Protection concept of the University of Bern for continuing education under COVID-19

The protection concept for continuing education at the University of Bern is the basis for the resumption of face-to-face courses in continuing education in the facilities and on the premises of the University.

Face-to-face courses in continuing education will take place as soon as official requirements allow and only if the measures specified in this protection concept can be complied with.

Statutory basis
- Federal COVID-19 Ordinance 2 (818.101.24)
- This protection concept is based on the document “COVID-19 General Provisions for the resumption of classroom teaching in secondary level schools, tertiary level institutions and in other educational institutions” issued by the SERI and FOPH on May 13, 2020.

Validity and responsibility
The protection concept is valid for continuing education courses in accordance with Art. 1 Paragraphs 2 and 3 (excl. lit. c) Regulations for continuing education at the University of Bern (in German).

Unless otherwise stated, the responsible body for the implementation of and compliance with the protection concept is the organizing body of the relevant education opportunities. It is recommended that the implementation of this protection concept be documented in cooperation with the safety officer of the responsible organizing body.

The organizing body ensures that the measures of the protection concept are also adhered to if the face-to-face course is not taking place on its own premises (e.g. In seminar hotels, in companies etc.).

Protection concept

1. Obligation to inform
Participants and lecturers are to be informed about the valid protection concept for continuing education, the distance and hygiene rules as well as the adapted choice of methods for continuing education before and during the course.

2. Keeping your distance, limitation of persons per room and hygiene
a. A minimum distance of two meters applies to all interpersonal contacts in face-to-face training courses. In terms of room occupancy, the University is working on the basis of 4 m² for each person. Teaching (in particular the choice of methods) is adapted so that the distance rules can be observed at all times. The number of participants will be reduced according to the space available in the course and group rooms to ensure that it is possible to comply with the distance regulation. The rooms are assigned by the central lecture hall management of the University of Bern according to the size of the group.
b. Responsible and respectful conduct of all those involved is to be encouraged with the help of supporting structural framework conditions. The providers of the face-to-face courses are responsible for ensuring that posters, markings on the floor, especially in break situations, distances between chairs and explicit marking of any seats to be left free, etc. are put up.

c. The Facility Management Office provides hand sanitizers in the entrance area of the buildings.

d. The Facility Management Office is responsible for the regular cleaning of surfaces, banisters, vending machines, restroom infrastructure and washbasins in the rooms and facilities of the University. The providers of the face-to-face courses are independently responsible for the regular cleaning and/or disinfection of other objects and equipment used by several people in the teaching setting (e.g. flipchart pens).

e. The teaching rooms should be ventilated regularly (every hour) and extensively.

f. For every course it is ensured that hygiene masks are available for special situations (person becomes symptomatic). The general wearing of hygiene masks or gloves as a preventive precaution is not part of the measures or at least only has any relevance in the case of unavoidable training-related contact.

g. During breaks as well as in cloakroom and catering situations, it must be ensured that the distance rules are observed in all activities, e.g. by using a staggering system. There is no self-service for meals. Disposable cups are used in course rooms. The protection concepts of the catering providers apply.

h. For everyone taking part in face-to-face courses, the Rules on conduct and hygiene issued by the FOPH apply. These include regular hand washing, no shaking hands, no hugging or kissing.

i. Activities with higher transmission risks are avoided wherever possible, for example activities with close interpersonal contacts or large numbers of people, such as diploma celebrations etc.

3. Measures to protect persons at particular risk and to exclude persons who are ill or who feel ill (Quarantine and isolation)

a. Persons at particular risk are to be protected and should not be discriminated against in access to continuing education at the University of Bern. Lecturers who belong to the risk group choose digital solutions for teaching.

b. Participants and lecturers are advised that persons who show individual COVID-19 symptoms or who have been in close contact with infected persons are excluded from face-to-face courses; participants and lecturers who have been proved to have been affected by the coronavirus are only allowed to take part in a face-to-face continuing education course two weeks after they have fully recovered from the illness.

c. Generally speaking, contact in the context of face-to-face training courses does not fall under the definition of close contact, provided that the rules are observed. However, if there is an increasing number of cases of the disease, the procedure defined for close contact must be followed and quarantine must be implemented.

4. Tracking participants

Attendance lists must be kept for all continuing education courses. These can be destroyed one month after the particular course has taken place.

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1 Hygiene masks are regarded as medical products and carry the CE mark. Type II or Type IIR masks are recommended.