

FHNW Covid-19 protection concept

Applies from 1 September 2020 (start of autumn semester 2020/21)

Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, the “special situation” as defined by the Epidemics Act of 28 September 2012 (EpG) has been in force in Switzerland since 19 June 2020. Based on the Epidemics Act, the Federal Council issued the “Ordinance on Measures in the Special Situation to Combat the Covid-19 Epidemic” on 19 June 2020. The annex to this ordinance sets out the requirements for protection concepts.

On 25 June 2020 Swissuniversities issued the “Covid-19 – guidelines for the commencement of operations of Swiss universities in the 2020/21 autumn semester”.

This FHNW protection concept is based on the aforementioned requirements and guidelines. The measures defined in the protection concept are intended to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19), interrupt transmission chains and protect the persons present at the FHNW from infection. The protection concept is based on the sharing of responsibilities: the institutional responsibility of the FHNW and the individual, personal responsibility of all persons present on the FHNW campuses or performing mandated activities.

Classroom teaching subject to the following protective measures is again envisaged at the FHNW from the 2020/21 autumn semester. The balance between classroom teaching and distance learning is a matter for the relevant organisational entities (presidium of the board of directors, schools, services, campuses).

This document contains binding requirements, formulated by the president, regarding protective measures for the campuses and the schools/services. When applying the protection concept, the needs of schools with more than one campus must be taken adequately into account.

- The directors of the schools and the VP Services are responsible for implementing the organisational protective measures described below at a school/services level (II).
- The campus managers are responsible for implementing the spatial protection measures (see below) at the campuses (III).

I. Organisational principles at FHNW level

1. Protective measures

The FHNW seeks to contribute to the containment of the Covid-19 pandemic through systematic application of the protective measures. The protective measures are:

- Hygiene measures
- Observing distancing of 1.5 metres
- Wearing masks

2. Presence on the premises of the FHNW

- Students, participants in continuing education, employees and visitors are personally responsible for observing the protection measures while on the FHNW’s premises, in and out of the classroom.
- In addition to maintaining the required distancing, students, participants in continuing education, employees and visitors are required to wear masks on the FHNW’s premises.

Exceptions to the obligation to wear masks apply

- to employees in their offices
- when taking meals in canteens/campus restaurants/cafeterias
- if granted by a school's director
 - depending on the circumstances of a particular campus
 - exclusively to events with fewer than 100 participants.

- The following persons are prohibited from entering the premises of the FHNW:
 - Persons with symptoms which could be caused by the Covid-19 coronavirus or who have tested positive for it (see the Federal Office of Public Health's (FOPH) instructions regarding isolation).
 - Persons living in the same household as, or having had close contact with, a person who is a confirmed Covid-19 carrier (see the FOPH's instructions regarding quarantine).
 - Persons who have to go into quarantine because of arrival from countries/regions with increased risk of infection (see FOPH list).

These persons must inform the relevant director or VP Services accordingly.

The directors and the VP Services keep the head of the crisis unit informed about situations relating to Covid-19.

- The option of working from home, physical separation from other persons or the wearing of masks must be provided for persons deemed to be at particular risk (see FOPH).
- If the required distancing cannot be ensured through spatial protection measures, and exceptions to the obligation to wear masks have been granted, the schools must record the contact details of the persons present. The lists of contact details must be kept at a central location in the schools/services and destroyed after 14 days. Use of the canteens is subject to the rules of the operators.

The persons responsible for tuition involving physical attendance and delivered under these circumstances must inform those attending regarding

- The probable impossibility to maintain the required distance and the associated increased risk of infection
- The exception to the obligation to wear a mask granted by the director
- Collecting the contact details of those present
- The possibility that these contact details will be forwarded to the competent cantonal authority
- The possibility that the cantonal authority will be in contact, and its competence to order a quarantine.

3. Business and study trips

Business and study trips within Switzerland are permitted, subject to compliance with the applicable protective measures.

Business and study trips abroad should be avoided if possible. If trips abroad are unavoidable, the recommendations of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs must be observed.

4. Information

Posters at key locations provide information about the applicable rules of conduct.

If contact details are collected, those concerned must be informed as per point 2 above.

5. Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for implementing the protection concept lies with the President.

The directors and campus managers are responsible for its implementation at the schools and campuses respectively.

To ensure the coordinated implementation of any requirements of the sponsoring cantons, the contact person for the cantonal authorities is the Secretary General of the FHNW.

Those responsible for the schools and services are responsible for identifying critical processes and organising them in such a way that they are continuously available.

II. Organisational protective measures at school/services level

In order to implement the organisational principles, the schools/services are putting in place measures to protect employees, students, participants in continuing education and visitors, such as a reduction in activities requiring participants' presence, e.g. working from home, replacement plans, partial assignments, special teaching set-ups, special examination schedules.

III. Spatial protection measures at the campuses

The campus managers are putting in place the following spatial protection measures:

1. General measures

Hand hygiene

- Ensuring the availability of soap and disposable hand-drying material
- Provision of hand sanitizer stations according to room type

Social distancing

There is an increased risk of infection if the distance of 1.5 metres cannot be maintained for more than 15 minutes. The following measures are intended to facilitate the required distancing:

- Information via posters
- Signage, floor markings, barriers to control the flow of people
- Seating arrangements
- Measures on a per-room type basis
- Organisational measures at a school/services level

Cleaning

- Set periodic cleaning of door handles, handrails, lift buttons, WC facilities
- Measures on a per-room type basis

2. Additional measures on a per-room type basis

Type 1: open zones, access areas, transfer areas, libraries, car parking facilities, break areas, WCs

- Information/signage (FOPH posters)
- Provision of hand sanitizer stations in access areas (entrances, library, ...)
- Shutting off areas at increased risk of violation of the distancing rule
- Organisational measures at a school/services level

Type 2: lecture halls, teaching rooms, seminar rooms, meeting rooms

- Definition and labelling of maximum number of attendees per room
- Rooms with fixed seating: designation/labelling of seats that can be used
- Limiting number of available chairs
- Cleaning of table surfaces several times a day when used by different groups of people

Type 3: laboratories, workshops, special rooms (incl. for music)

- Definition and labelling of maximum number of attendees per room
- Periodic cleaning of surfaces touched by several people

Type 4: workplaces, offices (including break facilities)

- Definition of number of persons per room
- If necessary, appropriate rearrangement of the existing furniture
- Organisational measures at a school/services level

Type 5: canteens, cafeterias

- Action taken by operators
- Organisational measures at a school/services level

Specific measures for special zones with direct customer contact in the defined room types (reception areas, etc.), must be provided for in consultation with the schools.

Issued by the President on 19 August 2020

Applicable from 1 September 2020

(replaces the protection concept for the transitional period of 8 June 2020 and the protection concept of 30 June 2020)