



Start of semester: Priority for classroom teaching, campus life and events in the Berlin University Alliance

Dear students,

Next week, the lecture period at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin will begin. On behalf of the entire Presidential Board, all staff members in technology, service and administration, as well as all teachers, I would like to welcome you warmly to the winter semester 2022/2023 at Humboldt-Universität. As Vice-President for Academic Affairs, it is important to me to regularly exchange ideas with you and your representatives in the various university committees.

I would like to start this exchange right at the beginning of the semester by giving you some information on two topics that are probably on your mind at the moment: the energy crisis and the Covid 19 pandemic.

Priority for attendance

As you have already seen from the [joint statement by the State of Berlin and the Berlin Rectors' Conference](#), we as the Presidential Board of Humboldt-Universität are strongly committed to ensuring that you can study in attendance this winter semester. We are aware that you have often had to cut back in recent years in the context of the fight against the Covid 19 pandemic. That is why, even in the face of the current energy crisis, we will do everything possible to ensure that our lecture halls, teaching rooms and libraries remain open and heated for you. Even if a reduction in usage times cannot be ruled out, we are not currently considering an extended winter break, as is being discussed in some other institutions.

In order not to disregard pandemic protection when in attendance, we ask you to continue to be careful with yourself and others, to observe the general hygiene instructions and, if possible, to continue to use medical or FFP2 masks if minimum distances are not observed.

Digital and hybrid teaching

As announced last year, we have begun to reflect on our experiences with digital teaching and to discuss which digital elements we would like to retain and further develop in face-to-face teaching in order to make teaching fit for the future. Although we have not yet reached the end of this process, we have already agreed that we will continue to offer didactically meaningful digital and hybrid courses within the framework of face-to-face teaching in order to contribute to the expansion of the curriculum as well as to the flexibilisation and internationalisation of your studies. At the same time, we would also like to support those of you who would like to learn independently of time and place, e.g. due to care obligations or impairments. This does not imply any fundamental claim to digital teaching - the HU is and remains a face-to-face university.

Nevertheless, in addition to the basic instrument of disadvantage compensation, we would like to open up further teaching opportunities for you through some digital formats. For those of you who are concerned about the possibility of participating in digital events due to financial difficulties, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that we have loaned laptops at Humboldt-Universität. Please do not hesitate to ask the course advisors in your institutes and faculties about this. The student initiative [#gnuHU-books](#) also lends out laptops for use in digital teaching.

Joint events in the Berlin University Alliance

I would also like to draw your attention to the joint teaching events with our partners in the Berlin University Alliance (BUA). The BUA, the excellence alliance of Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin and Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, has set itself the goal of further strengthening the connection between top-level research and teaching. In the winter semester 2022/23, there will again be an exciting range of courses on BUA's priority topics. The Student Research Opportunities Programx (StuROPx) offers you the opportunity to work on current research questions together with scientists and other students. In the BUA modules, which are also offered, you will look beyond the horizon of your own degree programme in excellent courses. You can participate in the BUA teaching formats of the network partners as part of an extended secondary student membership. The BUA Office for Studies and Teaching will be happy to advise you on all questions regarding the [BUA teaching formats](#).

For the next few weeks, I wish you a good start to the new semester. Take advantage of the opportunities that study and campus life at Humboldt-Universität offer to get involved in your university and to network with your fellow students - be it in the student committee representations, in the diverse range of [university sports](#), in projects and initiatives such as the [Studium Oecologicum](#) or in completely new formats devised by you that make our university a lively educational institution.

With best regards

Prof. Dr. Niels Pinkwart
Vice-President for Academic Affairs

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