Reminder: COVID-19 protective measures in the workplace – Employees-list-mail from Karsten Gerlof, 3 February 2022

Dear employees of the university,

In light of the rising incidence rates, I would like to remind you of some of the regulations in place at the university regarding infection protection in the workplace. As you will have heard through the media, the spread of the Omicron variant has led to an increase in the number of employees calling in sick due to illness caused by COVID or quarantine orders in several companies and institutions. At the moment, the number of affected employees at the UP is still within limits, but incoming notifications already show an upward trend between November 2021 and January 2022.

Since the end of November, the 3G principle has been in effect at the workplace and will remain in place: All employees must be vaccinated, tested, or have recovered from the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus before entering the workplace. Proof of the 3G status is provided by presenting the yellow vaccination passport or the vaccination certificate via an app, a valid proof of recovery, or a test result proving the absence of infection with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

- This documentation has already been checked and documented by your supervisor if you are fully vaccinated.
- When the “recovered” status expires, for example, the corresponding documentation must be updated. In the last few days, the media reported that the deadlines for the “recovered” status have been changed. For the latest information, visit the website of the Robert Koch Institute.
- For employees who do not have a “fully vaccinated” status or proof of recovery, test results must be checked regularly by supervisors.

We would like to appeal to those who have not yet been vaccinated to take up an offer of vaccination. Anyone who cannot prove they are fully vaccinated or recovered and therefore needs to be tested to meet 3G status requirements can do so at one of the facilities offering the so-called “free citizen tests” (“kostenlose Bürgertests”). This test must not date back more than 24 hours, except in the case of the use of PCR tests or comparable procedures (in this case, the relevant test must date back no more than 48 hours). You are also welcome to make use of the testing opportunities directly on the university campus.

Please also observe the so-called “AHA+L” rules (mask wearing, hygiene, social distancing as well as regular airing of rooms) at the workplace; this also applies while you are on the way to another location/room, during breaks, or while in the dining hall.

The “home office requirement” is also currently in effect: It states that for office jobs or comparable activities, employers are to offer employees the opportunity to carry out these activities from their home offices. However, this does not apply if there are any compelling operational reasons preventing this. Employees are to accept this offer unless there are reasons on their side that prevent them from doing so.

What are the current rules at the UP?
Compelling operational reasons against working from a home office may include, among other things, important services for students and other members of the UP that can only be provided if the employee is on site. For employees in our technical and administrative services the following applies: Whether it is possible for you to work from home depends on the concept of the UP department in which you work. For academic staff members, working from home should be possible as a general rule, however, there are various situations in which your presence on site will be required, such as face-to-face teaching, lab work, or some examinations. You can find the university-wide framework regulations on remote work for academic employees at this link and for employees in the administrative and technical services at this link. If you have any questions about this, please contact your supervisor or Division 3.

In order to protect you and all university members as effectively as possible, the mask requirement continues to apply despite the 2G principle for teaching and the 3G principle for the workplace: Everyone must wear a medical mask inside the buildings. **The use of a mask with the FFP2 standard is highly recommended.** Exceptions to the mask requirement can be found in the university’s hygiene concept, which is still binding for all. Its latest version is available at this link. This is to ensure safe university operations during the pandemic. However, this will only succeed with the help of all of you. Please follow all of the rules laid out in the concept as far as they pertain to your work environment.

You can find further extensive, continuously updated information on all COVID-19 regulations on the COVID-19 information website for UP employees.

Kind regards and first and foremost: stay healthy!

Karsten Gerlof