

**STATE SECRETARY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, INNOVATION AND
VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

**Proposal for conducting digital education at higher education during the period of state of
danger**

Effective from 12 November 2020

Preamble

Regarding the state of danger declared by the Government Decree 478/2020 (3 November), the present sectoral proposal aims to serve as a unified guide for all public higher education institutions in Hungary to conduct the 2020/2021 academic year, in accordance with section 64 (3) b) of the Act CCIV/2011 (hereinafter: Nftv.) on National Higher Education.

As a primary aspect, the proposal takes into account the prevention of the spread of coronavirus pandemic, the safety, health, personal, property and legal security of persons at higher education, the continuity of higher education and the stability of institutional functioning.

According to the Government Decree 484/2020 (10 November) on the second phase of protective measures applicable during the period of state of danger (hereinafter: Government Decree), education in a higher education institution shall be carried out in the form of digital education. As a general rule, digital education must be applied; in duly justified cases, the Minister responsible for higher education (hereinafter: Minister) may, upon initiative by the rector of the higher education institution, grant exemption from the protective measure. The initiative shall include the education activity being the exemption from digital education, its reason and term.

During the period of state of danger, unified practical aspects need to be enforced in case of all study programmes; to this end, in case of the same study programmes, continuous cooperation between higher education institutions is particularly justified.

In accordance with the Government Decree, dormitories and student residences of each higher education institution are to close; exceptions to this rule may be set out by the rector. Staying in a dormitory may be permitted in particular for cross-border and foreign students and for students staying there under official quarantine obligation.

Every higher education institution shall have an institutional plan for the state of danger, which needs to be updated constantly – if necessary, taking into account the epidemiological situation within the higher education institution as well. The institutional plan needs to be provided to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (hereinafter: authority) until 13 November 2020. The

managing authority shall examine the institutional plan of each higher education institution and propose further measures if necessary.

For organising and conducting digital education, the contents prepared by the authority shall be used;

- Sectoral proposal for conducting higher education during the period of state of danger
- Measures and good practices related to distance education at higher education institutions
- “Practical experience of distance education in higher education” webinar (27 May 2020 – 24 June 2020). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mE63fpqT-o&t=10s>.

It should be noted, that compliance with the Nftv. and the related legal provisions - of course with the priority of emergency provisions - will continue to be mandatory. For information, the transitional rules on the cessation of state of danger and the applicable provisions of Act LVIII of 2020 on epidemiological preparedness are included in Annex 3.

This sectoral proposal must be applied during the period of state of danger declared by the Government, right after it has been made available to the higher education institution. The sectoral proposal applies to all premises and training places of the higher education institution, including training places outside of Hungary as well (e.g. community higher education centres) and to every institution/establishment maintained and operated by the higher education institution.

1. Ensuring health-safe environment for the operation of higher education

- 1.1. The compliance with laws, measures and guidelines declared in the Government Decree and the present proposal on health safeguard is mandatory for everyone.
- 1.2. In case education is conducted with personal attendance by the approval of the authority, upon the initiative by the rector of the higher education institution, the premises and courses of the higher education institution may be visited only by healthy persons, who do not show symptoms of the coronavirus infection. Violation of the rule shall result in individual sanctions. The typical symptoms of the coronavirus infection are included in Annex 1.
- 1.3. All citizens of the higher education institution must keep the rules of personal hygiene. It covers frequent soap or alcohol hand sanitization, compliance with cough etiquette, avoiding unnecessary contact with the face and keeping the rules of using medical face masks, safety masks, masks made of textile or other materials (hereinafter: mask) covering both nose and mouth continuously.
- 1.4. Wearing a mask is mandatory at all areas of the higher education institution (all premises and training places, also including the training places operating outside of Hungary (e.g. community higher education centre), and at every institution/establishment maintained and operated by the higher education institution), at all closed and open areas. The rector of the higher education institution or the manager of the institution/establishment is responsible for the observance of the mandatory mask wearing as described above.
- 1.5. Only persons whose body temperature does not exceed the level determined by the Chief Medical Officer may enter the higher education institution, which must be checked by

measuring body temperature or filling in the risk screening questionnaire according to Annex 2.

- 1.6. Information on pre-triage screening – included in Annex 2 – shall be made available for all who enter the higher education institution. Those who are suspected of having coronavirus on the basis of pre-triage screening must not enter the higher education institution. An exception is if a medical certificate is presented stating that the symptoms are not related to the coronavirus infection.
- 1.7. Keeping physical distance at the area of the institution is extremely important in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The required physical distance is 1.5 metres in all cases.
- 1.8. Student administration is available primarily in online form. In duly justified cases, personal attendance may be allowed upon the rector's decision.
- 1.9. Particular attention shall be paid to the cleanliness of the buildings visited by students and/or staff at the higher education institution, the use of appropriate (virucid) hand disinfectants, as well as virucid surface disinfectants and cleaning supplies. In all cases, virucid disinfectants shall be used in accordance with the Hungarian instruction manuals, in appropriate concentration and with an appropriate exposure time of 4. The continuous availability and procurement of hand and surface disinfectants shall be ensured. It shall be monitored and documented by the higher education institution.
- 1.10. Frequently touched surfaces must be disinfected regularly - at least every two hour - (door handle, lift buttons, switches, handles, railings, etc.). Regular cleaning and disinfection of coffee machines, vending machines, dispensers and jugs is required at least after every each service – with virucid disinfectant. It shall be monitored and documented by the higher education institution.
- 1.11. In close places, particular attention shall be paid to continuous or regular, intensified natural air ventilation in order to reduce the concentration of possible disease agents. In case of artificial air conditioning, if the windows can be opened, natural air ventilation is recommended as often as possible at the same time. Such air conditioning devices that are not suitable for fresh air supply and only circulate indoor air (e.g. split air conditioners, fan-coil units and mobile air purifiers) can only be used if there is an intensive air supply from outside at the same time. In case of split air conditioners, the appliance must be set so that it does not cause a large air flow in the lower half of the room. The heat exchanger and dust filter of the appliance should be disinfected regularly using a licensed antiviral agent. In case of increased use, replaceable filters need to be replaced more often than required. It shall be monitored and documented by the higher education institution.
- 1.12. Those entering the higher education institutions and establishments should be informed properly: on the actual rules of the institution, the measures taken related to the new coronavirus, the conditions of using the institution and establishment and on the restrictions connected to the epidemic situation.
- 1.13. The internal action plans and rules of each institution shall be observed by every citizen. These action plans and rules shall be supplemented and updated regularly in line with the epidemic situation. Beside the related rules and sectoral proposals, the rector may issue special institutional instructions.
- 1.14. If any signs of infection or illness are detected in the area of the higher education institution, it shall be communicated immediately in accordance with the epidemic rules.

- 1.15. It is the responsibility of the higher education institution to provide health-safe environment and ensure the compliance with health regulations, in the area of public educational and vocational training institutions maintained by the higher education institution. In the case of public educational and vocational training places, the rules declared in chapter 10 of the Government Decree entitled “Protective measures relating to upbringing and educational institutions” and the rules on public educational institutions available on the website of the Education Authority shall be applied.
https://www.oktatas.hu/kozneveles/aktualis_tanev_esemenyei/covid19/EMMI_tanugyi_dont_esek
- 1.16. The restaurant and buffet of the higher education institution, dormitory or student residence may be open in accordance with section 8 (3) of the Government Decree, where only the staff or students of the institution may be served.
- 1.17. If the Minister granted an exception of digital education, the library and archives of the higher education institution may be used by the authorized staff and students of the institution, in duly justified cases.

2. Attending classes

- 2.1. Education in a higher education institution shall be carried out in the form of digital education; exception may be granted only in duly justified cases. Education with personal attendance (internships, practical courses) shall be organised in such way that the safety distance of at least 1.5 meters could be kept, by taking into account the capacity of the classroom as well.
- 2.2. Classes with a large number of students must be held online in all cases, ensuring appropriate interactivity.
- 2.3. Every communication with students must be conducted via e-mail and student administration systems. Opportunities to access the evaluation of the tests and the submitted documents shall be provided for all students, during which safety rules shall be strictly followed.
- 2.4. During the period of digital education, higher education institutions shall ensure the continuity of education.
- 2.5. Full compliance with the cleaning instructions is required at all educational and community places, which shall be documented properly. In case education is conducted with personal attendance, surfaces in the rooms should be disinfected after each class.

3. Conducting internships and practical courses

In case internships and practical courses could not be held in the form of digital education,

- 3.1. During internships and practical courses, students and lecturers shall keep exceptional hygiene rules. Soap or alcohol hand sanitization is mandatory before the courses, the sanitizers should be provided at the place of the practice. Wearing a mask is mandatory in all cases.
- 3.2. Compulsory pre-trainings (fire and safety protection training, data protection training and hospital hygiene training) must be conducted in online form.
- 3.3. Student schedules should be prepared in advance in order to reduce the number of students attending at the same time.
- 3.4. During internships and practical courses, it is the instructor's responsibility to continuously monitor the adequate use of the personal protective equipment. During the whole period of the practical courses, at least 1.5 metre distance should be kept.
- 3.5. During practical courses, all equipment shall be cleaned with virucid surface disinfectant by the instructor or a person authorized by him – if it does not damage the equipment.
- 3.6. At some study fields, especially at the field of medical and health sciences, the higher education institution may introduce further regulations as well.
- 3.7. The rules for internships and practical courses shall be observed at both indoor and outdoor training places.
- 3.8. Full compliance with the cleaning instructions is required at all training places, which shall be documented properly. Surfaces in the rooms should be disinfected after each practical course.

4. Conducting exams and reports

In case exams and reports cannot be conducted in the form of digital education,

- 4.1. The date and study field of the oral report and the expected number of students shall be determined in advance, ensuring the compliance with epidemic rules.
- 4.2. In case of oral reports, students shall arrive in a pre-arranged and scheduled time.
- 4.3. In case of written reports, rules for standard classes shall be followed. It is recommended to use personal equipment during the written reports. Written tests can be safely corrected after 24 hours, by following the hygiene rules.
- 4.4. Only healthy students and examiner, who do not show any symptoms of coronavirus, may participate in the reports. Students must undergo a pre-triage screening – questionnaire (Annex 2), measuring body temperature. It shall be documented by the examiner.
- 4.5. Wearing a mask is mandatory during oral and written reports. All surfaces and equipment shall be regularly disinfected.
- 4.6. During the exams, everyone shall strictly keep the rules of the cough etiquette. Students shall be informed on the cough etiquette before the exam in a written form, and they shall be informed orally as well when the exam starts.
- 4.7. Oral reports may be held only in rooms which can be well-ventilated. Except the examiner, maximum 2 students can be in the rooms. In special cases, where the equipment is used by

more students after each other (e.g. art, music, sport education), the equipment shall be cleaned by surface disinfectant with short exposure time.

- 4.8. It is necessary to ensure frequent, if possible, natural ventilation in the location of the report. Disinfectant cleaning is always required in the classrooms, corridors and community places before and after the report. The frequently touched surfaces (handles of doors, windows, keyboard, monitor, mouse, switches, railings, faucets etc.) shall be cleaned by virucid disinfectant.

5. Emergency rules for dormitories, student residences and colleges for advance studies

In accordance with the Government Decree, dormitories and student residences of each higher education institution are to close; exceptions to this rule may be set out by the rector. Staying in a dormitory may be permitted in particular for cross-border and foreign students and for students staying there under official quarantine obligation.

- 5.1. Students need to get at least 48 hours for moving out of the dormitory or student residence. Students are required to take their own personal objects when leaving their accommodation.
- 5.2. The rector, in his/her own discretion, may grant exception of the vacation upon the student's request, if special equity requires. Taking into account the epidemiological aspects we suggest that those who have a dormitory or student residence membership status on 10 November, 2020 may maintain their dormitory place:
 - Hungarian diaspora students
 - Foreign students who study in international programmes
 - Students quarantined in dormitories and student residences, separated from the members of their households and other students

Further equity reasons might be:

- Volunteer students, who do either epidemiological or community work
- Students studying in dual and special internship programmes (e.g. medical, health sciences programmes)
- Those students, whose family members or a person with whom they live in one household are under official home quarantine obligation, and separate living conditions cannot be solved
- Doctoral students who need personal attendance for their research activities,

And other special equity reasons as housing, social or employment status. Each case is to be handled individually.

- 5.3. In case the exam needs personal attendance, those students who moved out of the dormitory may rent a room only for the night before the exam and/or for the exam day, by paying dormitory fee.
- 5.4. Gathering or assembling is forbidden in the dormitory.
- 5.5. It is forbidden to receive visitors, overnight guests and guests at empty student places.

- 5.6. When housing students in dormitories and student residences, the epidemiological safety measures are to be followed. Dormitory places should be filled with respect to the economic aspects of the operation, by placing the students in their own room, if possible.
- 5.7. Except students under quarantine obligations, only healthy persons who do not show symptoms of coronavirus may stay in the dormitories, student residences and in the colleges for advanced studies - if it is allowed for equity reasons. Students are to undergo pre-triage screening - questionnaire (Annex 2), measuring body temperature – which shall be documented properly. Pre-triage screening is to be made with every person daily, persons showing symptoms shall be isolated immediately.
- 5.8. Wearing a mask is mandatory in the dormitories, student residences and in the colleges for advanced studies. This rule may only be waived by a student living alone, only in his/her own room.
- 5.9. Shared places are to be cleaned and disinfected regularly. At all shared places, virucid hand sanitizers shall be placed and regularly refilled.
- 5.10. The number of equipment in shared places and recreational places (indoor and outdoor places) shall be minimized as much as necessary. Shared places in dormitories and student residences (kitchen, laundry rooms, study hall and TV hall) may be used only to a necessary extent, following the epidemic and dormitory rules. Compliance with the epidemic rules shall be monitored at least twice every day.
- 5.11. Students under official quarantine in dormitories/student residences or in colleges for advanced studies shall be cared in accordance with the epidemiological rules.
- 5.12. An alert protocol is to be made for suspected coronavirus cases, so that the suspicious person could be isolated as quickly as possible. At the same time, immediate measures shall be taken in accordance with the procedures of the National Centre for Public Health (hereinafter: NNK).
- 5.13. The rector of the higher education institution shall send a report to the authority once a week on the number of students living in the dormitory or student residence, in the form the authority requires.

6. Sports facilities, swimming pools and other leisure facilities

According to the Act on sports, sports facilities and swimming pools shall be visited by competitive athletes for participating in training or sports competition, by following the Government Decree and the epidemiological rules of the sports trade union. Individual recreational sports, in particular jogging, walking and cycling, shall be allowed in the outdoor sports fields of the institution. In case of individual recreational sports, wearing a mask is not mandatory.

Annex 1

It is FORBIDDEN for a student or staff who shows symptoms of the new type of coronavirus infection or who experienced the following symptoms in the previous three days to enter or stay in the institution:

- Cough;
- Shortness of breath or difficult breathing;
- Fever;
- Chills;
- Muscle or body aches;
- Sore throat;
- New loss of taste or smell;

The list does not contain all possible symptoms, other less often symptoms were also reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms such as:

- Nausea,
- Vomiting and/or
- Diarrhoea,

Anyone who shows the symptoms above should immediately call their doctor and follow his/her instructions.

Annex 2

In case the higher education institution applies pre-triage risk screening questionnaire for entering the higher education institution, the following questions shall be asked.

(The content of the questionnaire shall be updated continuously in accordance with the actual process of the National Public Health Centre (NNK) or other equivalent rules with them.)

1. Have you had the following symptoms for the last 3 days?
 - Fever or low fever (in accordance with the degree determined by the Chief Medical Officer);
 - Headache, malaise, weakness, muscle aches;
 - Dry cough, difficult breathing, shortness of breath, rapid breathing;
 - sore throat, loss of taste or smell;
 - Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhoea?
2. Have you had contact with a person with confirmed coronavirus infection for the last 14 days?
3. Have you had contact with a person for the last 14 days, who is under official quarantine for suspected coronavirus infection?
4. Have you been abroad for the last 14 days or had a guest coming from abroad?
5. Have had contact with a person for the last 14 days who had fever, shortness of breath or coughed?

If necessary, a coronavirus test (PCR test) is recommended.

Annex 3

Provisions on the transitional rules applicable to higher education on the cessation of state of danger and epidemiological preparedness declared in the Act LVIII of 2020

35. Transitional rules applicable to higher education

Section 79 (1) of Act CCIV/2011 (hereinafter: Act CCIV/2011) on National Higher Education shall be applied with the discrepancies included in the present section.

(8) The deadline for fulfilling the obligation of maintaining employment determined in the decision of the Educational Authority shall be extended with one year, in case the deadline for fulfilling the obligation of maintaining employment did not expire till 11 March 2020, and will expire before 31 December 2020.

(11) If a foreign student starts or continuous his/her studies in Hungary in the framework of distance education, the foreign student may have student status without the permission declared in section 80 (2) a) of Act CCIV/2011.

The foreign student shall obtain the permission declared in section 80 (2) a) of Act CCIV/2011 before starting his/her academic studies with personal attendance. The foreign student shall present to the higher education institution those of his/her documents submitted electronically during the admission procedure that are required by the higher education institution.