

INSTITUTO SUPERIOR DE AGRONOMIA
GUIDELINES FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

Management Board, July 13th 2020

Considering the existent uncertainties regarding the evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as the possibility of a second pandemic wave, different scenarios were outlined with teaching/evaluation models to be adopted by Instituto Superior de Agronomia (ISA), during the 1st semester of the academic year 2020/2021, in accordance with the rules and procedures defined by the national Health Authorities (Direcção Geral de Saúde - DGS) and the World Health Organization (WHO). In this context, the document proposes that the teaching activities are framed in three scenarios/models, and whenever the pandemic situation allows it, face-to-face or in-person contact between teachers and students should be privileged. The guidelines for the 2nd semester activities will be settled in December 2020.

The three different teaching scenarios are described below with a decreasing degree of probability:

SCENARIO 1 – PARTIAL DECONFINEMENT

I. Assumptions:

(a) Free or very few limitations to the circulation of people in the national territory, allowing the regular mobility of students from and to their residences and in the urban space (e.g., use of public transportation with restrictions only applied to social distancing rules which are currently in use), as well as the possibility of access (with rules) to social and cultural services and equipments.

(b) Access with no restrictions to the campuses of the University of Lisbon and to their main infrastructures, such as school buildings and supportive services, like residences, canteens and libraries.

(c) Limitations regarding people gathering in small spaces - such as classrooms, libraries, study rooms, canteens, common circulation spaces – associated with the restrictive social distancing rules (e.g., distance of at least 1 meter).

(d) Assurance from the University of Lisbon and from ISA to health, hygiene and security conditions, adequate to the standards established by reference entities.

(e) In the current condition of ISA's buildings, and taking into account the number and the capacity of the classrooms and the laboratories, it is not possible to guarantee the regular theoretical and theoretical-practical classes for more than 25 students and laboratorial classes for more than 16 students.

II. Principles of organization of the teaching activity

(a) In the scenario of partial deconfinement, a mixed teaching model will be adopted to all the curricular units, eventually with an exception for Project and other similar curricular units, and when the number of students enrolled is less than 15.

(b) The use of a mixed teaching model aims to ensure that the students will have regular teaching activities lectured in person/in the classroom, namely for practical and theoretical- practical classes, but with limitations given the impossibility of gathering a large number of students in

the classrooms and in other spaces of the buildings, without jeopardizing the health of ISA's community.

(c) This model should guarantee to all students the participation in face-to-face/in-person activities correspondent to 50% of the programmed sessions for the 1st semester to each curricular unit.

(d) The mixed model is characterized by the conjugation of 3 conditions:

(i) Theoretical classes lectured remotely, through synchronous media (e.g live on-line classes via Zoom) and eventually asynchronous media for working students (e.g. recorded lessons).

ii) Practical and theoretical-practical classes will take place in-person/in the classroom and, if necessary, for classes with a bigger number of students a combination of in-person/autonomous work will be possible using two distinct spaces, as contiguous as possible.

iii) If the conditions allow it, the evaluation period should preferably be made in person/in the classroom.

(e) The implementation of the mixed model might imply an adaptation of the program of the curricular units, namely through the definition of a representative (but not extensive) number of papers or practical work to be developed by the students;

(f) The responsible teachers of each curricular unit should diversify the methods and the evaluation moments throughout the semester, so that the assessment (Pass/Fail) does not depend just on one final examination, which should be held (preferably) in person, if the current conditions allow it;

(g) In-person/face-to-face evaluations of curricular units with a high number of enrolled students might have to take place in different shifts during the same day/date of the exam, in a different schedule from the classes or even on Saturdays;

(h) The 1st year/Bachelor students, that will need to adapt to the school and to a new study cycle, should have a different/more intensive monitoring, both in person as well as remotely.

III. Support to the academic activities

In order to comply with the rules of social distancing and hygiene conditions of closed spaces at ISA, the following rules are adopted:

(a) During the 1st semester of the academic year 2020/2021, the access to the Library and to the computer rooms is conditioned to a limited number of users, with the possibility of creating different access shifts/periods, or even determining a maximum amount of time per user, depending on the demand for those services;

(b) The number of work stations in the Library and in the computer rooms will be reduced, in order to assure social distancing conditions inside the rooms, and also taking in to account the ventilation conditions of each space;

- (c) 15 minute breaks between classes will be assured, for ventilation and cleaning of the rooms/spaces, which should preferably be done by the users (e.g., disinfection of counter tops and laboratory equipment) or the staff assigned to each department, when applicable;
- (d) ISA will provide basic disinfection materials at the entrance of the buildings and also inside certain spaces that are not equipped with washbasins, running water and appropriate soap/detergent.

Schedules for the academic year 2020/2021: In order to avoid people agglomerating in the buildings and in other spaces, ISA will try to concentrate the schedule of the classes lectured in-person/face-to-face for each year/study cycle in 2-3 days per week, adopting uncoincidental shifts between curricular years/study cycles, so as to reduce the daily commuting of students from their homes to ISA, as well as the permanence of a high number of students in ISA's premises, such as classrooms and common spaces, bar/cafeteria services and the library.

IV. Other supportive spaces of the academic life

- (a) The bar services will be working regularly, always respecting the rules defined by the responsible entities for this activity sector;
- (b) The operating rules for the canteen depends on the instructions provided by the Social Services of the University of Lisbon;
- (c) Whenever the weather conditions allow it, the use of nearby outdoor spaces should be privileged, where the meals can be taken abiding by the recommended distancing and hygiene rules.

V. General access rules to buildings and use of closed spaces

- (a) Access to buildings and spaces is limited to ISA's community, suppliers, service providers and clients;
- (b) Exceptionally, the access and use of ISA's spaces can be authorized to other people, as long as previously authorized by the Management Board;
- (c) In all closed spaces and also outside, whenever there's an agglomeration of people, the use of individual protection equipment is mandatory, namely the use of community masks;
- (d) A physical distance of at least 1 meter should be maintained between individuals, both during circulation and while using the different spaces;
- (e) ISA will assume the cleaning, disinfection and ventilation of the common spaces, with adequate frequency;
- (f) All meetings, such as work meetings, Master's or PhD's jury meetings, recruitment jury meetings, public examinations and Management Board meetings should preferably be held by video conference.

(g) Every element of the academic community present at any space of ISA's campus will have to self-monitor - this has to be respected by everyone – and in case of any manifestation of Covid-19 symptoms, or contact with someone who has been infected, access to ISA will have to be withheld;

(h) Regardless of the self-monitoring exercise, authorized elements of the school's services can, at any moment, measure the body temperature of the elements of ISA's community, collaborators and visitors, in accordance to the current legal rules.

VI. Protection for people belonging to risk groups

(a) People who proven to belong to risk groups, as defined by the national Health Authorities (e.g, with certain chronic diseases or with a compromised immune system), can request to develop their work activities remotely/in home office;

(b) In this situation, and in particular for teachers and researchers, it is recommended that in the Teaching Service Distribution for the academic year 2020/2021, alternative solutions are found which allow the teaching activities to be shared with other teachers, in order to maximize the existence of regular in-person/face-to-face activities.

SCENARIO 2 – TOTAL CONFINEMENT

If, at any moment, a more restrictive scenario is imposed, determined by the public and academic authorities, ISA will develop all the teaching and evaluation activities following the work model adopted previously (from March and until the end of the 2nd semester of 2019/2020), with the changes considered necessary to reduce the difficulties that were identified by students and teachers, and to improve the quality of the education. For this purpose, and at the proper time, a new set of guidelines for the academic activity will be outlined.

SCENARIO 3 – TOTAL DECONFINEMENT

In a scenario of total deconfinement, and if there is no restrictions to the normal development of the school activities using the face-to-face model, all the teaching activities will take place in the format that was used previous to the academic year 2019/2020.