Directive on Working from Home and Transition to Normal Operations¹
(Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2)
(dated 28.04.2020)

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 exceptional situation in Switzerland. Resolution No. 415/2020 has now updated and replaced these measures.

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

In a resolution of 28 April 2020, the Executive Board of the University has therefore implemented the rules in the form of the following directive. Effective from 20 April 2020, it shall replace the previous Directive on Working from Home dated 27 March 2020.

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. Place of Work at UZH

Until further notice, UZH employees shall either work from home or on-site as part of a step-by-step transition to normal operations. Line managers will assess and decide which jobs will continue to be done from home and which should be done on-site.

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 are obliged to observe and apply the hygiene regulations of the Federal Office of Public Health FOPH at all times.

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.

4. Working Hours

The heads of the departments, institutes and clinics as well as the heads of the Central Services units can approve the recording of working hours that fall outside of the normal daily hours (6:00 a.m. to

¹ Definition of “normal operations”: On-site presence with strict adherence to FOPH guidelines, including those on social distancing.
8:00 p.m.). However, this extension only applies to the period between 5:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. This extension applies to all employees of the relevant organizational unit.

Individual decisions regarding how much overtime must be or may be performed are the responsibility of the relevant organizational unit. During the exceptional situation, line managers may require or approve employee overtime of more than 20 hours per calendar month. In doing so they will pay attention to achieving appropriate workload distribution within their area of responsibility (see also Section 5).

5. Procedure for Employees with Insufficient Workload

Employees who are unable to be assigned tasks in accordance with their full workload (either inside or outside their remit) and employees who are unable to perform their work from home will have their missing hours balanced by using their working time credit starting from 20 April 2020. The working time credit will be reduced in the following order: Overtime hours, surplus hours\(^2\), vacation allowance up to and including 2019. This use of overtime and surplus hours applies to staff who are required to record their working hours or who do so voluntarily.

If employees still have no or insufficient work after completely reducing their working time credit as described above, they will be paid their full salary until further notice.\(^3\)

The previous sentence also applies to employees paid on an hourly basis.\(^4\)

This section also applies in full to persons at high risk as defined by the COVID-19 Ordinance 2 dated 17 April 2020\(^5\).

6. 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.\(^6\) 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 medical reasons, 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.

7. Procedure for Symptoms of Illness and Employee Obligation to Provide Information

Employees who display symptoms of illness\(^7\) 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.

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\(^2\) The compensation of surplus hours does not take place according to the scheme outlined in § 124 para. 2 VVO, meaning that the maximum amount of permissible compensation days is not affected. § 124 para. 3 VVO does not apply in light of the time reduction measures.

\(^3\) Please refer to the relevant detailed provisions on how to record these working hours.

\(^4\) They will receive their salary based on their predetermined work schedule or the average salary of the last 12 months.

\(^5\) SR 818.101.24.

\(^6\) § 141 Canton of Zurich Implementation Ordinance of the Employment Act (VVO) dated 19 May 1999 (LS 177.111).

\(^7\) An up-to-date list of COVID-19 symptoms can be found at:
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. In order to ensure that UZH can effectively fulfill its obligations for protecting the health of its staff, employees are obligated to inform their employer/line manager immediately if they have a concrete suspicion of coronavirus infection with symptoms of illness as described by the FOPH, in particular:

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

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). 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.

8. Special Rules for Persons at High Risk

Articles 10b and 10c of the COVID-19 Ordinance 2 dated 17 April 2020 shall apply.

9. Vacation

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

The heads of the departments, institutes and clinics as well as the heads of the Central Services units can cancel already scheduled vacation – after consulting with the relevant Human Resources head – if the operational interests of UZH significantly outweigh the personal interests of the employee. However, UZH must pay any damages that may result from cancelled vacations (especially cancellation fees).

The heads of the departments, institutes and clinics as well as the heads of the Central Services units can order their staff to take vacation provided they give one working week of notice. This applies in full to vacation allowances from 2019 and earlier and only proportionally to vacation allowances from 2020.

10. Additional Special Rules for Working From Home


8 § 100 VVO
9 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 the 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.
10 As defined by the FOPH

https://www.admin.ch/opc/search/?text=SR+818.101.24&lang=en&product%5B%5D=cc&product%5B%5D=oc&product%5B%5D=ba&product%5B%5D=fg&product%5B%5D=proccons&product%5B%5D=pubextra&language%5B%5D=en&productAll=all&date_range_min=&date_range_max=&d_compilation=both&d_is_in_force=yes&thesaurus=1

a) 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.

b) 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.

c) Security

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.

d) Telephone Use

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.

e) Misuse

Any misuse of remote working arrangements may lead to disciplinary action.