

Osnabrück University

#UOSagainstCorona

1st Newsletter for Students issued by the President's Office of Osnabrück University

April 6th, 2020

Dear Students,

We are living in turbulent times. Since the beginning of March, we have all been planning diligently and conscientiously to start our summer term on time as usual – albeit digitally – whilst banking on a return to face-to-face courses at the start of May at the earliest. Now, however, everything has changed once again. Apparently, there has been an agreement between the Ministries of Education and Research to the effect that all universities will start their terms on April 20th and should prepare to conduct their teaching for the most part digitally. Today, you received an email to that effect. So: take a deep breath once again – we will now start the summer term on April 20th in the first instance as a digital semester!

On a more general note: the corona crisis affects us all and will continue to cause disruption. When will the university's buildings open? Will I lose my claim to BaföG if my studies are prolonged? Will my examinations take place? You are entitled to an answer to these and many other questions. Rest assured, we are in close contact with your professors and lecturers to ensure that you experience as little insecurity as possible. But please remember, this situation is exceptional for us too, and a great many things are liable to change very quickly (sic!).

In order to provide you with a reliable source of information, we will publish this newsletter every two to three days. You and your interests and needs are of paramount importance to us. Send us an email if you are experiencing a problem, or if we can help you with anything, or if you have a good idea! Oliver Schmidt at the Communication and Marketing Office (oliver.schmidt@uos.de) would be happy to receive them. I am really curious and looking forward to them! But most importantly: Take care of yourselves and stay healthy!

Best wishes

Susanne Menzel-Riedel

What has happened so far...?

How the virus has changed our university

Since February, the formerly unheard-of coronavirus has spread from China to the rest of the world. It has had unforeseen consequences for all sectors of society, including our university. You can find a precise chronology of the pandemic together with answers to the most pressing questions and a list of the measures currently being taken at: www.uni-osnabrueck.de/informationen-zum-corona-virus

Good Advice

The Student Services Psychosocial Counseling Center remains open

The Psychosocial Counseling Center (psb) in Osnabrück, Lingen and Vechta is closed to the public for the foreseeable future. However, students can continue to use its telephone counseling service. Please submit enquiries by email or telephone.

Secretary's office at the psb: Tel: (0541) 9692580

#beactive

New Sports Program

The central message is currently #stayathome. But University Sports would now like to present the program #beactiveathome which is intended to help students to remain active and fit and prevent the onset of health issues even under current circumstances. In addition to general tips for leading an active lifestyle at home, the program includes exercises based on short instructional videos through to complete courses on live stream. University Sports is planning to consistently expand its digital program and to provide a broad range of activities. You can find all information on #beactiveathome on the University Sports website at www.zfh.uni-osnabrueck.de/sportangebot/beactiveathome.html

Corona: Medical Matters

University Doctor apl. Prof. Dr. Henning Allmers comments on the usefulness of face masks

Should I as a healthy person wear a mask?

Although more and more politicians and doctors are demanding it be made obligatory for everybody to wear a face mask, the advice being issued by the WHO is clear: Healthy people do not have to wear a mask unless they have contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. Keeping a distance of two meters to the nearest person is the best protection.

However, many people do not know if they have become infected with coronavirus. So if you have caught a cold or similar illness, you should wear a mask to prevent other people becoming infected when you cough and sneeze. If the intention is to protect others from becoming infected, then the face mask is a sensible precaution, explains the virologist Christian Drosten. In this case it is recommendable that as many people as possible wear a face mask. When you cough, sneeze or speak, the mask can prevent at least some droplets of saliva or mucus escaping from your mouth. However, virologists like Drosten also point out that wearing a mask makes less sense as far as protecting yourself is concerned: People wearing a mask are no better protected from infection than people who are not wearing one.

Do people wearing masks still have to maintain a distance of one and a half meters and wash their hands regularly?

Definitely. The WHO expressly warns against getting a false sense of security from wearing a mask. Without taking other precautions, a face mask is quite ineffective. The Robert Koch Institute has also issued clear guidance: "On no account should wearing a nose and mouth covering or any other form of face mask cause people to neglect the rules governing social distancing or hand washing".

Student Questions

What allowances will be made for Bafög recipients involved in work to combat the pandemic?

Bafög recipients who are currently involved in fighting the coronavirus pandemic by working in the health sector, in social care institutions or agriculture will only have their additional income accredited for the duration of their employment. This means that Bafög recipients continue to receive their entitlement before and after their paid employment during the pandemic which temporarily increases their usual income. The money earned during this time will therefore – in contrast to normal practice – only be calculated against the time the student spends working to combat the pandemic. This means that it is not calculated against the entire period of Bafög entitlement and even then only when the threshold for additional earnings has been reached. Students receiving Bafög who wish to avail themselves of this possibility should direct any questions they might have to the Student Finance section of Student Services [Studentenwerk]:

www.studentenwerk-osnabrueck.de/de/finanzen/kontakt.html

What kind of music is most relaxing during the crisis?

Feature: Lecturer in Drums and Marimba Hermann Helming

I like listening to WDR Cosmo with my whole family because we are all fans of Global Pop. We all use the kitchen as a place to dance. It puts you in a good mood. And to relax I like listening to the Italian composer and cembalist Domenico Scarlatti who was born in 1685 in Naples and died in 1757 in Madrid. When I'm doing Yoga, I listen to the Yoga Electronic Play List on Spotify to get me in the right mood. I recommend it to everybody.

Language courses still taking place

Please remember to register for all foreign language courses between April 8th and 14th. You can find all relevant information regarding your placement in the courses on the website of the Osnabrück University Language Center. Due to the current situation, you should however expect changes to the course schedules and/or formats. You can find arrangements relating to particular courses on the main website of each course in studIP. Please contact us if you have any questions:

www.uni-osnabrueck.de/universitaet/organisation/zentrale-einrichtungen/sprachenzentrum

@home? Is anybody there?

Coronavirus has started to turn our lives upside down. As a student, how are you spending these highly unusual days? How have your daily routines changed, is there anything you find it particularly difficult to do without? What personal insights have you gained recently? And most of all: how do you feel? We are clearing part of the space we usually set aside for UOS abroad on our Instagram channel @uniosnabrueck and would like you to visit us at #UOSatHome-Stories. Send us your thoughts, feelings, descriptions, photos – or just your #Corona-Diary-Excerpts to onlineredaktion@uos.de using the hashtag #UOSathome.

For example, Primary School Education student Simon Macherski sent in tips on how to do basketball practice at home. We will also ask from time to time about coronavirus and look forward to your contributions in our Instastory, in comments sections or in your social media channels. Just tag us using #UOSathome and @uniosnabrueck.

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