

**22 May 2020****Summer semester: Challenges remain following strong start  
Special support needed for colleges of art and music**

Today in Berlin, one month into the online 2020 summer semester, HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt provided a positive initial assessment but also addressed the need for further action:

“Universities have widely been very successful in transitioning to digital teaching formats. This is predominantly down to the phenomenal yet exhausting efforts of teaching and administrative staff. In many cases, universities had already laid the foundations long before the coronavirus crisis by training staff, expanding their digital infrastructure and continuously developing online teaching formats within the limits of their possibilities. In many instances, they are commendably being supported by special programmes that were swiftly set up at state level.

Having said that, this initial positive assessment of a very unusual semester cannot blind us to the fact that the federal and state governments and universities will soon need to make a concerted effort to improve digital Infrastructures at universities in order to meet the now much clearer requirements in the long term. This is something the HRK repeatedly emphasised prior to the relevant announcement in the coalition agreement of the federal government and the recommendations of the Commission of Experts for Research and Innovation. A federal and state funding programme that considers the digitalisation needs of universities would be very welcome.

The situation of German colleges of art and music currently deserves particular attention. The teachers and instructors at these institutions are also very much committed to making digital courses in the theoretical and academic fields available to their students. Nevertheless, colleges of art and music are heavily dependent on practical teaching formats that can only be fully provided in the form of face-to-face teaching. In this respect, the easing of the physical restrictions placed on teaching – in accordance with the level of infection – is particularly important within this field. It is also important to note that a potential decline in the number of international students in the 2020/21 winter semester would create major difficulties for a large number of colleges of art and music.

In light of this, the HRK urgently appeals to the federal and state governments to specifically consider the special needs of colleges of art and music in all future resolutions.”