To all members of
Hochschule für Künste Bremen

- via E-Mail -

6. April 2020
Letter from the Rectorate regarding the summer semester 2020

Dear Students, Faculty and Members of our Staff at the University of the Arts Bremen,

Today would have been the official start of our summer semester 2020. But instead of this the University is closed and running on an emergency schedule. There will be no inaugurating events, no meetings in class rooms and no casual conversations on the floors. Life was expected to return to Speicher XI and Dechanatstraße – but now our academic home seems to be almost completely deserted.

Everybody involved in the shift to emergency operations handled their tasks with much consideration and we found numerous solutions for individual needs. We at the Rectorate would like to express our sincere appreciation for the responsible and solidary way everybody here among faculty, students and staff has met this challenging situation.

These days and weeks bring far-reaching changes for all of us. We are in a crisis the likes of which none of us ever has probably experienced ever before. This is especially true for artists and musicians and students in the artistic and design disciplines, as they depend on personal exchanges, contact, audiences, reactions and interactions with others and furthermore tend to lead financially insecure lives. We can not ignore their situation.

We are meeting these challenges together. But everyone of us has to face and tackle their own individual challenges and is experiencing the crisis in their own way. We therefore have to take extra care to approach each other with consideration and respect, find patience and empathy for each other and meet each others’ efforts and needs with mutual appreciation.

At first, classic crisis management had to be launched. We are still operating along those lines. There are a number of crisis teams and these are constantly in touch to deal with the situation as it changes on a daily basis.

We are all aware that a transparent communication of our actions and plans is of crucial importance. This goes beyond communicating on the Corona crisis, but also relates to our plans for the immediate future, as well as to issues concerning the summer semester in general and individual programs for help and support.
All of our academic and student bodies will hold sessions regularly. As of now, these are primarily online. Beyond the Academic Senate, departmental committees and student commissions, our Campus Offices, the International Office, the offices of the Deans, the AStA, all administrative departments and corona@hfk-bremen.de (as well as additional counseling offices listed in the attachment and on our website) are ready to consult on emerging situations and provide support in meeting this challenge.

The “Crisis Team on Teaching” has been meeting on a weekly basis since their constitution. Members of student bodies are participating, as well as representatives of the relevant offices at the University, including the administrations of the departments, the Student Office, the Staff Council, the Campus Offices, the KBB and the International Office as well as the Offices of the Deans and the Rectorate. The next meeting will be tomorrow, Tuesday, April 7, to discuss and communicate next steps in partnership with student representatives.

Relating to this, we would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for the open letter the AStA published last week! We take much heart from the fact that the dialogue with students at the University is working in such a constructive way even in a time of singular stress. The differentiated description of the ways students perceive and experience this crisis is very helpful for us. We also would like to express our strong agreement and support for the demands raised by the AStA. We want those ideas to be realized and are determined to engage in a thorough discussion about the demands and questions raised by the student organization.

We want to highlight and support the request of the AStA to initiate, maintain and intensify participatory processes and committee work during these trying times. We therefore also salute the request to have StuKo-meetings for all courses in both departments before April 20 (ideally this week, before Easter) to resolve the urgent issues concerning the summer semester in an expedited way. We would like to ask the “Fachgruppen” to join us in this effort.

**Issues relating to the Summer Semester 2020:**
The Offices of the Deans, professors, teaching associates ("Lehrbeauftragte"), the Rectorate and students are engaged in intense discussions on the limitations and opportunities brought along by the pandemic.

We would like to encourage everybody to approach the planning for the summer semester with an open mind. Established plans, procedures and curricula are of limited use in this crisis. Whatever we want to call it: this will not be a regular semester as we know it. This is especially true for us as an academic institution for the arts and music that is buildt upon the personal presence of student and teachers in a room. Our possibilities to transfer teaching and learning into online-formats is therefore limited.

We all have to approach this semester with a high degree of flexibility and a willingness to improvise in completely new ways. The University as a whole is turning our structures and capabilities into a platform to help you in realizing your ideas and concepts.
Please turn to your relevant Office of the Dean and Rectorate [rektor@hfk-bremen.de] if you need help for your projects:

As stated in the open letter of the AStA, our internal communications have now assumed a pivotal role to at least counter the lack of personal exchanges by sufficient information.

Referat 1 is currently developing an internal platform to facilitate exchanges and discussions on breaking developments and projects outside of courses and seminars. Referat 1 would very much appreciate if you would provide information on your projects and concepts for this new platform. Please also share your posts, tweets and mails with Referat 1. This is relevant for our internal communications and only relates to our public relations to a lesser degree. Please contact Alina Holz and Sue Wendlandt, pressestelle@hfk-bremen.de

**Facts on the Summer Semester 2020:**
We assume that this semester does not have to be counted as a regular semester for official purposes such as rules relating to the standard period of studies. Students that can not attain all or some of the accomplishments expected from them in a regular semester shall as a rule not experience any disadvantages in this respect. In particular:

- Students interested in acquiring a CP can do so.
- Who ever wants to postpone an exam to the next semester should do so. If exams have to be conducted during the current semester as a requirement, we are giving our best efforts to make this happen. We will decide this on a case-by-case basis.
- A policy of leniency appropriate to the current situation has been introduced for issues relating to CPs and exams during this semester.
- Detailed information will be provided by the departments, Offices of the Deans and Campus Offices.

As you all are certainly aware, future developments can not be prognosticated in any way. We all hope that the University can be reopened in the near future and return to regular operations in responsible steps. We would like to thank you for your participation and patience on this journey. Please do not hesitate to turn to the Rectorate with specific questions or suggestions.

Kind regards and best wishes,
the Rectorate

Prof. Roland Lambrette
Rektor

Dr. Antje Stephan
Kanzlerin

Prof. Dr. Andrea Sick
Konrektorin

Prof. Martin Classen
Konrektor

Attachment: Help offers, support and further information
Help offers, support and further information

HfK-Corona-Info Website
You will find the latest information, e.g., official letters and further information on our HfK-Corona-Info website: https://www.hfk-bremen.de/en/corona-info

HfK Social Fund
Students in financial need and under financial duress due to the pandemic can contact the International Office (for international students // international-office@hfk-bremen.de) and Dezernat 1 (for German students // dezernat1@hfk-bremen.de) for assistance.

International Office
The International Office is active in a number of areas: it provides support for international students at the University regarding, e.g., funding, accommodation and visa and advises German students and teaching staff during the planning of residencies and projects abroad
Contact: international-office@hfk-bremen.de
Website: https://www.hfk-bremen.de/t/auslandsstudium-der-hfk-bremen
funding: https://www.hfk-bremen.de/t/auslandsstudium-der-hfk-bremen/n/finanzierungstipps

The Department of Research Development and Research Funding now offers help and advice in two key areas online from now on:

- **Stipa: Counselling on scholarships and residencies for and by fellow students**
  Contact: stipa@hfk-bremen.de
  Students provide advice to fellow students in German and English via Skype on issues concerning fellowships and residencies. Questions such as these might arise:
  o The range of support provided by different foundations. What are their criteria?
  o How and when do I apply?
  o How do I draft a strong application and what needs to be listed on a résumé?
  o What kind of residencies are available and how do I apply for these?

- **Language Assistance: Helping with matters regarding language problems and language barriers German – English**;
  Contact: language_assistance@hfk-bremen.de
  Fellow students provide language assistance. If you need assistance in another language than English/German, do reach out and Language Assistance will try put
you in touch with someone who can help with your specific language needs (i.e. Chinese, Korean, Arabic etc.)

Services:
- Support with translating assignments in course work
- Submissions and submissions written in German
- Drafting short texts or filling forms in German
- Accompany students to important meetings and help with translating

Rent
Students struggling to pay the monthly rent should reach out to their rental company (e.g., professional rental company, landlord/landlady, Studierendenwerk) and explain the current circumstances.

Residence permits
Students can turn to the „bremen_service universität” located at the Universiyt of Bremen for issues relating to residence permits. Further information and forms are available on the website: https://www.uni-bremen.de/bsu/auslaenderangelegenheiten/

Psychological and social counseling
In this challenging situation the Studierendenwerk Bremen continues to offer psychological counseling by phone. Please find schedules and contact information on their website: https://www.stw-bremen.de/de/beratung-soziales/psychologische-beratung

The center for social counseling can be reached on a reduced schedule by phone. Please find schedules and contact information on their website: https://www.stw-bremen.de/de/beratung-soziales/sozialberatung

Emergency funds for students by the Studierendenwerk Bremen
The guidelines for the financial support of students in non-indebted emergencies are currently (April 3, 2020) adapted to the current situation. Further information will follow on their website: https://www.stw-bremen.de/de/news/notfallfonds

Help in cases of domestic violence
The AStA of the University of Bremen has compiled a list with phone numbers to call for help if you experience a case of domestic violence: https://www.asta.uni-bremen.de/nicht-sicher-in-den-eigenen-vier-waenden/Hilfe

Grants and support received under the federal law concerning the promotion of education and training (Bafög)
The government support for students (BAfög) is being paid out on the regular schedule despite the postponement of the start of the semester.

Students can also submit applications for a raise in their support or for advanced payments. If the support from the parental home is discontinued due to short-time work,
the Studierendenwerk also recommends submitting a BAföG application (update application).

The Studierendenwerk Bremen is responsible for funding students at all the institutions of higher education in Bremen and Bremerhaven under the Federal Education Support Act (BAföG). BAföG is based on a very extensive and complicated piece of benefits legislation. In particular for international students an application is not always possible. Please note that Studierendenwerk can only advise about BAföG in German.

Please visit https://bafoeg.bremen.de/ and https://www.stw-bremen.de/de/news/coronavirus for contact information and service schedules.

Catholic University Parish
The Catholic University Parish provides help for international students in crisis. Please contact for further counselling and application forms: hochschulgemeinde@kirchenamt-bremen.de

Help for freelancers and Start Ups
Emergency aid programs have been put in place for freelancers, start-ups and freelance artists/musicians on state and federal level. Please find further information on the Websites of „Bremer Aufbaubank” (processing applications for Bremen) and „Nbank” (processing applications for Lower Sachsony).

https://www.bab-bremen.de/stabilisieren/beratung/task-force.html
https://www.nbank.de/Blickpunkt/Uebersicht-der-Hilfsprogramme/index.jsp

The Senator for Culture provides general information for those working in the area of art and culture. Please find further information, e.g., about the promotion program, on his website:
https://www.kultur.bremen.de/startseite/corona_hinweise_fuer_kulturakteure-17312

Basic income support from the Federal Employment Agency
The application procedure for the basic income support will be simplified for a limited period of six months. The new rules are expected to come into force within the next few weeks. According to the preliminary status, among other things, the existing assets and whether the rent is appropriate will be waived. Customers will enjoy the protection of their previous home for this period.

Please find current information on the website http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/corona-grundsicherung or call the hotline (0800 4 5555 23) for self-employed persons, freelancers and other affected persons.