

## RESOLUTION OF THE RECTOR, OF 10 JUNE 2020, ON FURTHER ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN DURING THE 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR (EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES) TO ADDRESS THE COVID-19 HEALTHCARE CRISIS (SCENARIO 7)

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### Background and legal basis

The Board of Directors of the Inter-university Council of Catalonia agreed to establish a “period of exceptional circumstances” from 1 June 2020 to the end of the academic year 2020-2021 as a result of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and irrespective of the state of emergency declared by the Government of Spain.

The *Health and Safety Protocol: Preventive Measures against the risk of SARS-Cov-2 coronavirus transmission (COVID-19 health warning)*, approved by the Health and Safety Committee of the University of Girona, establishes the specific risks and preventive measures regarding hygiene, building and room capacity and personal protection for activities on University premises.

In addition, the need for thorough control of personal physical presence in order to enable contact tracing in the event of a positive case of COVID-19 infection cannot be overemphasised.

During this period of exceptional circumstances, the University of Girona must be, as always, especially sensitive to the most vulnerable. We should be aware that the range of problems experienced by staff and students may include illness, lockdown, travel restrictions, and having to reconcile work and family, all of which would require changes to planned activities. These modifications, however, must not mean time lost in students’ learning process or putting them at a disadvantage. Entitled to the training provided by the University of Girona, they are protected against any kind of discrimination based on personal or social circumstances (article 139 of the Statutes of the University of Girona, published in the Official Gazette of the Government of Catalonia (DOGC) no. 5897).

The University of Girona is committed to face-to-face teaching and learning. We will apply the *Health and Safety Protocol* to achieve the highest level of physical presence possible and still guarantee personal health and safety in compliance with *Law 31/1995, of 8 November, on the Prevention of occupational risks* and with *Royal decree 1791/2010, of 30 November, approving the Legal Status of University Students* (art. 7.1.n). Although the COVID-19 health emergency restrictions make it impossible to have full classrooms, the University will ensure that this situation has as little effect as possible on the close relationship between teachers and students, and the learning process in general.

Nevertheless, this period of exceptional circumstances will require new tools to support teaching, new teaching methods and new skills. We will adjust University staff training to include aspects of health and safety, personal data and personal image protection, and teaching methods and resources adapted to an environment where face-to-face activities will need to coexist with blended and online learning.

At this time every year, teachers reflect on how we want to change and improve the courses we teach. This year that job will require more focus and dedication than ever before. We must decide what can be transmitted to students at a distance, how we can take advantage of moments when we can work together in classrooms, in labs or on field trips, and which assessment criteria and activities are most appropriate.

We have an opportunity to rethink our teaching, to apply new teaching methods, to remove the boundaries between face-to-face and distance learning, and to work on a unique and remarkable project. We can do more than simply transfer what we have been doing in the classroom to online instruction; we should make better use than ever of the time we spend with students to do activities that cannot be done from a distance, that bring added value to the learning process and that strengthen our close personal relationships with them.

In accordance with the above, and by virtue of the powers vested in me by Articles 93 and 97 of the Statutes of the University of Girona (Agreement GOV/94/2011, of 7 June, approving amendments to the Statutes of the University of Girona and providing for the publication of its full text – Official Gazette of the Government of Catalonia (DOGC) no. 5897, of 9 June 2011) and by Royal Decree 1065/2017, of 22 December, appointing the rector of the University of Girona (BOE no. 316, of 29 December 2017),

#### **I RESOLVE:**

**One.** That the period from 1 June 2020 to the end of the academic year 2020-2021 will be a “period of exceptional circumstances” as a result of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and irrespective of the state of emergency declared by the Government of Spain.

**Two.** That while bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes will maintain their particular types of instruction during this exceptional period, they will also organise virtual environments to ensure that students achieve the expected learning outcomes through other means in the event that instruction could not be provided as established in the degree verification reports.

**Three.** That educational training at the University may undergo specific methodological, assessment and programme adjustments that affect, for example, face-to-face activities in large, medium and small groups, external placements or mobility opportunities. These adjustments must be publicly disclosed and disseminated through features included in the

design of the course for this purpose, and must be approved as stipulated in the [existing regulations for the academic year 2020-2021](#).

**Four.** That, in general, these adaptations should not involve any changes in the number of teaching credits assigned to each subject under the approved curriculum. In exceptional cases where a change is required, the ultimate effect with regard to studies and departments must be negligible.

**Five.** That face-to-face instruction should be planned with the following guidelines in mind:

- a) Avoid crowding at the entrances and exits of University of Girona buildings. Academic activities should be scheduled so that moments when people are entering and exiting are staggered. Moreover, to the extent possible, buildings will have separate entrances and exits and people will move in and out of them in one direction.
- b) Schedule activities to reduce student movement as much as possible between classrooms and to prevent overcrowding in specific spaces of the University. Academic activities will be concentrated in larger time slots and in the same location.
- c) Schedule activities in groups that comply with the capacity of the spaces where they take place, and in accordance with any personal protective equipment (PPE) worn by students, teachers and administrative and service staff members during the activity.

**Six.** That online instruction, like face-to-face instruction, will take place within the established timetable. It must comply with the directives of the [Office of the General Secretary](#) on the use of personal images and telematics in teaching activities, including assessments.

**Seven:** That it be recommended to students that they do not participate in either outgoing or incoming mobility programmes during the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021. However, each faculty or school will consider particular circumstances and make the most appropriate decisions regarding mobility.

**Eight.** That equal access to learning will be guaranteed for students particularly vulnerable or sensitive to COVID-19 and who cannot engage in face-to-face activities on medical grounds or due to travel restrictions set by health authorities.

**Nine.** That the University will ensure the safety of the any members of the administrative and service or teaching and research staffs who are vulnerable or especially sensitive to COVID-19. In each case, an individualised optional assessment will be made to determine whether or not there is a need for an increased use of PPE and preventive measures, an adaptation of the workplace to avoid exposure to infection or a continuation of working from home.

**Ten.** That University of Girona staff shall receive basic health and safety training to protect themselves and students.

**Eleven.** That the preceding measures will be implemented in accordance with the [Health and Safety Protocol of Preventive Measures against the Risk of SARS-Cov2 coronavirus transmission: COVID-19 health warning](#) approved by the Health and Safety Committee of the University of Girona and its updates. The *Protocol* may be supplemented by directives issued, within the limits of their authority, by vice-rector's offices, the General Manager's Office or the Office of the General Secretary.

**Twelve.** That this resolution will be published in its entirety on the notice board of the E-Office of the University of Girona and in the Official Gazette of the University of Girona.

The rector,

Joaquim Salvi Mas

Girona, 10 June 2020

*This resolution exhausts the right of appeal through administrative channels. Independently of its immediate enforceability, and in accordance with Articles 123 and 124 of Law 39/2015, of 1 October, regulating common administrative procedures, interested persons may file an administrative appeal against this resolution with the rector of the University of Girona within one month of the day after the decision is made public; or to file an administrative appeal directly against this resolution with the administrative law court of Girona within two months of the day after the decision is made public, as established in Articles 8.3, 14.1 and 46.1 of Law 29/1998, of 13 July, regulating contentious-administrative jurisdiction of the administrative courts.*

*Likewise, interested persons may also file any other appeal they consider appropriate to defend their interests.*