

Media Release, 13th August 2021

In-person courses will continue

At the University of Bern, the upcoming fall semester will continue to be planned in in-person mode. There is no longer a restriction on the number of people for events at universities and the room capacities can be fully utilized. Masks are mandatory in indoor spaces. The University of Bern recommends that all students and employees be vaccinated, but no certificates are required.

On Wednesday, August 11, the Federal Council announced the next approach regarding the pandemic and underlined its intention to strive for a return to normality. For university teaching, this means that the easing of restrictions which were decided upon by the Federal Council before the summer holiday will continue to apply. Specifically, the restrictions on the number of people, as well as the capacity restrictions for in-person courses in tertiary education have been lifted, while the mask requirement remains in place.

Based on this, the University Executive Board anticipates that teaching in the fall semester of 2021 will essentially be in-person and that room capacities will be fully utilized. At the same time, however, the learning content of all courses will be made available digitally or in an equivalent form. In justified exceptional cases, lecturers may teach in online mode. Individual solutions will be provided for students who cannot participate in interactive events for medical reasons.

Ready for rapid transition to distance learning

Based on the experience of 2020 and remaining uncertainties, it is recognized that the situation may change at any time. The University Executive Board will continue to adapt measures based on further developments and the requirements of the federal government and the canton. As in 2020, the University of Bern is prepared to switch to distance learning at any time if necessary. Fritz Sager, Vice Rector Teaching, says: "Lecturers must also have a 'Plan B' ready this year when planning their courses in order to be able to switch quickly to online teaching. This has meanwhile proven to be very valuable."

Vaccination recommended, but not compulsory

The Executive Board of the University of Bern recommends that all university employees get vaccinated. "The numbers of coronavirus infections are rising again and protecting everyone's health is a top priority at the University of Bern," says Christian Leumann, rector of the University

of Bern. As previously reported, the Faculty of Medicine has considered requiring vaccination certificates or negative tests of unvaccinated individuals for admission to courses. This is due to considerations of the increased responsibility that medical students bear, as they are in contact with patients and work in primary care practices from the beginning. However, as an institution under public law, the University cannot allow individual departments to make exceptions regarding admission to courses.

Measures regarding the coronavirus at the University of Bern

The University of Bern continuously reviews the situation regarding the coronavirus. In doing so, it is also in regular exchange with the Bern University of Teacher Education and the Bern University of Applied Sciences. Information on the situation and measures at the University of Bern can be found at: www.unibe.ch/coronavirus

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