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**SAFETY RULES ON WORKING AND TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY
AND PRECAUTIONS RELATING TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021 UNDER THE
CONDITIONS OF COVID-19 ON THE TERRITORY OF MEDICAL UNIVERSITY -
VARNA**

The main objective of the current Rules is to protect the health of students, those working at the University, and the families of every one of us, in the context of the ongoing pandemic situation resulting from the spread of COVID-19. All together we need to find the formula and balance between precautions and responsibility for our health, on the one hand, and the need to learn, work and live fairly normally, on the other.

The Rules shall be incorporated in the initial instructions of students, carried out by the lecturers conducting exercises at the beginning of each semester and shall be documented in the relevant instruction book for students. The instruction of the absentees shall be held on the day of their attendance at classes.

The main challenges we face at the threshold of academic 2020-2021 year are the following:

1. To make Medical University - Varna a maximum risk-free environment under the conditions of the pandemic. This implies the implementation of a set of measures to reduce the risks of infection, including by means of a personal example and the creation of attitudes towards healthy and socially responsible behaviour of students as part of the educational function of the training;
2. To react according to the health rules in force in each case of morbidity or suspicion of COVID-19;
3. To be prepared under the guidance of the health authorities and in accordance with the decisions taken by the regional crisis headquarters to fight COVID-19 to switch to distance learning in an electronic environment;
4. To ensure the continuity of training for students from risk groups;
5. To provide supplementary training and support to students who have missed lessons due to health reasons, including due to quarantine;
6. To maintain positive psychological working and learning environment and to actively reduce the situations of tension, stress and disinformation.

A. Mandatory measures to limit the risks of spreading the virus include:

A distance of 1.5 - 2 metres, use of face masks covering the nose and mouth, disinfection of hands and surfaces, ventilation of enclosed spaces are the only scientifically proven measures for the prevention and control of air-borne infections in the absence of vaccine. The available information and experience make them mandatory.

- 1. Disinfection of hands** upon entering the premises of Medical University – Varna and the training rooms with a disinfectant, through using the installed dispensers.

Wearing a face mask or a face mask and a shield is mandatory for all students, lecturers, including external visitors to the institution, in:

— **the common enclosed parts of the building** — entrance halls, lobbies, staircases, corridors, sanitary facilities, offices, library, etc.;

— **training rooms and other learning spaces** (incl. facilities for training and practice, offices, gym) — depending on the model of distancing enforced at Medical University - Varna;

— **work offices.**

The face mask is effective only when it covers the nose, mouth and chin and tightly fits on the face, especially at the base of the nose. Before putting it on, hands shall be decontaminated and, after removing it, without touching the front surface of the mask, it shall be disposed of in the available litter bins with a cover. After removing the mask, hands shall be washed with water and soap, rubbing in soap for at least 20 seconds, and/or disinfected.

— Simple masks, i.e. disposable, shall be changed after the end of the class — usually after an hour and a half.

— Reusable masks shall also be replaced at least 2 times a day and, if necessary, more frequently. The use of this type of masks involves a risk of contamination of hands. Every day masks shall be washed up with soap and ironed!!!

— Face shields shall be used simultaneously with the mask on. The use of a face shield does not cancel out the use of a mask that covers the nose and mouth!

Control of this anti-epidemic measure shall be performed by the lecturer conducting the training /exercise, lecture, seminar, etc./ and by the student in charge of the student group. Students shall be notified in advance that no exceptions are to be allowed.

The above rules on wearing face masks and shields are in accordance with the existing health rules, applicable to whole country and the chosen model for limiting interaction between groups. The same can be changed provided the general rules are amended by the Minister of Health.

2. The face masks for the students shall be provided by themselves /an exception shall be made for the practical training of students in Dental Medicine/.

3. Use of gloves by students is optional and supplied by them, but only for the respective exercise or lecture. Using gloves is mandatory while working with cadaveric (or other biological) material! Used gloves shall be disposed of just like face masks.

4. Use of gloves is recommended for the teaching staff while collecting written assignments and when checking them.

5. Surface disinfection and ventilation.

- On a daily basis, on three occasions (before the beginning, around noon and after the completion of the training process for the day), wet cleaning and disinfection of all critical points is required — floors, desks, tables, door handles, windows, lighting keys, lift buttons, railings, appliances, screens, lavatory pans, sinks, faucets, etc., and, in the case of confirmed case of COVID-19, hygiene and disinfection actions must be increased and, depending on the premises, they shall range from 4 times a day to disinfection on an hourly basis.

- The training rooms shall be ventilated in the morning before the start of the classes and after each exercise, paying special attention to the practice rooms, the gym, the laboratories in which surfaces, mice, keyboards and instruments shall be disinfected during each break. To the extent permitted by weather conditions, classes shall be carried out with windows open.

- In all sanitary and toilet facilities in the building, it is necessary to monitor the use and timely provision of liquid soap or disinfectants, disposable wipes for drying hands, toilet paper, and regular waste disposal.

- Establishing an organisation of hygiene and disinfection actions and familiarisation with the instructions on how to use the respective biocides, including the correct preparation of

the disinfection solutions for biocides that are not ready for use, according to the authorisations issued by the MH.

6. Increased personal hygiene and conditions for achieving it:

- Familiarisation of staff, students and external visitors with health requirements.
- Creating habits of washing hands with liquid soap and hot water after a toilet visit, before eating, after outdoor recreation/physical activities, while sneezing and coughing.
- Use of hot running water and soap in all sanitary facilities and toilets for all students and employees.
- Use of automatic disinfectant dispensers at the entrance to the building and in the corridors.
- Proper use of hand sanitizer, which is applied to clean hands.
- Elimination of harmful habits related to touching nose, mouth and eyes.

B. Rules of conduct in the event of suspicion or a case of COVID-19 in the building:

Measures for preparedness for a possible encounter with the virus and compliance with specific rules in the event of occurrence of symptoms or in case of a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 of a student or a lecturer have been undertaken by the already approved by the Rector of Medical University - Varna action procedure in case of contact with a person infected with COVID-19 at the workplace.

Preparatory measures require:

1. Establishing a place for temporary isolation of a student or a person with flu-like symptoms.
2. Establishing an organisation in the building to carry out a medical filter for detecting the occurrence of flu-like symptoms and non-admission to the premises of persons in apparently unhealthy condition.
3. Instructing medical and non-medical personnel on recognising the symptoms of COVID-19, so that potential cases can be detected more quickly.

Mandatory health algorithms of conduct in the event of suspicion or a case of COVID-19 at the educational establishment include:

B.1. In case of occurrence of one or more symptoms in a student present on the territory of Medical University - Varna or UMHAT (fever, cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, muscle pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, etc.):

Initial behaviour

1. The student shall be immediately isolated in an intended for such a case room, and Emergency Service shall be called (tel. 112).
2. A face mask shall be put on the student.
3. Physical contact must be avoided, and a consultation with the student's general practitioner shall be made (first by telephone) to assess the student's state of health and follow up actions according to the specific situation, including the need of a test for a new coronavirus to be done. If necessary, Emergency Service shall be called (tel. 112).
4. After the student has left the room, thorough disinfection shall be carried out within a short period of time with a biocide with virucidal activity, in compliance with the disinfection requirements.
5. Preventive and restrictive measures shall be strictly complied with.
6. The student shall be admitted to face-to-face training at the University only after presenting a medical certificate by the general practitioner, confirming that he/she is clinically healthy, and that this is permissible.

In case of a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 of a student

1. The student or his/her relatives shall inform the management of the University, which must immediately contact the relevant RHI and provide it with a list of students and lecturers who have been in contact with the student, in accordance with the RHI instructions.

2. Identification of the contact persons and the measures to be taken at the University are to be administered by the RHI.

3. Persons placed under mandatory quarantine shall be designated by the relevant Regional Health Inspectorate in accordance with the specific situation, but as a rule, the following persons are subject to 14-day quarantine after a risk assessment and being identified as close contacts:

- Students from the same group are instructed to monitor for the occurrence of clinical symptoms and signs of COVID-19 and to notify the student's general practitioner and the RHI in a timely manner.

- The lecturer in charge of the class.

- Lecturers and other personnel who have been in unprotected contact with the infected person: at a distance less than 2 m and for more than 15 minutes, or without wearing a protective face mask.

- Other students who have been in unprotected contact with the infected person: at a distance less than 2 m and for more than 15 minutes, or without wearing a protective face mask.

- The unprotected contact with the infected person must have taken place within two days before and up to 14 days following the occurrence of complaints, and in the case of an identified asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19, two days before and up to 14 days after taking the sample for PCR test.

- All contact persons shall be instructed to monitor for the occurrence of clinical symptoms and signs of COVID-19 during the home quarantine and to notify the student's general practitioner and the RHI in a timely manner.

- In the case of placing a contact person in quarantine, the members of his/her household shall monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 within the 14 days of the student's quarantine, and further 14 days after that quarantine. If symptoms occur, they shall notify the relevant RHI and relevant GPs, regardless of whether the student has or has not symptoms, in view of an asymptomatic infection of the person and possible infection of adults in households.

- After removing the infected student and his/her colleagues, long-time ventilation, wet cleaning and ultimate disinfection of all surfaces, objects and rooms, with which the student has been in contact, over the last 48 hours, shall be performed, after which the room/premises can be used for training.

B2. In case of occurrence of one or more symptoms in a lecturer present on the territory of Medical University - Varna or UMHAT (fever, cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, muscle pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, etc.):

Initial behavior

1. The person shall immediately be isolated and given a mask to put on his/her face if it is not possible for him/her to return home at the same time.

2. Physical contact with other persons must be avoided.

3. If possible, he/she shall use private transport to travel.

4. He/she shall consult his/her general practitioner to assess his/her condition and follow-up actions, including a decision on whether or not a test needs to be done.

5. The management of the University shall provide the relevant RHI with a list of students and lecturers who have been in contact with the person, in accordance with the RHI instructions.

6. After the person has left the room, thorough disinfection shall be carried out within a short period of time with a biocidal product with virocidal activity, in compliance with the disinfection requirements.

7. The preventive and restrictive measures shall be strictly complied with.

8. The person shall be admitted to working at the University only after presenting a medical certificate by the general practitioner, confirming that he/she is clinically healthy, and that this is permissible.

In case of a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 of a lecturer

1. The person shall inform his/her immediate superior who shall immediately contact the university management, which in turn informs the relevant RHI, which shall carry out an epidemiological enquiry, in order to assess the risk of the infection being spread within the university building/buildings, among the staff/Department and in the family, and, depending on the situation, the most adequate isolation measures in this particular case shall be taken.

2. The management of the University shall provide the respective RHI with a list of lecturers, employees and students who have been in contact with the person in accordance with the RHI instructions.

3. The identification of the contact persons, as well as the measures to be taken by the University, shall be administered by the RHI and prescribed to the management in the relevant building.

4. Persons placed under mandatory quarantine shall be designated by the relevant Regional Health Inspectorate in accordance with the specific circumstances, but as a rule, persons shall be placed under 14-day quarantine after a risk assessment and being designated as high risk contact persons:

- Students shall be instructed to monitor for the occurrence of clinical symptoms and signs of COVID-19 and to notify their general practitioners and the RHI in a timely manner.

- Lecturers and other personnel who have been in unprotected contact with the infected person: at a distance less than 2 m and for more than 15 minutes, or without wearing a protective face mask.

- Other students who have been in unprotected contact with the infected person: at a distance less than 2 m and for more than 15 minutes, or without wearing a protective face mask.

- The unprotected contact with the infected person must have taken place within two days before and up to 14 days following the occurrence of complaints, and in the case of an identified asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19, two days before and up to 14 days after taking the sample for the PCR test.

- All contact persons shall be instructed to monitor for the occurrence of clinical symptoms and signs of COVID-19 during the home quarantine and to notify their general practitioners and the RHI in a timely manner.

- After removing the infected person, long-time ventilation, wet cleaning and ultimate disinfection of surfaces in classrooms, premises and objects, with which the person has been in contact, over the last 48 hours shall be performed, after which the training rooms or other premises can be used for training or other purposes.

- Psychological support shall be provided, and its form may vary depending on the circumstances.

C. Algorithm for switching to distance learning in an electronic environment:

The unpredictability of the spread of COVID-19 requires from the Higher Education Institutions readiness for reaction and dynamic planning, which should not be reduced to formal validation of plans. It is necessary a list of measures to be discussed in advance and adopted by the Department Council aimed at facilitating the rapid and smooth transition from face-to-face

to distance learning in an electronic environment (DLEE), or failing to do so, to paper-based distance learning.

In this regard, and in order to allow a timely preparation of the University for the transition to DLEE, the Ministry of Health is expected to announce:

1. threshold values (criteria) for those infected by COVID-19 at which training shall be conducted in an electronic environment;

2. updated criteria (threshold values) for the number of infected of seasonal respiratory viruses at the educational establishment/settlement/region, when a flu epidemic shall be declared at the educational establishment/settlement/ region.

In practice, when students from a particular group, following a decision by the relevant RHI, as a result of a positive PCR test of a student from the group, are placed in quarantine, the group shall continue its studies through a distance learning in an electronic environment following the approved weekly schedule for the period of quarantine, and after that they shall continue their studies in face-to-face format at the University.

If, by a decision of the respective RHI, several groups at the University building have been quarantined, the training of students from these groups shall continue through a distance learning in an electronic environment following the approved or new weekly schedule for the period of quarantine, and after that they shall continue their studies in face-to-face format at the University.

In case a suspension from work of a lecturer is required, due to a positive PCR test result, the students from the group shall continue their studies through a distance learning in an electronic environment following the approved weekly schedule for the period of quarantine/sickness, and after that they shall continue their studies in face-to-face format at the University.

In cases a suspension from work of a lecturer teaching in more than one group is required, due to a positive PCR test result, in the event of a close contact of the lecturer with the students from more groups, the students from all these groups shall be transferred to DLEE for the duration of the quarantine, and after that they shall continue their studies in face-to-face format at the University, in compliance with all the above requirements and especially the observance of distance among students.

Upon declaration of an emergency situation by the competent authorities of the settlement, region or the country, or in the cases of emergent and unforeseen circumstances, the students at the University respectively in the settlement, region or the whole country shall switch to DLEE for the duration of the emergency situation or emergent and unforeseen circumstances, after which they shall continue their studies at the University in a form corresponding to the curricula of the disciplines studied.

OPEN LIST OF RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

To ensure distance

Training rooms and organisation of the training processes

- Use of one desk/table by one student and placement of students' seats in a checkerboard pattern, where applicable (in case of small groups and larger training rooms).
 - Providing a physical distance between the lecturer's table/desk and the first row of students' tables/desks, including leaving the first row of tables/desks vacant to comply with the distance of at least 1.5 meters during training, where applicable.
 - Limiting the number of students in groups where applicable.
 - Allocation of lessons among lecturers for the purpose of forming, where possible, a teaching workload within a single class.

- Reducing unnecessary objects in corridors/training rooms.
- Placing a plexiglass barrier in front of the lecturer's desk, if possible.
- Organisation of one-way movement in corridors and on staircases.
- No crowding at the entrance and keeping a distance on entry and exit of the University buildings. If possible, allowing more entrances to be opened so as to avoid crowding out. However, the condition is a person to be in charge of ensuring the access mode at each entrance.
- Using the gym only during the months when it is not possible to hold classes outdoors. When this is not possible, on account of the specific features of the season, the classes of a limited number of students shall be held in the gym, keeping a distance and more frequent disinfection regime.
- The resources of the University Library shall be used by a prior online application.
- Students shall keep a distance from each other.
- Open-type bactericidal lamps for air disinfection, can be used **only** at night in the absence of people. **Only** closed-loop bactericidal UV lamps may be used in the presence of people. In either case, the special lamps should be ozone-free.