PROMOTIONS-
KOLLEG NRW

Contingency Plan
for the Doctoral School NRW

(07.10.2026)

Subject

Crises are events that are not covered by standard procedures, cannot be planned for, and may cause instability at the Doctoral School NRW. Possible events that have only an indirect impact on the Doctoral School NRW include:

- Attacks on individuals at supporting universities of applied sciences, including active shooter situations
- Fires or natural disasters at connected facilities or in the region
- War or violent conflicts

There are also events with immediate impact:

- Burglary or fire at the administrative office
- Attacks on individuals at the Doctoral School NRW, including active shooter situations
- Death or serious illness of a member or affiliate, particularly from the group of directors or the board
- Hacker attacks on the database, website, or email server, e.g., denial-of-service attacks or ransomware
- (Sexual) assault on members or affiliates, including, for example, escalated stalking or bullying
- Major scientific or ethical misconduct by a member or affiliate
- Case of plagiarism

Of course, unexpected events with a positive impact are also conceivable, such as:

- Special awards or honors for members or affiliates
- Unexpected large monetary or in-kind donations

The task of crisis management is to create trust and credibility both internally and externally through appropriate action and transparent communication, and to prevent damage to the Doctoral School NRW and its members and affiliates.

Crisis Task Force

To ensure a rapid response to crises, the Doctoral School NRW establishes a Crisis Task Force consisting of four members:

- Chairperson and Executive Director (usually agree on leadership among themselves)
- The person responsible for communication at the administrative office, in addition to the board
- Chairperson of the Doctoral School Senate
- Additional persons as needed, e.g., Data Protection Officer or MKW member

In the event of a crisis, the Crisis Task Force forms a crisis team with additional experts selected on a case-by-case basis (e.g., Data Protection Officer, Equal Opportunities Officer, disaster management experts). Additional expertise may be consulted at any time for advisory purposes.

The Crisis Task Force meets at least twice a year (virtually) to run through scenarios and review emergency and communication plans.

For initial contact, the Crisis Task Force has agreed on the following procedure: first, contact by phone (work or private), followed by SMS chain and email (work and private). Further communication among members can then be arranged as needed.

The Crisis Task Force must have the following capabilities:

- Send emails to all members and affiliates (using current distribution lists)
- Issue press releases
- Disable the website and email (in coordination with the emergency IT team at HS Bochum)
- Post announcements on the website and, if necessary, replace the website with a single information page
- Disable KISS, and if necessary, restore from backup
- Contact the local police (Polizeiwache Südost: 0234 909-3521 or emergency: 110)
- Contact the bank (Sparkasse) and freeze accounts

All actions are carried out under the direction of the Crisis Task Force leadership.

Procedure in Case of a Crisis

- Upon becoming aware of an incident, the Crisis Task Force is contacted.
- The Crisis Task Force assesses the situation, gathers relevant facts if necessary, and clarifies responsibilities.
- If the Crisis Task Force is responsible:
    - Formation of a crisis team with the appropriate experts
    - Distribution of tasks within the crisis team, if necessary
    - Identification of individuals directly affected
    - Determine who will be informed and define the communication strategy
    - Send initial notification
    - Decide which additional communication channels should be used
    - Assess whether internal processes are affected and determine required actions
    - Assign responsibility for necessary actions
    - Determine if external assistance is needed
    - Contact affected individuals
    - Offer support, if applicable
    - Inform the responsible persons, committees, supporting universities of applied sciences, and MKW
    - Inform members and affiliates of the Doctoral School NRW

Communication, both internal and external, must be timely, credible, consistent with further actions, and consider the following dimensions:

- People (protection of life, physical integrity, and well-being) – highest priority
- Reputation (the doctoral rights of the Doctoral School NRW are at stake) – second priority
- Material or environmental damage
- Disruption of processes at the Doctoral School NRW

External communication should only be carried out by a person designated by the leadership of the Crisis Task Force.

After the Crisis

After the crisis has ended, members and affiliates must be informed within an appropriate timeframe about the causes of the crisis and the measures that were taken.

The crisis and the actions implemented, including all communication, must be reviewed and documented. This serves to prepare for handling future crises.

Further Development

This document should be further developed as needed, also serving as a practical guide.