

Vienna, August 17th, 2021

Dear students,

in a few weeks, the winter semester 2021/22 will start at universities and higher education institutions . The last three semesters have demanded a lot from you and you have achieved great things. We would like to thank you for that. We all want things to be as "normal" as possible in the fall, and the good news is that with the vaccines, we have an effective means to collectively get a handle on the Corona pandemic and make that wish become a reality, provided enough people get vaccinated. However, there are still too few for us to truly breathe a sigh of relief. Herein lies the less good news, especially due to the increasing spread of the so-called Delta variant, we must unfortunately assume that the upcoming winter semester will also be affected by the Corona pandemic.

With this in mind, we turn to you. Only if students and teachers collectively take responsibility will it be possible to overcome this crisis. Your personal contribution to this is to get vaccinated in time before the semester begins. The Corona vaccine, in combination with the application of the 3-G rule at universities and higher education institutions, is the central key to being able to study again in the fall with the greatest possible presence on site.

Therefore, we jointly call on you to take up the offer of a vaccination! Low-threshold opportunities for this are available in all federal states, sometimes even directly at your higher education institution. At Österreich impft – Initiative gegen das Coronavirus (www.oesterreich-impft.at) you will find an up-to-date overview of the vaccination offers of the federal states and your higher education institution also provides corresponding information on their respective Corona information page. In some cases, you may not need to make an appointment since sufficient vaccines are now available. We also ask you to please attend both vaccination appointments if you receive a two-part vaccination. The increasing number of infections in and outside Europe shows that only the first part of a two-part vaccination alone does not provide sufficient protection against the highly infectious Delta variant.

Only with a high vaccination coverage rate across all higher education institution students and employees can we achieve our common goal—a start to studies that is as normal as possible.

Not one of us would like to do without the positive aspects provided by digital teaching, but nevertheless we all wish that courses and examinations can once again take place in lecture halls and seminar rooms without any restrictions; that learning zones, libraries, refectories, and sports facilities can open and that one or two semester opening parties can finally be held on campus again.

Studying at universities and higher education institutions also depends on an exchange at a personal level between teachers and students. Distance learning, as most of you have experienced enough as students, can only convey this feeling to a limited extent. First-semester students in particular, but also those who have started studying in the past three semesters, must finally get the chance to really get to know their higher education institution from the inside.

No one can yet accurately predict what the pandemic situation will be like in the fall. But with your cooperation, we can be confident that, whatever the outcome may be, we will handle it successfully together.

We wish you a pleasant summer and a good rest. Stay healthy.



Heinz Faßmann
Federal Minister



Sabine Seidler
President of the Public
University Conference



Sara Velić
Chair of the Federal Student Union



Karl Wöber
President of the Private University
Conference



Raimund Ribitsch
President of the Applied University
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