

FAQs for international exchange students (incomings) and international coordinators for study trips during the Covid-19 pandemic (as of 12 August 2020)

Are international exchange students allowed to participate in courses at the FH SWF in the upcoming semester?

The travel restrictions within the European Union, the Schengen associated states and Great Britain have been repealed. Therefore, students may travel abroad again. Since 2 July 2020 this also applies to the following countries: Australia, Georgia, Japan, Canada, Montenegro, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, China. Entry regulations are always tailored to the international infection situation. Current information is available on the homepage of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community.

(<https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2020/07/aufhebung-einreisebeschraenkung.html>).

Nevertheless, persons who travel to NRW and have stayed in a risk area defined by the RKI within 14 days prior to their arrival must either go into domestic quarantine for 14 days after their arrival and contact the health department or submit a medical certificate stating that there is no evidence of infection with the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. The results of the molecular biological test may not be older than 48 hours. These provisions can be amended at any time depending on the infection situation. Before travelling to Germany, students are obliged to check the applicable regulations.

(https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete_neu.html)

(https://recht.nrw.de/lmi/owa/br_bes_text?anw_nr=2&gld_nr=2&ugl_nr=2126&bes_id=43045&menu=1&sg=0&aufgehoben=N&keyword=Coronaeinreiseverordnung#det0).

Will teaching activities take place on-site or exclusively online?

The upcoming semester will be taught mainly online, although some courses (internships, seminars, some elective modules) will also be taught on-site. If a second wave of infection occurs, the in-class teaching will be replaced by online teaching if necessary. Thus, the situation for the upcoming semesters can only be forecasted to a limited extent. You should check regularly the general information of the FH SWF.

https://www4.fh-swf.de/de/home/beschaefigte/organisation_1/beauftragteundvertretung/arbeitsicherheit/corona/coronavirus.php

When are the lecture and examination periods for the winter semester 2020/21? Is there a uniform regulation for the entire FH SWF?

The winter semester officially begins on 28 September 2020. First-semester students of study courses with restricted admission (Agriculture [Bachelor], Business Psychology [Bachelor]) will start on 02 November 2020. It is up to the faculties to postpone the start of lectures also for other courses and higher semesters to 2 November if necessary.

The semester will officially end on 12 February 2021 for all students, however, the examination periods may be extended.

How is the enrolment procedure for international exchange students organised?

The enrolment of international students who register for a semester as part of an exchange programme is carried out exclusively in writing. The corresponding application for enrolment is provided by the International Office. The completed application form and proof of health insurance should then be forwarded to the respective Student Service Office along with the required status sheet from the International Office. Another contact option, e.g. the guest faculty, must be indicated if the payment request should not be sent by post to the incomings.

Do the incoming students have to provide proof of a German health insurance if they only participate in online courses?

International students from third countries who do not stay in Germany during their studies do not have to take out a German health insurance policy, just like students at distance learning universities. Thus, the universities can enrol them as regular students with the status "not subject to compulsory insurance". Please note that, according to the current status, the health insurance obligation will come into effect when the students enter Germany at a later date. **If the arrival takes place in the current semester, the health insurance obligation is applicable retroactively to the beginning of the semester, so that contributions must also be paid retroactively** (<https://www.studentenwerke.de/de/content/corona-faq-der-studenten-und>). The proof of health insurance does not apply if, including the examinations, only online courses are taken. In such a case, students have to apply at the examination office of the respective faculty for an examination that does not require attendance at the FH SWF. If students participate in on-site examinations, proof of health insurance must be provided.

How can an examination be designed that does not require attendance at the FH SWF?

The examination boards are authorised to offer students with proven reasons for not being able to take part in an on-site examination at the university an examination in another examination form upon request. Another reason is that students from abroad are not in Germany for the entire semester and participate exclusively in online teaching formats. The alternative examination form must be comparable to the attendance examination concerning the requirements of the competencies to be examined with regard to the examination content and degree of difficulty. According to § (6) 2 of the Corona Epidemic University Regulations, the university may carry out online exams outside the university buildings and in doing so may use the help of third parties, also by means of administrative assistance.

Alternatively, an examination can also be carried out outside of the university as an on-site examination, if the examinees are supervised by separately assigned persons and the required distance and hygiene regulations are observed at the examination location.

Do the incoming students have to pay the semester ticket if they do not travel to Germany?

Yes, the obligation to purchase the semester ticket is stipulated in the student body's contribution regulations. The costs must generally be paid even if public transport is not used. However, they can be reclaimed in case of longer absence <https://asta.fh-swf.de/startseite/rueckerstattung-semesterticket>

Requests for reimbursement of the semester ticket must be submitted before the beginning of the respective semester.

If the application is submitted after the start of the semester, 1/6 will be deducted for each month. Applications will not be processed until the beginning of the semester, therefore no reimbursements can be made before then.

How is it ensured that the international periods of study can be maintained?

Lecture periods are determined centrally for all universities by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. They are not subject to the universities own decisions. The winter semester 2020/21 is scheduled from 28 September 2020 to 12 February 2021. The summer semester 2021 is scheduled from 29 March 2021 to 23 July 2021.

Are the technical requirements such as VPN client etc. easy to install and easy to understand?

You can find instructions for installing the VPN Client on the IT Services homepage.

https://www4.fh-swf.de/de/home/studierende/its/vpn_zugang/einrichtung/global_page_default_81.php

Is it possible to install the certificate of the university without any problems on computers abroad and to transfer it portably to different end devices?

The login to the central services of the university is carried out via user ID and password, which are assigned after enrolment, for further information see here:

<https://www4.fh->

[swf.de/de/home/studierende/its/diensteundservices/benutzerkennungstudierende/index.php#](https://www4.fh-swf.de/de/home/studierende/its/diensteundservices/benutzerkennungstudierende/index.php#)

Is it possible to contact the International Office, international coordinators, Student Service Office, IT services, etc. in the home office?

All services of the university can be contacted via email in the home office. However, if a telephone call is unavoidable, students should ask for it by email, giving their own telephone number.

Students from non EU/EEA countries would like to work in a system-relevant area beyond the legally permitted scope of 120 full days or 240 half days. Is this possible despite the current situation?

In this context, students should contact their immigration authorities. The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community has recommended that the federal states/immigration authorities issue employment permits that require the approval of the Federal Employment Agency (BA) so that newly created employment opportunities can be used. In this context, the importance of recruiting workers in agriculture (harvest workers) is especially emphasized.

What happens if students from non EU/EEA countries are no longer able to provide proof of adequate means of subsistence due to the Covid-19 pandemic (loss of part-time jobs, financial problems of parents due to the pandemic)?

In this context, students should contact their immigration authorities. The Federal Ministry of the Interior, for Building and Community has recommended that the German federal states/immigration authorities waive the requirement to provide proof of securing livelihood for study purposes if pandemic-related financial problems arise.