Regulations for members of Saarland University as a result of the current crisis situation

Status: 16 March 2020 – 6.30 pm

Due to the current spread of the "corona virus" (SARS-CoV-2 infection) and the cases of illness in the State of Saarland, the University has decided on measures which you are required to follow on the basis of the regulations here specified. The stipulated measures are strictly mandatory, especially in light of the shut-down of university operations announced by the state of Saarland effective as of 18 March 2020 (0:00 am) and the introduction of emergency operation in accordance with the pandemic plan intended to ensure essential functionalities in research, teaching and administration.

Against this background, important tasks during emergency operation must be maintained as a priority. Tasks that are not absolutely necessary for emergency operation are to be handled via home office as far as possible. All service offerings such as opening of libraries, university sports, student advice etc. are to be stopped in emergency operation if they are not absolutely necessary for emergency operation. The accessibility of all areas must be guaranteed.

In consultation with the university management the crisis team will determine the end of the crisis situation based on evaluation of the situation in accordance with WHO / Robert Koch Institute (RKI) guidelines and an assessment by the authorities. Any information on changes to the measures specified below is provided in the FAQs on the coronavirus on the UdS homepage. These measures hereby are considered as regulations, without restriction.

No emergency operation is ordered for those employees at the Homburg campus whose activities are in the field of research into the current corona pandemic or clinically relevant diagnostics. Their deployment must be clarified individually with their superior.

Business trips, private trips, secondary employment, stays abroad and excursions

1. Ban on business trips

All members of the university are subject to a general ban on business trips, which applies to all business trips/further education and training, participation in congresses etc. in Germany and abroad until further notice. This does not apply to business trips within the Saarland in connection with official business at ministries, offices, etc., or to urgent appointments within the Saarland that cannot be postponed.

2. Secondary employment

Activities related to secondary employment can only be carried out if they do not increase the risk of infection. According to § 87 of the Saarland Civil Servants Act, secondary employment is to be prohibited if the performance of such employment affects official interests. This is particularly the case if the secondary employment can lead to a significant restriction of the future deployability of
the civil servant. For this reason, secondary activities which are likely to increase the risk of infection (e.g. lectures at conferences, secondary activities involving travel) must be banned at present.

3. Excursions

Lecturers and students of the university who have planned study-related trips, excursions etc. or are planning them for the coming semester must postpone their trips until further notice.

4. Return from risk areas designated by the RKI

Members of the university who return from business trips, stays abroad, internships or private trips from risk areas are instructed not to enter the university and its sites for 14 days after their return. Risk areas include those designated by RKI (see www.rki.de).

Persons resident or permanently staying in the coronavirus risk areas designated by the RKI, including the French region of Grand Est, will not be allowed access to the university sites until further notice. Superiors in all areas are required to ensure compliance with this regulation. As a member of the university, you are obliged to inform your superior directly by telephone or e-mail. You should work via home office where possible. In cases where you cannot work from home, a decision will be made by your superior on the allocation of other activities or, if necessary, a release from work.

5. Interaction with third parties

Third parties (e.g. staff from external service providers) and guests of the university may only access the university's sites if their presence is necessary for emergency operation. However, if these persons have stayed in the designated risk areas privately or on business in the past 14 days or have had contact with possibly infected persons (e.g. sharing a flat with a possibly infected person), they will also be requested not to enter the university campuses in the two weeks following their return or after contact.

Visits by guests or foreign delegations must be cancelled.

6. Stays abroad

University students who have planned study-related trips, excursions, etc. or are planning to do so for the coming semester must postpone their trip until further notice.

Students who go to the regions affected to carry out an Erasmus placement and then abandon it will receive their Erasmus grant for the days spent abroad in the event of an early return, even if the minimum duration for the stay is not reached. Affected regions are areas declared as such by the relevant national authority.

Due to the exceptional circumstances, even shortened stays abroad are fully recognized as academic achievements.

7. Internships

It is prohibited to carry out internships in a designated risk area. Students who are unable to carry out their internship should contact their examination office. For school internships, students should
contact the Centre for Teacher Training (Zentrum für Lehrerbildung). This also applies if the execution of the internship is jeopardized by specific measures taken by the school.

Diseases or suspected cases

1. Symptoms of disease with signs of corona infection

If you have symptoms of illness with signs of corona infection, you must inform your superior or the respective department (Personnel Department – Dezernat Personal) directly by telephone or e-mail and contact the responsible health office (Gesundheitsamt) immediately. Stay at home and follow the instructions of the health office. Do not go to a clinic or to your family doctor yourself.

2. Contact with a person infected with the coronavirus

If you have had contact with a person infected with the coronavirus, you must inform your superior or the respective department (Personnel Department – Dezernat Personal) directly by telephone or e-mail and must stay at home for the time being. The basic principle is that the risk of spreading the virus should be minimized in order to protect others. In addition, you must immediately contact your local health office by telephone - even if you do not have any signs of illness. You will find the health office responsible for you in the RKI database. Follow the instructions of the health office. Do not go to a clinic or to your family doctor yourself.

3. Duties of superiors

Superiors who notice clear signs of flu-like infections in employees must instruct them to stay at home.

4. Interaction with risk groups

University members who fall into a risk group are encouraged to work from home. If teleworking is not possible, other tasks can be assigned or time off can be granted. According to the university’s pandemic plan, the risk group includes pregnant and breastfeeding women, cardiovascular patients, people with weakened immune systems, and asthma sufferers.

Members of the university who also belong to a risk group on the basis of medically certified previous illnesses are to be treated in the same way upon presentation of the certificate. In all the cases described, the persons concerned must consult with their superior.
University during the period of emergency operation

1. Continuation of pay and time recording during emergency operation

The right to continued pay exists for the duration of a closure, as this is not self-imposed. Home office is a prerequisite for continuing work. Where the technical infrastructure does not yet exist or tasks are not suitable for home office work, you must clarified with your superior how technical infrastructure can be set up as quickly as possible or whether alternative tasks can be carried out from home. If none of these options are effective, the respective employee must be released from work with full pay.

As a general rule, it is not the time consumed by the activities performed in home office that is decisive, but the extent of activities agreed with your superior.

This regulation also applies to persons who have childcare obligations due to closures of schools and daycare facilities. Here, too, the principle of implementing home office with telecommunication must be taken into account in all instances; see also “Childcare obligations due to closures of schools and daycare facilities”. Time recording is suspended for the duration of the emergency operation. Overtime is not possible during this time.

2. Vacation

Leave that has already been applied for and approved remains valid even during the period of emergency operation.

3. Sickness notifications

Sickness notifications must continue to be submitted even during the period of emergency operation. This can also be done electronically to personal@uni-saarland.de. Your superior must also be informed about the sick leave. The same applies if you are staying at home due to "sickness of child".

Minimization of physical contact

1. Home office/teleworking

From now on, home office will be required as a special measure. This means that all employees whose work can also be done from home are to work from their home office wherever feasible. The rules governing part-time home office with regard to the application for and provision of end devices and the risk assessment of the home office are suspended for the duration of the crisis.

The agreed tasks and their implementation via home office work are agreed between the respective superior and the employee and recorded in writing (by e-mail). Where the technical infrastructure does not yet exist or activities are not suitable for home office work, you must clarify with your superior how technical infrastructure can be set up as quickly as possible or whether alternative tasks can be carried out from home. It should be examined whether end devices of your own are available and suitable for this purpose. If none of these options are effective, the respective employee must be released from work with full pay.
2. Opening hours of libraries, university sports

The libraries remain closed during emergency operation. Please note the information on the homepages of the individual libraries. Please make use of electronic resources wherever possible.

University sports events will be suspended until further notice. The Uni-Fit fitness centre will also remain closed for the time being.

3. Childcare obligations due to closures of schools and daycare facilities

If you have childcare obligations for children, you may continue to provide childcare until schools and childcare facilities reopen, corresponding to the extended care exemption. The distribution of care among different caregivers (e.g. spouse, de facto) must be taken into account here. In addition, home office is also prescribed in care situations. Exceptions apply to those who cannot organize care in any other way. This includes, for example, members of staff whose partner works in a systemically important profession e.g. medical sector, as well as staff whose work is tied to specific hours. A written report on the release from home office due to a care situation must be submitted to the respective department (Personnel Department – Dezernat Personal).

Organization of extra-curricular activities, meetings, recruitment procedures

1. Events outside of teaching activities

All events outside of teaching activities are to be cancelled, unless they are necessary for emergency operation. Alternative formats for these activities or events should be considered, such as telephone or video conferences, etc., for which current additional handouts are being prepared. Until further notice, services of DFN (Link HIZ Coronavirus) or other commercial providers can be used.

2. Recruitment procedure

For the time being, the setting of new dates for interviews in recruitment procedures should be avoided. In the case of already scheduled selection interviews, the extent to which the interviews can be carried out by all participants using video conferencing should be considered.

Employment contracts that have already been signed take effect during the emergency phase, even if the employees concerned cannot take up their duties at their place of work due to a closure of the UdS. The processing of new hires and of recruitment procedures already in progress will be decided individually as necessary. Priority will be given to hirings where future employees have already had to give notice to their former employer, as well as to those directly related to third-party funded projects that cannot be postponed.
Research, teaching and examinations

1. Research

Research work shall be organized in such a way that no presence at the university sites is necessary. The sites of the UdS also include the research laboratories of the university on external premises, such as, in particular, in buildings of the UKS. The maintenance of important research infrastructures must be ensured, such as the keeping of experimental animals and equipment important for emergency operation. Critical research activities are carried out as far as possible in coordination with the Faculty staff responsible during emergency operation, in agreement with the Facility Management (FM) Department. Please notify Occupational Health and Safety (Arbeitsschutz) of the names of staff responsible during emergency operation.

Critical research activities are defined as activities related to research on the current corona pandemic and clinically relevant diagnostics as well as activities that are difficult to reorganize in the long term, the interruption of which would lead to the loss of essential sensitive data or to the severe impairment of particularly complex scientific and also clinical studies.

2. Teaching courses and examinations

The start of courses in the coming summer semester will be postponed from 6 April to 4 May 2020 without extending the lecture period. Students should not suffer any disadvantages as a result. Classroom teaching and studies will be suspended until 4 May 2020 in order to counteract the further spread of the corona virus. All attendance examinations including doctoral examinations will be temporarily suspended until 24 April 2020.

In urgently needed individual cases, examiners can decide in agreement with the students or doctoral candidates concerned whether to conduct oral examinations via video conference. Standard commercial systems may also be used for this purpose. The examination offices are required to adjust the processing times of ongoing qualification work (such as term papers, Bachelor's and Master's theses, state examination papers) accordingly. The respective examination board is responsible for examination questions. Legal advice to the examination boards in this regard is provided by the Legal Services (LS) department.

The regular study and examination schedule for the summer semester 2020 is to be prepared. It is recommended that the use of alternative, especially digital teaching and examination formats be examined. Guidelines are currently being prepared.

Online teaching materials can be made available to students before the beginning of the course, provided that participation in the course is not compulsory. Students should not suffer any disadvantages as a result of not participating in the online offering before the beginning of the course.

Saarbrücken, 20200316