

March 17, 2020

We are there for you - at a distance, but virtually personal

Dear students, dear lecturers, dear colleagues

From a Grisons perspective, we are already in the second day of the so-called «extraordinary situation», which - to my knowledge - has not existed in Switzerland since the Second World War. Because of this almost daily changing situation we are anxious to inform you as detailed as possible about the virtual operation of the UAS Grisons.

In this situation, the university management and the crisis management team of the UAS Grisons have set themselves the goal of coping with this crisis in the best possible way, while ensuring the – currently virtual – university operations. What does this mean in concrete terms? You and your relatives should get through this pandemic as healthy as possible, there is nothing more important than this! It is just as important that we can ensure that our students' academic success is maintained within the regular schedule. In addition, we continue to put all our efforts into the acquisition of future students, so that we can continue to welcome many curious young people into the family of the UAS Grisons in the autumn semester of 2020. The virtual university operation is ensured by our colleagues, partly on site, often from their home office.

Importance of the FOPH's rules of conduct and hygiene

In order for us to achieve our primary goal of the health of all FHGR members, each and every one of us is needed. Let us adhere to the sensible and necessary rules of conduct and hygiene of the Federal Office of Public Health (BAG)! Thus, «social distancing» is currently top priority. Disinfectant dispensers are available on the premises of the UAS Grisons by all sanitary facilities. Our housekeeping staff also regularly disinfects surfaces, door handles, etc. to counteract the spread of the virus. I am aware that we need to rethink our everyday lives, and I feel the same way. Out of solidarity - our (personal) responsibility towards the risk groups is called for.

If you have any questions about the crisis management of the UAS Grisons, or if you experience any symptoms etc., you can contact us around the clock by e-mail or telephone: notfall@fhgr.ch, +41 79 565 17 14. Updated information is also available on our website: fhgr.ch/en/coronavirus. Here you will also find an organization chart of the crisis management team.

Unfortunately, cyber criminals are trying to take advantage of the current situation. Under no circumstances should you click on links/charts in e-mails like the one from John Hopkins University. Secure information from this leading institution is available directly on their website, which you can access securely via browser input.

Importance of the extraordinary situation for students

Since yesterday, Monday, 16.3.2020, the distance learning program at the UAS Grisons has been running. We are continuously developing our distance learning offer towards interactive formats. Some of you are already experiencing such forms, in other study programmes the roll-out is still running. Either way, I would like to thank you very much for your positive attitude towards this teaching and learning format and for your commitment. I would also like to thank you for your understanding for any teething troubles the systems might still have. As already mentioned at the beginning, we are trying to stick to your study plan. At the moment, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to keep to the examination time exactly as planned, but the aim is to be able to carry it out with an extension of a maximum of one to two weeks. You will be kept up to date on this by your study director.

Due to the new regulations of the Swiss Confederation and the Canton of Grisons, we are unfortunately unable to grant you free access to our buildings with immediate effect. Should you need access for any reason (e.g. to inspect examinations), this will only be possible with prior organisation and the respective contact person. In addition to the course of studies, for which the director of studies and the respective administration are still your first contact person, the other services of the UAS Grisons are available to you virtually from Monday to Friday. Please find below the details:

Administration

Phone: +41 81 286 24 24

e-mail: info@fhgr.ch

Virtual opening hours: 07:45-12:00 / 13.30-17.00

Library

Phone: +41 81 286 24 33 / +41 81 286 39 37

e-mail: bibliothek@fhgr.ch

Virtual opening hours: 09:00 - 12:00 / 14:00 - 16:00

IT

e-mail: support@fhgr.ch

Virtual opening hours: 07.45-17.15

Career Center

Phone: +41 81 286 39 75

e-mail: careercenter@fhgr.ch

Virtual opening hours: 8.00-12.00

Internal advisory office

Phone: +41 81 286 39 75

e-mail: beratung@fhgr.ch

Virtual opening hours: 08.00-12.00

International Office

Phone: +41 81 286 24 29

E-mail: international@fhgr.ch

Virtual opening hours: 08.30 - 12.00

Together with other educational institutions in Chur, the Canton of Grisons is currently investigating to what extent and under what conditions you can be granted access to laboratories, etc. We will inform you as soon as we know more.

Significance of the extraordinary situation for student supporters, lecturers, lecturers, study administrators

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to my colleagues who are involved in training and further education for the successful and seamless transition to distance learning yesterday. I am also particularly pleased that some of you are already in the next phase of distance learning. Now it is important that we can roll out the distance learning operation at the UAS Grisons in its full breadth in the coming days and that you take advantage of the support offered for this step. The successful implementation of the virtual UAS Grisons is also a measure to ensure the acquisition success with new students. But also outside of virtual teaching, it is central that we do not let up in the recruitment of future new students! Your first contact person is still the director of studies. In addition, the Blended Learning Center will be happy to assist you in implementing the «virtual UAS Grisons». The corresponding task force leader, Martin Studer, can of course also be contacted.

From March 19, 2020, student supporters will assist in ensuring and further developing the study operation in distance learning. Their tasks include active support for lecturers in conducting teaching units, feedback to lecturers after teaching units and support in interactive video conferencing forms. Detailed information will be available in the student support section of the Moodle course «Virtuelle FH Graubünden».

Significance of the extraordinary situation for researchers

At the media conference of the Canton of Grisons last Friday, Cantonal Councillor Dr. Jon Domenic Parolini emphasised that research in our canton is continuing. Accordingly all researching colleagues are encouraged to continue working on their projects and to keep in touch with project partners online. In addition, the acquisition of new projects is to be further promoted. Success here is also vital, because we think about the future even during this crisis. Our creativity is also in demand here! The first contact persons are the heads of the respective institutes and Josef Walker as Head of Research.

Importance of the extraordinary situation for all employees

In principle, the UAS Grisons follows the work guidelines of the cantonal administration of Grisons. In support of this, the preventive recommendations of the federal government, in particular «social distancing», are implemented. In concrete terms, this means for all colleagues that tasks should be carried out from home, as far as possible. In case of doubt, contact your supervisor who also decides whether attendance is necessary for operational reasons. You have been informed of the details of your work programme by your supervisors in the past couple of days.

In the home office, the following availability must be guaranteed:

- On working days between 08.30 and 18.30 with a response time of two hours (for part-time employees depending on the working days specified).
- On Saturday and Sunday, once a day, at the latest by 19.00 hrs.

In this way we can ensure that we can respond in a timely manner if changes at short notice are stipulated by the canton or federal government. Please divert your office telephone number to your mobile phone. This is also possible from your home office, instructions are available in the IT section of the intranet. At the moment, our administrative colleagues are still having great difficulty contacting all employees, as these redirections have not yet been implemented across the board.

The focus is on the health of all employees and people in the same household. Should a colleague fall ill despite the preventive measures taken, their protection and the maintenance of the university's operations have top priority. Measures must always be determined on a case-by-case basis and cannot be decided in advance by means of a set of rules. In such a case, the crisis team and the respective superior must be contacted.

In the event of illness, a medical certificate is only to be submitted after five days. If your child falls ill in the current situation, three days of paid leave are available to organise care. The same rule applies if the child's school is closed and care needs to be arranged. If you have any questions regarding employment law, please contact the personnel department: personal@fhgr.ch.

As mentioned at the beginning, Switzerland is in an exceptional situation. In such times, work is carried out with the aim of functioning, for which the objectives of the community are central. This principle also applies to paid holiday. Holidays are important for maintaining health, and especially in times of crisis we need moments of relaxation with our loved ones. We all can now be creative when planning our holidays by spending them in a different form than travelling. Holidays that have already been planned are to be taken unless you are informed otherwise by your manager.

I'll zoom out once more a little from this detailed information. Without doubt we are in a crisis situation. But as an agile university, we also see the opportunities that arise from this, especially with regard to the development of the virtual UAS Grisons. We are there for you - at a distance, but virtually personal.

I look forward to staying in contact with you and wish you a successful spring semester, both in your studies and in research and further work. Stay healthy!

Your Jürg Kessler
Head of Coronavirus Crisis Team