

## Covid 19: Campus closure and EHL rates

Dear students, dear parents,

Since the closure of the campus on March 16 following the decisions of the local authorities, several student claims have been submitted to us. Most of the requests concern sport and extra-curricular activities, which are not accessible for the usual activities, and are about a pro rata reimbursement of the infrastructure and service package. The management of the School has communicated on this issue, both internally and in the press.

The purpose of this letter is to explain the situation surrounding Covid-19 and EHL's position in a global context, to clear up misunderstandings and to set out the reasoning behind Management's decisions:

The current pandemic crisis, which began to take shape at the beginning of the year, is affecting the entire world and all industries. As an international school with staff and students from all over the world on campus, and generating above-average travel, EHL has been and remains particularly exposed to the current situation.

Given this situation, the management has decided to put the highest priority on immediate measures necessary to protect the life and health of all members of the EHL community. At the same time, it has developed a concept to continue teaching and to allow the completion of the semester for all students. Today, we can say with enormous relief that, thanks to the commitment of all concerned parties and the measures taken in close cooperation with the authorities and regularly communicated, we have achieved these objectives in the best possible conditions given the situation.

EHL's mission is to offer our students the best quality of teaching and the best career prospects, and this remains our ambition despite these extreme circumstances. As a non-profit institution, we systematically reinvest our resources in the quality and innovation of our institution. It is this structure and cycle of continuous improvement that has enabled us to provide quality distance education and student services during the closure. Despite initial technical obstacles, things went smoothly and we are pleased to report generally positive feedback from students and faculty.

The implementation of the Federal Council's decision of 16 March and the ensuing measures has required tremendous management, organisation and logistics from one day to the next:

- There was a need to provide prompt support to students returning home, the implementation of which was complicated by various travel restrictions in their home countries and cancelled flights.
- For students whose return home was no longer possible, self-contained housing units had to be organized immediately either on campus or nearby, requiring an extraordinary authorization from the cantonal health authorities.
- A hotline was set up for the information and support of all students (Extended services desk, available 7 days a week to centralize and answer questions and requests for support).
- For students in the AP program, theoretical courses have resumed since April 25, and the school will remain open throughout the summer to allow the completion of practical courses which, by their nature, cannot be done remotely. This also allows these students to adequately complete and validate their semester.
- In order to guarantee training in accordance with the study plan, academia has set itself a deadline of just one week to switch to distance learning in the Bachelor program. This made it possible to maintain a number of contact hours compatible with the usual program, despite a temporary interruption in teaching. Students in the BOSC program will complete their semester, including exams, within the framework of distance learning.
- The change in teaching methods required a complete review of teaching and assessment methods, and then the adaptation of all planning. In total, more than 6,000 hours of teaching were delivered online by the end of April and all projects and group works were adapted to the new configuration. Thanks to the joint efforts of students and faculty, but also to the logistics and technical organization, the School was able to deliver the vast majority of the course content.
- The students in internships received particularly close support, thanks to regular telephone contact and follow-up. In recent weeks, we have focused on ensuring that each student can be offered an option to

validate their internship, which is an integral part of the curriculum, and we are pleased to have been able to find flexible solutions that meet the learning objectives of the internship. Depending on the situation and risk assessment at the placement site, they were given the opportunity to interrupt the internship while being able to validate it with additional work. This required close collaboration with the HES-SO and alignment with the derogations of the HES-SO regulatory framework, in order to ensure that the specificities of EHL were taken into account for both the AP and BOSC programs. 30% of the students planned to make use of this possibility.

- Numerous events to promote careers and connect students with the industry were held virtually (e.g. Virtual Career Forum with 2400 student and 25 company participations as well as numerous conferences and Q&A with industry leaders online).
- Student services, such as the Service Center, Student Affairs, Internship Office, Coaching, Psychological Support and Infirmary, continued to operate and expand their support. As much as possible, they were offered in digital form. The massive increase in demand demonstrated the relevance of this expansion.

In addition to the requests that concern individual issues, the reactions mainly concern the following point: "Infrastructures & Services". It should be noted that individual questions will also be answered individually, in addition to this letter.

Issues under the "Infrastructure & Services" area mainly concern the removal of extra-curricular activities and sports facilities, as well as access to the campus. It is important to note that this package includes much more than just the physical campus buildings and includes a range of extensive services offered by EHL, such as the Service Center, Student Affairs, Internship Office, Coaching, Psychological and Spiritual Support, Infirmary, Career Services, etc., which remain available during the closure of the campus and are in fact much more in demand than in normal times. This package also includes the participation in management, organization and logistics costs on campus (administrative functions), related to alumni, marketing, communication and admissions, as well as depreciation.

It is true that some benefits could not be maintained or entirely replaced in view of the measures imposed by the Federal Council. However, a whole series of new services and additional measures are currently being implemented. We look forward to seeing all students return to the campus, as we can all agree that this is the most ideal setting, but we must be patient in our efforts to ensure everyone's safety.

In order to ensure a return under the best possible conditions, a series of additional measures are being put in place, such as structural facilities, particularly in the areas of health and safety (e.g. automatic entry controls and counting systems, automatic taps, proximity warning device, etc.) and communication (teleworking technology, licences, data security, etc.). These measures represent significant costs, absorbed by the EHL Group, and are necessary in order to be able to resume teaching activities in a timely manner with the best possible protection for all those involved.

In the "Food & Beverage" area, Parking and Housing, pro rata reimbursements, i.e. a corresponding discount for invoices for the coming half-year, have already been decided.

The EHL management and all the staff have therefore done everything possible to protect the health of the students and to enable them to complete, respectively validate the semester according to the rules despite the extraordinary circumstances. There is therefore no reason for refunds in areas other than Food & Beverage, Parking and Accommodation. The "Lock-down" in connection with Covid-19 not only resulted in considerable additional costs for the School, but also in a significant loss of turnover.

In the context described, Management considers the decisions it has made to be fair and balanced.

Finally, the management would like to thank everyone, students and their families, as well as all the staff, for their exceptional flexibility, commitment and dedication in an extremely difficult situation. We wish you and your loved ones good health and continued success.

Executive Committee,  
EHL Group