

Research and qualification in times of Corona – Employees-list-mail from Prof. Robert Seckler, 23 May 2020

Dear researchers,
Dear junior scientists,

Although the shutdown lies behind us (for the time being) and several restriction could be removed, we are far from normal operations. Many research activities, such as work with human subjects and research field trips, are only partially possible or not at all. Many of you can't concentrate on research because of lacking child care services. In addition, many of us struggle to rapidly introduce new digital teaching tools.

Consequently, the majority of research projects and qualification tracks for junior researchers experience delays. Therefore, I would like to point you towards some new regulations meant to partially compensate for such stresses:

1. Longer employment possibilities: The German federal parliament (Bundestag and Bundesrat) have passed a law increasing the maximum time junior scientists in their qualification phase can be employed at a university or research institution by 6 months, provided the person has had a respective contract (according to the WissZeitVG) during the time between March and September 2020.
2. Extension of DFG grants: The German Science Foundation (DFG) offers relatively simple procedures for extension of grants and some additional funds for those projects that experience delays due to the Corona crisis. Further information can be found on the DFG web pages:
https://www.dfg.de/foerderung/info_wissenschaft/2020/info_wissenschaft_20_28/index.html
3. Federal government grants: BMBF is adjusting grant conditions to provide "liquidity and appropriate procedures" for persons working in BMBF funded projects. For more information, please see <https://www.bmbf.de/de/corona-krise-achtsamkeit-ja-alarmismus-nein-11069.html>. These adjustments are ongoing.
4. European Union grants: The situation here is more complicated, but the EU has included new information in the FAQ-section of the Funding & Tender Opportunity Portal:
(<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/faq?type=1;categories=;programme=H2020;actions=;keyword=COVID-19%20outbreak>).
This new information gives advice on the application of the rules of the Grant Agreement in projects in the frame of H2020 during the crisis of COVID-19. The FAQ of the Commission are updated and completes on a regular basis.

For more information and advice regarding the possibilities listed in 2.-4., please contact Research Affairs in division 1 of the university administration:

<https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/research/research-funding/service-and-contact>. For information about extension of doctoral student stipends, please contact the Potsdam Graduate School (PoGS): <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/pogs/foerderung/stipendien>.

With best wishes for a good and successful time after Corona and for a healthy future

Yours sincerely, Robert Seckler