

# **Framework regulations for digital sessions and procedures for non-public committees at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences (Committee Regulations, *GremienO*)**

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## **Section 1 Scope**

(1) Pursuant to Section 12 (2) sent. 6 of the Higher Education Act (*Hochschulgesetz*, HG), these Framework Regulations govern how committees may meet digitally and how their decision-making processes may be conducted via digital communication means or written consent in lieu of a meeting. The Rules of Procedures for each committee remain unaffected.

(2) These Framework Regulations apply only to committees at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences whose meetings are not open to the public, as defined by Section 12 (2) sent. 5 in connection with sent. 1 HG.

## **Section 2**

### **Digital committee meetings**

(1) A “digital committee meeting” is defined as a meeting in which

- a) video conferencing software is used so that committee members can meet online in a virtual room (video conference), or
- b) members participate either by video conference as in a) above or, alternatively, in person in one of the designated meeting rooms on campus (hybrid session).

(2) Inaugural committee meetings should be held in-person. During an inaugural meeting, the committee will decide (by simple majority) whether subsequent meetings will be conducted as video conferences and/or hybrid meetings. Committees should meet in-person at least once per semester.

(3) Digital committee meetings must be conducted in a way that ensures the proper exchange of opinions so that members can exercise their common decision-making will in a comparable fashion to meetings conducted in-person. Committee members connecting to a meeting via video conferencing software must have functioning webcams and microphones to ensure adequate communication. The use of virtual backgrounds is permitted.

(4) If a committee meeting is planned to be conducted as a video conference, members must be given the opportunity to participate from one of the designated meeting rooms on campus. Members participating from elsewhere must select an adequately secure location so that unauthorised third parties cannot learn anything about the contents of the meeting.

(5) Digital committee meetings must be conducted in accordance with applicable data privacy regulations, in particular the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU 2016/679), as amended. Audio or video recording of meetings is prohibited.

(6) If a committee meeting is planned to be conducted in person, the chairperson may permit members to participate online when justified by individual circumstances. Justified circumstances for not attending in person include, in particular, work-, family- or health-related reasons, or reasons connected to the rights and obligations of students.

### **Section 3**

#### **Technical requirements**

(1) Digital committee meetings may only rely on video conferencing software approved for use at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. Members must be notified in a timely manner of the video conferencing software they must use and its technical requirements.

(2) If a committee member participating in a digital committee meeting experiences any technical issues, they must report these issues to the chairperson immediately. The chairperson will decide whether to pause the meeting until the issue has been resolved. If the issue cannot be resolved in a timely manner, the chairperson will decide whether to reschedule the meeting or continue the current meeting without the affected member. Any technical issues occurring during a meeting must be recorded in the meeting's minutes.

### **Section 4**

#### **Decision-making in digital committee meetings**

(1) Committees can pass resolutions in digital meetings.

(2) Votes on resolutions can be conducted via simple hand gesture or other digital means. Secret ballots can be conducted with the help of digital voting systems with a secret voting function. If a secret ballot cannot be conducted in a digital committee meeting, it must occur instead in person with physical ballots.

(3) A quorum must be established before resolutions can be passed. If a committee does not have a quorum due to a temporary technical issue, the chairperson must pause the meeting for an appropriate period of time in order to resolve the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved during this time, the session must be rescheduled.

### **Section 5**

#### **Decision-making by silence procedure**

(1) Committees can pass resolutions via simplified written consent ("silence procedure"), either digitally or on paper, except where a member objects.

(2) Objections must be explained immediately. If a member objects to decision-making via silence procedure, the chairperson must schedule a meeting in a timely manner.

## **Section 6**

### **Digital elections for committees**

Elections for committees can be conducted with the help of a digital election system, provided the system complies with the Online Election Regulations of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

## **Section 7**

### **Deviating regulations**

The Rules of Procedure of the individual committees can set forth their own provisions that deviate from those given in Section 2 (2), (6); Section 3 (2); and Section 4 (3) of these Framework Regulations.

## **Section 8**

### **Entry into force**

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

Note: *These Framework Regulations entered into force on 5 August 2022.*