Decision regarding adapting work place activities during the autumn semester of 2020 for the purpose of preventing the spread of covid-19

The President brings attention to and adopts the following regarding the work place of the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) for the autumn semester of 2020, in relation to the directive from the government concerning the possibility for universities and colleges to return to on-campus operations starting 15th June 2020. The decision is valid through 15th January 2021, at the latest. Changes may have to be made during this time in response to information and recommendations from the government or other government agencies.

As an employer, KTH has a responsibility to prevent risks and deficiencies in the work environment and within this framework, take active measures to prevent the spread of covid-19. Employees and students are obliged to take the personal responsibility necessary in order to prevent the spread of infection by following government bodies’ regulations, general advice and recommendations as well as the local regulations at KTH, thereby contributing to an orderly and safe work environment.

KTH will utilise the experiences gained from using remote and digital solutions and will incorporate successful examples of this into university processes.

Decision

KTH will reopen for on-campus operations for the autumn semester 2020, meaning that physical presence will, in many cases, be required. Activities and operations will be planned so as to avoid close physical contact and crowding.

There will be coordination around the use of common premises and general spaces where employees from several organizational units gather at the same time. Support and services will be adapted accordingly.

Starting 1st August 2020, employees can, in agreement with their line manager, work remotely if and when their work tasks so permit. Careful planning is required by the responsible manager to avoid crowding.

Physical meetings that gather larger groups of people (conferences, events etc.) shall be replaced with digital meetings or gatherings in smaller groups.

Work trips shall continue to be avoided. In the extent that they are still carried out, they shall be executed in line with the recommendations from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Actions to prevent the spread of infection and risks in the work place are executed in accordance with the delegation and distribution of work environment tasks. The responsibility for risk assessment in different aspects shall be done in each respective part of the organisation. This requires responsible leadership and management as well as responsible employeeship on all levels.
Organisational preparedness is necessary to manage new conditions according to potentially changed directives from KTH or responsible public bodies.

The Director of Personnel at KTH is tasked with providing support and guidance to managers, employees and safety representatives in issues regarding work environment in connection to actions to prevent the spread of covid-19. Continuous guidance is provided on the Intranet’s pages dedicated to covid-19.

The matter at hand

In response to the corona pandemic and the spread of covid-19, the government has decided that all education and examination shall be held remotely starting on 18th March 2020.

The President of KTH has thereafter decided that all education for the rest of the spring semester 2020 shall be held remotely, dnr V-2020-0273. Furthermore, all examinations during the spring semester, as well as the re-examination period in August 2020, shall be held remotely.

The government has on 2020-05-29 informed that universities and colleges can return to on-campus education. The government’s information is in force until further notice, but the government is prepared to take action if the situation changes.

The President of KTH has made a decision for the operations and activities during the autumn semester of 2020, dnr V-2020-0410. The decision is valid through 15th January 2021. KTH will be open for on-campus education in the autumn semester 2020 and will gradually give students access to KTH’s facilities starting on Saturday 1st August 2020.

This decision has been made by President Sigbritt Karlsson after having been presented by Director of Personnel Annica Fröberg. The decision has been prepared through discussions in the Head of School Council on the 9th June 2020. The Deputy President, the Dean of faculty, the Deputy Dean of Faculty, the Vice presidents, the Administrative managers and the GVS’ Department managers have been given the opportunity to voice their opinions on the draft decision. Cooperation has been facilitated with the Centrala Union Collaboration Group on the 11th of June 2020, ahead of the decision. Present at the decision were Deputy President Mikael Östling, University Director Kerstin Jacobsson, THS President Elisabet Lökvist, THS President-elect (starting 1st July) Charley Jönsson and Management Secretary Eva Fredriksson.

Royal Institute of Technology

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Sigbritt Karlsson, President              Annica Fröberg, Director of Personnel

Appendix 1: High-profile risks related to the distribution of study environment data
List of recipients

For action: Heads of School skolchef-lista@kth.se, Administrative managers admchef-lista@kth.se, GVS' Department managers gvs-lg@kth.se,

Copy: Vice presidents vicerektorer@kth.se, THS ordf@ths.kth.se

Date processed: ____________
Appendix (2020 -06-16 dnr V-2020-0450 1.1)

Observed risk regarding the division of study environment tasks.

Introduction and reference to legal text:

Those who carry out education are seen as employees according to the Work Environment Act (SFS 1977:1160). According to the Swedish Work Environment Authority’s provision AFS 2001:1 an employer shall conduct a distribution of work environment tasks (including pre-emptive tasks to prevent risks in the work environment) as well as to distribute study environment tasks (including pre-emptive tasks to prevent risks in the study environment).

Steering documents and a description of how KTH organises the work environment work and study environment work is available on the Intranet:

Tasks in the systematic work environment work (risk inventory, risk evaluation, actions and follow-up on work environment and study environment) is distributed from the President to the Head of School.

https://intra.kth.se/en/anstallning/arbetsmiljo/kth-s-arbetsmiljo-1.383233

https://intra.kth.se/en/anstallning/arbetsmiljo/fordelning-av-arbetsmiljouppgifter-1.490917

The process for distribution of work environment tasks is described on the Intranet:

President --> Heads of School --> Department managers/Heads of Department/Administrative managers --> Heads of Division/Group managers/equivalent

Support is available from the cooperation with employees, the Schools’ HR-organisation, Human Resources/University Administration, safety representatives and head safety representatives, experts at the occupational health services.

Particular risks to pay attention to

The distribution of study environment tasks isn’t as clear and communicated within KTH. It is up to each Head of School to distribute study environment tasks. The estimate is that it varies, according to previous accounts that have been raised in dialogue. Some programs are organised beneath the Head of Department and in that case Program Directors report directly to the Head of Department. Other programs are organised centrally at the school and in that case Program Directors report to their Head of School.

How do we manage this today when it is especially current to prevent risks in the study environment? Should the distribution of study environment tasks uniformly follow the distribution of work environment tasks? Or do local adaptations work when it is of importance to prevent risks within education?

Uniformity, if it is wanted within KTH, could look like this:

President --> Head of School --> Director of First and Second Cycle Education --> Program Director --> Course responsible --> Component responsible, when needed

Support is available from the Schools’ Offices of Student Affairs, the Education Office/Student’s Office (University Administration), student safety representatives, THS, experts at the student health care services.
If uniformity isn’t wanted or deemed to be feasible currently, or if it is thought to be functional to distribute study environment tasks in more than one way, attention is needed to the potential risk of ambiguity regarding who it is that shall prevent risks in the study environment and take suitable action to diminish the spread of covid-19.