in the Winter Semester are to be conducted as **online examinations**. Digital formats have already been developed and are available for online examinations, including open-book and closed-book formats in the exam Moodle, and using Zoom and a computer lock (safe exam browser) if necessary.

Presence-based examinations and preparatory activities for exams are only permitted if they cannot be postponed for legal or practical reasons; or if postponement is unreasonable for examinees. Unreasonableness can include cases in particular where postponing the exam would result in a considerable delay in the students' progress in their degree program (see above). "Practical reasons" can also

stem from organizational circumstances, for example, if the examinations can no longer be rescheduled promptly or in the current semester due to the capacity limitations of available rooms or staff on site. Among the cases that count as exceptions for preparatory examination activities include, for example, laboratory practicals that have already been commenced for the purposes of a final thesis, especially if interrupting this work would result in a considerable delay in the students' progress towards their degree or otherwise constitute an unreasonable hardship. Proof of the above-mentioned requirements must also be provided and documented.

For exams qualifying to be held in person under exception, the sign-in and registration procedure for exams must be used. This was already established during the Summer Semester (course enrollment lists in eKVV) using individually allocated seating and no QR code.

Students who are unable to participate in courses and/or examinations due to relevant pre-existing health conditions are to be offered alternative formats.

The "Coronavirus Ordinance" for the 2020/2021 Winter Semester from the Rectorate for Education and Teaching can be found here: <https://uni-bielefeld.de/themen/pruefungsrecht/coronavirus/>

Bachelor/Master Theses and Work-Group Laboratory Research

Students who are involved in laboratory research teams as part of their bachelor/master theses and/or research work are subject to the same requirements as described above for exams because laboratory activities are to be understood as preparatory work for exams as defined in the General Order. A valid rationale must also be provided here, stating that postponement would represent an undue hardship. Responsible supervisors should forward these written justifications to the dean of studies. In addition to the measures governing workplace design, laboratory managers must prepare a supplementary risk assessment to prevent coronavirus infections. A sample hazard assessment can be requested from the AGUS. Consultation and onsite inspection will be carried out by AGUS.

Examinations & Graded Work

Students are to continue to submit their assignments via email or using the submission folder in "Lernraum" (Learning Room). This regulation does not apply if the examination regulations require a printed version to be submitted. For final theses, an email that contains an exact digital copy of the printed version must be sent to the responsible examination office as well as to the readers. Students are requested to meet deadlines for the submission of course assignments and exams (especially final theses) as far as possible, at least via electronic submission. Instructors are also asked to provide generous arrangements for submission deadlines.

b) Summer Semester 2021

Based on key considerations for the 2021 Summer Semester (see https://uni-bielefeld.de/themen/coronavirus/studium-und-lehre/2020-12-16_Eckpunkte-Lehr-und-Pruefungsbetrieb-SoSe21.pdf) course planning for the 2021 Summer Semester is currently being carried

out in the faculties. More information on the 2021 Summer Semester will be made available at a later date.

Service Units

Service units, such as the Information Point, the Student Office, the Central Student Advisory Service (ZSB), the Advisory Service at BITS, and the examination offices are only available by telephone, email, or other electronic forms. Further details can be found on the respective websites of these university service units.

Student Workstations

At present, student workstations (for studying) are not allowed to be used. This includes those located in the gallery/bridges in the hall of the main university building, selected central seminar rooms, seminar rooms of the faculties and institutes, as well as library workstations.

2. Work and On-Site Options for Researchers

As a rule, researchers are to work in Home Office. There are areas of the university for which this is not fully possible (e.g. research operations). On-campus presence at the university, however, is also to be reduced to a minimum in these areas. Details of this are determined by the supervisors or work group leaders for their respective areas.

When work is to be performed in university buildings, regulations governing workplace design must be observed – of particular importance is the rule that only one person at a time may work in a room smaller than 20 square meters. Points IV.1 and IV.3 in the Organizational Decree are to be observed.

3. Library Regulations

The library is only open for picking up materials that have been ordered in advance; materials with automated pickup; or returning materials. All individuals accessing the library (students/researchers/external visitors) are required to wear a medical-grade mask in library facilities in addition to maintaining social distancing.

Only the main library entrances D1 and U1 in the main university building and the specialist libraries in Building X are open. Some special lending periods and options for extensions are available.

Visitors must register when they come to the library by presenting their valid library card (UniCard or barcode card), or by filling out a registration form with their name, address, email address, and telephone number (optional). Everyone in the library must wear a face mask and maintain at least 1.5 meters social distancing.

Other library services are very limited: for details and opening hours, please visit the university library website at <https://www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/ub/coronavirus/>.

4. Regulations for Support Services

“Reduced basic operations” for university support services is based on the duration of the

SARS-CoV-2 Occupational Health and Safety Ordinance from 21 January 2021, which will initially be in effect until **14 March 2021**.

Maintaining operations in some technical and administrative areas on site is essential in order to enable current teaching, research, and service activities. For technical services and administration, presence at the university is to be limited to the necessary minimum. Staff in technical services and administration are to work from Home Office to the greatest extent possible. Work is only to be completed on-site if the technical or official circumstances compellingly require presence (i.e. minimum staffing requirements for contingency plans). All others are to work from Home Office. If this is not possible in individual cases, staff members shall be on call.

Details are to be determined by supervisors for their respective areas. These decisions are based on specific service requirements and attendant circumstances. Of particular importance is the rule that only one person at a time may work in a room smaller than 20 square meters. Points IV.1 and IV.3 in the Organizational Decree are to be observed.

Working on site at the employee's own request (when not required for official business) is no longer allowed. This is not permitted during reduced basic operations. However, short-term presence on campus is permitted if needed for official business – for example, picking up mail or documents for working from Home Office. During this time, mail must be picked up and outgoing mail deposited in the mailboxes in T7; parcels will be delivered on more limited schedules.

When scheduling work groups or staffing teams who will be present on campus, small groups with the same persons should be assigned to the same shifts or work groups as far as possible in order to further reduce the amount of contact among internal staff. Personal contact between individual work groups involved in operations and changes to shift assignments are to be reduced to the minimum necessary for university operations.

The exact organization and implementation of staffing is up to supervisors, who best know the specific circumstances and needs in their departments and can work with staff members to find viable solutions for all.

According to the SARS-CoV-2 Occupational Health and Safety Ordinance dated 21 January 2021, the following applies as **an important safeguard against infection**: As a rule, **only 1 person may work per office (if the room is not larger than 20 square meters)**. Points IV.1 and IV.3 of the Organizational Decree must be observed.

If a staff member develops respiratory symptoms, work is to be continued exclusively from Home Office and not on site at the university, even in reduced basic operations (if the staff member is not too sick for work) (see point 6. d. Introduction).

Work hours were already changed to trust-based work hours in March in agreement with staff representatives. This policy will continue to be in force through 30 June 2021. With trust-based work hours, the staff member typically compensates for times when they work less and times when they work more on their own. Anyone who is doing more work than can

be compensated for within this framework, whether due to the current Coronavirus situation or for other reasons (projects, seasonal peaks), must discuss this with their supervisor in advance. In such cases, staff members document the extra time worked and can offset it later.

III. Regulations/Procedures

1. Registration of Contact Information for Tracing Purposes

Principle

The traceability of contact chains of infected persons is one of the key strategies for containing the coronavirus pandemic. Based on the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance of North Rhine-Westphalia, the University is required to collect contact information for the purposes of traceability. Should an infected person have been present at the university, there may be a short-term obligation to provide information to public health authorities. In this case, people who may have come into contact with the infected person must be identified and informed (see point III.2 on suspected and confirmed cases below).

Students (Teaching and Practical Courses, Student Workstations)

Students are required to register for courses (lectures, practical courses, onsite examinations) that are allowed under exception to be held in person on campus. Ideally, registration of contact information is to be collected with a QR code at the entrance to the lecture hall or at the seat one is to occupy. This can then be scanned with a smartphone. For participants without a smartphone or for guests, registration is to be carried out by the **organizer**. Further Information on registration is available at: www.uni-bielefeld.de/anwesenheit

Additional registration of contact information at the (main) entrance areas (QR code or scanner) of university buildings is therefore not necessary for students.

More detailed information can be found in the respective hygiene protection concepts at <https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/coronavirus/sicherheitskonzepte>.

University Staff

Technical Requirements

Digital registration has been available in all university buildings since 26 October 2020. Registration is carried out with scanners using a contactless, building-specific QR code. It is to be performed at the open entrances to university buildings (see point III.7) by swiping the UniCard or by reading the building QR code using a suitable smartphone. Anyone who does not have a UniCard or a suitable smartphone or does not wish to use them must fill out a registration form at the entrance with their relevant contact details (name, address, e-mail address, telephone number, period of stay) or drop a completed registration form in the letterboxes provided.

Access forms can be downloaded here: https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/themen/coronavirus/registrierung/2020-08-21_Zugangsbeleg_Fomular.pdf.

Please use your own pen to complete forms onsite. The scanner records only the ID number stored on the UniCard; the QR code records the Uni-ID and the day of presence in specific university buildings. If there is no request for tracing, data are deleted after four weeks. This also applies to the registration forms. It will only be necessary to trace the registered ID numbers with contact details (name, address, telephone number, e-mail address) of the relevant persons if there is a coronavirus case in one of the university buildings. These data will then be processed by only a very small circle of authorized persons and only for the purpose of tracing. There is no recording of working times and no attendance controls either via electronic recording or via registration with a form.

By registering and entering the university buildings, you consent to the processing of your data as described above. The privacy policy can be viewed at: https://uni-bielefeld.de/themen/coronavirus/registrierung/2020-15-10_DS-Erklärung_Corona-Registrierung1.pdf

In principle, the following applies: University buildings may be entered only through the officially open entrances (see point III.9). Open emergency exits and side exits must be kept closed. This policy is being applied only in order to be able to trace Covid-19 contacts. It is therefore limited in time and will end at the latest when the university returns to normal operations.

The data processing procedure has been verified for data protection conformity, please see: <https://uni-bielefeld.de/themen/coronavirus/registrierung/>

Registration Rules

University buildings may only be accessed after completing registration. **This applies to all staff members: registration is therefore mandatory.** Those who do not register are not allowed to enter the university. Registration is required only once a day in each building that is entered. It is not necessary to “check out” when leaving a building.

In addition to the above-mentioned registration of your own presence in university buildings, the following points must also be observed for contact tracing and any potential requirement to provide contact information to public health authorities:

- It is not necessary for supervisors to document the presence of employees because this is done via the registration procedure at the entrances to university buildings.
- In the case of events, meetings, and gatherings arranged for official purposes, the organizer, supervisor, or promoter must keep a list of all participants/attendees for contact tracing purposes (please refer to point III.6. for the forms with which this can be completed).
- It is the staff member’s own responsibility to document mandatory business gatherings (such as work meetings with colleagues) that will be longer than

15 minutes and which had not been organized by supervisors (e.g. in the Outlook calendar).

- If guests are invited to official business appointments such as work meetings, the organizer must personally keep a record of contact information and attendees (e.g. in the Outlook calendar).
- If external companies are contracted and deployed onsite and there is a possibility of having personal contact with them (longer than 15 minutes), those responsible must also keep a record of these contacts.
- A record must be kept of contacts and attendance of students at student counselling centers, where contact/counselling sessions usually last longer than 15 minutes (these are not currently being held online).

2. Instructions on What to Do in Suspected and Confirmed Cases

Fever, coughing, shortness of breath, and disturbances to smell and taste can be signs of Coronavirus infection.

Staff with such symptoms are requested to leave the university campus immediately or to stay at home. Until their health status has been cleared by a medical professional, they are deemed to be unfit for work. As usual, supervisors must be informed if you are unable to work.

Supervisors are to forward information regarding suspected cases to the email address coronavirus@uni-bielefeld.de.

Affected persons should immediately contact a doctor or the public health authorities for evaluation by telephone. If the suspected infection is confirmed, the staff member in question must either send the relevant information themselves to the email address coronavirus@uni-bielefeld.de, or ask the responsible supervisor to do so.

After a positive test result has been confirmed, infected individuals may not enter university buildings for at least 14 days (from the date of diagnosis)—irrespective of any quarantine order issued by the public health authorities. The university may be entered again only after 14 days and at least 2 days of being symptom-free (an exception may exist if the public health authorities extend the mandatory 14-day quarantine).

Rapid Coronavirus Tests

If there is an increased risk of infection due to a work-related or studying situation (e.g. close contact with Corona-positive persons over a longer period of time), Corona rapid tests can be performed at the university based on individual case assessment and availability. Requests should be sent to the email address arbeitssicherheit@uni-bielefeld.de.

In the case of a confirmed positive case of Coronavirus, the following guidelines must be used for contact tracing:

1. Guidelines for contact tracing of students (Link: https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/einrichtungen/agus/2020-12-03_handlungsleitfaden_Studierende_final.pdf)
2. Guidelines for contact tracing of staff (Link: https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/einrichtungen/agus/2020-12-03_handlungsleitfaden_Mitarbeitende_final.pdf)

In accordance with § 7 of the Quarantine Ordinance of North Rhine-Westphalia dated 12 February 2021, individuals who test positive are required to immediately inform all persons (private and work-related contacts) with whom they have been in close personal contact either in the four days prior to the test, before the appearance of symptoms, or since the test was performed. This includes those persons with whom there had been contact for a period of more than 15 minutes and at a distance of less than 1.5 meters in which both parties were either not wearing a regular mask or had been together for a longer period of time in a poorly or unventilated room.

Information on work-related contact is to be carried out in such a form that the person who has tested positive will inform their supervisor in a timely manner. Their supervisor will then arrange further steps.

If a person living in your home falls ill and has such symptoms (suspected case), please contact your supervisor and clarify the next course of action (e.g. remaining in Home Office).

Staff members who live in a household with a person who has tested positive (confirmed case) are required under § 4 paragraph 1 of the Quarantine Ordinance of North Rhine-Westphalia from 12 February 2021 to self-quarantine immediately after the household member's positive test result is known and to inform the appropriate health authorities. This does not apply to persons who had no contact with the person who tested positive since the time of the test; had no contact with the person who tested positive in the last ten days prior to this time; and who themselves do not show any symptoms of illness. The Quarantine Ordinance of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia in the current respective version must be observed (link: <https://www.mags.nrw/coronavirus-rechtlicheregelungen-nrw#verordnungen>).

3. Preventive Occupational Medicine and Guidelines for High-Risk Groups

All staff members have access to occupational health care (as a provision or on request). They can obtain individual advice from university medical services, including advice on special risks due to a prior illness, their individual health status, possible risks of infection, concerns about the risk of infection, or psychological stress. Advice from university medical services can also be given by telephone.

Staff Members at Higher Risk of Serious Illness due to COVID-19 (Particularly Vulner-

able Persons/High-Risk Groups), including Technical and Administrative Staff, Instructors, Researchers

Especially in cases of certain underlying diseases, there is—regardless of age—a general increased risk of developing serious illness when infected with the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Special protection is therefore necessary for these groups of people (especially the vulnerable/high risk group or the possibly vulnerable/risk group). **Determining whether staff members belong to one of these groups cannot be generalized** due to the variety of different potentially predisposing pre-existing conditions and their severity (e.g. already existing organ damage) as well as the multitude of other variables involved (e.g. **age**, gender, body weight, specific behaviors, adequate drug/therapeutic treatment) and the individual ways in which these factors can compound together. **Because risk cannot be generalized, an individual risk assessment is required as part of an (occupational) medical evaluation.**

An occupational health evaluation is available (though not compulsory) for all staff members who potentially belong to the above-mentioned groups of people (high-risk group or risk group). Staff can seek individual advice from university medical services, and an occupational health assessment will be carried out (if required, in consultation with the doctor treating them) to determine whether they indeed belong to a risk group.

Should staff members then inform their supervisors that they have been identified as belonging to one of the above-mentioned groups, the following procedures for (high) risk groups must then be observed:

High-Risk Group

If, due to the severity or nature of the underlying illness, a (family/occupational health) doctor has certified that an individual belongs to the “high-risk group”, this individual is entitled to work from Home Office, regardless of the regulations governing reduced basic operations. It is urgently recommended that this entitlement be made use of in full.

In view of the current incidence of infection in Bielefeld (Germany), onsite presence at the university workplace is not advisable. Working exclusively from Home Office is advisable until the 7-day incidence rate for the city of Bielefeld consistently drops below 35 again (i.e. it is no longer a risk area). An exception to this is temporary entry to campus buildings to pick up or drop off work documents/materials during so-called off-peak hours (before 7:30 am or after 6pm).

For all those for whom an individual risk assessment was carried out before the increased 7-day incidence rate of greater than 50 (Bielefeld risk area) and those who requested and were granted permission to continue working on site at the university, the following applies: working exclusively from Home Office is indicated until the 7-day incidence rate for the city of Bielefeld drops below 35. Individual risk assessment will be adjusted accordingly and forwarded to the supervisors and the persons concerned.

If it is not possible to perform work from Home Office, staff members are to be released from work for the time being upon request.

All staff members who belong to the high-risk group are urgently requested to follow the special protective measures (in this case, working from Home Office). Working on site at one's own request is not allowed unless it is required for official business purposes.

Risk Group

In order to determine whether staff members belong to the “risk group,” a university medical service evaluation is required. **Only if a staff member is classified by university medical services (with the involvement/cooperation of doctor treating them, if needed) as belonging to the “risk group” and therefore requiring special protective measures (here, Home Office) can the authorization to remain working exclusively from Home Office be granted,** independent of the regulations for reduced basic operations.

University medical services may also find that the person does not belong to the “risk group.” In such cases, general hygiene protection measures and other general workplace regulations for “reduced basic operations” apply.

If university medical services confirms that a staff member belongs to the “risk group” and in view of the current incidence of infection in Bielefeld (Germany), such persons are also entitled and strongly advised to work exclusively from Home Office. This recommendation is independent of the regulations for reduced basic operations.

For all persons in the risk group for whom an individual risk assessment was carried out **before** the increased 7-day incidence rate of more than 50 (Bielefeld risk area) and for whom working onsite at the university was authorized, the following also applies: they should work exclusively from Home Office for the time being. The individual risk assessment will be adjusted accordingly and forwarded to the supervisors and individuals in question. If it is not possible to perform work from Home Office, staff members are to be released from work if requested for the time being.

All staff members who, after being assessed by university medical services, have been classified as belonging to the “risk group” and for whom special protective measures are necessary, are strongly advised to comply with these measures (here, Home Office). Working on site for non-essential business purposes at the staff member's request is currently not allowed.

Staff members who may belong to the potentially vulnerable group but who have not yet been classified as belonging to a risk group by university medical services have the right to a consultation (also by telephone) with university medical services to ascertain their status.

Staff with Chronically Sick Relatives Requiring Care

Staff members looking after relatives requiring care for underlying illnesses in their homes can have the care they are providing to chronically sick relatives certified by a

(general) medical practice. They can also continue to work entirely from Home Office regardless of the regulations for reduced basic operations.

This certificate, after being acknowledged by the responsible supervisor, must be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources and Organization (a scan/photocopy is sufficient). The relative's chronic illness should not be indicated for reasons of data protection.

Staff Who Live with Members of Risk Groups

Employees who share a home with individuals(s) who may have a (possible) special need for protection may also continue to work entirely from the Home Office regardless of the regulations for reduced basic operations by obtaining a medical certificate attesting to the health status of these person(s).

This certificate, after being acknowledged by the responsible supervisor, must be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources and Organization (a scan/photocopy is sufficient). The nature of the chronic illness should not be indicated for reasons of data protection. By default, pregnancy requires an increased need for protection as defined above.

Staff and Students with Severe Disabilities

Staff members and students with a severe disability (without relevant underlying illnesses) can, in principle, also work on site on university premises. If there are any questions regarding this, medical advice should be sought. Representation from severely disabled persons is to be included.

Pregnant Staff/Public Officials/Students

In view of the current circumstances, pregnant women cannot work on campus for occupational health reasons. Expectant mothers continue to be entitled to perform their work exclusively from Home Office. Working on site for non-essential business purposes at the pregnant staff member's request is currently not allowed. If on site presence is required for work purposes, and if the expectant mother agrees, an individual risk assessment can be carried out with the involvement of supervisors, the AGUS staff unit, and a university medical officer to determine whether it is also possible to work on university premises. If it is established that there is no unjustifiable risk in accordance with the Maternity Protection Act at the individual workplace and with the agreement of the Detmold district government, it is possible to work on site at the university. Pregnant women are required to contact the AGUS staff unit before starting work on site in university buildings.

Pregnant students are also prohibited from working on campus for occupational health reasons. **In order to participate in relevant presence-based courses/exams**, an individual risk assessment can be conducted on a case-by-case basis in coordination with AGUS, university medical services, and the responsible authorities (Detmold district government) to obtain permission for an exception to attend relevant onsite events (if no unacceptable danger exists). Pregnant students are required to contact the AGUS staff unit.

4. Work-Related Travel and Trainings

The necessity of work-related travel should be reviewed critically before undertaking it, particularly given the current level of infections. Work-related travel should only take place to the extent necessary, and – where possible – digital alternatives such as telephone or video conferences should be used instead. Attendance at **external** training courses should be treated in the same way. Business trips to regions with high infection rates (including those within Germany) at the time the travel begins must be limited to the absolute minimum needed to fulfill work obligations.

Necessary work-related travel is possible to countries or regions for which no travel warning has been issued by the Federal Foreign Office at the start of the trip and that have not been classified as risk areas. (Classification as a risk area is carried out by the Federal Ministry of Health, the Federal Foreign Office, and the Federal Ministry of the Interior, and is published by the Robert Koch Institute [RKI].)

All generally issued official travel approvals are again valid with the above-mentioned restrictions. If work-related travel or training courses are attended in person, appropriate protective measures must be taken: this includes travelling by private car rather than by public transport if possible, maintaining sufficient distance from others at the external location, etc.

Internal university continuing education courses should, in principle, be conducted digitally (via Zoom). Holding further training courses on site is currently prohibited.

5. Returning from International (Business/Tourist) Travel

Risk Areas

For travelers returning from:

1. Areas of risk for “virus variants” (according to the RKI)
2. Other risk areas abroad (according to the RKI)
3. Areas under travel advisory due to the Coronavirus

For travelers in cases 2 and 3, if the incidence rate per 100,000 inhabitants during the last 7 days of their stay was higher than in Bielefeld, the following regulations and measures must be taken:

For the safety of all persons present at the university, returning travelers may not enter the campus for a period of 14 days after return. Returning travelers also have to comply with legal regulations on remaining in quarantine in their homes.

During this time, returning travelers are to work from Home Office. If it is not possible to do their work from home, the supervisor must first check whether the staff member in question can be temporarily assigned another suitable task.

Due to the incubation period of the Coronavirus, infections that occur during the last few days of a holiday or during a return journey will only be detected after 5–7 days. Therefore, persons may only re-enter university premises if a second coronavirus test is again carried out approximately 5–7 days after returning home – and the result is also negative. Staff members who have spent time in risk areas are hereby required to inform their supervisors

accordingly so that the aforementioned precautionary measures can be taken.

Returning travelers to Bielefeld who have spent several days in areas in which the incidence rate per 100,000 inhabitants over the past 7 days was higher than in Bielefeld must discuss this with their supervisor and make appropriate arrangements regarding their place of work. In these types of situations, Home Office should be made possible in order to protect colleagues onsite.

6. Work-Related Meetings and Events with Internal and/or External Attendees

Work-related events (by invitation and in event format) and onsite meetings are not allowed to be held in person and may only be conducted in digital form or by telephone.

In order to carry out their work, essential contact between staff members is permitted, provided that hygiene regulations (Chapter IV) are observed and the number of persons present on site is significantly reduced. Any additional official onsite meetings are to be avoided.

7. Building Access

Buildings are open to staff and students for permitted onsite teaching and examination activities as specified in the regulations governing university operations during the coronavirus pandemic described here. Building access is also permitted for persons who need to be present at the university for operational reasons, as well as those who are present for agreed-upon reasons (e.g. on invitation by the university), and library users.

The entrances to the main university building (main entrance C01) and Building X (side entrance at the security station) are open. University buildings may be entered only through these officially open entrances. Emergency exits and side exits must be kept closed. If additional entrance areas have to be temporarily opened for events, these are to be defined as exceptions in the hygiene protection concepts. The university will remain closed to the general public.

II. Policies on University Workplace Design during the Coronavirus Pandemic

1. Use of Work and Break Rooms

Sufficient social distancing of at least 1.5 meters between colleagues must be maintained. This distance must be maintained even for periods of short personal contact. The only exceptions to observing minimum social distancing requirements include for example mandatory meetings for work-related purposes. Staff are still requested not to gather in groups.

If a room needs to be used by more than one person at the same time, the minimum area shall not be less than 10 square meters for each person present in the room, insofar as allowed for by the activities to be permitted. **As a rule, the following applies to typical 2-person office: only one person may work per office (in which the room is no larger than 20 sq. meters).** If the work to be performed does not allow for the regulations of 10 sq. meters per person, other suitable protective measures must be implemented, including social distancing of 1.5 m between individuals, ventilation measures and suitable partitions between those present. If this

is also not possible and the distance falls below 1.5m, suitable masks (medical masks or FFP2 masks) must be provided and used. Exceptions to these regulations governing the use of office rooms must be cleared in advance with the AGUS staff unit, which provides guidance and verifies whether safety regulations and hygiene measures can be complied with.

Furthermore, office rooms may only be entered by colleagues upon request and with an appropriate face mask or a medical mask (if the distance is less than 1.5 m).

For **laboratory work** (laboratory workstations with technical ventilation, fume hoods, weighing chambers, large equipment, etc.), general and customary laboratory hygiene regulations must be observed. Social distancing of 1.5 meters from colleagues must also be maintained. Laboratory workstations must be set up accordingly (e.g., no shared use of laboratory work benches).

Compliance with the social distancing rules must be observed in the **break rooms and areas**, tea kitchens, and cooking facilities as well as in **other social rooms** by changing the arrangement of or minimizing seating in these respective areas. Where applicable, break times should be staggered. Before entering and using these rooms, users must wash their hands.

Ventilation of these rooms is particularly important due to possible virus-containing aerosols. **For this reason, rooms must be regularly ventilated by their users.** Ventilation reduces the number of fine droplets that may contain pathogens present in the air. The minimum standard for the period of time between ventilation is as follows: every **40 minutes** at a minimum for offices, and every **20 minutes** at a minimum in meeting rooms. The length of ventilation (with all doors and windows open) should be at least 10 minutes in summer, 5 minutes in autumn/spring, and 3 minutes in winter (when the temperature is below 6°C). Increased ventilation can also further reduce the concentration of possible virus-laden aerosols present in the air. The effects of ventilation can be enhanced by increasing the above-mentioned frequencies and extending the length of ventilation.

Offices must be ventilated regularly at the beginning and end of work. Meeting rooms must also be ventilated before being used.

In public areas, minimum social distancing of 1.5 meters must also be maintained. In areas where the above-mentioned measures of workplace design are not possible, alternative protective measures must be taken. To develop alternative protective measures, please contact the AGUS staff unit directly (arbeitssicherheit@uni-bielefeld.de). If partitions (protective hygienic walls) are to be used, these must be cleaned every day on both sides with a standard cleaning agent.

2. Shared Work Equipment

Tools and work equipment (also IT devices, telephone receivers, table tops, etc.) are to be used by just one individual wherever possible. Where this is not possible, regular cleaning (with a commercial household cleaner) is to be performed by the user, especially before handing the equipment over to others.

3. Sufficient Protective Distancing/Face Mask Requirement

In addition to compliance with minimum social distancing requirements in university buildings, there is also a general requirement to wear a face mask (exceptions to this include offices and other work areas where social distancing is maintained and individuals who are exempt on certified medical grounds).

This face mask requirement also applies to areas in which wearing a face mask has already been defined as necessary in separate hygiene protection concepts.

Wearing a **higher-quality face mask** (a surgical mask or an FFP2 mask) is mandatory **if a distance of 1.5 meters between persons cannot be maintained** while performing work or if no other protective measures (e.g. suitable Plexiglas partitioning) are available. At permitted courses and examinations held in person for students, wearing a medical-grade mask is required of all those in attendance even if social distancing is maintained. Wearing a medical-grade mask is also required when going to the library (e.g. students/researchers/external visitors). (Exceptions exist for individuals with a medical certificate exempting them from wearing a mask, practical sport courses, laboratory activities, and music instruction). The mask can be temporarily removed during, for instance, permitted in-person discussions at lectures and oral exams provided that social distancing to others is maintained.

Filtering half masks (FFP2 /FFP3) must be provided to and worn by staff members when they come into direct contact while performing their work with another person who cannot wear a mask for medical or other significant reasons. An FFP2 mask must also be provided and worn during activities that are likely to involve an increased risk of increased aerosol emission (e.g. very loud talking during activities in noisy areas). When using FFP2 masks, specifications for personal protective equipment (PPE) must be observed. This includes, in particular, the length of time for wearing an FFP2 mask and regulations regarding multiple use. Employees must be instructed in the correct use of FFP2 masks before they are distributed. Example instructions for using FFP2 masks are available on the AGUS website (www.uni-bielefeld.de/agus). Staff members who use FFP2 masks must be offered occupational health care (preventive care).

If for medical reasons a staff member cannot wear a mask (community mask, medical mask, FFP2 mask) or can only wear it for a very short period of time and submits a certificate attesting to these medical reasons, the workplace setup must be adjusted by the supervisor in such a way that these colleagues are adequately protected. For instance, supervisors must determine whether contact with others can be ruled out, or, in the case of contact with other staff members, whether they can wear a higher-grade FFP2 mask (for self-protection and the protection of others). With regard to the scientific evaluations that are now available (as of January 2021, in the Explanation of the Corona Protection Ordinance) on the lack of efficacy between community masks and face visors with regard to droplet and, above all, aerosol transmission, face visors can no longer be considered equivalent mask substitutes at this time.

Where applicable, staff members who have a medical certificate attesting that they cannot wear a mask can work permanently from Home Office if adequate protection cannot be assured on site.

If face masks (community masks, medical-grade masks, FFP2 masks) are not worn in accordance with these instructions, this constitutes a violation of §3 of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance of 25 January 2021. This also constitutes a violation of the University's operating regulations and thus a violation of employment contract obligations and/or official work duties.

Orders for medical-grade masks and FFP2 masks are to be pooled by the various divisions of the university (i.e. faculty, department, institution) and placed by email by sending the order to arbeitssicherheit@uni-bielefeld.de. Distribution of masks to the employees will take place at the divisional level. As a general rule, minimum social distancing of 1.5 meters must be maintained even when wearing a mask.

4. Hygiene, Face Masks, PPE

Personal protective equipment (e.g. FFP2 masks) are only for individual use. (Reusable) masks must be taken home after work (and not left in the open on your desk). This does not apply to special areas, such as genetic engineering facilities. Liquid soap, towel dispensers, and disinfectants are available for cleaning your hands.

5. Official Instruction and Review of Measures

Management is legally obligated by the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the SARS-CoV-2 ASR to provide regular instructions to their employees, and to document this. Staff working from Home Office must also receive such instructions. Instructions should include in particular the regulations of the Organizational Decree; (Coronavirus) transmission risks and modes of transmission, protective measures, measures for groups in need of special protection (e.g. high-risk and risk groups), as well as how to correctly wear and remove face masks. Instructions should be provided in digital form wherever possible.

Sample instructions based on the above-mentioned content are available at <https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/einrichtungen/agus/>.

The effectiveness of these measures in the workplace and the impact of the measures on protecting staff health, as well as the occurrence of for example hygiene failures, must be monitored by supervisors and adjusted as necessary.

Contact

Email: coronavirus@uni-bielefeld.de

Bielefeld University

The Chancellor

