Holding In-Person Events at RWTH

Dated: August 18, 2020

At present, several different types of events can be held in person at the University. Basic regulations on this issue that will be in force for the period after the summer break have had to be established.

In light of the renewed increase in infection numbers, the possible regulation options should focus on the in-person events that are most aligned with RWTH’s mission.

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Teaching and Learning

Exams (Section 2 Allgemeinverfügung (AV) – General Degree of the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs)

In principle, the existing rules on written and oral exams will continue to be in place.

Courses and Practical Sessions (Section 3 General Decree)

Target Group: First-Semester Bachelor’s Students: Students in their first Bachelor's semester should be introduced to the new university learning environment as comprehensively as possible. Here, the University will exploit the full potential of the possibilities offered by the general decree of the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs. The Faculties will be encouraged to offer as many events and courses in person as possible, while ensuring the number of participants does not exceed the maximum limit of 50. All such events are to be held in compliance with the minimum distancing regulation of 1.5 meters, consequently, only "simple contact tracing" (according to § 2a CoronaSchVO) has to be ensured here. For this purpose, Faculties should primarily use the University's central venues that have already been certified. The individual Faculties must submit a request for a venue to Division 11.1 and the carpe diem! Team, who will then allocate a suitable space. If additional classrooms are required, a risk assessment must be carried out in coordination with the Occupational Safety and Radiation Protection Staff Unit and the necessary hygiene measures must be ensured. For all other events and courses, the carpe diem! team will book the venue as a 'virtual room' as part of their planning process.

If the nature of the event (e.g. a lab course session) means that the minimum distance cannot be maintained, a hygiene concept must be drawn up together with the Occupational Safety and Radiation Protection Staff Unit and contact tracing must be guaranteed.

Special Case: Introductory Events for First-Semester (Bachelor’s) Students: The regulations outlined above also apply to introductory events for first-semester students held by the student councils and the faculties. However, when planning events, please be aware that only groups of 10 or less may be formed in public areas, i.e. outside the university premises, in accordance with the provisions of the CoronaSchutzverordnung (Coronavirus Protection Ordinance – CoronaSchVO). This is especially important to take into account with tutorials, etc.

Target Group: Higher Semester Bachelor’s and All Master’s Students: Events focused on supporting first-semester Bachelor's students already take up much of the available rooms at RWTH. What is more, each additional offer of in-person events or courses increases possible contact between people. In addition, a short-term change from virtual to in-person formats would mean that many students would continue to linger on and around the RWTH premises. Finally, due to common winter infections and possible quarantine requirements, many students will not be allowed on site at times and should therefore have the chance to continue learning remotely. For these reasons, all courses should, in principle, be offered virtually, unless they absolutely have to be held in person due to a special requirement (e.g. laboratory courses). In the interest of preventing infections, such courses will be limited to a maximum of 30 participants. A hygiene concept must be drawn up for the course together with the Occupational and Radiation Protection Staff Unit. Initially, however, in the carpe diem! planning process, all course venues will be booked as 'virtual rooms'.
Research & Ongoing Operations

In-Person Work Meetings (§ 4 para. 1 CoronaSchVO)
In-person work meetings are defined as such if only employees of RWTH are present or when the external participants form a considerably smaller proportion of the attendees. If the supervisor(s) deems in-person meetings to be essential on the basis of the content of the discussion, such meetings are permitted in compliance with the known hygiene regulations and the RWTH minimum standards. The maximum number of participants here is also usually 50. In all other cases, we still recommend holding meetings remotely instead. So-called "hybrid solutions" (partly in person; partly online) are of course also possible. If you need a larger meeting room, please consider using the central room booking service.

Congresses/Specialist Conferences (§ 11 para. 2 CoronaSchVO)
The CoronaSchVO stipulates a special hygiene and infection protection concept for congresses (or specialist conferences). Event management must draw up this concept and submit it to the public health department. The Occupational Safety and Radiation Protection Staff Unit can only provide advice here if time permits.

Since it is impossible to realistically estimate the effort required for such a concept or to predict how the numbers of infections will develop, the Rectorate strongly recommends switching to virtual formats for the foreseeable future.

Cultural Offers (§ 8 para. 1 CoronaSchVO) and Events Not Covered by the Special Regulations of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance (§ 13 CoronaSchVO)

Cultural offers and other events are not part of RWTH’s core mission. Such events can still be held but are subject to the same maximum participant numbers as in the area of teaching and learning.

These offers by the University are possible in compliance with the requirements of § 8 CoronaSchVO or § 13 CoronaSchVO. The individuals in charge of event management are responsible for compliance with the legal requirements (especially regarding contact tracing). Regardless of the actual capacity of the venue, the maximum number of participants is 50 and great care must be taken that the minimum distance of 1.5 meters in the auditorium is strictly observed at all times. In addition, the applicable minimum standards of RWTH must be adhered to.

The Rectorate also strongly recommends switching to virtual formats for such events for the foreseeable future.

Community Events (§ 4 para. 1 CoronaSchVO)
Work events such as outings, Christmas parties etc. are currently prohibited by the CoronaSchVO.
Third-Party Offerings

RWTH-Affiliated Institutions
RWTH has many affiliated institutions, student associations etc., which use the buildings of RWTH to hold their own events.

These institutions should once again be given reasonable access to the premises:

- The organizer (affiliated institute, association ...) is responsible for compliance with the current relevant legal regulations, which also includes the obligation to create necessary safety concepts. In addition, the applicable minimum standards of RWTH must be adhered to.
- Due to lack of staff resources, the Occupational Safety and Radiation Protection Staff Unit is not able to offer any advice here.
- Regardless of the actual capacity of the venue, the maximum number of participants is 50.

The Rectorate also strongly recommends switching to virtual formats for such events for the foreseeable future.

Non-Affiliated Third Parties/Commercial Use

At present, we are not providing any University venues to third parties if these are not in any way affiliated with RWTH.