

DER REKTOR



UNIVERSITÄT  
HEIDELBERG  
ZUKUNFT  
SEIT 1386

Heidelberg, 11 October 2022

Dear students, dear colleagues, dear members of staff,

In spite of the Covid pandemic and the crisis regarding energy costs, the 2022/2023 winter semester at Heidelberg University will take place on campus! Nothing can replace the personal exchange between lecturers and learners, and between the students themselves. That has become well and truly clear to us in the last two years of the pandemic. We will do everything to keep places of learning open, knowing that we enjoy the support of the Science Ministry and the new Minister of Science, Research and the Arts, Petra Olschowski.

The energy supply has become uncertain and energy costs have soared as a consequence of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The universities face a difficult winter. By contrast with other institutions of higher education, they have to finance energy price rises from their own budget; this will not be possible without additional assistance from the State of Baden-Württemberg. In this exceptional situation, however, we have to take action ourselves, and are willing to do so. I appeal to you to do everything in your respective setting so that we can meet the target of cutting our energy consumption by 20 percent. Besides adjusting the key areas of our operational services, there are also seemingly small things that will help: turning off the light, setting room temperature at a maximum of 19 degrees, taking the stairs instead of the lift... You know your own environment best, so please do what you can to contribute to our community.

The number of people suffering from Covid is currently rising again. That was predictable and will not deter us from our decision to provide classes on campus. However, I would like to urge you again to show consideration. If you have not already done so, go and be vaccinated, and wear a mask when you can't keep the required distance. That way, you will protect yourself and others.

We do not close our eyes to the various difficulties confronting us, collectively or individually. At the same time, we look with optimism to a semester in which our freshly enrolled students will begin their degree courses – coming as they do from Germany and many other countries, also from crisis-ridden regions like Ukraine, where war continues to rage. Let us be glad that we can return to physical presence at the university, as this lays the foundation for academic discourse and research-based study. We can retain much of what has been developed digitally and has given rise to new teaching formats. That is also a way of deriving benefit from the crisis of past years.

In order to find the best solutions for the challenges of the present and the already foreseeable future, we work together and provide mutual support. Societal or personal crises do not lead to resignation and failure, but galvanise us into action and the search for solutions. We are creating the future with optimism, like so many generations before us since 1386. At the start of the semester, I wish all of you good health and the motivation that stems from the positive experience of making progress academically and personally on your way through life. Together we are “the university”.

Yours

Prof. Dr Dr h.c. Bernhard Eitel