Dear Students, dear Colleagues, dear Staff Members,

The novel coronavirus is spreading very fast in Germany and worldwide. This urges us to react quickly, but not without thorough consideration. On Friday, 14 March 2020, the City of Mannheim has issued a decree that prohibits public and private events of more than 50 people until 19 April 2020 and requires organizers of smaller events to register them first. The decree is effective immediately. Moreover, as of Tuesday, 17 March 2020, all schools, kindergartens and day care facilities will be closed until the end of the Easter break. Rhineland-Palatinate closes all these facilities as of Monday, 16 March 2020.

The new situation requires the University of Mannheim to adapt its measures in many areas. In some areas, this is effective immediately. Each and every one of us is responsible for the health of many people. Particularly we are responsible for the elderly and those who have pre-existing illnesses. Moreover, we are responsible to keep the University of Mannheim operational in order to return to normal soon.

The new, immediate measures are listed below. We will keep you up-to-date on the latest developments and will inform you continuously, particularly via our website (www.uni-mannheim.de/corona).

Kind regards - and please stay healthy!

Barbara Windscheid Thomas Puhl
Executive Vice President President

Immediate Measures of the University of Mannheim to Contain the Coronavirus

(As at: 15 March 2020, 9:30 a.m.)

1. The lecture period of the spring semester 2020 remains suspended until and including 19 April 2020. Until then, all those responsible in the President’s Office, the schools and the administrative and infrastructural units are urgently working on reducing the risks for students, teaching personnel and other staff members as far as possible by developing digital teaching concepts and further measures. Details will be communicated shortly.

2. On-campus classes, also those that have started already, are being canceled or, if possible, continued in digital form. This applies to classes for students as well as for other types of courses such as training for teaching personnel and staff members, choir and orchestra practices, and the sports program of the university. Mandatory internships, such as in the industry, that are not taking place at the university, can be continued. However, the continuation of the internship depends on the respective employer of the intern.

3. Conferences, congresses and other public events with participants from outside the university are canceled during the suspension of teaching operations.
4. The University Library and all respective subject-specific libraries are closed with immediate effect until and including 19 April 2020. In order to allow users to make urgent borrowings, the library’s central lending desk and the textbook collection remain open on Monday, 16 March 2020, and Tuesday, 17 March 2020. Books from the closed stacks can be ordered until Monday night via the online catalog Primo. The central lending desk, the A3 Library, A5 Library and Business Administration Library will be open on Monday, 16 March and Tuesday, 17 March exclusively to lend media and empty lockers. The library is not open for regular business. Further information can be found on: https://www.bib.uni-mannheim.de/

5. The university administration, institutions responsible for infrastructure and other units remain operational. Studying, research and teaching activities are to be continued as far as possible in order to avoid hardship for the persons affected. However, as far as possible, these units offer their services via telephone or e-mail. In order to break the chain of virus transmission and to allow parents who are affected by the closure of schools and day care facilities, superiors are to allow their employees work from home as far as this is possible. Employees who belong to the at-risk group are to work from home exclusively. If this is not possible, employees are to reduce their accrued overtime before they receive a paid leave.

In order keep the university operational, a minimum of employees needs to be present on its premises. This particularly applies to the administration, the university IT and the library, but also to the dean's offices and the head offices of central research institutions and all other required units.

In order to allow superiors to organize this, we ask all employees to come to work as usual on Monday, 14 March 2020, unless you were able to arrange to work from home with your superior beforehand and received the necessary approval.

Due to the exceptional situation, working from home can be approved by your superior alone and, until further notice, does not need additional approval from the human resources department. The approval may be recalled by your superior at any time.

Moreover, employees need to be reachable in their home offices. Office phones can be forwarded to private lines. During this exceptional period, work from home may be completed in the hours from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

6. As it is in the interest of the students, the university will hold planned examinations under consideration of the current risks as far as possible. As far as state examinations are concerned, the ministry is currently discussing the challenges with the respective examination authorities (Landesprüfungsämter). For examinations given by the university, the following procedures apply: Written on-campus examinations of the coming weeks will be postponed. In the next few days, we will work on finding solutions to hold the examinations under the new circumstances. We will inform you in due time about this.

Oral examinations will take place on campus as planned, unless a different
arrangement has been made with the respective examiner (e.g. examinations via video conference).

All deadlines for final theses or term papers will be extended by the time of the library closing. Currently, that is by five weeks.

The university is striving to find accommodating solutions regarding deRegistrations and re-sit options for all on-campus examinations. A de-registration from an exam, however, needs to be requested before the examination. Students do not need to indicate reasons or provide a medical certificate.

It is the goal of the university, that all students of the spring semester 2020 can complete their examinations and that no student is at a disadvantage due to the current situation.

7. In order to contain the coronavirus, the City of Mannheim has prohibited all public and private events and gatherings of more than 50 people until 19 April 2020. At the University of Mannheim, meetings with more than five attendees are to be avoided with immediate effect. Meetings of the university bodies will not take place until further notice. The respective chairs of the meetings will decide whether the current agenda requires immediate decisions or if the meeting can be postponed. If decisions cannot be postponed, the chair is to make use of the option to decide via e-mail or, in very urgent matters, make use of their right to decide alone. Please note, that certain types of decisions are excluded from the right to make urgent decisions by the rules of order. Telephone or video conferences are an option to consider for meetings.

8. Persons who are not members of the university, may only enter university buildings due to important reasons and are to leave the buildings without delay if they are asked to do so by the staff.

9. Business trips to COVID risk areas are not approved until further notice. Earlier approvals for business trips to risk areas are hereby revoked. Teaching personnel, students and researchers who have returned to the university from risk areas as defined by the Robert Koch Institute have to observe a two-week self-quarantine.

10. All members of the university are asked to observe the recommendations of the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) for educational institutions. (https://www.infektionsschutz.de/fileadmin/infektionsschutz.de/Downloads/Merkblatt-Bildungseinrichtungen-Coronavirus.pdf, in German).

11. The university is updating its measures and plans continuously and informs its members and the public comprehensively at short notice. We urgently ask all members of the university to check the website www.uni-mannheim.de/corona and their e-mail regularly in order to receive new information.

12. The Studierendenwerk Mannheim adapts individual measures and communicates them individually. Further information can be found on: www.stw-ma.de