



Directive on Working from Home (Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2) (dated 13 January 2021)

1. Purpose of the Directive

In accordance with the Executive Board's decision of 12 January 2021, UZH (hereinafter: employer) is directing its employees to work from home as a matter of principle. This directive has been issued to ensure the greatest level of employee protection during the exceptional situation that has arisen due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. This directive replaces the Directive on Adapted On-Site Operations dated 20 October 2020 effective from 18 January 2021.

2. Validity of the Directive

This directive is only valid for the current exceptional 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. Working from Home

Where feasible and where this can be implemented with proportionate effort and expense, employees shall perform their work duties from home.

Where on-site presence is required for operational reasons, work shall be carried out on site if the legal and government/cantonal provisions allow for on-site work. This applies in particular where employee's tasks cannot be carried out remotely (e.g. laboratories, facility management), or minimum on-site presence is essential for maintaining university operations ("key roles").¹

Line managers will observe the regulations below concerning on-site presence in exceptional cases, through which the employer ensures that employees are adequately protected. Employees are required to comply with this instruction to work on site.

Line managers should decide which tasks must continue to be performed on site in exceptional cases after hearing their employee's opinion.

In the event of conflict, line managers who instruct their employees to work on site must do so in writing, providing an explanation and with a copy sent to the head of the relevant department, institute or clinic, or to the head of office of the relevant Central Services unit.

Human Resources must be informed of any conflicts arising from an instruction to work on site. If no agreement can be reached, the head of Human Resources will present the case to the coronavirus pandemic management and coordination group, which will obtain a decision from the Executive Board of the University. This decision will be communicated by Human Resources.

Teaching staff who want to make their courses available as podcasts etc. may come to UZH to do so, provided this is necessary for technical reasons.

¹ In the case of research work, the [additional provisions for research operations](#) must also be observed.



4. Regulations for Working from Home

a. Working Hours

Employees should only work extra 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).

Employees working from home must be reachable during their usual office 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 Resources². 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.

b. Work Equipment and Costs

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

Since the instruction to work from home is a temporary measure, no expenses will be reimbursed to employees who perform their work duties from home based on this directive.

c. Security and Use of Telephones

All devices used in an employee's home office must be 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.

d. Collaboration and Affiliation

Line managers take an active role in shaping the way in which employees work together remotely to sustainably promote the quality of the work performed, team spirit, and the well-being of the employees working from home.³ They also ensure efficient and effective collaboration between employees working from home and those on site at UZH.

5. Regulations for On-Site Presence in Exceptional Cases

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. Employees must observe and apply the hygiene and safety rules of the [Federal Office of Public Health \(FOPH\)](#) at all times.

² Some organizational units use special systems for recording their employees' working hours.

³ See website "[Staying Fit and Healthy Working from Home](#)"



A general obligation to wear a mask applies for all indoor spaces at UZH. A mask must also be worn at the workplace. Employees working indoors are excluded if there is only one person in the room, e.g. in one-person offices.⁴

Line managers will organize the size of their teams, the division of working hours and the ways of working together to ensure that employees are protected to the best possible extent and that adhering to FOPH guidelines is possible on site and during their commute.

Line managers should set up and maintain a shift plan which includes the working days/times for each employee in their area of responsibility. The goal is to minimize the simultaneous on-site presence of employees, in particular through split offices and working from home, and to create transparency for all employees.

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 physical separation, separating teams or the use of face masks.⁵ Safety measures according to the FOPH and cantonal provisions must be observed in full; 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.

Knowledge of and compliance with the basic safety concept and the specific safety concept defined by the heads of the organizational unit must be reviewed and ensured by line managers at all times.

⁴ Employees who can demonstrate that they cannot wear a face mask for special reasons are exempt from the requirement to wear a mask, pursuant to [Art. 3a para. 1 lit. b of the Ordinance on Measures during the Special Situation to Combat the Covid-19 Epidemic](#), cf. (SR818.100.26).

⁵ See Art. [10 of the Ordinance on Measures during the Special Situation to Combat the Covid-19 Epidemic](#) (SR818.101.26) dated 18 December 2020



6. Employees at Especially High Risk

Special safety measures apply for employees who are at especially high risk in accordance with Art. 27a of the Covid-19 Ordinance 3.⁶

7. Assignment of Other Work

Employees should support each other with their work and fill in for other employees when necessary.

Employees may be called upon by their line managers to do work that lies outside of their normal scope of responsibility, including work in other organizational units.⁷ This is considered reasonable in light of the exceptional situation and the need to show solidarity. Being assigned other work can only be considered unreasonable for compelling reasons, for instance excessively high requirements, childcare obligations or inability to reach the place of work. Employees with sufficient workload within their own remit may also be assigned other work if said work is of greater importance to UZH.

The relevant organizational unit is responsible for the assignment of other work.

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.

8. Insufficient Workload and Vacation

If employees are unable to be assigned tasks in accordance with their full workload, and if they are unable to perform their work from home, cantonal provision shall apply with regard to the recording of working hours as well as regarding compensation of extra hours, vacation time taken and any paid leave granted.⁸

Already scheduled vacation time should be taken unless there is work to be done that is necessary to maintain UZH operations. The same applies to unpaid leave that has already been approved.

Any special arrangements concerning the instruction to take or the refusal of vacation time shall be based on cantonal provisions.⁹

9. Working from Abroad

Working for UZH from abroad is not the same as working from home. For periods of one month or more, each case must be evaluated separately with the involvement of Human Resources to clarify the implications regarding social insurances and, if applicable, withholding taxes.¹⁰

People in management positions and those holding key roles should discuss work performed from abroad in advance with their line managers. Professors should get in touch with the relevant dean..

⁶ [Covid-19 Ordinance 3](#) (SR818.101.24).

⁷ [§ 141 Canton of Zurich Implementation Ordinance of the Employment Act \(VVO\)](#) dated 19 May 1999 (LS 177.111).

⁸ [Decision by the Executive Board of the University and detail provisions; FAQ for staff](#)

⁹ [Decision by the Executive Board of the University and detail provisions; FAQ for staff](#)

¹⁰ See also the Fact Sheet on [Transnational Social Insurance](#).



10. Work-Related Travel and Stays Abroad

Work-related travel on behalf of UZH is generally permitted if the relevant travel recommendations of the FDFA, the provisions issued by transport companies as well as the general rules of hygiene and social distancing can be observed. Travel on UZH business will continue to be limited to urgent and important trips, which require the approval of the relevant dean or head of Central Services unit.¹¹

11. Procedure for Symptoms of Illness¹² and Employee Obligation to Provide Information

Employees who display symptoms of illness¹³ 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 illness 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.¹⁴

In order to ensure that UZH can effectively fulfill its obligation to protect the health of its staff, employees are obligated¹⁵ 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:

- a. being personally infected with coronavirus
- b. having contact with infected persons
- c. travel in high-risk areas that was not pre-approved by UZH.

For cases a and b, employees are to leave their place of work and UZH premises without being asked by their line manager. They should then immediately go into self-quarantine (work from home). 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.

¹¹ The approval form for work-related travel abroad is available [here](#); the travel recommendations of the FDFA can be found [here](#)

¹² See also [Fact Sheet for UZH Staff: Procedure for COVID-19 Infections](#).

¹³ An up-to-date list of COVID-19 symptoms can be found [here](#).

¹⁴ § 100 VVO.

¹⁵ 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.