

Vienna, August 27, 2020

Letter from the Rector at the beginning of the academic year 2020/21

Dear students at SFU,
Dear employees,

In September, the SFU's Faculties of Medicine and Psychotherapy will begin the new study year, in October the Faculties of Law and Psychology will follow. We are pleased about the high demand at all faculties and see our work to date confirmed by the number of new enrollments. This development strengthens our determination to continue to enable our students to progress in their studies with a high level of commitment and the pursuit of the best quality in teaching and research. We want to support this through a high level of service orientation in administration.

Nevertheless, we have to deal with the COVID-19 situation in the upcoming winter semester 2020/21. And even though the World Health Organization (WHO) expects the pandemic to abate in the summer of 2021, we have to design our teaching in such a way that our students and employees* have maximum possible safety. On this basis and - based on the important learning experiences of the past semester - we are planning a hybrid form of classroom and digital teaching for the semester that is about to begin. The individual faculties will be responsible for setting the focus of each study course, which will also offer the respective study course in different modes according to the number of students. Knowing the special importance of establishing personal contacts for a successful start in a student life, we will try to offer as much classroom teaching as possible especially to first-year students.

Every course of study thrives on interaction and so we are happy about the lively exchange opportunities between students and lecturers. We will continue to offer these opportunities while taking the necessary security measures.

For COVID-19 infection prevention, the following still applies: keep your distance, use masks, hand hygiene. In the event that COVID-19 disease occurs at the SFU, all necessary precautions have been taken: a team is prepared to initiate the necessary measures to ensure safety for all.

The Ministry has published the following information on private universities for the beginning of the new academic year:

In contrast to the other higher education sectors (universities, universities of applied sciences, teacher training colleges), there are currently no legal regulations governing the right to study at private universities. The private universities were therefore able to react quickly and flexibly to the crisis requirements in the area of study law.

Regulations for distance learning and distance examinations were provided for in many study and examination regulations, partly as a temporary, partly as a permanent alternative to the respective attendance formats.

- *Differentiation of the holding of teaching and examinations according to categories*
- *Fundamental conversion of university teaching to "Distance Learning":*
- *Lectures are mostly held live online and remotely, with interactive features to allow students to actively participate in class.*
- *Performance of selected examinations (especially individual examinations) and non-substitutable courses (laboratory exercises, individual artistic lessons, etc.) in classroom operation in compliance with the applicable safety and hygiene regulations*
 - *e.g. additional security measures with regard to the number of participants* and room distribution for written examinations*
 - *use of hybrid formats for courses with compulsory attendance (e.g. exercises, seminars, internships)*
 - *conducting dislocated written exams with the help of a suitable conferencing tool (recording option for documentation)*
- *Students can choose the learning mode: If students have safety or health concerns or visa/travel problems, the first semester can be completed entirely online.¹*

The SFU takes into account the possibilities of flexible design of the framework conditions in teaching and research according to the specific requirements of the respective faculty.

¹ Excerpt from the "COVID-19 Guide for Secure University Operation. Recommendations for Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, Universities of Education and Private Universities" of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. August 2020. page 54. link from 27.08.2020, 14.28h: https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/Hochschule-und-Universitaet/Aktuelles/corona/covid_19_leitfaden.html

We wish all students a successful start into the new academic year 2020/21 and look forward to welcoming you for the first time or again at SFU!

We would like to thank all our colleagues in teaching, research and administration for their untiring commitment to our students!



Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Alfred Pritz
Rector

Sigmund Freud Private University
Freudplatz 1
1020 Vienna

T +43 1 798 40 98 DW 600
M +43 664 11 222 99
alfred.pritz@sfu.ac.at
sfu.ac.at