

# Action plan for conducting face-to-face examinations

during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

As of 1 February 2022

## I. Introduction

Based on the Infection Protection Act (IfSG), the NRW Corona Protection Ordinance (CoronaSchVO) and other legal provisions established in the context of overcoming the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the following regulations have been defined for conducting examinations during the examination period for the winter semester 2021/22 at the University of Duisburg-Essen. As a rule, examinations can be held face to face. Due to the high number of infections, examinations should be conducted in online formats wherever this change is feasible without an unreasonable amount of inconvenience. The faculties and/or the responsible teaching staff take the relevant decisions.

### **Brief overview of the overall conditions for face-to-face examinations:**

- General protective measures ('AHA' rules)
- [3G access checks](#) apply to examinations in the same way as to classes, with the checks being conducted either by the faculties or by the security service, depending on the size of the examination room.
- Testing in accordance with [UDE's testing strategy](#)  
An obligation to get tested applies to individuals who are not immunised (the third 'G'). The NRW Coronavirus Protection Ordinance stipulates that negative test results are valid for 24 hours or 48 hours in the case of PCR tests. Self-tests and rapid tests are helpful and recommended in the case of immunised individuals.
- An obligation to wear face masks applies within buildings and during classes and events. Exceptions: teaching staff and speakers may take off their masks during examinations if they keep a minimum distance of 1.5 m from their audience or while they are behind a transparent barrier.
- It is no longer necessary to keep minimum distances in classrooms and lecture halls. For examinations in lecture halls, seat occupancy ratios of 1:4 are usually applied; thus, some distance between individuals is already given for reasons of examination organisation. As a result of this occupancy ratio, the number of participants remains under 500 even in the large lecture halls (LX, R14, S04). A seat occupancy rate of 1:2 applies for examinations in classrooms. The PC halls can be used to full capacity since the distance between individuals is greater by one third than in lecture halls due to the size of the desks. When moving about in buildings, the minimum distance of 1.5 m must be kept wherever possible.
- As it is no longer necessary to keep records of attendants, seating plans no longer need to be documented. However, the numbering of seats is retained even if it is currently irrelevant.

The existing separate concepts for examinations (e.g. in Physical Education) will also have to be adjusted but are not affected by this.

This document summarises the protective measures and rules of conduct applicable to face-to-face classes as guidelines for the faculties, which supplement the [internal action plan](#). As the overall conditions and legal provisions are currently subject to continuous change, this action plan will be adapted and expanded as required.

An [information sheet](#) that describes the conditions and the rules of conduct for on-campus operations has been compiled for students.

## II. General rules for conducting examinations

### 1. Room allocation and capacity requirements

The usual process for the allocation of centrally managed rooms for classes and examinations by the Facility Management Division continues to apply. An [overview of rooms](#) has been published. All rooms can once again be used without adhering to minimum distances; reduced capacity of the rooms is usually applied for examinations. The Facility Management Division usually allows 30 minutes for admission procedures before the actual start time of the examination.

Examinations and meetings organised decentrally may be held in premises managed by the faculties. With the exception of the oral part of DSH examinations, rooms for oral examinations are independently allocated by the faculties or the responsible units. Rooms should be selected that can be well ventilated.

### 2. Accessibility and room setup

The main building entrances are open:

Mondays to Fridays between 6 am and 9 pm

Saturdays between 7.30 am and 12.30 pm

(exception: buildings housing libraries will remain open until at least 10 pm).

The Facility Management Division will implement all necessary organisational and protective measures for centrally managed rooms (labelling of entrances and exits, cleaning contact surfaces every workday, sanitiser, etc.).

Medical face coverings (surgical masks) are no longer provided free of charge in the centrally managed lecture halls. Teaching staff will be provided with masks by the faculty or by ordering from the central stock kept by the Procurement Department as usual. Students have to procure their masks themselves.

The faculties are responsible for developing and implementing a hygiene concept for rooms that cannot be booked via the central system.

In all cases, the respective faculty is responsible for conducting the examination.

### 3. Ventilation of lecture halls and classrooms

In centrally managed lecture halls, in all classrooms without windows and in some classrooms with windows (for example, S06 and R11 T), proper ventilation is ensured by means of forced air-handling systems. Potentially virus-laden aerosols are regularly removed with the exhaust air. Partial recirculation, which is usually applied in order to save energy, has been switched off. Most lecture halls are equipped with displacement ventilation systems, which provide each seat with fresh air and thus provide additional protection from infection.

All other examination rooms must be thoroughly aired for three to five minutes approximately every 15 minutes. When airing rooms manually, you may find the CO2-Timer app from the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV) helpful, which includes a timer function on your mobile phone: [Lüften leicht gemacht: eine kostenlose App gegen dicke Luft](#) (ventilation made simple: a free app to clear the air; only available in German). If you prefer 'analogue' aids, you can request a DGUV calculator disc from the Staff Unit for Occupational Safety and Health (☎ 0201 183 4499 or 3628), on which you can set the number of persons and square metres to have it display the required ventilation intervals.

#### 4. Testing and the 3G rule

To participate in events, individuals who are not immunised must present a negative test result from a test centre (public test facility) that is no older than 24 hours. These tests can be taken free of charge at the [public test centres](#) in building S06 in Essen, in the container next to the Gerhard-Mercator-Haus in Duisburg or any other test centre at your place of residence.

Access to all indoor events at UDE is only possible with proof of immunisation or of a negative test result in accordance with the so-called 3G rule: vaccinated (*geimpft*), recovered (*genesen*), tested (*getestet*). To monitor this, teaching staff or invigilators, with support from the security service, are to conduct checks. Please find more detailed information in the [process description](#).

If individuals turn up at the location of the examination and do not fulfil the 3G regulations, this constitutes an unexcused absence. The attempt is to be counted towards the maximum number of attempts allowed (no 'free attempt').

Changes have been implemented relating to certificates: individuals who only received a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine lose their vaccinated status and have to get tested to enter UDE premises. The validity period of certificates of recovery has been reduced from 180 to 90 days. For new registrations at the check-in counters, this shortened period will be entered. In view of the upcoming examination period, existing certificates have not yet been adjusted. If the Johnson & Johnson vaccination is supplemented with a booster dose using a different vaccine or if recovery from coronavirus is combined with a vaccination that was administered before or after the infection, the status as vaccinated is retained. Two [circulars](#) were distributed to staff and students to inform them of these changes. This does not entail any changes for teaching staff and invigilators checking the green ticks in the 3G web application.

#### 5. Access to the building and the classroom

Where groups of people gather, medical face masks must be worn even outside buildings. An obligation to wear medical face masks still applies at present during the entire time spent inside buildings. Hand sanitiser is made available at the building entrances. A minimum distance of 1.5 m must be kept between all persons present wherever possible. Please take note of signs and labels in buildings (one-way system).

According to the [process description](#), **teaching staff** are responsible for access checks, i.e. the '**boarding**' process, in rooms with **fewer than 100 seats**. To do so, they simply visually check for the green tick on their students' smartphones (3G web application) or the green access card. The green tick must be surrounded by a spinning circle (otherwise, it may be fake). In the case of access cards, the expiration date must also be checked. Verifying the attendants' identity is not usually required. However, if there are any doubts as to the authenticity of the proof or whether it belongs to the individual presenting it, they have the right

to check both the original certificates and the individual's identity. Any fraud must be reported to the Legal Affairs Office.

When the **proof expires** (in particular for test certificates), the green tick in the 3G web application will turn into a red cross. In that case, attendants are not to be admitted.

If the **3G web application** is not accessible **due to technical issues**, the original certificates can be checked instead to allow the examination to take place. In these cases, a brief visual check (if the original certificate is available) is sufficient as it can be assumed that the students have been through the check-in process. If only individual students are unable to present their 3G proof from UDE (green tick or access card), it should rather be assumed that they have not been to the check-in counter. In such cases, teaching staff may either send them to a check-in counter first or admit them upon having checked their original certificate at their own discretion.

The **security service** carries out the **boarding** process, i.e. the 3G checks, for rooms with **more than 100 seats**. The Facility Management Division automatically assigns them to those rooms based on LSF bookings. The security service will be at the examination location approximately 30 minutes before the start of the examination. Depending on their schedule, security service staff can either be assigned to another location after the start of the examination or remain on site.

## 6. Within the examination room

Medical face masks must also be worn during the examination. Teaching staff may take their face masks off if they keep a minimum distance of 1.5 m from the candidates or if a protective barrier is in place.

Before the examination starts, the applicable hygiene requirements must be pointed out to the students. A corresponding template for [brief instructions](#) has been made available.

In centrally managed lecture halls and classrooms without windows, proper ventilation is ensured by means of forced air handling systems. All other classrooms must be thoroughly aired for at least three to five minutes every 15 minutes at the latest. The lower the temperature, the faster the air will be exchanged (see Section II.3 for further details).

## 7. Leaving the examination room

The indicated entrance and exit ways must be used in order to limit the number of encounters where the minimum distance is not adhered to. Teaching staff are to organise departure from the room in such a way that the minimum distance of 1.5 m is kept between all individuals.

In classrooms without forced ventilation, a few windows should at least be left in a tilted position in order to allow some air to be exchanged before the next group enters.

## 8. Use of sanitary facilities

Medical face masks must also be worn in washrooms. Please make sure you keep a safe distance from others. Units that are immediately next to one another without separation, e.g. washbasins, may not be used simultaneously.

## 9. Right to request individuals to leave the premises

Individuals may be requested to leave the premises in order to ensure compliance with the stipulations of the action plans. The house rules have been modified accordingly. If an individual refuses to comply with the rules, they will be requested to leave the examination and

the building immediately. In such cases, the individual's personal details are to be noted wherever possible.

In difficult cases, teaching staff can call for support from the security service. The number for the security service – also for the Duisburg campus – is: +49 201 183 2614 (porters' lodge S05). Security service staff will be assigned from there.

## **10. Quarantine regulations**

NRW's Coronavirus Testing and Quarantine Ordinance (CoronaTestQuarantäneVO), was amended in January. Please find a synopsis at: [Quarantine rules \(as of: 20 January 2022\)](#). If an infection is suspected and until it has been ruled out, in cases of infection or if individuals have had contact with an infected member of their household or other close contacts, obligations or recommendations to self-isolate apply automatically without the responsible authorities issuing corresponding orders. Such cases can be proven to the University by means of positive PCR or rapid test results. Corresponding notifications are to be sent to [studierendensekretariat-essen@uni-due.de](mailto:studierendensekretariat-essen@uni-due.de).

Individuals who are subject to a quarantine have to stay away from University premises and are considered unfit to take face-to-face examinations. As long as they are not ill, they can participate in online examination formats.

'Recently immunised' contact persons can be exempted from the obligation to go into quarantine, also in order to participate in face-to-face examinations. This only applies to individuals who are free of any symptoms and not infected themselves. These individuals are strongly recommended to be vigilant, get tested regularly and strictly adhere to the hygiene rules. Anyone who was in contact with infected individuals over a period of ten minutes or more with a distance between them of less than 1.5 m and with one or both parties not wearing a face mask and anyone who spent an extended period of time in a poorly ventilated or unventilated room with an infected individual in the two days before they tested positive or before the onset of symptoms is considered a close contact.

## **11. Coronavirus infections (important for up to two days after being present on campus)**

If a student informs teaching staff or the faculty that they have been diagnosed with Covid-19, this must be forwarded to the Registrar's Office via [studierendensekretariat-essen@uni-due.de](mailto:studierendensekretariat-essen@uni-due.de). An obligation to report infections via the central [personaldezernat@uni-due.de](mailto:personaldezernat@uni-due.de) address also applies to staff.

Such notifications are gathered by a central office and trigger contact tracing within UDE or advice for teaching staff as necessary. They are used by the University to monitor the spread of infections within UDE. The central office has to provide information in case of enquiries from the health authorities. Personal data will not be passed on internally and only submitted to the health authorities upon request if it is at all possible.

Based on the current legal situation, it is no longer necessary to trace contacts using seating plans. The University can use lists of attendants in order to support the health authorities in tracking chains of infection nonetheless. The health authority will decide upon further steps.

Pursuant to NRW's Coronavirus Testing and Quarantine Ordinance, individuals who have tested positive are obliged to self-isolate and immediately inform all persons to whom they have been in close personal contact within two days before or since they took the test.

As it is mandatory to wear face masks even while seated during examinations, the contact is generally not considered close and thus no further measures apply if an infection occurs in the

context of examinations. Teaching staff can also consult with the [Occupational Safety and Health Specialists](#).

## **12. Support and questions**

The Facility Management Division and the Staff Unit for Occupational Safety & Health and Environmental Protection can provide consultation and assistance for implementing the required protective measures.

In addition, the central [corona@uni-due.de](mailto:corona@uni-due.de) inbox has been set up.

## **III. Additional information regarding oral and practical examinations**

### **1. Room setup and obligation to wear masks**

Transparent barriers can be set up to separate the attendees in order to avoid the general obligation to wear face masks in the case of oral examinations with very few participants. If the minimum distance of 1.5 m is kept between all persons present, mask do not need to be worn while seated either. Regular ventilation of the room (see Section II.3) is a prerequisite for this to apply.

### **2. Doctoral degree examinations**

In order to allow members of the University to attend as stipulated by the faculty-specific doctoral degree regulations, the defence of a doctoral dissertation may be made available as a video stream in full or in part as required. However, these examinations may also be held without restrictions to the number of attendees in suitable rooms if the protective measures described above are in place. Observers are obliged to wear face masks.

Speakers and examiners may take off their protective masks if a minimum distance of 1.5 m is kept from the nearest person or if protective barriers are in place and regular ventilation is ensured.

### **3. Practical examinations**

Separate hygiene plans must be compiled for conducting practical examinations, e.g. for sports studies or art education.