

Hygiene Policy of the University of Mannheim (as at 25 September 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 members and affiliates of the university 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 corresponding 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 intranet at <https://intranet.uni-mannheim.de/arbeitsplatz/personalangelegenheiten/aktuelles-zu-corona/#c193205>

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1. General hygiene and distancing regulations

Generally, the following rules apply:

- a. Employees must maintain a safety distance of at least 1.5 meters, if possible 2 meters, between each other, whether they are inside buildings, outside on campus or inside vehicles. This will be ensured by corresponding signs, floor markings, cordons or access regulations.
- b. If it is not possible to maintain the prescribed distance, employees must wear face masks. They are generally required to do so in circulation areas.
- c. When violating the obligation to wear a face mask, a prohibition of access and participation applies.
- d. In particular, employees are to practice cough and sneeze etiquette and to observe hand hygiene regulations.
- e. Rooms must be aired frequently.
- f. Office equipment and materials should always be used by the same person. If this is not possible, hands should be properly sanitized before using the materials and the latter frequently cleaned, especially before being passed on to other people.
- g. Insofar as it is possible in terms of technical equipment and the type of work, employees can carry out office work either from home or at the office or by a combination of both (for general guidelines regarding office workspaces, see no. 5). This will be decided by their superiors in consideration of the tasks that need to be performed, the office setups and upon prior discussion with the employees. Personal needs of employees, especially those from risk groups or with family members to care for, are to be taken into account according to the current legal regulations and recommendations of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Ministry of Finance (<https://intranet.uni-mannheim.de/arbeitsplatz/personalangelegenheiten/aktuelles-zu-covid-19/#c190607>).
- h. Procedures are organized such that employees have as little contact to other people as possible.
- i. 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).
- j. Persons showing symptoms indicative of the coronavirus (fever, dry cough, impaired smelling or taste) are not allowed to enter the premises of the university. Employees with symptoms of a cold have to leave the workplace or stay at home until their symptoms have been checked by a doctor.

- k. Additional hygiene measures are to be taken by providing disinfectant dispensers and ensuring that communal rooms, office materials and other contact surfaces are sanitized at frequent intervals.
- l. Employees who have a doctoral certificate stating that, due to personal preconditions, they cannot be treated or only to a limited extent in case of a COVID-19 infection, or who are at a higher risk for a severe disease progression, are not allowed to take on tasks with a lot of contact to other persons or where they cannot maintain the distance of 1.5 meters. In these cases, superiors and affected employees should examine possibilities of reorganizing work processes in a way that enables employees to carry out their work without being put at risk.
- m. 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. The current version of the Corona Ordinance (Corona-Verordnung, CoronaVO) and the additional group-specific regulations for the non-public area determine the maximum number of people that are currently allowed to assemble within the university buildings and premises, provided the hygiene and distancing regulations specified above are observed (<https://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de/en/service/aktuelle-infos-zu-corona/aktuelle-corona-verordnung-des-landes-baden-wuerttemberg/>). Additional hygiene policies and regulations have been drawn up for the following areas and situations:
 - the University Library (<https://www.bib.uni-mannheim.de/en/corona/>),
 - examinations (see no. 9),
 - 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. University operations are given priority when it comes to the allocation of rooms.

- b. Within the public area (e.g. sidewalks in front of the university, bus stops), the provisions of the current version of the 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 should be marked as entrance and the other as exit insofar as possible.
- 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.

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. 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.
- c. For this purpose, the university supplies its employees with suitable mouth and nose protection. Employees should wear their private mouth and nose coverings, if possible.

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 as it is possible in terms of technical equipment and the type of work, employees can carry out office work either from home or at the office or by a combination of both (see no. 1 f).

- b. Employees should each be offered an individual office. To ensure this as far as possible, all organizational possibilities should be exhausted (e.g. dividing employees up in teams, working in shifts, working from home, reorganizing working hours).
- c. If employees cannot be provided with an individual office, but several people need to be present simultaneously, 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. Appropriate organizational measures need to be taken to ensure that the hygiene and distancing regulations are observed.
- d. The offices must be aired frequently.

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

In addition to the general hygiene and distancing regulations, the following guidelines apply for positions involving personal contact to customers or other people:

- a. Personal contact to or advising of customers or other people should be kept digital wherever possible.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. For employees working behind counters, adequate barriers must be installed between staff and customers.
- 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 with soap under running water 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 according to the respective cleaning policy in place.

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 cubicle.
- b. Employees are to wash their hands with soap under running water and dry them off with disposable paper towels.
- c. Instructions on proper hand hygiene will be put up.

9. Examinations

Applicable regulations are specified in the [general guidelines for examinations](#).

10. Contact with external companies and external persons

- a. Any communication with non-university members should 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. They also inform them that they are not allowed to enter the premises of the university in case of a violation.

11. Meetings of university bodies and other events

Meetings of statutory bodies of the university should preferably 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, 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. The designated number of seats in the rooms must not be exceeded under any circumstances. The marked seats must be used.
- 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 and whenever they are not seated.

- 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 or telephone conference.
- f. The rooms in which the meetings are held are sanitized by the cleaning services according to the respective cleaning policy in place.

Other events, especially sports or cultural events, are subject to the provisions of the current versions of the various coronavirus decrees. Other regulations are specified in a separate hygiene policy. Events of this kind must be approved by the President's Office.

12. Meetings in the context of research and teaching activities

Meetings in the context of research and teaching activities are to be carried out according to the current version of the CoronaVO and under strict observation of the hygiene and distancing regulations specified above (<https://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de/de/service/aktuelle-infos-zu-corona/aktuelle-corona-verordnung-des-landes-baden-wuerttemberg>). Further provisions are defined in the special regulations for meetings in the context of research and teaching activities.

13. Job interviews and interviews for professorial appointments

Job interviews and interviews for professorial appointments may be held in person, provided no more than the maximum number of people allowed according to the current version of the CoronaVO take part (<https://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de/en/service/aktuelle-infos-zu-corona/aktuelle-corona-verordnung-des-landes-baden-wuerttemberg/>). Furthermore, the general hygiene and distancing regulations as well as the additional regulations for meetings of university bodies (see no. 11) must be observed.

By decision of the board, job interviews and interviews for professorial appointments can also be held via electronic communication channels using a system recommended by the University IT (see https://www.uni-mannheim.de/it/digitale_jobinterviews/).

In any case, applicants with disabilities must be offered an interview in person. If requested by an applicant with a disability, the interview can also be conducted electronically.

14. Preventive occupational health measures

Employees can seek individual medical advice from the occupational medical service, including consultation on special risk factors such as underlying conditions 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 the public authorities

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

- CoronaVO of the Land as of 1 October 2020
- Corona Ordinance of the Land of Baden-Württemberg (Corona-Verordnung) in the version valid from 2 June 2020: <https://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de/en/service/aktuelle-infos-zu-corona/aktuelle-corona-verordnung-des-landes-baden-wuerttemberg/>
- Further decrees of the Land of Baden-Württemberg relating to the coronavirus, especially for sports and cultural events: <https://www.baden-wuerttemberg.de/en/service/aktuelle-infos-zu-corona/uebersicht-corona-verordnungen/>
- Hygiene policy of the University Library for the study areas and the central lending desk: <https://www.bib.uni-mannheim.de/en/corona/>
- Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs: SARS-CoV-2 Occupational health and safety standard (SARS-CoV-2-Arbeitsschutzstandard, German only), as at 10 August 2020: <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Presse/Meldungen/2020/neue-sars-cov-2-arbeitsschutzregel.html>
- Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA): COVID-19 – Guidelines for employers and employees working primarily in an office environment (German only), as at 15 April 2020: Wednesday, April 15, 2020: <https://www.baua.de/DE/Themen/Arbeitsgestaltung-im-Betrieb/Bio-stoffe/FAQ/pdf/Bueroarbeit.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=3>
- Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA): COVID-19 – Measures for communal washrooms and sanitation facilities, communal break and stand-by rooms, and accommodation provided by the employer (German only), as at 15 April 2020: Wednesday, April 15, 2020: <https://www.baua.de/DE/Themen/Arbeitsgestaltung-im-Betrieb/Bio-stoffe/FAQ/pdf/Sanitaereinrichtungen-Pausenraeume-Unterkuenfte.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=4>
- Robert Koch Institute: Guidelines for sanitization and disinfection (German 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 only)
 - For employers, as at 29 June 2020: <https://www.infektionsschutz.de/fileadmin/infektionsschutz.de/Downloads/Infoblatt-Arbeitgeber-Coronavirus.pdf>
 - For employees, as at 29 June 2020: <https://www.infektionsschutz.de/fileadmin/infektionsschutz.de/Downloads/Infoblatt-Arbeitnehmer-Coronavirus.pdf>