COVID-19 coronavirus

GUIDELINES OF THE RECTORATE ON PREVENTION IN RELATION TO COVID-19

Status: 9 March 2020

In connection with COVID-19, the Rectorate has issued guidelines on lectures, special offers (e.g. libraries), opening of counters, holding of internal university meetings and other events (especially conferences and meetings). The Rectorate has communicated separate guidelines for the work organisation of the staff by e-mail dated 4 March 2020.

The Rectorate continuously reviews the situation in close cooperation with the competent authorities and regularly updates these guidelines. The latest version of the guidelines can be found on the special website of our university.

A. In general

Based on the current situation and the spread of the coronavirus, the Federal Council classifies the situation in Switzerland as a special situation under the Epidemics Act. It bans major events with more than 1000 people. The ban will remain in force at least until 15 March 2020, at which time the health authorities will make various recommendations. Further information can be found here.

The health authorities, in particular the Federal Office of Public Health FOPH, communicate continuously updated information, recommendations and guidelines concerning coronavirus. The most important links and further information can be found on the dedicated website of our university.

In connection with the organisation, the attendance of events, especially abroad, as well as in the case of travel, the FOPH's recommendations for travellers and the travel advice of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA must also be observed. In particular, all persons who have been in particularly affected areas are recommended to work from home whenever possible during the first 14 days after their return. If this is not possible, the federal protection regulations must be strictly observed. Participation in meetings (especially meetings, events and lectures) with more than 5 persons is prohibited during this period.
B. **Courses**

The University of Fribourg will **continue to run** the lectures and maintain the offer. However, for meetings, conferences and continuing education, see letter F below. In general, the recommendations and [protective regulations of the Swiss Confederation](#) must be observed as far as possible.

For **courses with more than 150 participants**, the following special precautions apply for the time being until 9 April 2020:

- If space is limited, the events must either be moved to a larger room or held twice.
- If this is not possible, other methods of teaching should be used (video) recording of the courses, teaching of the material via the "Moodle" platform or other methods, such as targeted literature references). Further information can be found [here](#).

C. **Special offers**

Libraries, refectories and UniSport will remain open and the relevant services will be maintained. The recommendations and [protective regulations of the federal government](#) are to be observed to the best of our ability.

D. **Counter openings**

The counters of the University of Fribourg **remain open**. It is important to ensure that conversations are limited to less than 15 minutes and that a physical distance is maintained within the bounds of possibility.

An **exception is made** for desks with a large number of contacts to persons not directly identifiable. Counter services there will continue to be offered by telephone and online, but the counters will remain closed to visitors. The counters of the following services are currently affected:
- Uni-Info;
- Uni-Social;
- Admissions and Registration;
- International relations.

E. **University internal meetings**

University internal **meetings may continue to be held**. In general, the recommendations and [protective regulations of the Confederation](#) shall be observed to the best possible extent. It is recommended that meetings be limited to what is necessary. Where possible and reasonable, telephone conferences etc. should be held and/or non-urgent meetings should be postponed.

**Exception**: As part of its business continuity management, the Rectorate aims to reduce the risk of quarantine-related failure of entire groups of persons and teams that are essential for the proper functioning of the operation and ultimately the institution (so-called key groups). As an immediate measure, the Rectorate therefore orders the cancellation of the following meetings for the time being until 22 March 2020:
- Senate session;
- Rectorate meeting;
- Dean's council meetings;
- Faculty council meetings;
- Meetings of the university commissions.
Where possible and reasonable, telephone conferences etc. can be held and decisions can be made by way of circulation. In addition, "Moodle" can also be used for the coordination of online faculty council or online commissions meetings. The deans and the presidents of the commissions can contact nte@unifr.ch if necessary.

F. Other events (especially meetings, conferences and further education)

If fewer than 1000 people take part in a public or private event, the organisers must weigh up the risk together with the competent cantonal authority. The cantons may decide to ban the event. In this context, the canton of Fribourg issued a directive on 6 March 2020 according to which the organisers, in collaboration with the competent cantonal authority (Prefecture), must weigh up the risks. Events involving more than 150 people are subject to special analysis and investigation.

Subject to the instructions and guidelines of the authorities (see above), there are currently no travel restrictions in Switzerland, nor are there any fundamental restrictions on events with fewer than 150 participants.

The Rectorate is aware of the importance of holding events at regional, national and international level for good teaching, research and further education. At the same time, it recognises the risks associated with holding or attending events. Against this background, the Rectorate issues the following guidelines:

- Participation in events in particularly affected areas is strongly discouraged. Information on the current international situation can be found here.

- Members of the university community returning from events held in particularly affected areas are required to work from home whenever possible during the first 14 days after their return. If this is not possible, the protective regulations of the federal government must be strictly observed. Participation in gatherings (in particular meetings, events and lectures) with more than 5 persons is prohibited during this period.

- The organisers of meetings, conferences and further training courses and other events shall consider postponing the event and take appropriate measures if necessary. If events are organised and conducted by members of the university community, it must be ensured that the participants and their contact details are known. This will facilitate any subsequent tracking.

- Travelling to areas not particularly affected, as well as holding events at the University of Freiburg, requires a careful risk assessment that takes into account the specific circumstances. The following criteria can be used as a decision-making aid. In case of doubt, the competent cantonal authority (Prefecture) should be consulted. The contact office is also available to answer questions.
**Decision support** regarding the organisation of or the participation at events:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general: Does an infection or an absence due to quarantine endanger the company (e.g. an ongoing research project)?</td>
<td>In general, care must be taken to ensure that any infection or quarantine does not seriously endanger ongoing projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the participants of the events known?</td>
<td>The knowledge of the persons participating in an event facilitates possible &quot;tracking&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are persons participating in the event over 65 years old?</td>
<td>This group of people is particularly vulnerable. In accordance with cantonal <em>guidelines</em>, these persons are not advised to participate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have participants been to an affected area within the last 14 days?</td>
<td>The risk of infection is increased by the participation of persons who have stayed in an affected area within the last 14 days. These persons must be prohibited from participating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do several people from the same unit participate in the event?</td>
<td>Infection or quarantine absences of several persons from the same unit jeopardise the proper functioning of the establishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the people exposed to the risk of infection play a key role in the research and/or administrative unit of our university?</td>
<td>Infection or quarantine absence of key personnel endangers the proper functioning of the establishment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the event of infection or quarantine, is substitution ensured?</td>
<td>Representatives are indispensable in certain areas for the good functioning of the business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the measures within the meaning of the federal protection regulations guaranteed within the framework of the events?</td>
<td>Strict compliance with the protection regulations considerably reduces the risk of infection.</td>
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