

5 March 2021**HRK following the latest federal/state resolutions on the coronavirus crisis:
Keep students and universities in mind**

Students and universities must be kept in mind in the scenarios regarding how to proceed in the coronavirus crisis. The President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Professor Dr Peter-André Alt, called for this today in Berlin in reference to the resolutions reached by the federal government and federal states on Wednesday (3 March).

"Students and universities also have a strong interest in returning to safe face-to-face contact where possible, at least on a part-time, differentiated basis. We have students who have been enrolled for two semesters and are yet to visit their university or see their fellow students in person. Exam candidates have a legitimate interest in continuing to prepare for their exams promptly and safely in person, at least on a part-time basis. Test concepts can and must also be carefully tried out and rapid tests used for this purpose. The same goes for facilitating laboratory exercises."

In the view of the HRK President, the considerations included in the resolutions for schools cannot be simply applied to universities. Instead, they would need to be adapted and underpinned with an appropriate amount of resources for the universities with respect to logistical requirements. Digital platforms could also be used at universities as a means to effectively and quickly trace the contacts of infected persons.

"However, if more face-to-face teaching can be achieved by means of testing and vaccination strategies, these options should also be used. Furthermore, our colleagues in research, teaching and administration should be given access to free rapid tests, as has been announced for company employees," says Professor Oliver Günther, HRK Vice-President for Governance, Teaching and Learning. "This equal treatment is crucial, not least as recognition of the teaching and research work performed in universities for society as well as the important educational role that universities play. We should not forget that it was research at universities that made the positive advances through vaccination possible in the first place."