



Scenario-based planning for Winter Semester 2022/23

I. Introduction

This scenario-based planning aims to prepare the University for the possible intensification of the pandemic in the upcoming Winter Semester 2022/23 and to enable it to respond quickly. The planning also informs University members about what they can do and enables them to respond early and appropriately. Particular attention is paid to teaching; we hope to maintain in-person courses as long as possible.

Establishing the scenarios

— To prepare for the fall and winter of 2022/23, the German government's panel of corona experts assumes 3 basic scenarios for the evolution of the SARS-COV-2, categorizing them as 1) **best-case scenario**, 2) **basic scenario**, and 3) **worst-case scenario**. Below, we explain the scenarios as defined by the German government.

1. Best-case scenario (level I)

— In this scenario, it is assumed that a new, less-virulent variant of the virus than the Omicron variant will dominate. Its contagiousness and immune evasion will be higher than those of the current variants. The new variant will not cause such severe illness among older people and result in barely noticeable health impairments among immunized adults. This will render stronger infection protection measures to fight COVID-19 either unnecessary or necessary only for high-risk groups. Because contact restrictions will no longer be necessary, there may be higher rates of infection from other respiratory pathogens in the winter months. Parents, especially of toddlers and primary school children, may be absent from the workplace more often to care for children or themselves in case of infection. Wearing masks inside may positively impact the general development of the pandemic.

2. Basic Scenario (level II)

The rate of SARS-CoV-2 illness remains similar to that caused by the Omicron variants BA.4, BA.5, and BA.2.12.1. Throughout the winter months, there will be higher rates of infection and absenteeism among the employed population. In contrast to the normal seasonal influenza, the winter wave will last longer than the usual 2–3 months. Despite the moderate COVID-19 burden in intensive care units, absenteeism

may render blanket contagion measures (masks and distancing indoors) as well as regionally-based contact-reduction measures (e.g., caps on in-door events) necessary.

3. Worst-case scenario (level III)

In the worst-case scenario, a new more virulent variant of the virus will dominate, with a combination of increased contagion due to intensified immune evasion and greater severity. Even those who are fully vaccinated could, without booster shots, become seriously ill if they have other risk factors such as age, pregnancy, underlying conditions, or immunosuppression. COVID-19 cases would place a great burden on intensive care units and standard hospital wards. A protracted reaction time in the case of boosters for risk groups would make contact restrictions necessary or place extra burdens on regional health systems.

The University is basing its plans for the Winter Semester 2022/23 on the above-mentioned scenarios proposed by the German government's experts, although it uses the terms level I, II, and III to facilitate understanding. Based on these scenarios, we set forth the following goals for University operations and the appropriate tools and measures to contain the infection. Section II provides a table summarizing the measures for each scenario.

II. Measures and recommendations

Measures derived from protection goals

The protection and hygiene measures recommended below aim to limit future SARS-CoV-2 infections among staff, students, and visitors to University facilities. The University draws on scientific expertise for the necessary, evidence-based protective measures.

To maintain in-person teaching for as long as possible throughout the winter semester, level II does not require distancing for classes in which masks must be worn. With regard to the masks in question, the University follows the recommendation made by Prof. Knobloch of the UKE, who considers the use of a medical mask covering nose and mouth sufficient protection for teaching operations, and who has ordered the use of easy-to-adjust FFP2 masks as self-protection for vulnerable parties only. The experience of the last 2 years has shown that these measures have successfully limited infections at the University.

Below, Table 1 shows the protective measures for each of these scenarios. Table 2 lists the University's fields of action and recommended measures.

Table 1: Overview of recommended protective measures

<i>Measures category</i>	<i>Level I</i>	<i>Level II</i>	<i>Level III</i>
Contacts	Permitted	Only if necessary	Prohibited, urgent exceptions only
Admission with undiagnosed symptoms	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Distancing	Recommended	Comply as a rule; exceptions for teaching in conjunction with mask requirement	Comply
Masks*	Recommended	As a rule; few exceptions	Required
Ventilation	Required	Required	Required
Hand disinfectant in entrance area	Required	Required	Required
Tips on personal hygiene	As implemented	As implemented	As implemented
Admission regulations	None	If applicable, 3G (tested, recovered, or vaccinated) or 2G (recovered or vaccinated) for specific areas	3G; with compelling reason
Self-test options	Recommended	Urgently recommended	Required
Collecting contact information	Not required	Recommended	Required

*) Recommendation Prof. Dr. med. Knobloch (UKE): The use of a medical mask is generally sufficient. The easily adjustable FFP2 masks are especially helpful for vulnerable people.

Table 2: Overview of fields of activity (with differentiated measures)

<i>Field of activity</i>	<i>Differentiated measures in field of activity</i>	<i>Level I</i>	<i>Level II</i>	<i>Level III</i>
Teaching		<i>In-person; maximum occupancy in classrooms permitted; basic protective measures recommended (distancing, hygiene, masks, ventilation—in German known as the “AHA-L” regulations) (masks recommended)</i>	<i>Restricted in-person (goal: reducing contact); protective measures (masks, etc.) mandatory; maximum occupancy in classrooms permitted; distancing recommended;</i>	<i>Digital teaching as a rule (with few exceptions); protective measures (masks, etc.) mandatory; distancing (checker-board pattern) mandatory; i.e., reduced occupancy in classrooms</i>
	Crediting digital courses pursuant to teaching obligation statutes (Lehrverpflichtungsverordnung für die Hamburger Hochschulen, LVVO)	25 %, exceptions decided by the office of the dean	50 %, exceptions decided by the office of the dean	100 %
	Lectures	Standard protected operations	Primarily digital; in person only if learning objectives cannot otherwise be achieved => Decision by the office of the dean	Digital only
	Seminars	Standard protected operations	In-person possible, digital seminars recommended	Primarily digital; in person only if learning objectives cannot otherwise be achieved => Decision by the office of the dean
	Exercises, tutorials, projects, colloquia, language courses	Standard protected operations	In-person possible, digital seminars recommended	Primarily digital; in-person only if learning objectives cannot otherwise be achieved => Decision by the office of the dean
	Courses with practical components: lab internships, practical sports courses, arts courses	Standard protected operations	In-person possible; if necessary, supplementary protective measures	In-person only if learning objectives cannot otherwise be achieved

<i>Field of activity</i>	<i>Differentiated measures in field of activity</i>	<i>Level I</i>	<i>Level II</i>	<i>Level III</i>
				=> Decision by the Executive University Board in consultation with the office of the dean
	Field trips	Standard protected operations	Possible (if necessary, restrictions issued by authorities; e.g., travel warnings)	Possible only if absolutely necessary and within the scope of authorities' requirements => Decision by the Executive University Board in consultation with the office of the dean
	Orientation modules	Standard protected operations	In person possible, digital modules recommended => Decision by the office of the dean	In person only if absolutely necessary => Decision by the Executive University Board in consultation with the office of the dean
	Written examinations	Standard protected operations	In-person possible, digital seminars recommended	In-person only if absolutely necessary => Decision by the Executive University Board in consultation with the office of the dean
	Oral examinations	Standard protected operations	In-person possible, digital seminars recommended	In-person only if absolutely necessary => Decision by the Executive University Board in consultation with the office of the dean
	Doctoral examinations	Standard protected operations	In-person possible, digital seminars recommended	In person only if absolutely necessary => Decision by the Executive University Board in consultation with the office of the dean
	Academic offices / Campus Center	Standard protected operations	Open to those with special advising needs	Not open to the public

<i>Field of activity</i>	<i>Differentiated measures in field of activity</i>	<i>Level I</i>	<i>Level II</i>	<i>Level III</i>
	Student jobs	Faculty/department should offer student jobs	Faculty/department should provide workspaces	TH should provide workspaces
	PC pools	Open	Open	Open for classes only if learning objectives cannot otherwise be achieved => Decision by the office of the dean
	Teaching placements	Regulations set forth by the Ministry of School and Vocational Education apply	Regulations set forth by the Ministry of School and Vocational Education apply	Regulations set forth by the Ministry of School and Vocational Education apply

Research		<i>In-person; maximum occupancy in classrooms permitted; basic protective measures recommended (AHA-L regulations) (if applicable, masks recommended)</i>	<i>Restricted in-person (goal: reducing contact); protective measures (masks, etc.) mandatory; restricted occupancy in laboratories permitted; distancing recommended;</i>	<i>In-person only if necessary</i>
	Lab-bound work	Standard protected operations ¹⁾	Reduce number of people in the laboratory	Laboratory operations strictly limited through shifts, distancing measures, and mask requirement
	Empirical research conducted with test subjects	Standard protected operations	If necessary, supplementary protective measures	Prohibited (special application to Executive University Board)
	Field research	Standard protected operations	If necessary, supplementary protective measures	Prohibited (special application to Executive University Board)
	Domestic travel	Standard protected operations	Observe varying regional protective measures	Prohibited (special application to Executive University Board)
	Foreign travel	Observe travel warnings	If necessary, restrictions based on regulations set by authorities; observe travel warnings	Prohibited (special application to Executive University Board)
	Receiving delegations	Permitted if necessary, with restrictions	Special application to Executive University Board	Prohibited
Administration		<i>In-person; maximum occupancy in workspaces allowed; basic protective measures recommended (AHA-L regulations) (if necessary, masks recommended)</i>	<i>Restricted in-person (goal: reducing contact); protective measures (masks, etc.) mandatory; distancing mandatory; (restricted use of office space)</i>	<i>In-person only if necessary</i>
	Office spaces without client contact	Standard protected operations	Individual use of office space and working from home recommended	Working from home; in person only if necessary
	Office spaces with contact restricted primarily to colleagues	Standard protected operations	Individual use of office space and working from home recommended; in case of contact with clients and/or colleagues: sneeze guards	Working from home, digital client contact, in person only if necessary

	Office spaces with high degree of client contact	Standard protected operations	Individual use of office space and working from home recommended; restrict client contact sneeze guards	Working from home, digital client contact, in person only if necessary
	Infrastructural Facility Management	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Distancing, mask mandatory, shift-work
	Working in workshops	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Distancing, mask mandatory, shift-work
	Using vehicles	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	As a rule, individual use only
Meetings		<i>In-person</i> ; occupancy in conference rooms permitted; basis protective measures recommended (AHA-L regulations) (if necessary, masks recommended)	<i>Restricted in-person</i> (goal: reducing contact); protective measures (masks, etc.) mandatory; restricted occupancy in conference rooms permitted; distancing required;	<i>In-person only if necessary</i>
	Committee sessions, if applicable, with other members of the University, of <i>inter alia</i>: Academic Senate, Academic Senate committees, faculty and departmental councils	Standard protected operations	Hybrid and restricted in-person in compliance with protective measures	Digital
	Committee sessions without other members of the University including: University Council, Executive University Board, offices of the dean, examinations boards, work meetings, academic search committees, selection procedures	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Digital
Regular University events and activities		<i>In-person</i> ; full occupancy in allocated rooms permitted; basic protective measures recommended (AHA-L regulations) (if applicable, masks recommended)	<i>Restricted in-person</i> (goal: reducing contact); protective measures (masks, etc.) mandatory; restricted occupancy in conference rooms permitted; distancing required;	<i>In-person only if necessary</i>

	interviews open to the University public as part of the academic search procedure	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Digital
	internal professional development and continuing education events	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Digital
	internal training sessions.	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Digital
Other events and activities		<i>In-person; full occupancy in respective rooms permitted; basic protective measures recommended (AHA-L regulations) (if necessary, masks recommended)</i>	<i>In-person restricted (goal: reducing contact); protective measures (masks, etc.) mandatory; restricted occupancy in rooms permitted; distancing required</i>	<i>In-person only if necessary</i>
	Discussions, lectures, information sessions, reading circles, student-led seminars	Protected standard operations	If necessary, further protective measures	Digital
	Doctoral degree celebrations, graduation ceremonies, commencement events	Protected standard operations	Hybrid, if necessary further protective measures	Digital
	Conferences and congresses	Standard protected operations	Hybrid, if necessary further protective measures	Digital
	Film screenings	Standard protected operations	Not permitted	Not permitted
Areas with (if applicable) special regulations		<i>In-person; full occupancy in rooms / on premises permitted; basic protective measures recommended (AHA-L regulations) (if applicable, masks recommended)</i>	<i>Restricted in-person (goal: reducing contact); protective measures (masks, etc.) mandatory; restricted occupancy in rooms; distancing required</i>	<i>In-person only if necessary</i>
	Libraries	Standard protected operations	No workspaces for groups	No-contact lending
	Music/theater	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Closed

	Loki Schmidt Garden	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Pursuant to the Hamburg containment provisions (Hamburgische Eindämmungsverordnung, EVO)
	Museum	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Closed
	University Sports	Standard protected operations	Additional protective measures if necessary	Digital offers
Further special matters				
	Vulnerable groups	Additional protective measures if necessary	Additional protective measures if necessary	Working from home

Definition of “protected standard operations:”

Standard operations including protective measures to prevent or contain infection Protective measures include: tips on sneezing and coughing etiquette; hand-washing; provision of disinfectants; recommendations to wear masks and sufficient ventilation

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