Directive on Adapted On-Site Operations¹ (Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2) dated 30 June 2020, valid from 6 July 2020.

1. Purpose of the Directive

In Resolution No. 300/2020, the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich set out legal measures for employees during the extraordinary situation in Switzerland. Resolution No. 415/2020 updated and replaced these measures. On 19 June 2020, the Federal Council downgraded the situation from extraordinary to special.


Due to the current epidemiological situation, the changes in federal legislation as of 22 June 2020 and the adapted recommendations issued by the FOPH, the regulations previously issued by the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich were revoked with RRB 669/2020 dated 1 July 2020.

Since this concerns substantive personnel law enacted by the Government Council, these rules must be implemented within UZH (hereinafter: “employer”).

In a resolution of 30 June respectively 1 July 2020, the Executive Board of the University has therefore implemented the rules in the form of the following directive. It replaces the previous Directive on Working from Home and Transition to Normal Operations dated 28 April 2020 as well as the Directive on Staff at UZH with Children Requiring Care dated 28 April 2020, by 6 July 2020 which are thus revoked in full. The regular provisions of personnel and employment law once again apply, subject to the provisions listed in this directive.

2. Validity of the Directive

This directive is valid for the current special situation and remains in effect until further notice. The employer will regularly evaluate the directive. If necessary, the directive can be extended via e-mail.

3. Place of Work at UZH

In principle, members of UZH must now work at their workplaces.

Employees must observe and apply the hygiene and safety rules of the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) at all times².

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¹ Definition of “adapted on-site operations”: Normal operations with strict adherence to FOPH guidelines, including those on social distancing.
UZH will put the appropriate organizational and technical measures into place to ensure that federal government regulations on hygiene and social distancing can be observed. If the recommended social distancing rules cannot be observed, line managers must take measures in accordance with the STOP principle and in the relevant order (substitution, technical measures, organizational measures, personal protective measures). Specifically, these measures include working from home, physical separation, separating teams, or the use of face masks. Measures resulting in additional costs must only be taken if no other suitable measures are available. If the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is required for professional reasons and ordered by line managers, such equipment will be provided by UZH.

If social distancing rules cannot be observed at the workplace and working from home is a temporary organizational solution, line managers will assess and decide on how and how long the option to work from home can be applied. For the rules regarding working from home during the special situation, refer to section 6 of this directive.

4. Working Hours

In the interest of finding a solution that is suited to the circumstances, the decision to offset or remunerate previous overtime resulting from the extraordinary situation is governed by the general provisions of cantonal employment law (§ 126 et seq. VVO).

For reasons of practicability, working hours carried out for other UZH organizational units will not be offset internally, subject to other agreements between the units involved.

5. Procedure for Symptoms of Illness4 and Employee Obligation to Provide Information

Employees who display symptoms of illness5 must inform their line managers immediately and contact either their family doctor or the canton’s medical hotline (0800 33 66 55) in order to discuss the next steps. Employees must immediately inform their line managers of illnesses and accidents as usual. If an employee is unable to work for more than one week, they must also submit a doctor’s note as usual.6 In order to ensure that UZH can effectively fulfill its obligations for protecting the health of its staff, employees are obligated7 to inform their employer/line manager immediately if they have a concrete suspicion of coronavirus infection with symptoms as described by the FOPH, in particular

1. being personally infected with coronavirus
2. having contact with infected persons
3. travel in high-risk areas8 that was not pre-approved by UZH.

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6 § 100 VVO.
7 Based on an employee’s duties toward their employer as set out in § 49 of the Employment Act dated 27 September 1998 (LS 177.10), employees have certain obligations to provide information, and this also relates to coronavirus. The employer requires this information in order to fulfill its duty to protect the lives and health of its staff with appropriate measures. This obligation of an employer toward its employees is anchored in § 39 of the Employment Act and outweighs the personality rights of the employee(s) concerned.
8 As defined by the Covid-19-Verordnung Massnahmen im Bereich des internationalen Personenverkehrs (German only).
For cases 1-2, employees are to leave their place of work and the UZH premises without being asked by their line manager. They should then immediately go into self-quarantine (working from home; see section 6 of this directive). Any information provided by the employee will be used exclusively for the protection of other employees’ health and to avoid additional risk factors. Line managers will ensure that employees are aware of their obligation to provide information and informed about how said information will be used.

6. Additional Special Rules for Working From Home

Working Hours when Working from Home
Employees should only work additional hours after coming to an agreement with their line manager.

No bonuses will be paid for work done from home (with the usual exceptions of on-call duty and mandatory overtime).

During the home office period, employees should be reachable via telephone and e-mail during normal working hours.

Employees who are required to record their working hours must do so in the usual manner using the employee time sheet provided by Human Resources. Employees must submit a completed time sheet (final version) to their line manager at the end of each month. The line manager is to reply to the e-mail with a formal confirmation. Line managers may also request time sheets on a weekly basis.

Work Equipment and Costs
Whenever possible, work equipment already made available by UZH should be used for working from home.

Creating additional operating costs during this period should be avoided if possible. Employees are obligated to keep these costs to an absolute minimum and must discuss any potential costs with their line managers before they occur. Expenses that are not necessary for carrying out work must be borne by the employee.

Employees will be reimbursed for any work-related costs that do occur, provided they submit an original receipt. These costs will be paid out via an expense account after the conclusion of the home office period.

Security and Use of Telephones
All devices used in an employee’s home office are password protected. Business data and backups are to be accessed/made via the UZH server.

Employees must make sure that all files and devices are secure, both when transporting them and using them at home. All files and devices must be protected from unauthorized access and theft.

If possible, UZH office landlines will be forwarded internally or to an office voicemail that informs callers about said office’s availability/contact details. The latter applies in particular to employees who have client contact. Forwarding calls to private (mobile) phones should be avoided if possible.