Corona-related adjustments in the field of study and teaching

Preliminary remark

Hochschule der Medien endeavours to reduce disadvantages for students resulting from the restrictions imposed by the state of Baden-Württemberg, which are based on the state government’s regulation on infection-protective measures against the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus (Corona Regulation - CoronaVO) in the currently valid version. To this end, the Rectorate, in consultation and with the agreement of the deaneries of all faculties, has developed the present adaptations for the area of study and teaching.

The present adaptations in the area of study and teaching are continuously adapted to the CoronaVO in force at the time. This document is an update of the document of the same name published on 02.07.2020. The updates mainly include questions about deadlines for the practical semester. Revised passages are shown in blue font.

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1 Adaptation of the forms of examination

1.1 Procedure

If it should happen in the summer semester 2020 that, due to a changed didactic setting or corona-related boundary conditions, an examination performance other than the one provided for in the SPO has to be taken, this is permitted once without changing the study and examination regulations.

It is also permissible for the form of examination to be changed in the course of the semester due to the resulting coronal situation.

Any changes must be communicated immediately to both the students and the responsible Dean's Office. The Dean's Office shall inform the Examination Office of any planned changes before the start of the examination planning process.

Should it be necessary to change an examination form after this notification, the Examination Office must be informed by the person responsible for the module at the same time as the Dean's Office.

In general, if the form of examination is changed for graded academic work and the new form of examination is from the list of ungraded forms of examination, all students who pass the ungraded form of examination will receive a 4.0. Therefore, only forms of examination listed in § 10, paragraph 1 of the SPO can be used for graded academic work.

1.2 General notes

It is important to make a clear distinction in the case of written (partial) examination performances between the groups "written supervision work" and "written work without supervision".

As a general rule
- all written work without supervision without problems and
- Written supervisory work not at all

can be provided in distance formats.

The reason for this is that supervisory work requires a controlled environment that cannot be created in the Distance format, or at least not with a reasonable amount of effort. For lectures, presentations and oral examinations, the regulations specified in the section Video Conference Exams must be observed. In this case, the controlled environment is not necessary or only very weakly necessary.

For the forms of examination according to § 10 SPO, this means that the examination elements written exams and electronically supported written exams cannot be taken in distance format, either as part of a course of study in the KL and EP examination forms or as part of a course of study in the context of another form of examination (e.g. KMP, KSP, PF or LA).

Case studies, design or programming tasks handed out for processing by university didacticians are often referred to as Take-Home-Exams (THE). However, these THE are not written supervision papers, as they are not processed in a controlled environment. Therefore, their use is not compatible with the examination form of written or electronically supported exams. This applies to regardless of the type and scope of the time constraints.
These THE can, however, be easily incorporated into portfolios or cumulative examination formats, for example, as "evaluated exercises", or can be accepted as practical work in the form of academic performance.

2 Withdrawals from examinations and time limits

2.1 General regulations

In the summer semester 2020, there is an extended possibility to withdraw from examinations.

Non-participation in a written or oral examination will be considered as an approved withdrawal in the examination procedure for the summer semester 2020. As a result, no medical certificates need to be presented in the examination procedure for the summer semester 2020 in the event of non-attendance at an examination or oral examination. In order to enable the university to organise the exams properly, the withdrawal should be made by 22.07.2020. The non-attendance should only be used as a last resort.

In addition, a withdrawal of up to two examinations with other forms of examination in the summer semester 2020 is also possible if the task is known or if work on it has already begun. This withdrawal must be declared by 12.07.2020. For these two examinations, the need for confirmation by the examiners in accordance with §17 Para. 1 SPO does not apply.

2.2 Amendment of the State Higher Education Act

On 24.06.2020, an amendment to the State Higher Education Act (LHG) was adopted, which is already effective for the examination procedure in SoSe2020 (see draft resolutions for the 122nd plenary session on 24.06.2020: draft and amendment).

The amendment of the LHG is of particular importance in the amendment of §32 LHG by a new paragraph 5a:

"For students who are enrolled in a course of study in the summer semester 2020, the deadlines for the submission of semester-related study and examination papers in this course of study are extended by one semester.

The explanatory memorandum to this amendment contains the following statement:

"Insofar as the provision of study and examination services is tied to a specific semester according to the study and examination regulations or other regulations of the universities, the deadlines by which these services must be provided by the students at the latest shall be extended by one semester."
2.2.1 Effects on HdM’s deadline regulations

This means that the summer semester 2020 will not result in the deadlines being exceeded. This applies in particular to the deadlines for the Foundation Studies and the maximum duration of studies. For the entry into the practical semester, a differentiated consideration is necessary, as this deadline is linked to a certain study progress as well as to the semester counter. Detailed information on the effects on the practical semester will be provided by the end of the lecture period.

No threats of exmatriculation due to missed deadlines will be sent in the autumn. There will also be no re-registration block this semester for students who wish to re-register for the 11th or higher semester of the Bachelor’s degree or the 7th or higher semester of the Master’s degree.

In the following semesters, the summer semester 2020 will always be excluded from the consideration of deadlines. As a consequence, the deadline for the completion of the Foundation Studies for semester cohorts starting in winter semester 2018/2019, summer semester 2019, winter semester 2019/2020 and summer semester 2020 has been increased to five semesters.

2.2.2 Effects on the obligation to carry out repeat tests

Section 18 (2) of HdM’s SPO specifies when a repeat examination is to be initiated. The wording of the SPO at least suggests that the repetition of an examination that has not been passed is tied to a time limit and that not only an examination date is set here.

When the LHG amendment comes into force, there will be no obligation to take a repeat examination in the summer semester 2020. This applies to first and second repeat examinations.

Cancellations of repeat examinations are therefore permitted in the summer semester 2020 in analogy to the regulations for first-time examinations.

The combination of the almost universal semester-by-semester offer of all compulsory modules, the legally anchored time limit regulation and the agreed cancellation rules make the summer semester 2020 a “can-do-semester” for HdM students.

This enables students with upcoming repeat examinations in particular to concentrate fully on these examinations. The 2020 summer semester can therefore be seen as a unique opportunity to catch up on backlogs and eliminate the risks of failing in their studies.

2.2.3 Effects on the entry into the practical semester

The regulations for entry into the practical semester are regulated in § 14 SPO Part A Bachelor. Admission is defined there in section 2 in sentences 1 and 2 as well as 5:

"In the courses of study according to § 1 section 1 running no. 1 and 2 as well as running nos. 4 to 16, a compulsory practical semester is integrated in the fifth semester as a preliminary work for the Bachelor examination. In justified exceptional cases, the obligatory practical semester may be postponed once."
"A postponement shall be made ex officio if the requirements for admission to the practical semester are not met in the fourth or higher semester of study by the deadline for registration for the provision of examination papers as specified in § 7, section 2.

These regulations state that the entry into the practical semester is first linked to a course-specific performance level and then a deadline is set for the actual entry. With the amendment of the LHG of 26.06.2020, this deadline for entry into the practical semester must therefore be extended by one semester.

In the logical sequence, two cases can be distinguished:

Case 1: Those who fulfill the condition for entering PS for the first time in SoSe2020 have to start the internship either in WiSe20/21 (with course: 4P67), SoSe21 (with course: 46P7) or in WiSe21/22 (with course: 466P7). So there is a double possibility to postpone the start of the PS.

Note: In all the courses given, semester level 4 is the SoSe20

Case 2: Whoever has applied for a postponement of the entry into the PS for the SoSe2020 can apply for a further postponement and must therefore enter the PS either in WiSe20/21 (with course: 46P7) or SoSe21 (with course: 466P7). There is therefore an additional possibility of postponing the start of the PS.

Note: In all the courses given, semester level 4 is the WiSe19/20

For all students who receive an ex officio postponement in SoSe2020, the deadline does not change.

3  Note on the evaluation of academic performance

3.1  Cumulative procedures

The use of cumulative procedures does not in any case release the student from the need for clear, comprehensible documentation of the examination elements used and their interaction to produce an assessed academic performance. The same requirements apply to each individual examination element as to academic performance. Thus, for each examination element, in particular the assessment standard or the assessment criteria must be documented; in addition, the student's completed or submitted performance must be retained for later (possibly even judicial) review.

This requirement must be complied with irrespective of whether the submission was made in paper form or electronically. In the case of electronic submission, it is essential to ensure that the (partial) service submitted cannot be changed.

The formation of the overall assessment must be transparent and free of contradictions from the individual elements.
3.2 Quiz and answer choice procedure

Quizzes are popular and proven performance controls in Learning Management Systems. They are usually low-threshold and are not included in the assessment of academic performance. However, if one or more quizzes are to be included in assessment, this can be done in two different ways:

1. reflection of the result of a quiz, e.g. as part of a portfolio
2. Evaluation of the quiz as an exercise

If the quiz is designed entirely or at least to a large extent according to the principles of the answer-choice procedure, even if the quiz is evaluated as a practice task, this does not release the student from the obligation to comply with the rules for the evaluation of examination performances which are made according to the answer-choice procedure. These requirements always apply, irrespective of the current corona-related special situation, if one or more quizzes are included in the assessment of a course achievement.

The following supplementary explanations apply in all situations in which response dialling procedures are used.

Reply-election procedures initially appear attractive for examiners, but there are many pitfalls in examination law. This also has to do with the fact that answer-choice procedures are used in medical examinations. Therefore, this type of task has very often been the subject of court proceedings up to the highest court decisions.

There is only a legal basis for pure multiple choice examinations at the HdM if there is sufficient justification for this form of examination design. The time saved during correction is not sufficient as a reason.

If multiple-choice tests or assessments are used, the requirements regarding a review of the test result (keyword: relative and absolute pass limits) must be observed and documented. In addition, malus points are generally not allowed in multiple choice tests or exams.

The effects of the requirement that malus points are also inadmissible within a task are shown by the driving licence test. If even a single cross is placed incorrectly, the whole task is incorrect. The construction of an exam/part of an exam according to the answer-choice procedure is anything but easy because of this and many other problem points. This is especially true for multiple-choice elements.

If a quiz is used and the students are immediately shown the sample solution, it is a good idea to ask for a reflection on an open question. This could take the following form, for example: "How do you interpret the result of the quiz in relation to your learning progress to date? If the overall task consisting of quiz and reflection is now assessed, the guidelines for the assessment of answer choices are only applicable to a very limited extent. At the same time, this leads to a strengthening of competence orientation.
3.3 Laboratory work

Laboratory work as test performance shall be considered separately due to the closure of the laboratories or the restriction of laboratory operations. In this case, the teacher must explain without contradiction why a laboratory work is present. In case of doubt, it is recommended to change the examination form.

Of course, this reference does not apply if the laboratory work only begins after the laboratories have opened in presence and/or the local or environmental part of the services can also take place in the summer semester 2020.

4 Audit inspection

In the SoSe20, too, exams should preferably be inspected in a personal conversation between students and examiners. In order to avoid hardship and long waiting times, exams in SoSe20 can also be viewed in electronic format. In this case, the examiner should release the screen, if possible, and explain and discuss the sample solution, the previously scanned solution of the student and the points system with the student.

Initially, the electronic examination inspection only applied to failed second repeat examinations and in the event that a de-registration procedure is initiated ex officio due to the failure (e.g. deadline exceeded for basic studies, number of second repeat examinations exhausted).

Since these special cases of hardship have now been dealt with, electronic inspection should now be made possible, especially for repeaters, if inspection in person is not possible or only possible at great expense. For this group of students, the inspection of examinations is a good preparation for the exams.

5 Checks in presence

5.1 Oral examinations and colloquia on final papers

As a rule, colloquia on final theses and oral examinations can be held in attendance if

1. none of the parties involved is affected by quarantine measures (ordered or recommended),
2. none of the parties involved shows signs of disease, and
3. the test is carried out in a well-ventilated room allowing a distance of more than 1,5 m between persons

Points 1 and 2 are to be noted on the examination protocol.
5.2 Rules for written tests

Organisational regulations for written examinations (especially KL and EP) in attendance are currently still being worked out.

6 Organization form "Video Conference Examination"

Video-conferencing examinations are permitted as an alternative form of organisation to attendance examinations with immediate effect and until the end of the examination procedure for the summer semester 2020, provided that the course work or partial course work to be completed is not a written supervision paper. VKP are not academic achievements in the sense of § 10 of the study and examination regulations of the HdM. Rather, they are a form of organisation that can be used as an alternative to attendance examinations, particularly in the case of certain forms of examination listed in section 10 of the SPO.

The use of video-conferencing examinations (VKP) in examination procedures that are not assigned to the summer semester 2020 requires a separate resolution. The permanent use of VKP is only possible after the study and examination regulations of the HdM have been changed.

In particular, the following study achievements can be carried out in the format of a VKP:

- Presentations (RE)
- Presentation as part of a course of study (especially PP, ST, TEA, KMP)
- oral examinations (MP)

In addition, there are expert discussions in the context of the recognition of study achievements from previous study periods or abroad, provided that these are not part of a Learning Agreement, as well as the selection of students. Colloquia on final theses can also be held in the form of a video conference. The legally required academic counselling during the application and enrolment process can also be carried out in the form of a video conference.

VKPs can also take place as group examinations with a maximum of four candidates, in accordance with § 10 paragraph 4 of the SPO.

When implementing videoconference examinations (VKP), the following requirements must be observed in addition to the regulations of the examination form used in each case, which must be observed unchanged. It is also necessary to document various aspects of the VCP in a protocol.

1. The implementation and participation in VKP is voluntary for students and examiners*. There is no right to take an exam as a VKP. A prerequisite for the use of a VKP is the agreement of all participants. The consent should be explicitly requested at the beginning of the examination. The result is to be noted in the examination protocol. Consent is also deemed to have been given if the examination begins without objection.
2. Examiners and examination candidates arrange the date for the video conference bilaterally and usually electronically. The examiner in charge documents the date of the appointment in the examination protocol.

3. To carry out the VKP, examiners and candidates agree on the necessary technical equipment. Here the definition of the video conference platform is of particular importance. It is recommended that a test of the technical environment be carried out to ensure that the procedure is as trouble-free as possible. If such a test is conducted, this should be documented in the examination protocol. At the beginning of the test, it should be asked whether the candidates are sufficiently familiar with the technical environment. This is to be recorded in the examination protocol, stating the video conference platform used.

4. The provisions of data protection law must be observed. In particular, the storage of personal data must be limited to the necessary extent. The storage of image or audio files is only permitted if all persons participating in the trial have given their explicit consent. In the case of a recording of the VKP, the consent shall be recorded in a suitable manner in the test protocol.

5. During the entire examination period it must be ensured that all candidates and examiners are in visual contact at all times. This also applies to assessors, if the form of examination provides for this. Telephone conversations or audio conferences are therefore not permitted. The video signal must also be activated continuously. The webcam may not be switched off at any time. The active switching off of the video signal by candidates must always be noted in the examination protocol and can be considered an attempt to deceive.

6. In the event of a technical malfunction, it must be ensured that the candidates are not put at a disadvantage. All parties involved are obliged to take all possible and reasonable measures within a maximum of 10 minutes to eliminate the connection fault and continue the examination. The examination is to be extended by the duration of the connection interruption. An interruption of the connection must be documented in the test protocol. If the fault cannot be rectified within the above-mentioned period, the test is considered not to have been passed and must be repeated in full¹. Candidates are to be informed about this regulation when the date of the examination is arranged (see section 3). The instruction is part of the VKP protocol.

7. Depending on the type of examination, further persons can be added to the VKP (listeners). These are considered as participating persons according to clause 4 if an audio or video signal or chat contributions could be recorded. Listeners can also follow the VKP without their own audio or video signal. Technical malfunctions of listeners are not taken into account under item 6.

8. If a course work is completed in the format of a VKP, the assessment takes place directly at the end of the examination and the examination result is communicated to the candidate immediately². If only a part of a piece of academic work is completed, the result of the piece

¹ "Not taken" is a term in examination law which is used to express that an examination attempt was made but no examination result could be determined. Accordingly, the attempt is documented and sent to the examination administration, but does not lead to a pass or a failed attempt.

² The term "immediate" expresses that no culpable delay must occur. A delay, e.g. caused by the advice of the examiners, is always permissible.
of work is communicated and the examination protocol is attached to the examination papers of the piece of academic work.

9. The general regulations for the implementation of (partial) study achievements such as

- the determination and documentation of auditability,
- the verification of the examination candidate's identity by means of the student identity card or an official photo identification,
- the appointment of examiners* and assessors* with the associated tasks and their presence in the examination,
- the preparation of the examination protocol and
- the transmission of the examination results to the examination administration

also apply without restriction to VKP.

7  Regulations for the internship semester

The examination boards and the head of the central internship office recommend that an internship semester at SoSe20 can also be recognised with less than 100 attendance days.

Due to the current situation, home offices are arranged in many companies. It is at the discretion of the PA manager* whether confirmed home office days are counted towards the attendance days. For the decision making process, the tasks that have been processed in the home office should be taken into account.

The decision as to whether an internship has been successfully completed is based on the skills acquired. The competence acquisition is determined by the PA managers* on the basis of the documents submitted.

An insufficient acquisition of competence can be made up for by reworking if necessary. The necessary number of days of practical training must be agreed with the PA manager*. The rework can be done until 10/2021.

Should the internship semester be completely cancelled by the internship company due to the current Corona situation, it is possible to arrange for the placement in a classroom semester in consultation with the PA manager* and the examination board (presentation of a written cancellation/termination; if necessary, also digitally). In this case, re-registration for a presence semester will not be considered a postponement of the practical semester in accordance with §14, paragraph 2, sentence 2 of the SPO. Therefore, re-registration for a semester of attendance is also possible if the student has already applied for a postponement of the practical semester in a previous semester.

In the summer semester 2020, the date for postponing the practical study semester to the summer semester 2021 was postponed to August 21, 2020.
8 Support for the tracking of online events

If a student can credibly demonstrate that he or she is unable to follow courses held or recorded online in sufficient quality at his or her home workplace due to a poor Internet connection, or that he or she does not have a suitable terminal device, the Hochschule der Medien shall provide the student with a place at the university, taking into account the regulations of infection protection.

In the whole area of the HdM the coverage by Eduroam is so good that even events held online can be followed. Students should preferably use the places in the library, the learning world or the learning bar in front of the S-Bar to follow the courses with their own terminal equipment they have brought with them. If the demand is so high that these places are exhausted, taking into account the distance requirements in these areas, lecture halls and seminar rooms may also be available.

If students do not have a suitable end device, they can use PC workstations at the university by arrangement. The pool rooms of the study programmes should preferably be used for this purpose. This requires individual arrangements with the responsible course administration. As a rule, a workstation is not permanently assigned.

Students are obliged to bring their own headset/headphones and to use them at all times to follow online courses from a place at the university or to watch recorded courses.

The students are obliged to strictly adhere to the regulations of infection protection on the premises of the university. In the event of violations, the university management is entitled to issue a temporary ban from entering the premises of individual students.

9 Individual study plan for foreign achievements

The regulations described below for an individual study plan for foreign achievements are intended as an alternative to a semester abroad if a real semester abroad is not possible due to corona-related restrictions and limitations.

In order to facilitate the recognition of competences acquired at partner universities outside the scope of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (hereinafter referred to as "partner universities"), students can agree an individual study plan in the form of a Learning Agreement with the responsible Dean of Studies.

The curriculum must include at least one course credit in accordance with Part B of the Study and Examination Regulations in addition to the credits required at the Media University,
which is provided at one or more partner universities. The curriculum may not provide for the achievement of more than 30 ECTS in any six-month period. When considering the period of time, the points in time of the actual performance shall be taken into account. Within an examination period (administrative semester), achievements may be completed both at the Media University and at partner universities.

The regulation applies to first examinations at partner universities which are to be allocated to the examination semesters of the summer semester 2020 up to and including the summer semester 2021. It shall be extended accordingly for the performance of repeat examinations or for admission to the initial examination at the partner university if the initial examination was to take place in the above-mentioned semesters but could not be taken for a reason for which the student is not responsible (in particular withdrawal due to illness or other approved reasons).

10 Execution of final papers

Due to the corona, there may currently be limitations in the processing of theses. The type and scope of these restrictions depend on the respective task and general conditions.

Therefore, extended regulations for the processing of theses apply until further notice:

1. The extension of the processing period pursuant to § 23 para. 1 sentence 9 shall be increased to up to 4 months.
2. An extensive reorientation of content with a changed working title is permissible.
3. An abort of the processing can be considered as a failed attempt without evaluation.

In the above-mentioned cases 2 and 3, an opinion of both auditors is required, stating the reasons for the decision. In case 1, the opinion of the first examiner(s)* in is sufficient. In particular, the reference to corona-related measures ordered must be explained.

In the event of termination, a new registration of a thesis is required by 30.06.2020. If a new registration is not made in due time, a final thesis will be issued by the examination board.

10.1 Registration of theses

The application may be made by purely electronic means. Ideally, the examiners* and the student(s) should use the PDF commentary function to add signatures.

10.2 Topics for theses

Companies and public institutions are currently only able to offer and supervise theses to a limited extent. Therefore, the university must offer students appropriate opportunities here.

All courses of study are requested to issue topics for final theses in order to enable all students who are currently in the process of graduating to do so. The situation that the final thesis had to be aborted due to corona conditions must also be taken into account.
10.3 Submission of final papers

A purely electronic submission to meet the deadline is reasonable and possible. The papers should be sent as PDF documents to the examiners* and the Examination Office at the same time. For large documents (larger than 10 MB), a suitable download link should be sent instead of the PDF file.

Printed copies must be submitted no later than 3 working days after resuming classroom teaching. If this submission is not made on time, this has the same consequences as late submission in the regular submission procedure.

The document submitted by electronic submission is compared at least randomly with the copy submitted on CD/DVD using the Acrobat tool "Compare Documents" function. Deviations will be evaluated as an attempt to deceive if necessary.