Hygiene and infection control concept of TU Darmstadt for SARS-CoV-2

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1 Introduction

The following information and guidelines are based on the recommendations of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) and the currently applicable ordinances of the State of Hesse. The coronavirus pandemic is a challenge touching all of society and requires all of us to act responsibly. TU Darmstadt intends to put in place measures for reopening the university without compromising the protection of all members of TU Darmstadt. Containing the pandemic still has top priority.

This hygiene and infection control concept applies to all members of TU Darmstadt in all buildings of TU Darmstadt including premises rented or leased by TU Darmstadt. It does not apply to those organisational units with which separate agreements have been negotiated (such as tenancy agreements for premises of TU Darmstadt). It also applies to all non-TU members who are frequenting TU Darmstadt spaces as guests or as employees of contractors working at TU Darmstadt. It must be ensured that these external parties are familiar with the hygiene and infection control concept as well.

Assessing risks for employees and staff at their respective workplaces and identifying and implementing the necessary protective counter measures are one of the key demands of §5 of the Arbeitsschutzgesetz (ArbSchG - Safety and Health at Work Act). Superiors must produce risk assessments for every single workplace and must update them should there be substantial changes in working conditions. For this reason, the risk assessment addendum “Setting up a workplace with regard to the coronavirus pandemic” is attached to this hygiene and infection control concept for your convenience. In this risk assessment, pandemic-specific risks and their corresponding protective counter measures have been added to the already existing risk assessment. Superiors must complete this risk assessment form and implement the respective protective counter measures. The support team (Gesundheit) at TU Darmstadt will assist superiors as necessary.

Please note that a special risk assessment under pandemic conditions applies to expectant mothers. For more information, please refer to the Directorate VII webpage: https://www.intern.tu-darmstadt.de/verwaltung/dez_vii/info_a_z_vii/mutterschutz.de.jsp

Special hygiene concepts can be drawn up supplementing this overall Hygiene and infection control concept of TU Darmstadt by including special regulations and their implementation for specific areas or situations. Already approved hygiene concepts will remain in force unless they are in contradiction to this hygiene concept.

Please mail your respective hygiene concepts to the support team (Gesundheit) at TU Darmstadt. They will be happy to answer any questions in this regard that you may have: gesundheit@tu-darmstadt.de. Hygiene concepts for practicals, laboratory work and excursions do not have to be approved by the support team. These hygiene concepts will be checked by the respective departments.

With the current hygiene and infection control concept, all members of the university are given the opportunity to cooperate with one another and take part in university life as much as possible even during the pandemic. Hence, this hygiene and infection control concept and all hygiene concepts based on it do not distinguish between vaccinated, recovered and not vaccinated members of TU Darmstadt. The regulations stated in these concepts apply to all members of the university independent of their medical status.

This hygiene concept is applicable until revoked due to changing statutory provisions or newly imposed conditions by the local Gesundheitsamt Darmstadt-Dieburg (public health department).

Darmstadt, 07 September 2021
The President of TU Darmstadt
2 General rules of hygiene and infection control

2.1 Basic rules of conduct

Please observe the following general rules of conduct during all your activities (AHA+L):

- **A for Abstand – distancing**: Observing the required minimum distance of 1.5 m (4-5 steps) has top priority for all hygiene and infection control measures at all times. When carrying out your work, it is therefore necessary to always keep a minimum distance to all people around you whether indoors or outdoors.

- **H for hygiene rules**:
  1) Observe the cough and sneeze etiquette. Cough and sneeze into paper tissues or your bent arm.
  2) Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.
  3) Keep your hands away from your face, i.e. do not touch your face.
  4) Do not touch others in greeting like shaking hands, hugging etc.
  5) Always keep a sufficient distance to other people particularly those showing symptoms of illness such as coughing, sneezing or fever.

- **A for medical face masks (formerly Alltagsmasken – mouth-nose covers)**: Wearing medical face masks when using the so-called traffic areas (such as corridors, staircases etc.) inside of university buildings is required whenever more than one person is using this space at the same time. They are also required for passengers in a company car. Should it become necessary in exceptional cases to reduce this minimum distance of 1.5 m, everyone present is required to wear medical face masks. A medical face mask is either a surgical mask or an FFP2 mask. The simple mouth-nose covers, so-called Alltagsmasken, (DIY) made from fabric, are no longer permissible.

- **L for Lüften – ventilating**: Ventilate the rooms you are using thoroughly and regularly to reduce the number of potential causative organisms in the air. It is best to ventilate several times a day for 5 to 10 minutes. The simplest way to ventilate is by opening windows. This airing by opening the window must be done at start of work in any room and must be repeated regularly for as long as you work there. A ventilation (or airing) interval of 60 minutes for office rooms and of 20 minutes for meeting rooms is recommended. To this end, open the window completely to allow for maximum air exchange. This is called “Stoßlüften”, i.e., impact or surge ventilation. In rooms with room ventilation systems, manual ventilation by opening windows is usually not possible because these rooms are supplied with fresh air automatically via central control systems. When ventilating rooms and hallways, do not use doorstops or similar to keep fire doors open. Fire doors must be able to close automatically for fire protection reasons. The use of recirculation units (fans, ventilators, air purifiers or cleaners, fan heaters etc.) is only permitted in offices that are used by one person, as these ventilators circulate aerosol matter around the room.

2.2 Hygiene and infection control material, personal protection equipment

Every organisational unit (such as department, institute, research group, central services) is independently responsible for providing their employees and staff with the required material. Orders can be placed centrally via the Directorate III using this email address: dez-3-z@zv.tu-darmstadt.de.

Workwear and personal protection equipment must not be shared with others. They are for personal use only. Work equipment such as tools should whenever possible, be used by one person only. Should this not be possible, this work equipment must be cleaned regularly. While at it, observe hand-washing routine as well. Wearing disposable gloves is not necessary when observing proper and thorough hand-washing routines. It becomes necessary only whenever there are no hand-washing facilities nearby.
2.3 Returning from a trip

Your immediate presence at work after returning from a trip on official business or holiday abroad can only be granted under certain conditions. Quarantine regulations for travellers returning to Germany have been harmonised nationwide and can be found in the fact sheet available in multiple languages: https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/coronavirus-infos-reisende/info-sheet.html.

Beginning work in person on site without the measures mentioned in this fact sheet is not possible. An up-to-date list of virus variant areas and high-risk areas can be found on the website of the Robert Koch Institute. Again, please evaluate responsibly and carefully what risks and hazards you were exposed to during your trip, and what consequences they could have for you and your colleagues. If you are concerned that you may have been exposed to an increased risk of infection, you should contact your superior/manager and, if necessary, arrange for mobile working. In case of organisational questions, please feel free to contact the support team (Gesundheit) at TU Darmstadt by email: gesundheit@tu-darmstadt.de. In case of medical questions of an occupation-related nature, please contact the Medical Service MAS.

2.4 How to deal with COVID-19 infected people

If you are working at TU-Darmstadt and feel symptoms such as coughing, fever and/or shortness of breath, inform your superior/manager or the Departmental Office and go home immediately. Get in touch with your general practitioner or the Gesundheitsamt (public health department) by phone to discuss how to proceed.

Should an employee or staff member call in sick to work because of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 infection, we ask you to notify us via gesundheit@tu-darmstadt.de so we can initiate any further steps that may prove necessary together with you. Vaccinated and recovered employees, staff and students are kindly asked to report back to the support team. Naturally, we will handle all information and data involved confidentially.

For further information please refer to the webpage of the Directorate IV: https://www.intern.tu-darmstadt.de/verwaltung/dez_iv/corona_leitfaden_und_hygienekonzept_der_tu_darmstadt/index.de.jsp.

2.5 Recovered, vaccinated and tested persons

At TU Darmstadt no distinction is made between recovered, vaccinated or tested persons. Hence, the 3G rule (genesen, geimpft, getestet – recovered, vaccinated or tested) cannot be used at TU Darmstadt to allow for instance more than one person to work in any office room at the same time without practising additional hygiene measures. Conditions of employment and teaching have to be set up in such a way that all employees and staff are protected in the best possible manner against infections and any resulting health issues – regardless of whether they have been vaccinated, tested or have recovered. Adherence to the AHA+L rules (“Keep your distance, observe hygiene rules, wear a mask, ventilate”, refer to section 2.1) continues to be of great importance. Wherever the AHA+L rules cannot be implemented sufficiently, all participants have to present a negative test result even if they have recovered from or have been vaccinated against the coronavirus. This duty applies to certain

- practicals and laboratory work (taking place in rooms without ventilation systems, for instance);
- physical education courses;
- single events (events lasting several days, events outside of the university, events with participants from outside, events including mealtimes).

For more information about 3G – recovered, vaccinated or tested, please visit the webpages of the Directorates VII: https://www.intern.tu-darmstadt.de/verwaltung/dez_vii/info_a_z_vii/informationen_a_z_vii/artikel_details_de_en_304384.de.jsp.
2.6 Keeping participation lists
For tracing chains of infection quickly in case of a confirmed COVID-19 infection, successful contact tracing must be ensured for all face-to-face events at TU Darmstadt (e.g., for courses). The event/course organisers are responsible for preparing and updating participation lists. Section 4 CoSchuV (Coronavirus-Schutzverordnung – Coronavirus Protection Ordinance) is the legal basis. To this end, the following data is required:
- Name, first name
- Residential address
- Email address
- Telephone number
- Date of participation

Physical presence at taught courses and examination script viewing are recorded digitally using the TU Check-in App. For people unable to use the TU Check-in App, check-in lists on paper must be provided. For more information, please refer to www.tu-darmstadt.de/checkin-infos.

3 Special hygiene measures at the workplace

3.1 Working in teams
It is not necessary to have rotating fixed teams in all areas. In areas where working mobile from home is not possible or where operations need to be maintained (at shop floors or laboratories), rotating fixed teams need to be set up.

3.2 Office work, mobile work, official meetings and briefings
It is still best to move working on site to working mobile from home. Physical presence on site at TU Darmstadt needs to be avoided as much as possible. Employees and staff need to discuss personally with their superiors what options there are to work mobile from home and which tasks can only be done on site. They also need to discuss the availability of suitable working space on site and at home to set up a tailored work schedule and place. An important aspect to be considered is the employee's and staff member's mental health including personal and social circumstances. Office workplaces should, if possible, be used alternately to ensure that only one person works in an office room at any given time. Subject to personal and spacial circumstances, office space used by more than one person is also possible. However, if more than one person occupies an office simultaneously, they must all wear medical face masks.

The currently valid regulation of 10 m² per person can be used as a basis for specifying office occupancy rates. Workplace separators and open windows can be used as additional protective measures in addition to wearing a mandatory medical face mask.

At some workplaces, separators made from plexiglass (transparent acrylic plastic) for instance can be useful in addition to keeping a minimum distance. This applies particularly to areas that are frequented regularly and extensively by others, e.g., to receive counselling, to get information or material and may even include laboratories and shop floors.

It is still necessary to consider carefully if official meetings and briefings really require the participants to be present physically. If digital formats prove to be inadequate and gatherings on official business on site prove to be the best option, suitable locations and numbers of participants need to be selected in accordance with the AHA+L rules. In addition, the gatherings must be kept as brief as possible. For any gathering on official business of more than three people on site, the responsible senior manager has to...
document confidentially the number of participants, the duration and the location of the gathering to ensure that chains of infection can be traced quickly. This documentation will be deleted following a retention period of four weeks.
For more information regarding working on site, mobile work from home and gatherings on official business, please refer to the Directorate VII webpage: https://www.intern.tu-darmstadt.de/verwaltung/dez_vii/info_a_z_vii/corona_virus_handlungsanweisungen.de.jsp

3.3 Using shared spaces
When using shared spaces such as break rooms and tea kitchens, you must observe the minimum distance of 1.5 m (4-5 steps). Breaks must be taken at staggered times to avoid indoor encounters during meals as much as possible. Medical facial masks may only be taken off temporarily while eating or drinking. When using tea kitchens, you must observe customary hygiene rules regarding the use of cutlery and dishes as well as tea towels.

3.4 Using changing rooms, toilets and washrooms
In toilet facilities, do not stand around the sinks as a group at the same time. Regular ventilation of sanitary facilities must be ensured. If changing rooms are used, ventilation must also occur after each use. Please observe the minimum distance to other people in the changing rooms as well. Should it be impossible to maintain such a minimum distance due to room design, organisational measures must be put in place such as one-person access at a time only.

3.5 Trainees and apprentices at workplaces
Should it be necessary for trainees and apprentices to be present on site, the workflows must be organised in such a way that work can be resumed safely while adhering to the applicable hygiene and infection control measures. The instructor in charge is responsible for setting up a safe working environment. In addition to this requirement, each workplace environment must be assessed (such as specific requirements for laboratory work, shop floors or offices). To ensure full infection control, processes and work assignments need to be organised in such a way that parts of them can also be done from home. If necessary, respective measures need to be coordinated with the training/education provider in charge.

3.6 Using university vehicles
Use university vehicles (cars) one person per vehicle and day only. Those in charge of university vehicles must provide non-alcoholic disinfection tissues so the user can wipe down frequently-touched surfaces such as steering wheel, back mirror, gearshift lever, Radio/GPS controls. Should it be necessary that not just the driver but another person rides along at the same time in any of the other university vehicles (such as transporters, lorries, vans or service vehicles of the technical services, the HRZ and the Directorate IV), the passenger must wear an FFP2 mask (without breathing valve) and must sit on the back bench, if available.
4 Special hygiene measure for studying and teaching

4.1 Courses
In the winter semester 2021/22, courses will, as a rule, be taught in a hybrid format both traditionally and digitally. As far as circumstances allow, courses taking place in person on site will be offered subject to AHA+L rules. These rules require a minimum distance of 1.5 m between marked seats, marked pathways, the obligatory use of medical face masks, registration of participants via TU Check-in. Hygiene concepts for practicals, laboratory work and excursions must be coordinated with the respective department (section 1). Hygiene concepts for all other courses deviating from the overall hygiene concept must be coordinated with and approved by the support team (Gesundheit) at TU Darmstadt (gesundheit@tu-darmstadt.de). Which courses are to be held digitally or in person on site will have to be decided by the departments. Dissertations and theses requiring student attendance on site can be registered any time, provided that the required hygiene concepts have been implemented.

4.2 Oral and written examinations
Oral examinations will be possible in person on site, provided that
• the AHA+L rules are being observed;
• 10 m² are available per person; and
• the respective hygiene concept exists.
Provided that the above-mentioned points are being observed, members of the university, the family or the circle of friends of the doctoral candidate may be invited to a formal academic debate on a dissertation.
For detailed information regarding the organisation and holding of oral and written examinations, please refer to “Courses and examinations under corona conditions” on the webpage of the Directorate II: https://www.intern.tu-darmstadt.de/verwaltung/dez_ii/covid19/index.en.jsp

4.3 Access to specific courses
For some courses (section 2.5), the hygiene concepts can specify a negative coronavirus testing result to permit participation. Participants must self-test before the course starts and must confirm that they have tested negative. Anyone showing a positive result is not permitted to participate in the course. In such a case, section 2.4 of this hygiene concept applies to the person(s) concerned. Same-day negative self-tests, rapid PoC antigen tests or PCR tests are considered equivalent proof.