

28 January 2021**HRK on digital examinations: boost flexibility of universities and take advantage of opportunities**

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities in Germany are faced with the challenge of holding the upcoming final examinations at the end of the current winter semester in a legally incontestable manner. In a rapidly changing pandemic situation, they need to be able to respond flexibly and highly adaptively and offer attendance-based or digital examinations. The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) touched on this today in Berlin.

HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt: "The federal states still need to resolve existing legal uncertainties surrounding digital examinations with appropriate regulations to allow universities sufficient scope for action. Some federal states have already enacted laws or are currently in the process of preparing them. Having said that, the majority lack such regulations. It is inadequate to draft laws purely from the perspective of examination legislation. Rather, data privacy, data security and related issues must also be regulated."

The HRK emphasises that the form of examination must be chosen on a case-by-case basis by the university or the responsible internal departments. Infection prevention and practical feasibility would have to be factored into the decision, as would issues related to technical feasibility (e.g. Internet access) and examination didactics.

In the view of the HRK, the current push towards innovative solutions brought about by the pandemic also presents opportunities. According to the HRK, universities are intent on discussing the key issue of different examination formats beyond the pandemic and on continuing to explore this important topic with an innovative spirit, with a view to further enhancing studying and teaching. This involves testing out new examination formats such as digital open book examinations.