

Graduate School COVID-19 Guidelines 2021/2022

Updated April 28, 2022

Introduction

Especially in times of a pandemic, it is essential to prevent or minimize the spread of infection, to protect others and ourselves. In particular, it is crucial to keep rates low enough that infections can be contained by contact tracing. Throughout the pandemic, Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA) has had very few cases of COVID-19 on campus and we all want to keep it that way. At the same time, the education and research system must still function even under difficult conditions. This document outlines procedures to ensure a safe learning and research environment for students of ISTA.

These guidelines are valid from April 16, 2022, but may be updated if the pandemic situation changes significantly.

Teaching

The current regulations still allow course instructors to freely choose the teaching mode from entirely onsite to entirely online teaching, as well as many hybrid modes, for example online lectures and in-class recitations.

The 3G rule on campus has been lifted and the general obligation to wear masks has fallen. Course instructors should maintain attendance lists for in-person classes, in case we need to trace contacts at short notice.

Other academic activities – Rotations

Students rotating with research groups must follow all group and ISTA rules.

It is up to activity supervisor, for example your research group leader or rotation supervisor to determine what research activities you should handle on campus and what can be done remotely.

Exams

Qualifying exams and PhD Thesis defenses may be held fully remotely, in a hybrid mode, or fully on campus. Audience can join for the Thesis defense's public part.

Exam/defense protocol would normally be physically signed and sent to GSO; if some committee members participate remotely, electronic signatures are accepted.

Events

Events including social gatherings on campus are no longer restricted by preventive room capacity limits.

Working on campus

The 3G rule on campus has been lifted.

The campus and the facilities are open with all services continuing. Please be reminded that the default working mode is presence on campus. As usual, please coordinate your work place presence and any home office times with your supervisor. The special care time arrangement for children under 14 years and disabled persons stays in place until July 7. Contact HR for inquiries: hr.administration@ist.ac.at.

Travel

Travel restrictions apply according to the Austrian foreign ministry.

Please check the information of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs on travel restrictions <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/travel-stay/travel-warnings/> carefully before booking and actually going on a business trip.

Important: The status of the country or of a specific region within the country can change at short notice.

Situation in Austria

Information on the development of the infection can be found on the official dashboard: <https://covid19-dashboard.ages.at/?l=de>

Since April, 16, a new regulation is valid. The obligation to wear FFP2 masks remains in place in hospitals, retirement and nursing homes, in public transport, in supermarkets, post offices, banks, drugstores, pharmacies, petrol stations, and public administration buildings. As of April 1 a new regulation limits the number of tests available free of charge monthly (see Testing section below).

Vaccination

For vaccination appointments, enter the campus address as your home address on <https://termin.impfung.at/no/start/termine> if you do not have a primary residence in Lower Austria. All employees with their main residence in Vienna may also register here: <https://impfservice.wien/>

If you have received a vaccination with an EMA-approved vaccine outside of Austria, please have your vaccination entered into the Austrian vaccination register, which is possible at all general medical practitioners with your e-card.

Testing

To find out where testing is available through the authorities, see <https://coronavirus.wien.gv.at/site/testangebote> in Vienna, in Lower Austria <https://notrufnoe.com/testung/>.

„Alles Gurgelt“ is recommended: <https://allesgurgelt.at/>. For registration and details, see <http://gurgeln.noe-testet.at>.

As of April 1, only 5 PCR tests will be available free of charge monthly. Five existing PCR test kits may still be used in addition in April. PCR-tests ordered by the authorities as well as those performed directly by a doctor are not affected by the limit. The collection of "Alles Gurgelt!" test-kits on campus has been terminated.

Please notify EHS if you suspect you have been in contact with a person who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself: ehs@lists.ist.ac.at.

At ISTA

Additional information can be found here: <https://ehs.pages.ist.ac.at/frequently-asked-questions/> as well as all rules and recommendations.

The general obligation to wear masks has been lifted. Exception: Wearing an FFP2 mask remains legally mandatory when visiting the occupational physician on campus. Please note any special regulations, for example when using the hairdresser on campus.

Risk groups

Adults with certain underlying health conditions have a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Students who might belong to the risk group should contact their doctor and inform EHS accordingly. Specific measures to protect the student's health (e.g. increased home office) might be implemented.

Communication to students

- [EHS website](#)