

Pavia, 1 September 2020

Dear Colleagues and Dear Students,

the new academic year is about to begin, and I desire to wish the whole academic community a big good luck. We particularly need it.

With this letter, I want to recall the choices made for the teaching during next semester and the actions taken to adapt our classrooms, in order to ensure controlled accesses and safe environments.

Though, I would like to start again focusing on what has already been done during the last six months, to underline once again how the ability to guarantee almost all the teachings of the second semester, as well as the related exams, is a result to be proud of. It would not have been possible without the extraordinary enthusiasm of the whole university community, without the maturity of the students, the quality of the teachers, the competence of the administrative, technical and language experts staff. Seeing how cohesive our community has turned out to be, while facing a great emergency, has been for me a surprise which goes beyond what I could have ever hoped for.

The opening academic year poses a new challenge: to carry out all our activities in the best possible way and in complete safety.

A working group (which I desire to thank in a special way) has prepared the teaching organization for the next semester, which will be carried out in a mixed way. Students who have objective difficulties in attending class in person, will still have the possibility to attend all the lessons online. Through an IT platform, which will be activated in the next days, each student will be able to choose whether to follow a certain teaching in the classroom or remotely. If the maximum capacity of the classrooms does not allow the simultaneous presence of all students, the class will be divided in order to alternate presence in the classroom and online attendance (so-called "teaching in rotation"), or the course will be divided into two parts: online theoretical lessons and workshops (or similar activities) in presence, with students divided into small groups. Each Department or Degree Course will promptly notify the timetable and the teaching methods to the students, as well as all the memberships to the various sub-groups.

Our classrooms were not equipped for video shooting and, during the summer, the network connection of each classroom has been checked, and the needed cameras installed. The necessary PCs and tablets were also purchased, required by the Departments for the provision of training contents. In this way, we plan to make over 300 classrooms available for live streaming of lessons.

Access routes are also being prepared with specific signs. The places where students will be allowed to sit to follow the lessons will be explicitly indicated. Personal and over-the-counter disinfectants will be available. Dedicated employees will provide for the ventilation of the classrooms, in accordance with health regulations.

For the consultation of the books, eleven Libraries (or Sections of them) have been reopened, which can be accessed through the Affluences App or by e-mail booking. We will evaluate the extension of the opening hours in the coming weeks. The loan services will continue in contactless mode. I also recall that, especially thinking about these last days of summer, the central building courtyards, Palazzo San Felice and Polo Cravino are open to the staff and to the students of the University.

Another important news: the exams of the September session can already take place in person. And, in particular, I recommend that, in strict compliance with health measures, written exams and degree exams take place in this way.

These difficult months have made clear to all of us the fact that *there is no University without university life*. Friendships, common experiences and personal growth are as important as training in the strict sense. This is even truer in Pavia, which has been a university city for centuries. Our city will have to be this way even more in the future, with more infrastructures and a greater interdependence between University and colleges. This is the path to follow if we really aspire to welcome a greater number of students.

I hope that what the University has prepared with determination will prove to be a good solution to immediately return to an academic life as similar as possible to the one we have always known.

I am confident that this strong desire for participation will be combined with strict compliance with health standards, and I wish you the best possible academic year.

Francesco Svelto
Rector of the University of Pavia