

23 March 2022

HRK Senate:

Yes to more in-person classes at universities – legal certainty demanded for mask mandates

After four semesters impacted by Covid-19, in which studying and teaching had to take place predominantly in digital form, the Senate of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) welcomed the prospect of being able to hold classes largely in person again in the summer semester of 2022 at its meeting yesterday. At the same time, it emphatically pointed out that in-person classes must be conducted as far as possible without endangering students and teachers.

"Universities must and want to ensure that students can start learning in person again – without distancing and restrictions on room capacities," said HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt in Berlin today. "However, in terms of health protection, this will only be safely feasible if universities can simultaneously make the wearing of FFP2 masks mandatory. This possibility is important to them, not least in view of the fact that vulnerable groups among students should also have the opportunity to study safely on site. And last but not least, teaching staff who are particularly at risk, for example due to pre-existing conditions, must be protected."

The HRK Senate recalled the particular importance of FFP2 masks in reducing infection rates. It therefore called on the federal states to ensure with legal certainty that universities can mandate the wearing of FFP2 masks as part of their hygiene concepts.

The Senate also appealed to all university members to continue adhering to the wearing of FFP2 masks in university buildings and especially during classes, regardless of the legal situation, to further contain the pandemic.