Dear Colleagues,

Due to the increasing inquiries received by the Executive University Board regarding the planning horizon following the expiration of the current Instructions No. 12, I would like to clarify my remarks in the letter that accompanied Instructions No. 12 and inform you about the planning requirements for the coming months.

The unclear nature of the pandemic demands that teaching and examination operations continue exclusively in digital form. This applies to the entire examination period for the winter semester—that is, until 31 March 2021. Therefore, with the exception of examinations in Staatsexamen (state examination) degree programs, all oral and written examinations must take place exclusively in digital form.

Changing to a new examination format at short notice is a didactically, conceptually, and technically challenging project and requires a lot of additional effort. The Executive University Board is aware of this. However, our goal is clear: the University is contributing substantially to reducing contact and mobility while simultaneously offering students the opportunity to complete the winter semester without delay. Many of you have already started with the necessary preparations for switching to digital written examinations. We are exceptionally thankful for your commitment to this demanding and complex project.
In order to provide the greatest possible certainty when planning for you, your students, and staff in the academic offices and University Administration, the current situation also requires us to take forward-looking, appropriate decisions with regard to Summer Semester 2021. In light of the dynamic of the pandemic, currently, we can only achieve planning certainty with an essentially digital arrangement for the summer semester. As soon as the pandemic’s development allows for it, the University will begin to reopen gradually for in-person formats that have already been designed for this purpose in the upcoming syllabus planning. The same restrictions must be observed that were already set during the original planning for Winter Semester 2020/21 (distancing, hygiene, airing, cleaning, collecting contact data). Laboratory internships and field trips, practical sports courses, and courses teaching clinical skills will have top priority when reopening. However, we cannot yet foresee at which point we will be able to begin gradually reopening.

The Executive University Board is in constant communication with the offices of the dean regarding the requirements of teaching and examinations planning. All decisions communicated by offices of the dean to the faculties are based on this exchange. I therefore ask you to stay informed within your faculty, because the Executive University Board cannot always directly communicate all intermediate steps during medium-term planning in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Dieter Lenzen