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Nonofficial Full Version

Regulations to offset the negative academic effects of the coronavirus epidemic (SARS-CoV-2)

Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences

Dated 8 May 2020 (Bulletin11/2020)

The Executive Board of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, acting on the basis of Section 82a (1) sentence 1 of the Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia [HG NRW] dated 16 September 2014 (published in GV. NRW. p. 547), last amended by Article 10 of the Act of 14 April 2020 (published in GV. NRW. p. 218b), in conjunction with the Coronavirus Epidemic Ordinance for Universities dated 15 April 2020 (published in GV. NRW. p. 297), has enacted the following regulations.

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Section 1 Scope

(1) With these regulations, the Executive Board chooses to exercise the powers granted to it by the Coronavirus Epidemic Ordinance for Universities enacted on 15 April 2020 ("Coronavirus Ordinance") with the express goal of empowering the faculties to successfully tackle challenges brought about by the coronavirus epidemic (SARS-CoV-2) for students and

educators, thus ensuring continued academic operations.

(2) These regulations apply to all degree programmes at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences without exception. Should provisions contained in the General Examination Regulations for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences ("RPO"), dated 3 January 2018, or in degree programme-specific examination regulations or in other official regulations valid at the start of the lecture period for summer semester (20 April 2020) clash with provisions contained herein, then the provisions contained herein shall temporarily supersede the conflicting regulations in the aforementioned documents in accordance with Section 13 (2) of the Coronavirus Ordinance.

(3) The power of the Senate and the Faculty Councils to enact regulations remains unaffected in accordance with Section 14 of the Coronavirus Ordinance. Should the Senate or the Faculty Councils enact regulations after 20 April 2020 which clash with the provisions contained herein, then the newly enacted regulations shall supersede the conflicting provisions contained herein. Provisions contained within these Regulations which retain their validity in new regulations enacted by the Senate or the Faculty Councils after 20 April 2020 must be explicitly indicated. New regulations enacted by the Senate or the Faculty Councils after 20 April 2020 can stipulate that provisions contained within these Regulations shall expire at a future date which cannot be later than the date on which the Coronavirus Ordinance itself expires.

(4) Academic operations (i.e. courses and examinations) in summer semester 2020 will commence from 20 April 2020 (begin of lecture period) exclusively online and remain in this format until further notice. Alterations and amendments to this policy will be decided by the Executive Board on the basis of the currently valid guidelines of the German federal government and the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia with a reasonably adequate notification period.

(5) Decisions made by functionaries, bodies or members of a faculty in connection with these Regulations must be published for students in a prominent position on the faculty website with a clearly indicated publication date. These notification obligations fall under the responsibility of the deans.

Section 2 Courses

(1) Courses in summer semester 2020 will be conducted online until on-campus lectures are again permitted fully or partially; the Executive Board is responsible for deciding when this is the case. Courses in summer semester 2020 which began online will be continued online until their conclusion, even if on-campus lectures have resumed in the meantime. The deans can decide to shift individual courses from an online format to an in-person format if student

participation is taken into consideration accordingly. Students must be informed of this decision immediately and in accordance with Section 1 (5).

(2) The intended formats for courses per examination regulations and/or module guides (examples: lecture, seminar, tutorials, practicals, projects) can be amended by the responsible instructor. Instructors must immediately notify the responsible dean of any amendments to course formats as well as the students in accordance with Section 1 (5).

(3) Courses or parts thereof can be postponed from summer semester 2020 to a future lecture-free period. The deans are responsible for postponement decisions; students must be notified of postponements as soon as possible and in accordance with Section 1 (5).

(4) Guest auditors are not permitted to attend courses at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in summer semester 2020. They may be granted access to online courses, however.

Section 3 Examinations

(1) The principle of fair and equal treatment in examinations, taking into consideration the fundamental rights of students in Germany and the fact that all students have been adversely affected by the coronavirus epidemic, shall continue to apply during these extraordinary circumstances. The faculties are responsible for ensuring that this principle is upheld.

(2) Examinations in summer semester 2020 will be conducted online until such time that in-person examinations are again permitted in part or in full; the Executive Board is responsible for deciding when this is the case. Examinations planned to be offered online in summer semester 2020 can remain online examinations even after in-person examinations have become permitted. The deans can decide to offer in-person examinations as well as online examinations, taking into account student participation. The principle of fair and equal treatment in examinations, taking into consideration the fundamental rights of students in Germany and the fact that all students have been adversely affected by the coronavirus epidemic, shall apply here as well. The deans are responsible for ensuring that this principle is upheld.

(3) Examinations scheduled for summer semester 2020 may be offered until the begin of the lecture period for winter semester 2020-2021; examination dates will be set by the Examination Board based on suggestions of the examiners. Section 17b RPO shall not apply to online examinations conducted in summer semester 2020. Written examinations completed at home and submitted online are considered "online examinations" within the meaning of these Regulations. Oral examinations must be conducted online via video conference only. Audiences for oral examinations are not permitted. Examinations may not

be recorded.

(4) For identification purposes, a written declaration from the student confirming that he or she is indeed the examinee in question will suffice. In addition, the student must explicitly state in this declaration that the examination was completed independently and without the use of any unapproved aid or support. If technical difficulties occur which prevent a student from completing an examination normally, then the examination attempt must be terminated. The affected student is obligated to notify the examiner of these technical difficulties immediately. Notifying the examiner of technical issues after the examination has been completed is considered too late. A prematurely terminated examination attempt will not be counted towards a student's remaining attempts.

(5) The examination format and duration indicated in the RPO, the degree programme-specific examination regulations or the module guide can be substituted with a different format and/or duration. Examinations can also be offered as pass/fail certificates; in this case, the examination will not count towards a student's overall mark. The examiner can also permit the use of additional aid or support during an examination. New formats or durations for examinations can be set by the Examination Board based on the suggestions of examiners and students must be notified immediately of any changes, at the latest by the start of the registration period for the examination in question. If changes to an examination's format or duration are made and students cannot be notified before the deadline set in sentence 2, then any students who have already registered for the examination may be permitted to withdraw from the examination at any time before the examination date without penalty. This provision also applies to situations in which the examination format originally planned at the start of the registration period must be changed to a different format for justifiable reasons. Taking into consideration student participation in examinations and bearing in mind the principle of fair and equal treatment for examinations given the coronavirus epidemic, a variety of examination formats may be offered in a module for justifiable reasons.

(6) If degree programme-specific examination regulations contain requirements for admission to an examination that go beyond the requirements set forth in Section 15 (1) RPO, then the responsible Examination Board can decide to suspend these additional requirements temporarily for summer semester 2020 and winter semester 2020-2021.

(7) Provisions in examination regulations which stipulate mandatory registration for a first examination attempt (Section 15 (9) RPO) or a re-examination attempt will not apply to the examination phase in summer semester 2020.

(8) Students may withdraw from an examination for any reason before the submission deadline. Examinations which were undertaken for the first time in summer semester 2020

and were not passed successfully will not count towards a student's remaining attempts unless the examination was failed due to (attempted) cheating within the meaning of Section 13 (3) RPO.

(9) Students may view past examinations only after the University has returned to normal operations. Students will be notified when past examinations may be viewed again. Students who contest the results of an examination before the deadline may submit future justification for their request within one month of viewing the examination.

Section 4 Internship and study abroad semester

(1) The 20-week internship and study abroad semester (Sections 21, 22 RPO) can, in justifiable cases and on request, be conducted after the thesis to avoid delays in a student's projected graduation timeline. Accordingly, applications for admission to a thesis can be approved despite having not acquired the minimum number of credits stipulated by examination regulations. The Examination Board is responsible for the approval of these requests.

(2) Paragraph (1) applies accordingly to applications for admission to the master's thesis if the student in question was required to complete an internship or semester abroad in a learning agreement.

(3) Deviating from Section 5 (3) RPO, if an internship or semester abroad is interrupted as the result of the coronavirus epidemic, the 20-week requirement can be fulfilled in segments and affected students are permitted to remain at the same company, or switch to a different company, or, if their study abroad was interrupted, to opt for an internship instead. If most of the internship or study abroad was completed before the interruption, then an exemption for the remaining part can be requested. In this case, the remaining part of the internship or study abroad will be replaced with some form of examination. If an internship or study abroad semester is cut short due to the coronavirus epidemic it will not count towards a student's remaining attempts to complete this requirement; Section 21 (9) RPO remains unaffected. Sentences 1-4 shall apply to internships or study abroad semesters which commenced in summer semester 2020 and winter semester 2020-2021 as well. The Examination Board is responsible for decisions in connection with sentences 1-5, taking into consideration the suggestions of the affected student's supervisor.

Section 5 Thesis

(1) In accordance with Section 4 (1) and (2), an application for admission to the thesis can be submitted before having completed the internship or study abroad requirement.

(2) If the coronavirus epidemic has adversely affected a student's work on their thesis, then he or she can request a deadline extension beyond the normal four-week limit set forth in Section 25 (2) sentence 7 RPO. This request must be justified in writing. Alternatively, said student can also withdraw from their thesis without the loss of an attempt. The decision to withdraw must be justified in writing. In the case of withdrawal, the student must choose a different topic for the next thesis attempt.

Section 6 Admission requirements

(1) Deviating from Section 4 (3) RPO, proof of completion of the 8-week basic internship can be submitted until the re-registration deadline for the 5th semester. This general extension will apply until summer semester 2021.

(2) The deadline for completing missing admission requirements for a master's degree programme in accordance with Section 49 (6) sentence 5 HG NRW shall be extended until 1 December 2020 for students who first enrolled in their master's degree programme in summer semester 2020. For students who first enrol in winter semester 2020-2021, the deadline shall be extended until 1 June 2021.

(3) Enrolment for winter semester 2020-2021 is permitted to occur online.

(4) Students who are planning to sit for their final remaining examinations in winter semester 2020-2021 can, in justifiable cases, request to sit for these examinations without re-registering for the semester. This application is justified in particular for students facing social or financial hardship caused by the coronavirus epidemic. If the student does not successfully pass these examinations in winter semester 2020-2021, then he or she may re-register for winter semester 2020-2021 retroactively. If the student chooses not to re-register retroactively, then he or she will be considered to have de-registered from the University in summer semester 2020.

Section 7 Standard period of study

The extension of the standard period of study by one semester (Section 10 (1) sentence 1, Coronavirus Ordinance) shall also apply to students on an approved leave of absence in summer semester 2020.

Section 8
Ensuring collaborative participation per Section 7 (5) of the
Coronavirus Ordinance

In accordance with Section 7 (5) of the Coronavirus Ordinance, the Executive Board is required to take steps to ensure the collaborative participation of the faculties with regard to examination-related decisions defined in Section 7 (1) sentence 2, Section 7 (2) sentence 3, Section 7 (3) and (4). These Regulations were drafted with collaboration and input from members of the faculties. Therefore the requisite collaborative participation has been obtained.

Section 9
Entry into force and expiration

(1) These Regulations shall enter into force on the day after their publication in the Official Notices of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

(2) These Regulations will expire on 31 October 2020. Deadlines set by these Regulations which extend beyond this date remain unaffected.

(3) The validity of these Regulations can be extended until 31 March 2021 if the circumstances dictated by the coronavirus epidemic extend their need into winter semester 2020-2021. An extension for winter semester 2020-2021 will be enacted by the Executive Board as a separate resolution.