



Limited on-site operations at UP – Employees-list-mail from Karsten Gerlof, 20 May 2020

Dear university employees,

The university has been under so-called “limited on-site operations” for a little more than two weeks now. It has become possible to gradually ease some restrictions: Some examinations and practical laboratory courses can now take place again, you can once again borrow and return media at the libraries in Golm and Griebnitzsee, and the Studentenwerk has taken first steps in Golm and at Campus Neues Palais to supply you with meals again.

However, we are still far from “normal operations” since COVID-19 remains just as dangerous as before. That is why gradual easement also comes with safety measures. This also applies to your workplace. Work in your department has been re-organized by your supervisors with due regard to these safety standards. Solutions that apply across the board are hardly possible, because regulations for the individual departments have to be adapted to the tasks, necessary availability, office hours and advisory services. This is the only way we can guarantee well-regulated operations for this semester. Above all, we have to respect the principle: Health protection comes first. That is why a deliberate choice was made, wherever possible, to have a reduced number of people working in office spaces, to work in alternating shifts or from home.

The university’s occupational safety division is working tirelessly to advise and always provides you with the latest information. You can find more detailed information regarding safety measures on the intranet: <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/verwaltung/bsso/safety>. In the next few days, the information kit will also be made available on the UP website (Important information about coronavirus/Information for employees, please find link below).

I urge you to protect yourself and those around you by following the relevant regulations that apply to your department and the general safety measures in a thorough manner. Please also respect the distance regulations on your way to work and during your breaks.

One piece of good news is that the process of filling vacancies at the university, which has been interrupted in the meantime, can resume shortly, with the optional use of video conferences under consideration. A corresponding concept is currently being discussed with the works councils.

Due to the recent easing of restrictions in the Berlin-Brandenburg region, business trips in the region and within Germany that are deemed absolutely necessary can even be approved again if they are essential due to urgent official business and if they pose no particular risks. Business trips and personal meetings are to be reduced to the absolute minimum however, and technological alternatives such as telephone or video conferences should be used as far as possible. Restrictions apply to business trips, e.g. in the choice of the means of transport and accommodation options. In your own interest, we therefore urge you to avoid business trips as far as possible. Distance regulations imply very large meeting rooms and further restrictions for personal meetings at UP. Therefore, personal meetings shall be organized only in urgent cases. Please find further information at the webpages of the

university's occupational safety division in the coming days.

Employees with small children or with care duties at home are still particularly affected by the corona situation. Childcare services in the day-care centers will only slowly be expanded in the coming weeks. Access to emergency childcare services is often difficult, even for those parents who are entitled to it in principle. Due to current information, access may be partly improved. The UP would like to support you in this situation, but must adhere to the regulations that apply to all employees in the state:

- Brandenburg, unlike Berlin, has not included employees at universities in the list of essential infrastructure areas. We are trying to convince the ministry to include university employees in the list to facilitate access to emergency childcare.
- If there are no appropriate childcare options, no possibility to work from home and no compensation days or flexitime credits available, currently up to 20 working days of leave can be granted with continued payment of remuneration and, if desired, a further 10 working days without continued payment of remuneration. It is also possible to take half days off. Whether it is possible for you to do your work from home will be determined by the respective supervisor. The university's directorate recommends an accommodating and flexible handling of these regulations, which helps to reconcile work and family life – but it is still up to you and your supervisor to find a balanced solution for private obligations and the completion of work tasks in each individual case. If conflicts arise, you can consult a higher ranking supervisor and, of course, your works council.

Similar possibilities of leave of absence also exist for employees who have to care for relatives in need of care, provided that they live in the household of the employee providing the care.

You can find further information on the limited on-site operations here:

<https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/presse/press/latest-news/coronavirus/information-for-employees>.

Taking a look at these pages in regular intervals is worthwhile as information is continuously being updated and added.

Have a restful public holiday tomorrow and, first and foremost, stay healthy!

Kind regards,

Karsten Gerlof