

February 6, 2020

Update: handling of the Corona Virus

The World Health Organization (WHO) last week declared a health emergency of international proportions in connection with the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The aim of this measure is to slow down the transmission rate and prevent a global pandemic. To date, no cases of disease have been detected in Switzerland, but it is possible that cases will occur in Switzerland as well, since the risk is considered high. The Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) provides regular information on its website on the current status both internationally and nationally. The WHO has not yet imposed any travel restrictions, the FOPH advises against travelling to Hubei Province in China, and the Federal Office recommends certain precautionary measures for the other regions of China (see summary below).

The novel Coronavirus

According to the FOPH website, flu-like symptoms occur at the beginning of a coronavirus disease. This is usually followed by respiratory symptoms. If the course of the disease is mild, these symptoms persist for several days until the patient has recovered. If the course of the disease is severe, shortness of breath, and the infestation of other organs may occur after about a week. To date, it is mainly older people who are affected by a severe course of the disease. In the coming days or weeks, more clarity is expected on the mortality rate and the course of the coronavirus epidemic.

The FOPH recommends the following precautionary measures:

- Avoid people with an acute respiratory disease if possible.
- Avoid large gatherings of people if possible.
- Use hygiene measures: wash your hands regularly with soap and water, avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes, sneeze or cough in the crook of your arm, or use a handkerchief.
- If symptoms of illness occur, do not go out in public and contact a doctor or medical institution immediately by telephone.

Measures of the FH Graubünden

As a precautionary measure, the University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons has activated the emergency management as a result of the new coronavirus. Due to the situation, Anne-Marie Jäger and Nicole Massüger from the International Office were asked to join the emergency team for this event. The International Office is in charge of coordinating all information and monitoring current developments. It has been decided that all physical contact to and from mainland China are immediately subject to the approval of the Emergency Team: notfall@fhgr.ch.

Moreover, the following decisions have been taken so far:

FH Graubünden members who have recently been in mainland China:

All students, faculty and staff who have been in mainland China in the past 14 days should spend the following 14 days at home. If any symptoms occur, the emergency management must be informed and contact will be made by telephone with the doctor and the FOPH hotline (058 463 00 00, 8-18 hrs).

Teaching assignments at the partner university SUES in Shanghai:

SUES in Shanghai has postponed the start of the spring semester and urges all members of the university to stay off campus. SUES will remain closed until the end of February. For the FHGR lecturers this means that the February teaching assignment in Shanghai has been postponed and further assignments will be decided on continuously by the emergency management team.

Exchange students at the FH Graubünden:

Students who spend an exchange semester at the FH Graubünden in the spring semester will be specifically informed by the International Office about precautionary measures and possible dangers. No students from China are expected at the FH Graubünden this spring semester.

SUES students at the FH Graubünden:

The SUES students currently at the FH Graubünden were advised against travelling to China and receiving family and friends from China until further notice. The students affected have reacted with understanding to these precautionary measures.

Exchange students from the FH Graubünden:

FH Graubünden students who are going on an exchange semester in the spring semester will be specifically advised by the International Office of precautionary measures and possible dangers.

Study trip to Shanghai:

A (voluntary) study trip to Shanghai for FH Graubünden students is planned for the second time at the end of August. The decision if the study trip will go ahead will be made in consultation with the organizing lecturer.

In view of the seasonal influenza, it is advisable to follow special hygiene measures, regardless of the coronavirus.