

**16 July 2021**

**Striving for on-campus study, pushing vaccinations and observing the pandemic  
HRK President looks ahead to the coming winter semester**

With a view to the end of the lecture period, Prof Dr Peter-André Alt, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), spoke today in Berlin about the prospects for the next semester:

"Once again, I want to explicitly acknowledge the great achievements of the universities in coping with the pandemic. Their goal now is to enable on-campus study again in the coming winter semester 2021/22, as far as the framework conditions allow.

The ever-changing pandemic remains the central factor in planning. Health protection must be guaranteed. Universities will use the experience of the past three semesters to assess local risks and responsibly design access to face-to-face lessons. It is important to make use of all options to strengthen and support students in their everyday studies.

In the discussions surrounding the Infectious Diseases Protection Act and vaccinations for students, the HRK has recently repeatedly made clear which legal, financial and organisational framework conditions the universities need. This specifically concerns the distance requirement, the legal basis and responsibility for any checks on compliance with the 3G rule. We are engaged in very good dialogue with the states on this and they actively support the HRK's demand for a vaccination campaign for students in different ways.

As things stand, universities are gearing up for different scenarios, largely based on the 3G ("Tested, vaccinated, recovered") rule. The following are some possible scenarios:

- Exercises and seminars can be conducted with a mask and in compliance with the distance and ventilation rules for face-to-face teaching; larger lectures should be conducted digitally.
- Hybrid formats with the option of participating digitally or in person are offered if this makes didactic sense, provided that it is technically possible and can be financed. Given the complex requirements here, hybrid formats cannot be the rule.

In the event of worsening of the pandemic, a nationwide return to purely digital formats will be necessary. The universities cannot plan for different scenarios for an unlimited period in parallel. They therefore need clear framework conditions and the continued support of policy-makers.

The most important weapon against the pandemic is and remains vaccination, and the federal government, states and local authorities have recently launched further, very welcome initiatives in this regard. It must be clear to all involved that the progress of the vaccination campaign will essentially determine which options for action will be available to the universities. Therefore, I urge all students and staff at universities to take up vaccination offers

at their home or study locations so that we can once again make universities places of learning and discussion where scientific discourse and social encounters go hand in hand."