

RESOLUTION of 18 September by the rector of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, which modifies and substitutes the Resolution of 30 June relating to teaching activities at the faculties and schools of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili and the Fundació URV planned for the 2020-21 academic year.

Antecedents

I. The declaration of the state of alarm by Royal Decree 463/2020, of 14 March, and the Resolution issued by the rector on 15 March, regarding coronavirus (COVID-19), led to the suspension of all face-to-face academic activities and the closure of the facilities and buildings of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV). It also led to the URV's General Management and the competent Vice-Rector's Offices approving a series of instructions regarding the implementation of academic activity and research online, and teleworking.

II. On 10 June 2020 the Ministry for Universities published the document "Recomendaciones del Ministerio de Universidades a la comunidad universitaria para adaptar el curso universitario 2020-2021 a una presencialidad adaptada" (Recommendations from the Ministry for Universities to the university community for adapting face-to-face activity for the 2020-2021 academic year), which was extended on 1 September by the document "Recomendaciones del Ministerio de Universidades a la comunidad universitaria para adaptar el curso universitario 2020-2021 a una presencialidad adaptada y medidas de actuación de las universidades ante un caso sospechoso o uno positivo de COVID-19" (Recommendations from the Ministry for Universities to the university community for adapting face-to-face activity and the measures to be taken in the case of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 academic year).

III. On 18 June 2020, the Catalan Government published Decree 63/2020 regarding the new governance of the health emergency caused by COVID-19 and the start of the resumption of activity in the territory of Catalonia. On the same day the Department of Health's Resolution SLT/1429/2020 was published, which establishes basic organisational and protective measures to prevent the risk of transmission and to contain the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

IV. On 18 June 2020, the rector issued a Resolution on the gradual resumption of activities at the facilities of the URV and the Fundació URV to conclude the 2019-20 academic year.

V. On 25 June 2020, AQU Catalunya published the document "Orientacions per a l'adaptació de les titulacions universitàries en períodes d'emergència sanitària i

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excepcionalitat: implantació, desenvolupament i acreditació” (Guidelines for adapting university courses during health emergencies and exceptional circumstances: Implementation, development and accreditation).

VI. On 30 June, PROCICAT approved the Sectoral Plan for Universities, approved the previous day by the Interuniversity Council of Catalonia and required by Resolution SLT/1429/2020, of 18 June, which adopts basic organisational and protective measures to prevent the risk of transmission and to contain the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

VII. On 8 July Resolution SLT/1648/2020 was published, which established new measures regarding the use of facemasks to contain the spread and further outbreaks of COVID-19.

VIII. On 14 July the URV Senate approved its ethical code, which stipulates the following: “The URV is committed to ensuring people’s safety by establishing the conditions needed to promote a healthy and decent quality of life for the whole university community. The University will take every step to enable people to take care of themselves and of others, by promoting socioemotional feelings of prosperity, happiness and satisfaction. At the same time the University will continue with its mission to provide training and generate knowledge, which is its primary purpose.” These principals will underlie the measures included in this resolution.

IX. On 10 September the Department of Health published Resolution SLT/2207/2020, which extends the special public health measures adopted to contain the spread and further outbreaks of COVID-19 in the territory of Catalonia.

X. The URV aims to resume its face-to-face activities in terms of teaching, research, transfer, management and administration during the 2020-21 academic year insofar as this is possible. However, the current situation of the pandemic, the high number of cases in the areas in which the URV operates and the recommendations offered by URV experts all point to a need to significantly reduce the presence of people on our campuses to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Given this situation and exercising the social responsibility that is expected from an institution with more than 2000 members of staff and 14,000 students, the university has taken the autonomous decision that face-to-face teaching during the first semester will be restricted only to that which the teachers on its various courses regard as essential. For this reason it is necessary to establish the conditions under which university activity will take place during the 2020-21 academic year.

XI. This exceptional situation offers us the chance to reflect on the future of higher education and the role of teaching, research and transfer in relation to the challenges facing society. Thus the aim of this resolution is to regulate the University’s teaching activity during the next academic year whilst ensuring that we all reflect in depth and together on our activities, on the model that sustains it and on the quality and rigor with which we need to act, as we have done to date. The university community has shown that it is capable of giving a professional response to the most complicated challenges, and it is this that has prevented the University from closing during the

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pandemic and has ensured that students could finish the academic year. This has been and continues to be the primary objective of the URV.

XII. The general principles on which this resolution is founded are as follows:

1. The Interuniversity Council of Catalonia declared the 2020-21 academic year to be an “exceptional period” as a consequence of the health emergency. Given that the emergency is still ongoing, the **exceptional nature of the situation** justifies the adoption of extraordinary measures and the need to organise online environments for each course to ensure that students obtain their desired learning outcomes via other means if teaching cannot be delivered in the manner established in the course programmes.
2. The URV will aim to achieve the **highest level of face-to-face activity possible**, whilst reserving the option of complementing this with online teaching, teleworking and other alternative measures. The URV’s current priority is to ensure the health and safety of all members of the university community and of external groups that have a relationship with our institution, whilst also being particularly sensitive to those groups that are most vulnerable. For this reason, the URV is obliged to limit the presence of people in its facilities to only that which is most essential.
3. For activities that require a physical presence, it is essential that students and staff act in accordance with the principle of **joint responsibility**. They must know and respect, individually and collectively, the health recommendations and the preventive regulations. They must also ensure that at all times they observe the safety and hygiene conditions established by the current legislation. In this regard, it is compulsory to wear a facemask on all campuses and during all activities, and other measures are also of primary importance, such as ventilating spaces, washing hands and maintaining social distance.
4. The experience of the last term of the 2019-20 academic year means that we must ensure that we maintain the quality of our courses and prevent any possible discrimination in the event of the need for self-isolation, lockdown or other any situation that COVID-19 might cause.

Consequently, by virtue of the competencies that are conferred upon me by the current legislation, in agreement with the deans and directors of the URV’s faculties and schools, and having informed the representatives of students and staff,

I RESOLVE TO:

Modify the resolution dated 30 June 2020 as follows:

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First. The URV campuses will remain open, so that members of the university community can carry out their usual activities. It is recommended that at least one member of the dean's or the management team (or the person to whom the responsibility is delegated) be present during each centre's opening hours in order to take the necessary and appropriate measures at any moment in relation to possible effects caused by the current situation.

Second. All degree programmes (bachelor's, master's and doctorate, as well as further education and courses leading to unofficial degrees) will be taught in a "mixed teaching" mode in which "face-to-face distance teaching" will predominate. This system may involve changes to teaching methodology, exams and assessment activities to adapt to the situation as it develops.

Third. Face-to-face teaching in the classroom is limited to what is essential in order for teachers to ensure their students' progress and assessment activities:

- a) Practicals that require presence in the laboratories / classrooms
- b) Academic seminars and tutorials that unavoidably require physical attendance, at the discretion of the person in charge of the subject, the head of degree programme and / or the dean's team.
- c) Exams and other face-to-face assessment activities, at the discretion of each person in charge of the subject, the head of degree programme and / or the dean's team.
- d) First-year students may do theory classes in small groups (approximately one third of a large group, in groups of about 30 students) if the safety distance of 1.5 meters can be observed and the space adequately ventilated.
- e) For subjects of other years, face-to-face theory classes may be given, as long as they are considered essential by the person in charge of the subject, the head of degree programme and / or the dean's team. They must be in small groups (around 30 students), maintaining the safety distance of 1.5 meters and only if the space allows for adequate ventilation. Planning for these specific cases must also take into account the total volume of students on campus at the same time. This assessment must be made by the dean's team and the head of degree programme with the support of the Campus Logistics Office or an equivalent management unit and must be validated by the URV's group of experts.
- f) In the case of Medical and Nursing students, attendance at theory and practical classes is subject to the guidelines of health institutions, and will take into consideration the specific character of the practicals and the connections and obligations to health institutions of many members of the URV teaching staff.
- g) Outdoor teaching activities may be carried out if the safety distance of 1.5 m is maintained, without limits on the number of people, as long as the number of students present simultaneously on campus is not more than 300. This assessment will be made by the head of degree programme and / or the dean's

- team, with the support of the Campus Logistics Office in checking the number of students in the classrooms on campus simultaneously in the proposed time slot.
- h) Any proposal not covered in the previous points must be duly justified and will be evaluated by the rector, on the advice of the URV's group of experts COVID-19.

Fourth. Each Faculty or School Board has the competence to approve the type of teaching activities in its center, without contravening the provisions of this resolution.

Fifth. All face-to-face teaching activities must be programmed in such a way as to adapt to room/space conditions (for example, reducing the size of groups, establishing varying timetables, doing classes online using a mixed or hybrid model, etc.). This programming must be carried out in accordance with the following guidelines:

- a) Face-to-face activities must be timetabled so that they take into account the capacity of each room/area, as calculated on the basis of 1.5 m as the safe physical distance between people, in general, except in practicals that require a smaller distance. Masks are compulsory in all cases. As a general reference, the capacity of a room/space is set at 30% of its normal capacity, calculating 2.5 m² per person as a minimum safety space. In all cases, regular ventilation, as established in the Contingency Plan, is also obligatory.
- b) Teaching must be planned so that it can adapt to developments in the socio-sanitary situation, as is the case at the moment of the publication of this Resolution.
- c) Face-to-face academic activities must be timetabled in such a way that the entering and exiting of buildings are staggered in order to maintain the 1.5 m safety distance between people.
- d) Compact timetables and stable group rotations will be maintained, making it possible to monitor both distance and face-to-face teaching in buildings, where appropriate.
- e) The programming of face-to-face activities should try to reduce the movement of students between classrooms as much as possible. To this end, teaching and training activities should be programmed over more extensive time periods, and be held, where possible, in the same classrooms/spaces.
- f) Faculties and schools are responsible for deciding which face-to-face activities they will provide as a function of their educational needs. They must give priority to the first year of the bachelor's degree (first-year undergraduates) and those activities that proved to be most difficult to do online during the 2019-20 academic year such as clinical work experience, fieldwork, laboratory practical sessions and some assessments. Insofar as it is possible, priority must be given to practicals and seminars instead of theoretical sessions.



- g) Teaching methodologies must be flexible and adapt to the conditions and characteristics of every degree, course or subject. In this regard, some class sessions can be taught face to face for all students in the group or just some of them – as long as sections d), e) and f) of point 3 are respected – while others can be taught online. Some classes are equipped with the technology to teach face-to-face and online sessions simultaneously, as was requested by some faculties and schools. Whether the sessions are face-to-face or online, they should preferably be recorded and made available to students, ensuring that data privacy regulations are complied with, so that they can be accessed at any time by students who may not be able to attend the face-to-face class for reasons of the teaching schedule (group rotation), for reasons of health or for travel problems in the case of students from other places (national/international).
- h) The students who do not have the technological means necessary to follow a synchronous class on line will be given preference to join the face-to-face group if they ask the head of the degree programme. Preference will also be given to students who can document a particular educational situation, difficulty or need that requires them to attend face-to-face classes.
- i) The URV premises will be equipped with the necessary technology for the teaching staff to record classes and make the recordings available to students (see point 5g). In the case of difficulty, the head of the degree programme will be notified. Acting on instructions from the rector's team, the SRE, ICE and CRAI have set up a programme of webinars of specific training in the technologies and methodologies for quality blended teaching.
- j) The Course Plan must be shared with the representatives of the various groups and must be approved by the Faculty/School Board and subsequently validated by the URV's Delegate Commission of Academic and Teaching Policy and ratified by the Governing Council. The changes made to teaching methodology, educational activities, assessment and academic timetables must be published by faculties and schools, and made available to all students on their website and the Moodle spaces for every subject. Particular stress must be given to the solutions adopted for compulsory work experience programmes and bachelor's and master's theses.
- k) The use of classrooms and communal spaces must be regulated by protocols that provide safety and cleaning rules, which respond to criteria of efficiency, sustainability and proportionality in terms of the supplementary measures to be applied.

Sixth. For the exclusive purpose of monitoring those people who have been together in the same rooms at the same time, in case of infection at the URV or FURV, the teacher responsible for the teaching activity must keep a record of all the students who take part in all group activity. Work is currently being done to set up a

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supplementary registration system based on reading a QR code whenever someone enters or leaves a classroom or teaching space.

Seventh. Students must sign a statement of responsibility (available on Moodle) in which they agree to understand the Contingency Plan and to duly comply with all the protection measures included in the Plan and any other safety measures determined by the academic and health authorities.

Eighth. All coordination meetings and other non-teaching activities must be carried out online whenever possible. If it is absolutely necessary to hold a face-to-face meeting, there must be 10 people present at most and all safety precautions must be applied (mask, distance, washing of hands, cleaning, sanitisation and ventilation, etc.).

Ninth. The URV and the FURV must guarantee the safety of their community. Therefore:

1. The following people will not be allowed on URV and FURV premises: those with symptoms of COVID-19, those who have been diagnosed with the disease and have not completed the required period of isolation, and those who live with or have been in contact with other people with symptoms of acute respiratory infection (temperature, cough, respiratory difficulty, etc.).
2. URV and FURV staff must be provided with basic safety and health training so that they can protect themselves and their students.
3. Those students with highly complex chronic diseases that may become even more serious if they were to be infected by COVID must present a medical certificate that states that they can take part in face-to-face activities.
4. For those members of staff who may be vulnerable to COVID-19 because of their personal medical circumstances, the URV's and FURV's health surveillance service (SPA) will determine the level of risk involved in going to work on site and the preventive measures they need to take by applying the procedure of the occupational risk prevention service for exposure to SARS-CoV-2 specified by the Ministry of Health.

All workers who believe that they may belong to the vulnerable group must request a medical check up by making an appointment at the link <http://intranet.urv.cat:8081/continguts/cpvsalut.html>

Tenth. Whenever possible, systems of visit-by-appointment-only must be used to prevent too many people from gathering in the same place at the same time.



Eleventh. This resolution is valid until the end of the first semester of the academic year 2020-21, although it may be repealed or modified in response to the evolution of the COVID-19 health alert.

Tarragona, 18 September 2020