Instructions from the President (supplementary to the instructions issued on 13 March 2020)

The president of Universität Hamburg has issued the following updates and clarifications on individual aspects of the instructions of 13 March 2020.

All unaffected provisions of the instructions of 13 March 2020 remain valid.

Last updated 19 March 2020

For 1: Handling work-related travel, private travel, stays abroad, and field trips

1.3 Returning from a high-risk area

Employees and students returning from work-related travel or private trips to high-risk areas are still instructed not to enter any of the University's facilities at any of its locations for 14 days after their return. The human resources department has further instructed that, with immediate effect, the same rules apply to everyone who lives in the same household as someone (e.g., their partner, child(ren), parent(s), housemates) who has returned from a high-risk area in the last 14 days.

A list of current high-risk areas is available in the FAQ (https://www.uni-hamburg.de/newsroom/intern/2020/0131-corona-faq.html) and on the RKI website (https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete.html). People returning from Austria (not limited to Tyrol) and Switzerland are to be treated in the same way as those returning from an official high-risk area, regardless of the fact that both countries are (currently) not included on the RKI's list of high-risk areas. Universität Hamburg is following the provisions of the human resources department, which considers those countries high-risk areas.

Due to the unusually high risk of contagion, supervisors are entitled to ask employees who are returning from a vacation whether they have spent any time in any of the affected high-risk areas. Employees are obliged to answer truthfully.

As before, employees are not to return to work until 14 days after their departure from the high-risk area. Contact your supervisor and work from home instead.
For 2: Infected individuals or suspected cases

Suspected cases and infected individuals

Due to the nature of the disease and the necessity of protective measures, employees who have contracted the novel coronavirus are obliged to report their condition. If you contract the disease, notify your supervisor and HR immediately. This also applies if you have not been tested but have good reason to suspect that you are carrying the virus. Reasons to suspect an infection are:

1. Contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and
   - acute respiratory symptoms of any severity or
   - unspecified, general symptoms (e.g., a fever).
2. Time spent in a high-risk area and acute respiratory symptoms of any severity.

Employees who are quarantined on account of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 must continue to perform their work duties unless their illness renders them unable to do so. If possible, quarantined employees, like those returning from a high-risk area, should work from home. Unlike sick leave, approved vacation days cannot be reimbursed.

2.3 Regulations for people with severe disabilities (clarification of the instructions dated 13 March 2020) and pregnant women

Employees with severe disabilities that constitute a risk factor for infection with COVID-19 (doctor’s note required) must work from home. This does not apply to employees whose disabilities do not constitute a proven risk factor for infection.

Pregnant women are currently not considered a high-risk group. Supervisors should nonetheless enable this group to work from home if at all possible. They should further work with HR to determine whether specific protective measures or employment prohibition are required.

For 3: Minimizing physical contact

3.3 Working from home

In order to minimize personal contact, all employees should work from home if they have the technical abilities to do so and if their specific duties can be performed from home. If these conditions are not met, presence at the workplace remains mandatory. The final decision lies with each employee’s supervisor.

Employees who work from home must ensure that they can be contacted by telephone and/or email during their regular working hours. Working hours must be documented in a verifiable manner.
Leaves of absence

All employees are required to continue attending to their work duties, regardless of whether they work on site or from home. Leaves of absence may be granted to employees who should work from home due to (preventative) quarantine measures or membership of a risk group (employees who are older than 65 or have proven pre-existing conditions) but cannot do so (due to e.g., unsuitable tasks, lacking technology). In this case, the employees’ working time accounts will be adjusted accordingly.

Employees taking a leave of absence are nonetheless required to ensure that their employer can contact them by telephone and/or email. The decision about granting and, potentially, revoking a leave of absence lies with each employee’s supervisor. HR must be notified about any decisions.

Childcare measures in the wake of school and childcare facility closures

Employees forced to stay at home due to a lack of childcare options in the wake of school and nursery closures should arrange flexible working hours with their supervisors. This may include hours outside standard flexitime. If an employee cannot work from home while looking after their children, they may use vacation days or flexitime credits. In this case, their account may go into a negative balance as permitted in the flexitime regulations. The human resources department has ruled that the usual limit of 40 negative hours may be exceeded indefinitely. The human resources department has also ruled that leaves of absence beyond the aforementioned provisions will no longer be granted. Leaves of absence granted on the basis of the instruction of 13 March 2020 shall remain valid.

Traffic restrictions

Employees are responsible for making their way to work and back. Due to the unusual nature of the current situation, however, supervisors are instructed to react flexibly to any traffic restrictions (e.g., by allowing their employees to work from home temporarily).

Hamburg, 19 March 2020

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