

COVID-19 update April 30, 2020, 17:00

Dear PhD students,

In the wake of the current situation, here is an update how we can proceed by following the governmental directions (<https://www.bag.admin.ch>).

In agreement with the GHS president and with the Graduate School of Cellular and Biomedical Sciences (GCB), we decided to follow these emergency procedures:

1. The GHS is still working from **home office** only. Please do not come to our office and contact us **ONLY** via email. In case of necessity, we can set up a phone call via mail.
2. **First and second year exams:** the following modifications need to be implemented:
 - a. **First year exam:** it can take place **only** under the condition that **one examiner will in the same room with the student**, respecting the social distance and room guidelines (maximum 5 people and 10m² distance per person), the others can be present via skype or video conference.

Second year exams will be held - as closed exams only. All examiners join by video conference **until further notice**. There are several online tools, (Zoom, Teams, Skype) please get organized in time to arrange for this. If you wish, you can invite colleagues, friends and family to the online video conference.

3. **Defenses:** Since we are still allowed to have a gathering of maximum **5 people**, we decided to continue with the **thesis defense** as follows:
 - a. **Closed thesis defenses can still be held** until further notice, under the condition that at least **one examiner is present** with the student, respecting the social distance and room guidelines put in place at the corresponding Institutes. All other examiners can join by video conference. Please get organized **in time** to arrange for video conferences (Skype, Zoom or Teams) among your thesis committee members (supervisor, co-advisor, GHS representative). Make sure to send your PowerPoint presentation to your thesis committee beforehand. Please contact us by email if we can be of help.
If you wish, you can invite colleagues, friends and family to the online video conference.
 - b. Apéros are NOT allowed.
 - c. For defences from now on: please send us the documents for your PhD defense per mail. There is no need to print out a copy of your thesis, until further notice.

4. The **application deadline of May 1st** is still valid.
Before sending the complete application for the GHS (step 2 https://www.ghs.unibe.ch/application_and_admission/application/index_en_g.html) please send us the confirmation of supervision signed from yours supervisors and from you (step 1), together with a copy of your master degree as PDF files. This is valid **ONLY** for students with a Swiss master degree.
Otherwise, **if you own a foreign master degree** send those documents **first to the admission office (ZIB)** and they will process it and send it forward to the GHS.
The GHS/GCB team has set up everything so that we can handle your applications from the home office. After you will be informed on the date and form of your enrolment interview.
5. **Cancelled interviews from the January** applications as well as the **new May applications** will take place in **June-July by videoconference**. If in the meanwhile the regulations will change, the new procedure will be communicated in the invitation mail for the interview.
6. Please check regularly the updates on our homepage: directions might change!

Take good care of you, stay healthy and please be patient during these extraordinary circumstances: in these times, most processes may take longer but be aware that we are doing our best to support you. We are fighting hard for you to keep the GHS going and keep things moving forward.

Your GHS team