

Decision of the Rector of the University of Castilla-La Mancha on April 2nd, adopting the non-face-to-face protocol for the completion of the academic year 2019-2020 as a result of the evolving situation and prospects of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

On March 11th, the University of Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM) evoked the first preventive measures and public health recommendations for the University community as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. These measures were reinforced on March 13th through the adoption of the non-face-to-face protocols to be used as a general rule for University operation.

In managing this health crisis, the UCLM has been proactive in prioritising the general interest of public health at the university level based on the available health information and scientific studies within the framework of the advisory boards created for this purpose. Specifically, this includes the Coronavirus Crisis Monitoring Committee working in tandem with the proposals and recommendations of the coordinating bodies concerning the Spanish University System, such as the Board of Rectors of Spanish Universities (La Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas-CRUE), Council of Universities (el Consejo de Universidades), General Board of University Policy (la Conferencia General de Política Universitaria) and the Sectoral Board of Education (Conferencia Sectorial de Educación).

Throughout this week, the UCLM has participated in executive meetings which have been held amongst these bodies at different levels to address the central issue of the finalization of this academic year given the outlook for this health crisis. On Monday, March 30th, a meeting of the Board of Rectors (CRUE) was held with the Ministry of Universities to agree upon directives and guidelines considering different scenarios. That meeting was complemented by a meeting of the Standing Committee for the Advisory Board for Universities (Comisión Permanente del Consejo de Universidades) last Tuesday, March 31st. On April 2nd, the Expanded Standing Committee for the Board of Rectors (Comité Permanente Ampliado de la CRUE) met in order to help shape the remaining outstanding issues. Additionally, the General Board of University Policy (la Conferencia General de Política Universitaria) met in which the Minister informed the various Regions of the progress that had been made and the solutions reached based on the meetings that had previously taken place.

As a result of these various meetings, it was agreed that, given this ongoing health crisis, it is not advisable to resume normal activity for the remainder of this academic year. Even in the best conditions where the pandemic is brought under control by this summer, there is no reasonable expectation that mass meetings, such as university tests, exams or other large activities, will be able to be held during that time.

Given these expectations, the UCLM must be sufficiently organized in advance to ensure that students can complete their studies within the current academic year in accordance with the necessary adaptations, allowing the faculties and schools to plan the rest of their teaching activities and aligning them with the evaluation system that will be established. The student, in turn, ought to be advised of these changes as soon as possible to give them ample time to adjust to the new adaptations.

In light of these considerations, and through the convening of the Governing Board, the consultation of the deans and directors of all faculties and schools via extraordinary meetings; and under the powers provided by the Organic Law for Universities 6/2001 and the Statutes of

the University of Castilla-La Mancha, this Rectorate, exercising the principles on which academic autonomy is based;

AGREES

First — To establish that the University of Castilla-La Mancha ensures the end of the current situation of non-face-to-face academic activities as a general practice.

Second — To open up a process of participation within the university community to define appropriate adaptations ensuring that every student can complete their studies in which they are enrolled.

Third — to entrust the development of specific guidelines to the Commission of Teaching Innovation, which is under the purview of the Vice-rectory of Teaching and supplemented by the participation of the Vice-rectory of Students and Social Responsibility, the Vice-Rector of Faculty, and the Secretary General. This document should include general guidelines regarding teaching practice, practicums and internships, evaluation and capstone projects for bachelor's and master's degree programs, as determined by the various faculties and schools given the characteristics of each degree program.

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RECTOR