Hygiene Policy of the University of Mannheim (as at 29 April 2020)

Policy for additional temporary measures to protect employees from infection with SARS-CoV-2

When it comes to working in times of the coronavirus pandemic, the safety and health of our employees comes first. Safety at work is key in this regard. In light of the present epidemiological situation, this hygiene policy lays out the necessary measures that must be followed by all employees within the buildings, premises and vehicles of the university. The rules for employees apply analogously to all students and other university members unless special regulations are in place for certain groups of persons. University operations are only possible if each and every one observes the measures described below.

The hygiene policy is regularly adapted to the latest provisions and recommendations of the public authorities and to the according coronavirus measures taken or adapted by the university and their impact on the restrictions for the university. The current version can be found on the website:

www.uni-mannheim.de/en/corona

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1. General hygiene and distancing regulations

Generally, the following hygiene regulations to protect employees from viral infection apply:

a. Insofar it is possible in terms of their technical equipment and type of work, employees should carry out any office work from home (for general guidelines regarding office workspaces, see no. 5).

b. In order to ensure that work areas and communal facilities are occupied by as few people as possible, departments and units should divide up their employees in teams working in separate shifts. To reduce internal contacts as far as possible, superiors should make sure to always assign the same people to the same team.

c. Procedures are organized such that employees have as little contact to other people as possible.

d. Employees must maintain a safety distance of at least 1.5 meters, if possible 2 meters, from each other, whether they are inside buildings, outside on campus or inside vehicles. This is ensured by according signs, floor markings, cordons or access restrictions.

e. In case direct contact is unavoidable, additional protection must be ensured primarily by setting up protective barriers, or, if not possible, by wearing face masks (see more under no. 4).

f. Work utensils should always be used by the same person. If this is not possible, hands should be properly sanitized before using the utensils and the latter frequently cleaned, especially before being passed on to other people.

g. Employees showing discernible symptoms (including light fever, symptoms of cold, shortness of breath) have to leave the workplace or stay at home until their symptoms have been checked by a doctor.

h. Additional hygiene measures are to be taken by providing disinfectant dispensers and ensuring that communal rooms, utensils and other contact surfaces are sanitized at frequent intervals.

i. In particular, employees must practice cough and sneeze etiquette and observe hand hygiene regulations.

j. Risk groups are granted special protection, for which necessary individual protective measures are taken. Employees who are pregnant or have pre-existing illnesses as listed by the Robert Koch Institute must work from home. If this is not possible, they may work at a university workspace shielded from contact to customers or other people, provided according infection control measures are in place and they consulted their physician or the occupational medical service beforehand (see information on preventive occupational health measures under no. 14). Employees over 60 years of age should work from home unless they decide to work on the university premises voluntarily.
k. Superiors should actively communicate to their units that their health comes first and make sure that the additional infection control measures and guidelines of the university are explained in a clear, comprehensible way.

2. **Restriction of maximum number of people allowed to assemble**

   a. Currently, a maximum number of five people are allowed to come together in non-public spaces within the university buildings and premises, provided the hygiene and distancing regulations specified above are observed. Exceptions apply in the case of

   - the University Library,
   - examinations (see no. 9),
   - operations in the context of the admissions process,
   - meetings of university bodies (see no. 11),
   - meetings in the context of research and teaching activities (see no. 12), and
   - job interviews and interviews for professorial appointments.

   The President's Office may approve further exceptions.

   b. Within the public area (e.g. sidewalks in front of the university, bus stops), the provisions of the current version of the coronavirus decree (CoronaVO) of the Land of Baden-Württemberg apply.

3. **Access regulations**

   a. For rooms which are used by several people and have two separate entrances, such as conference rooms, lecture halls or open-plan offices, one door is to be marked as entrance and the other as exit.

   b. In case there is a risk of people gathering in communal rooms (e.g. washrooms or kitchenettes) or in front of shared objects (e.g. photocopiers), mandatory distancing must be ensured by means of access restrictions, cordons or signs and floor markings.

   c. Elevators may only be used by one person at a time and should only be used by people with reduced mobility or to transport heavy loads. A waiting area should be drawn in front of the elevators, for instance by marking the floor with adhesive tape to ensure the required distance is maintained.

   Please note: In case of an emergency (e.g. fire alarm), all escape routes must be used, and the restrictions are temporarily lifted.
4. **Face masks**

   a. In situations where it is not possible to maintain the minimum distance of 1.5 meters to other people, employees must wear face masks to cover their mouths and noses. For this purpose, the university supplies its employees with suitable mouth and nose protection. The same applies for employees who have contact to customers or a large number of other people in the scope of their job. Students are individually responsible for securing appropriate mouth and nose protection.

   b. In circulation areas (hallways, staircases) and in communal rooms (washrooms, kitchenettes) of university buildings, employees must wear non-surgical cloth face masks or comparable mouth and nose coverings, regardless of the availability of protective masks. In light of the limited stock of such masks, employees are asked to use their own cloth face masks for this purpose.

5. **General guidelines for office workspaces**

   In addition to the general hygiene and distancing regulations, the following guidelines apply in the office environment:

   a. Insofar it is possible in terms of technical equipment and the type of work, employees should carry out any office work from home.

   b. Employees should each be offered an individual office.

   c. If employees cannot be provided with an individual office, but their presence at the university is required, the office desks should be set out in a way that ensures that employees are not sitting directly opposite of each other and that they can maintain the mandatory distance from one another. If the latter is not possible, employees should be separated by protective desk dividers. To ensure good air quality inside the rooms, a maximum of 50% of the office desks may be occupied.

   d. The offices must be aired frequently.

6. **General guidelines for positions involving contact to customers or other people**

   Personal contact to customers and/or other people coming and going must be limited to the minimal extent that is necessary to provide a certain (non-digital) service. Advising is to be carried out via electronic means of information and communication.

   a. At the entrance of the respective area, a sign must be hung up advising customers of the general hygiene and distancing regulations and their obligation to wear mouth and nose protection in the form of non-surgical face masks.

   b. Certain measures such as access restrictions or appointment-only policies must be taken in order to ensure that the respective areas are occupied by as few people as
possible and that the required minimum distance of 1.5 meters between individuals can be maintained.

c. At all places where people might have to wait in line, floor markings should be used every 1.5 meters to indicate the minimum distance to be kept to the next person in line.

d. For employees working behind counters, adequate barriers must be installed between staff and customers.

e. If possible, the entrance to the room should be separate from the exit if this makes sense for infection control reasons.

f. Customers should be enabled to disinfect their hands before entering the area, provided this is possible and sufficient disinfectant is available. The respective university institutions are to supervise customers’ hand disinfection, make sure to fill up the dispensers and take appropriate measures to prevent theft.

g. Employees must be enabled to wash their hands under running water with soap and dry them off with disposable paper towels in close proximity to their workspace. Alternatively, they can use the disinfectant supplied or use disposable gloves.

h. Plastic, glass or metal surfaces touched by customers must be sanitized by the cleaning services at least once a day.

7. General guidelines for using communal rooms and kitchenettes

In addition to the general hygiene and distancing regulations, the following guidelines apply for using communal rooms and kitchenettes:

a. Before using communal rooms and equipment (e.g. kitchenettes, coffee machines, microwaves, dishwashers, cupboards), employees are to perform proper hand hygiene.

b. Doorknobs should not be touched if possible.

c. Objects of daily use (especially crockery, tea towels, cloths and sponges) should always be used by the same person if possible.

8. General guidelines for using washrooms

In addition to the general hygiene and distancing regulations, the following guidelines apply for using washrooms:

a. If possible, doorknobs should not be touched. For instance, employees should avoid closing the doors of bathroom stalls after leaving the stall.
b. Employees are to wash their hands under running water with soap and dry them off with disposable paper towels.

c. Instructions on proper hand hygiene will be put up.

9. Examinations

Examinations are generally held in digital form. In case they have to take place in person, an agreement must be made with the exam coordinators of the Division for Student Affairs. The general hygiene and distancing regulations must be observed.

10. Contact with external companies

a. Any communication with non-university members should also take place in written form, via e-mail or telephone, or via video or telephone conference.

b. Access by non-university members is to be limited to a minimum.

c. Access by external companies that is absolutely necessary, for instance for cleaning purposes, guard duties or technical services (e.g. building projects and planning, technical maintenance and repairs), needs to be agreed upon with the division responsible and any other unit involved.

d. The external companies in charge of cleaning services and guard duties need to agree to keep their employees’ shift plans for at least a month so that it is possible to analyze who was present on the university premises at what time.

e. In addition, the following regulations apply for external companies entering the premises for technical work:

   - The company is required to notify the Reception Desk at the main university entrance beforehand.
   - Only the Reception Desk can grant access and hand over keys to the university buildings.
   - The Reception Desk must document the contact details of non-university members as well as the time they entered and left the university buildings.

f. Non-university members must keep to the general hygiene and distance regulations during the entire time they are within the university buildings. They are informed of these regulations by the divisions or units responsible beforehand.

g. Non-university members are obligated to wear non-surgical face masks or comparable mouth and nose coverings during the entire time they are within the university buildings. The divisions or units responsible will inform them of this obligation beforehand and make sure it is observed.
11. Meetings of university bodies

Meetings of statutory bodies of the university should generally not be held in person. Instead, they should take place by electronic means of information and communication. Necessary decisions are to be made in telephone or video conferences and by way of circulation and accelerated proceedings as far as this is legally permissible.

For sessions which need to be held in person by decision of the board and which serve to keep university operations running, the following regulations apply in addition to the general hygiene and distancing regulations:

a. The bodies should only meet in rooms that allow for the required physical distance between individuals to be maintained and that have separate entrance and exit doors.

b. The participants are obligated to wear non-surgical face masks or comparable mouth and nose coverings in case it is not possible to maintain the minimum distance of 1.5 meters to each other, as well as when entering and leaving the conference room.

c. If possible, doorknobs should not be touched. This can be accomplished, for instance, by propping the doors open until all participants have arrived or have left the room.

d. The rooms used for the meetings must be aired frequently.

e. To keep the groups as small as possible, guests should only join the meeting via video/telephone.

f. Before the rooms can be used again, their surfaces must be sanitized, which is to be organized with the cleaning coordinator (e-mail: carina.smith@verwaltung.uni-mannheim.de, telephone: 0621/181-1046 or 0172/2029081).

12. Meetings in the context of research and teaching activities

Meetings serving to carry out research and teaching activities are only allowed if they cannot be replaced by means of electronic information and communication. They require prior approval by the President’s Office. The person or entity planning to hold the meeting must draw up an implementation concept that takes into account the general hygiene and distancing regulations as well as the additional guidelines for meetings of university bodies (see no. 11), and present this concept to the President’s Office.

13. Job interviews and interviews for professorial appointments

If possible, job interviews and interviews for professorial appointments should be held via electronic communication channels using a system recommended by the University IT (see https://www.uni-mannheim.de/it/digitale_jobinterviews/). Exceptions apply in the case
of applicants with disabilities, who should be offered an interview in person. If requested by an applicant with a disability, the interview can also be conducted electronically.

In case job interviews or interviews for professorial appointments are held in person, the general hygiene and distancing regulations as well as the additional guidelines for meetings of university bodies must be observed.

14. Preventive occupational health measures

Employees can seek individual medical advice from the occupational medical service, including consultation on special risk factors such as pre-existing illnesses or personal predispositions. Employees can also consult the medical service about anxiety and psychological stress.

Consultation is offered by telephone or by means of electronic telecommunication.

15. Legal bases and recommendations of public authorities

The hygiene policy is based on the following laws and recommendations:


- Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs: SARS-CoV-2 Occupational health and safety standard ([SARS-CoV-2-Arbeitsschutzstandard](https://www.bmas.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/PDF-Schwerpunkte/sars-cov-2-arbeitsschutzstandard.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1)), as at 16 April 2020:


- Robert Koch Institute: Guidelines for sanitization and disinfection (German language only), as at 4 April 2020:
Robert Koch Institute: Guidelines for sanitization and disinfection of surfaces outside of healthcare settings in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (German language only), as at 4 April 2020: https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Reinigung_Desinfektion.html

Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA): Information on the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and COVID-19 (German language only)
  o For employers, as at 24 April 2020: https://www.infektionsschutz.de/fileadmin/infektionsschutz.de/Downloads/Infoblatt-Arbeitgeber-Coronavirus.pdf
  o For employees, as at 23 April 2020: https://www.infektionsschutz.de/fileadmin/infektionsschutz.de/Downloads/Infoblatt-Arbeitnehmer-Coronavirus.pdf