Protection concept of the University of Bern for continuing education under COVID-19 (last amended on September 1, 2021)

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

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

Statutory basis
- Ordinance on Measures during the Special Situation to combat the COVID-19 Epidemic of the Swiss Federal Council (818.101.26) of June 19, 2020 (as amended on June 23, 2021)
- Decision of the Executive Board of the University of Bern of August 23, 2021 on the certificate obligation for all university-related activities (except for teaching at Bachelor’s and Master’s level).

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.

Unless otherwise stated, the responsible body for the implementation of and compliance with the protection concept is the organizing body of the relevant continuing 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. Duty to Inform
Participants and lecturers are to be informed about the valid protection concept for continuing education, the rules of conduct and hygiene as well as the certificate obligation for continuing education before and during the course.

2. Certificate obligation and hygiene
a. All continuing education courses (including ones which take place externally) must be carried out with a certificate obligation. All persons present in the course room during lessons (participants, lecturers and employees of the program) must present a valid COVID certificate. Checking the COVID certificate is the responsibility of the program’s employees and must take place outside the course room. The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) makes the “COVID Certificate Check” app available for this purpose. Social distancing obligations have been suspended in classrooms, and rooms are allowed to be fully occupied.
b. At the University of Bern, and thus in all continuing education courses (including those held externally), wearing masks is mandatory indoors. Lecturers do not have to wear masks during their course if they maintain a distance of 3 meters from the participants. The obligation to wear masks during face-to-face courses taking place outdoors is suspended. The obligation to wear masks during continuing education courses can only be waived if everyone present has a certificate and a distance of 1.5 meters is observed.

c. The Facility Management Office provides hand sanitizers in the entrance area of the buildings and will also provide sufficient waste bins. 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 responsible for the regular cleaning and/or disinfection of other objects and equipment used by several people within the teaching setting (e.g. flipchart pens).

d. The teaching rooms must be ventilated regularly (every 30-45 minutes) and extensively.

e. For every course it is ensured that hygiene masks are available for special situations (person has forgotten hygiene mask).

f. Catering is to be offered by official catering providers. The regulations and protection concepts of the catering providers apply. Otherwise, refreshments in the breaks (catering) are only allowed in the seminar rooms, and seating is mandatory. Joint breaks in the corridors are not allowed.

g. The Rules on conduct and hygiene issued by the FOPH apply for everyone taking part in face-to-face courses.

h. Graduation ceremonies and other continuing education-related events with external participation (e.g. alumni events) are allowed to take place subject to adherence to the current protection measures. In case of events with external participation, the approval of the General Secretariat is required if 30 or more participants take part.

3. Measures to protect people at especially high risk and to exclude persons who are ill or who feel ill (quarantine and isolation)

a. People at especially high risk must be protected in accordance with specific protective measures; if this is ensured, access to events is possible.

b. Participants and lecturers are reminded that persons who show individual COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with infected persons are excluded from face-to-face courses.

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.

5. Transitional provision

Continuing education courses are allowed to be held until September 15, 2021 in accordance with the protection concept of July 5, 2021. The foregoing is without prejudice to earlier implementation due to a change in the relevant legal framework conditions.

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