

Bulletin No. 11 Outlook for the 2020 Summer Semester

Dear Faculty,  
dear Students,  
dear Staff,

Before the weekend begins, we would like to share the following outlook for our 2020 summer semester with you.

The semester will start on April 20. All the Berlin universities and academies, Berlin's Senate Chancellery as well as academic institutions throughout Germany agree that despite the coronavirus crisis, the semester must not be cancelled entirely (cf. <https://www.lkrp-berlin.de/aktuelles/200324-sommersemester2020/index.html>).

In-person tuition has been suspended until further notice; all events, symposia and congresses scheduled through July 20 have been cancelled. This means that tuition in the familiar forms of individual lessons, group lessons, performances and rehearsals in ensembles up to and including the orchestra of the Hanns Eisler School – in other words, everything which constitutes the core of our artistic education and which we consider essential to excellent teaching – cannot take place during the summer semester.

Given this situation, along with all the other universities in Berlin, we are faced with the challenge of turning the summer semester into a creative semester, allowing us to try out new forms of teaching, of exchange among us, and of passing on knowledge and skills in digital formats. This requires creative ideas and bold experimentation. We are cognizant of the fact that the implementation of these plans also requires technical solutions which have to be found and installed. Here too we must break new ground, enabling us to implement our ideas at short notice. As mentioned in our Bulletin No. 9, our digital task forces are working at high speed with the School's directorate on collecting your ideas and experiences of digital teaching. We see a great willingness among the faculty to accept this situation as a challenge we must face jointly, in the interest of our students and due to the responsibility they feel for the level of teaching at our institution.

In preparation for the summer semester, we have agreed with the heads of department on the following timeline with several steps:

- Monday, March 30: Summary of the suggestions for digital tuition for individual departments in the form of a first handout; discussion between each task force, head of department and the School's directorate
- Monday, March 30 to Friday, April 3: TEST PHASE 1: Various forms of teaching in a small group of teachers and individual students, with feedback to their task force
- Monday, April 6 to Friday, April 10: TEST PHASE 2: Testing of those tools selected after Test Phase 1 for different forms of teaching, with feedback to their task force
- Starting on Tuesday, April 14: Development and communication of the 'new' digital courses with concrete information and action recommendations (registration process, sequence of seminars, examinations etc.)
- Starting on Monday, April 20: Beginning of the creative summer semester; more digital courses may be added at a later date

At this point, we are unable to determine in which departments we will manage to transform our regular tuition into a digital format in an equivalent and complete manner. However, we assure you that only where this is the case, from an artistic and pedagogical point of view, will the course in question terminate at the end of the semester with an examination. The limited offerings and the unusual form of tuition will not affect students adversely. We are conscious that there are many questions, and that you, dear students, are asking yourselves whether it might not be better to take a semester of leave? Responding to our inquiry, the Senate has signalled that all applications for leave of absence are to be adjudicated individually and with as much leniency as possible. Before we take this step, however, we should consider this situation an opportunity and try to shape the coming semester together, with the greatest level of creativity and flexibility possible.

With this outlook for the beginning of the semester, we send you our best wishes.

Yours,

The Hanns Eisler School Directorate