

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear employees / students / external associates and visitors of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering,

In accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the University of Ljubljana, a coordination team has been set up at the University of Ljubljana, which has prepared an action plan for ensuring continuous work. During the coronavirus epidemic (SARS-CoV-2). In addition to constantly updating the plan, the team will also coordinate activities and dissemination of information during the implementation of preventive tasks and the possible occurrence of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

First of all, we would like to emphasize that, given the current epidemiological situation, the work at the faculty is proceeding smoothly according to the established schedule. Therefore, we first and foremost ask all of you to remain calm. In response to the situation, the Faculty has set up an expert coordination team, which is responsible for preparing the Plan for ensuring continuous work at the Faculty, its implementation and, alongside providing constant updates to the plan, the coordination of activities during the occurrence of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Due to the changing situation, all activities will be constantly monitored and coordinated both within the University and with key institutions in the country. Appropriate treatment will be provided for employees and students in the event of a proven risk of infection. We will inform you of any changes in the workflow. Protocols of operation are also being prepared and will be provided to you as soon as possible. Until further notice, work at the Faculty and professional bases is taking place uninterruptedly, of course, alongside more intensive implementation of preventive measures.

At this point, we would like to reiterate the key preventive measures communicated to the public by the NIPH (<https://www.nijz.si/en/prevention-of-compact-with-virus-sars-cov-2019>), the World Health Organization – WHO (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – ECDC (<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china/questions-answers>).

The key preventive measures include:

- Avoiding close contact with people who show signs of illness;
- Compliance with cough hygiene;
- Consistent implementation of hand hygiene (in particular, washing hands and observing the principle of non-contact);
- If water and soap are not available, a dedicated hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol may be used instead;
- Avoiding enclosed public spaces with many people;
- Anyone showing signs of illness should stay home and avoid contact with people and first inform their medical doctor about the symptoms by telephone; based on your specific case, your GP or other healthcare worker will give you instructions on what to do next.

We urge you to continue to follow the NIJZ instructions (<https://www.nijz.si/en/koronavirus-2019-ncov>) and respond to them appropriately.

For any work- or study-related questions, please send an e-mail to dekanat@ntf.uni-lj.si, and for other, more specific questions, please visit the NIJZ website or use their contact points (call **031 646 617** every day **between 9 am and 5pm**).

Based on an analysis of potential complications, we provide some additional guidance for various situations and additional explanations (see attachment):

- Instructions for employees returning from abroad;
- Recommendations for employees planning a trip abroad;
- Instructions for students returning from abroad;
- A notification to employees receiving guests from abroad;
- Instructions for teaching staff on how to act if a student with severe symptoms (fever, cough, respiratory distress, etc.) joins the class;
- Instructions for cleaning the faculty's premises;
- Instructions for airing the rooms;
- Clarification regarding the use of hand sanitisers.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to share them with us.

Recommendations for employees planning a trip abroad (either on business or privately)

Dear employees,

You are currently advised not to travel to areas with a known presence of the coronavirus. This refers especially to areas highlighted on the NIJZ website, which is being regularly updated. You can follow the information on any new global infection hotspots on the NIJZ website (<https://www.nijz.si/sl/pojav-novega-koronavirusa-2019-ncov>). It is up to each individual to decide whether it makes sense to travel to other destinations outside the currently known hotspots.

If you decide to travel abroad, take the following precautionary measures:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- If soap and water are not available, use a dedicated hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Air your rooms regularly.
- Avoid events with large numbers of people.
- Avoid close contact with sick people. Close contact means contact with individuals seated in two adjacent seats next to the patient in all directions (left or right of the patient, in front of or behind the patient).
- The same applies to airports and planes.

If, during your stay abroad, a large number of new COVID-19 infections are confirmed in the area, follow the "Recommendations for employees returning from abroad" when returning home.

Notification to employees receiving guests from abroad

Dear employees,

In accordance with the guidelines on self-isolation provided by NIJZ, we provide instructions for receiving guests from abroad.

Given the emergence of the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) around the globe, as well as in Slovenia's immediate vicinity, we ask you to continue to announce all guests from abroad (teachers, researchers, students) in a timely manner.

Please email the following information to dekanat@ntf.uni-lj.si at least one week before the scheduled visit:

- Full name of the person,
- Town, country and institution the person comes from,
- How long the person plans to stay in Slovenia,
- Purpose of the visit (lectures, research, who the person will be in contact with at the Faculty, etc.),
- The person's email address.

All guests will receive an email from the Dean's Office containing key information and guidance regarding the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

If they come from areas with known outbreaks of the coronavirus (see the NIJZ website), even if they do not show signs of infection, they must go into a **fourteen-day self-isolation** when arriving in Slovenia if **they work in a clinical setting or come in contact with risk groups at work** (see instructions for employees returning from abroad). For this reason, we do not recommend such visits until further notice. In such cases, the host should decide whether it is reasonable or necessary to receive a guest from abroad.

However, if the guest is only involved in teaching or research **at the Faculty**, there is **currently no reason for self-isolation** if the **person is not feeling sick**. These individuals may work normally with other staff members and do not require self-isolation. Nonetheless, it is recommended that people coming from areas with greater incidence of SARS-CoV-2-related illnesses **carry out all preventive measures with especially great care** (especially hand hygiene, cough hygiene and close monitoring of any changes in their health status). In the event of any changes in their health status, they should consult a doctor immediately. In addition, during the visit of your guest we ask you to immediately notify the HR Office of any health problems on the part of your visitor, changes to their planned length of stay, and any other relevant details.

Instructions for employees returning from abroad

Dear employees,

Based on the revised NIJZ guidelines on **self-isolation**, we provide guidance for employees (travellers) coming from locations with a high incidence of COVID-19. You can follow the information on any new global infection hotspots on the NIJZ website (<https://www.nijz.si/sl/pojav-novega-koronavirusa-2019-ncov>).

As the current epidemiological situation in Slovenia does not call for extraordinary measures, no special restrictions on daily activities are in place, neither in the work environment nor in everyday life. This also applies to people coming from areas where the new coronavirus is emerging (a list of infection hotspots is available on the NIJZ website) and who do not feel sick. No special measures are in place for such individuals. These people may work normally with other staff members and do not require self-isolation at home. However, it is recommended that such people carry out all preventive measures with especially great care (especially hand hygiene, cough hygiene and close monitoring of any changes in their health status). In the event of any changes in their health status, they should consult their doctor immediately.

Based on the NIJZ position presented above, all of you can return to your work environment as soon as you return home from your travels.

However, the University of Ljubljana Special Coordination Team has decided that THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO those who work directly with patients or others who are more likely to have a serious course of illness (e.g., residents at special institutions, retirement homes, etc.). Self-isolation is recommended for these individuals.

All of you who have been in areas with high COVID-19 incidence over the past two weeks, or have been in contact with people from these areas or suspect you may be infected with SARS-CoV-2, please follow the following instructions:

- Do not teach any classes or perform other activities in a clinical setting (or work in an institution where you may come in contact with any of the risk groups) for the next fourteen days, regardless of your medical condition;
- Please notify your superior and the Faculty HR Office, which will record your absence accordingly;
- If you experience symptoms of coronavirus infection (fever, cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties) during this period, please inform your GP medical doctor by phone or email; in this case you must also remove yourself from the work environment at the Faculty;
- Do not go to a health centre or clinic unannounced in order to avoid infecting others. The health service has been informed of the necessary measures and is well prepared for cases of suspected coronavirus infection. Follow the guidance of healthcare professionals.
- If you do not get ill during the fourteen-day period, you can go back to work at the end of it;
- In addition to these instructions for performing work in a clinical setting, also follow all the instructions provided by the institution where you are involved in the work process.

Instructions for teaching staff on how to act if a student with severe symptoms (fever, cough, respiratory distress, etc.) joins the class

Dear employees,

If a student with fever and other associated symptoms joins the lectures or other classes, you should remind them of the responsibility of each individual to go into self-isolation. Such a student should immediately leave the class and, in accordance with the NIJZ instructions, consult their GP medical doctor (by phone) to obtain further instructions.

It is also important that all employees go into self-isolation if there are reasons for it, report their absence to the Faculty HR Office and contact their GP medical doctor (by phone) for further instructions.

If you show any sign of illness, you should stay at home and avoid contact with others. You should first inform your GP medical doctor about your symptoms by phone; based on your specific case, your GP medical doctor or other healthcare worker will then give you instructions on what to do next.

Instructions for students returning from abroad (student exchange programmes or private trips)

Dear students,

Based on the revised NIJZ guidelines on **self-isolation**, we provide guidance for students (travellers) coming from locations with a high incidence of coronavirus. Follow the information on the global infection hotspots on the NIJZ website (<https://www.nijz.si/sl/pojav-novega-koronavirusa-2019-ncov>).

As the current epidemiological situation in Slovenia does not call for extraordinary measures, no special restrictions on daily activities are in place, neither in the work environment nor in everyday life. No special measures are therefore required for any people coming from areas where the new coronavirus is emerging (a list of hotspots is available on the NIJZ website) and who do not feel sick. These people may work normally with other staff members and do not require self-isolation at home. However, it is recommended that these people carry out all preventive measures with especially great care (especially hand hygiene, cough hygiene and close monitoring of any changes in their health status). We especially urge all of you to respond immediately in the event of any changes in your state of health, and to stop your work at the Faculty, as this will greatly help to curb the spread of the virus. In agreement with your teacher and your year tutor, you will be able to make up for any missing laboratory or practical classes at the earliest possible date, so your studies (and consequently advancement to the next year) will not be jeopardised by self-isolation.

Based on the NIJZ position presented above, all of you can return to the academic environment at the faculties as soon as you return home from your travels.

However, the University of Ljubljana Special Coordination Team has decided that THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO students who participate in clinical training carried out directly with patients or other persons who are more likely to have a serious course of illness (e.g., residents at special institutions, retirement homes, etc.). Self-isolation is recommended for these students.

All of you who have been in areas with high COVID-19 incidence over the past two weeks, or have been in contact with people from these areas or suspect you may be infected with SARS-CoV-2, please follow the following instructions:

- Do not attend any classes or other activities in a clinical setting (or work in an institution where you may come in contact with any of the risk groups) for the next fourteen days, regardless of your medical condition;
- Immediately inform your year tutor and the Students Office at the Faculty, who will record your absence accordingly;
- If you experience symptoms of coronavirus infection (fever, cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties) during this period, please inform your GP medical doctor by phone or email; in this case you must also remove yourself from the academic environment at the Faculty; do not go to the health centre or clinic unannounced in order to avoid infecting others. The health service has been informed of the necessary measures and is well prepared for cases of suspected coronavirus infection. Follow the guidance of healthcare professionals.

If you do not get ill during the fourteen-day period, you can return to your clinical training;

- In addition to these instructions for performing work in a clinical setting, also follow all the instructions provided by the institution where you are involved in the work process;
- If you are absent from any mandatory classes during your time away, then immediately after completing the fourteen-day self-isolation please contact your teacher and your tutor to coordinate the missing obligations and set new dates for the classes.

Clarification regarding the use of hand sanitisers

With regard to installing hand sanitisers at the entrance to the Faculty and their use, we would like to reiterate that in the current situation, washing hands has absolute priority over using hand sanitisers. The Faculty is not a clinical setting, and also has properly equipped toilets, which are easily accessible to all. The official position of the medical profession is that, in the case of SARS-CoV-2, sanitisers are defined as an additional option, especially where and when, due to technical barriers, access to soap and water is not possible, and handwashing has priority over hand sanitisers.

Hand sanitisers in dispensers along with additional pictorial and explanatory material are placed at the entrance to the Faculty, , so that an individual may disinfect his or her hands upon entering the building and thus in some way make a barrier between the external environment and the one in the Faculty. While at the Faculty, we encourage employees and students to wash their hands often and whenever necessary.

The widespread use of hand sanitisers produces more negative outcomes than positives. The use of a hand sanitiser often gives rise to a false impression of safety, whereby an individual may neglect to wash their hands and the principle of non-contact. Furthermore, the choice of appropriate hand sanitisers, their rotation, as well as the correct disinfection technique are very important to prevent the onset of resistance. The use of hand sanitisers also represents an additional financial burden and impacts the environment.

When using hand sanitisers, the hands must be disinfected in accordance with professional guidelines. Disinfection only works if the hands are well-groomed (nails cut short, no artificial nails, no nail polish, no jewellery) and clean. Hands have to be washed and well-dried before using a hand sanitiser. However, because hand sanitisers do not remove dirt, we only use them on hands that are not visibly dirty. If your hands are dirty, the sanitiser may bind to the dirt and, as a result, is no longer (or less) effective at removing microorganisms. An additional danger may arise if users begin to abandon the other hygiene measures, such as washing their hands first and following the non-contact rule, because of a false sense of safety arising from the use of hand sanitisers.

We think it is right that the University and all its employees, through our conduct, set an example in the case of COVID-19 to all our other citizens and convey true and useful information.

With the help of NIJZ information, we keep abreast of the epidemiological situation in Slovenia and elsewhere, as well as all professional advice; in the event of changed circumstances, the UL FNSE will respond appropriately and keep all its staff informed.

Airing rooms

Dear users of premises at the UL FNSE, In the light of containing and preventing the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, we would like to remind you again of the importance of airing rooms frequently and efficiently.

Airing rooms is an important measure for reducing the number of microorganisms in the air, in addition to bringing fresh air into the room and releasing the spent air with elevated concentrations of CO₂, humidity, and microorganisms, as well as a higher temperature. In the current epidemiological situation, too, basic preventative measures, such as airing rooms, are crucial to prevent the spread of disease.

Therefore, each employee should ensure that the premises are regularly aired by opening the windows wide for 3 to 5 min at least before the start of individual classes. You should also air the rooms during breaks. All offices should also be regularly aired.