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16.11.2020

Dear Fachschaft

On behalf of the Engere Vorstand, I would like to forward this reply to your recent letter & questions. I have tried to address each individual point -sometimes grouping the themes together. I would hope that the required information is included below - if not, then I would suggest that you contact me.

1. Kursteilnahme & Zugang zu den Inhalten

Courses can be carried out as Hybrid (mix of live & zoom) courses or as completely online (zoom).

Where the latter, then handouts etc can be scanned and sent via email or powerpoint slides can be uploaded on ecampus.. Where the former, handouts etc can be copied and distributed in person.

It is entirely possible that courses which were originally supposed to be hybrid can switch to digital – depending on changing circumstances (e.g. lockdown).

Where a student considers the risk too great to actively participate in a hybrid course, DESPITE the extensive safety regulations which are already in place, then it may be possible to provide online support. This, however, should only be a last resort (and restricted to quarantine/particular risk situation etc) – since it would require much additional work to provide two versions of a course (both live & digital).

The existing “Anwesenheitspflicht” is not something that should be problematic.

The best solution, all round, is for students to maintain contact with the teaching staff, keeping them informed of any changes in their circumstances or situation.

2. Große Exkursionen etc.
This is, indeed, a problem. Many of our excursions take place outside of Germany – and in the short term such excursions may not take place. However, there are a number of possible solutions to this problem.

First off, some excursions (e.g. Froitzheim) are running. Mapping courses (e.g. Manchego) are also running.

In terms of a Große Exkursion – i.e. having a geological excursion running over a fixed number of days – that might be more difficult. However, again, there is a solution which has been proposed.
1. This would comprise shorter (2-3 daytrips) excursions which would be offered by various teaching staff and which could be combined to comprise a Große Exkursion.
2. This would refer to fieldwork projects in the sense of cumulative field days handling a defined geoscientific concept. Such a kind of fieldwork, can be done autonomously by the students or in small groups (2 pers.)

This is something which is being actively worked on at the moment – and the students will be kept informed via ecampus etc.

In terms of excursions related to specific courses (Kursteile) – this is something that the individual member of staff needs to take into account and provide an alternative.

3. Verzögerung der Studienzeit

It is NOT envisaged that the Studienzeit will need to be extended. Given the mixture of hybrid/digital courses which are up and running at the moment (WS 2020/21), and the fact that all are – as far as I know – working out, this would preclude the need for any extensions.

One point worth mentioning here, though, is the fact that BSc projects may be more difficult for the near future. This is particularly true for projects which are field based. Again, the teaching staff are busy trying to provide interesting and stimulating projects (BSc and MSc) for students. It should, however, be noted that it might not be possible to address/fulfill any special student wishes. Thus, the students may need to be more flexible in terms of their project ideas/wishes.

4. verschobene Module (MSc) & Modulauswahl

We are aware that some modules are not being offered (e.g. Coastal Processes), and that this has been an ongoing problem. This feeds into the second part of this theme – i.e. the modules which are on offer. Part of the problem here is that various teaching staff offer a range of modules which take place over 3-4 semesters, and so are not on offer every year. Teaching staff have been made aware of this problem and the need to provide more clarity and transparence. The Mentor/Basis-Staff have
been in touch with some staff in order to achieve an overview of what the precise
timetable of the various courses is.

Teaching staff have been informed – and asked to provide details of courses etc to
the Mentor/Basis-Staff.

In terms of registration etc – ALL staff have been informed that registration etc must
be via ecampus. The distribution of information etc, must also be via ecampus.

One additional point is the fact that not enough courses are on offer. This is of
particular importance for students planning their 2 year MSc studies. It is of great
importance that all courses listed exist in reality. A number of courses have been
advertised, but have not been offered in reality. This is, naturally, extremely irritating
for the students (particularly in terms of selecting courses which comprise a clear
thematic master's degree to be followed) – and it is something which needs to be
addressed by the various teaching staff. And sooner, rather than later.

5. BSc studies

As above, there is a problem with the lack of information. At this stage of the
semester, I would hope that ecampus is up and running and that teaching staff are
making extensive use of it. I would hope that this "lack of information" problem is thus
in the past.

In terms of courses not being offered etc – Again, this is something that needs to be
addressed by the individual teaching staff – and I would urge them to provide clarity
and transparency (via ecampus/basis) to the students.

There have been timetable clashes. We are aware of that. Those that occurred in
Sept/Oct were, hopefully, an aberration, rather than a rule. In terms of exams, these
are being coordinated by myself (for exams AFTER Rosenmontag). For exams prior
to that, the individual teaching staff are responsible. The dates should be
communicated FAR in advance in order to give the students time to
change/rearrange dates. This if of extreme importance. The same goes for exam
retakes, short excursions etc etc. Please make judicious use of ecampus.

And as for ecampus – I think it is clear from my points above that at the moment it is
absolutely NECESSARY to use ecampus. I would urge all colleagues to take the time
to learn how to use it. And then use it.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.

[Signature]

Prof. Dr. Tom McCann