

Last update: 11.03.2020

## To all Goethe University Professors and Employees

Dear Goethe University Employees,

In response to the occurrence of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), Goethe University's Executive Board has created a crisis unit. The crisis unit is in charge of coordinating what at present are solely preventive measures. This communication provides information on mobility and healthcare based on recommendations of the Robert-Koch-Institute and the Foreign Office. [This page is updated on an ongoing basis.](#)

### **Mobility:**

A daily updated [list of high-risk areas with regard to coronavirus](#) can be found on the website of the Robert Koch Institute (in German).

Goethe University members are urgently advised to forego business trips to high-risk areas at this time, even if the trip has already been approved, and even if the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) has not issued an official travel warning. Please inform yourself independently whether travel warnings are in effect.

Business trip applications for destinations located countries for which the Foreign Office has issued travel warnings cannot be approved as business trips. This applies analogously to travels into regions of countries for which the Foreign Office has issues partial travel advisories.

### [Current Foreign Office travel and security notifications \(in German\)](#)

The Executive Board requests that anyone returning from a business or private trip in a high risk area observe a 14-day self-quarantine at home in coordination with their supervisor, in order to minimize the potential risk of infection to the community. During this time, you should work from home to the extent possible. If you or family members develop symptoms, please contact your family physician.

### **Protection against infection**

To reduce the risk of infection with coronavirus, the same recommendations apply as for the influenza and other respiratory illnesses. In particular:

- Good hand hygiene (thorough washing with soap and water; avoid touching your face), [Information from the Robert Koch Institute](#) (in German).
- Etiquette for coughing and sneezing (sneeze or cough into the crook of your arm, not into your hand)
- Maintain distance from those who are sick (approximately 1 to 2 metres)

**Face masks:** If it is necessary for someone with an acute respiratory infection go out in public, it can be advisable for that person to wear a face mask to reduce the risk of infection to others (protection of others). However, there **is not adequate evidence to show that a healthy person wearing a face mask reduces his or her risk of infection (no self-protection)**. According to information from WHO, wearing a face mask in situations other than those in which it is recommended may provide a false sense of security. This can lead to the neglect of crucial hygienic measures such as good hand hygiene. See: *Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung. (Federal Centre for Health Education)*

**Disinfectants:** If the above measures are observed, the additional use of disinfectants is not necessary.

**Vaccination:** Influenza causes symptoms similar to SARS-CoV-2; the current northern hemisphere flu vaccine is recommended. In addition to having a personal protective effect, the vaccination helps avoid the occurrence of unnecessary suspicious cases and the ensuing stress on healthcare institutions. We further recommend making sure your vaccination status is up-to-date, i.e., regarding measles, diphtheria, polio, and rubella (e.g., with your family physician).

#### **Contact in daily university routine:**

Goethe University service units with advising functions should review whether potential students and other groups can be informed by telephone, email, video conference, etc. instead of in personal meetings, and communicate this policy.

Whether large university events (1000 people or more) might have to be postponed due to the coronavirus will be decided at this time case-by-case by the crisis unit based on current developments. If developments lead to a fundamental change in the basis for evaluation, we will immediately inform you through the website.

#### **What will happen if coronavirus cases occur at Goethe University?**

If coronavirus infections occur at Goethe University, events may be cancelled and partial closures may be ordered.

#### **Practical precautions with regard to work routines:**

All managers are requested to make sure that substitute regulations for their teams are up-to-date, and that contact lists for telephone chains are available. They should furthermore review the extent to which employees can work from home if necessary and what support they may require to do so. Scientists whose research projects cannot be interrupted should be particularly attentive to possible substitute regulations in order to ensure that at least emergency operations can be maintained.

#### **For those affected by the closure of schools, preschools, etc.**

If you have to take over the care of your minor children due to the closure of schools/preschools etc., if possible you can, in coordination with your direct supervisor, work from home. If this is not an option, you can reduce overtime hours or flexitime, or take vacation. You can also apply for a 3-day leave-of-absence in accordance with § 29 (3) TV-G-U, or – in exceptional cases – an unpaid leave of absence. Please inform your direct supervisor of the closure of the facility and its probable duration. Verification of the closure must be submitted, but this can also be provided after the fact.

**Further information:**

If you have urgent further questions on any of the above points, please write to [krisenstab@uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:krisenstab@uni-frankfurt.de). In addition, you can call the Office for Occupational Safety and Biological Security at 069/798-23688.

Further information (in German) on the current risk evaluation for coronavirus infections, hygienic recommendations and FAQs can be found on the websites of the [Robert Koch Institute](#) and the [Federal Centre for Health Education](#).

[FAQs in English](#) can be found on the website of the European Centre for Disease Protection and Control.

The state of Hesse has set up a **citizen's hotline** for questions on the coronavirus: Telephone: 0800 5554666, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

Best regards,

Professor Birgitta Wolff      Dr Albrecht Fester

President                      Vice President for Finances and Administration