

Uniform implementation of working time

Information sheet | August 2024

Legal basis

- Ordinance of the ETH Board on personnel in the ETH Domain (PO-ETH), dated 15 March 2001 (in German) ([SR 172.220.113](#))
- Regulations for the recording of working time and absences, dated 13 December 2016 ([RSETHZ 614](#))
- Regulations on shift work of the Security Facility Management SGM section at ETH Zurich (Shift Regulations SGM) dated 1 August 2024 (in German) ([RSETHZ 213.2](#))
- On-call regulations at ETH Zurich, dated 24 September 1996 (in German) ([RSETHZ 213.14](#))

Principles

The standard working hours for full-time employees are 41 hours per week. Working hours for part-time employees are based on the agreed level of employment.

At ETH Zurich, employees conduct their work according to the annual working hours model. If employees work more than the envisaged working hours in times of increased activity, this time is compensated in periods of lower activity. The goal is a balanced working hours total at the end of the year.

In times of unusually high activity, the responsible supervisor may order or approve over-hours or overtime. Over-hours are defined as hours worked in excess of the set weekly number of hours for full-time or part-time employees, but which do not exceed the legal maximum of 45 hours a week. Overtime is defined as time worked in excess of the legal maximum working week of 45 hours. Employees may work a maximum of 170 hours' overtime per year. Over-hours and overtime are to be compensated with equivalent time off.

If there are operational reasons that prohibit balancing over-hours during the current year, personnel regulations allow for 100 hours to be carried over into the following year and 100 hours to be paid out. Any over-hours or overtime exceeding this amount cannot be carried over and will instead expire.

During the year, employees should in principle keep to a maximum time balance of 50 plus hours or 20 minus hours. Within the departments, individual balances may be specified throughout the year within this framework.

If the plus or minus balance differs from the time specified or from the specifications for the relevant division, the employee must inform their supervisor. Together they define measures, such as

binding reduction agreements, to bring the working hours within the range of plus 50 or minus 20 hours.

Management employees at function level 10 and higher perform the working hours defined in PO-ETH. They are exempt from the obligation to record their working hours.

If a management employee records their working hours despite the above-mentioned regulation, they are responsible for compliance with working hours as defined in the principles. If these cannot be adhered to, they must inform their supervisor at an early stage and propose a solution.

Daily working hours

Daily working hours are from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Any other work carried out due to operational requirements is to be determined between supervisor and employee. The regulations for closure of individual buildings are to be observed.

For employees who undertake shift work, the shift work regulations at ETH Zurich apply.

Response times

Response times refers to the time in which employees must be available at their place of work. The individual departments and units may determine and regulate response times according to operational requirements.

Working remotely in Switzerland

ETH Zurich promotes opportunities for working remotely in Switzerland.

This form of flexible working is generally available to all ETH employees, although there is no general entitlement to it. The tasks, working environment and organisation as well as the operational procedures must be appropriate for delivering work from the self-chosen remote workplace (no childcare, guaranteed availability, etc.).

Working remotely in Switzerland requires a verbal or written agreement between the employee and the supervisor and their approval.

Special provisions apply for employees who reside abroad or for working in an international context.

Further information:

- [Working remotely in Switzerland](#)
- [Working in an international context](#)

Holidays and compensation

Holidays are to be taken in the calendar year in which the holiday entitlement arises. Of this, at least two consecutive weeks per year must be taken.

For full-time employees, a maximum of two weeks of holiday time can be carried over into the next year if approved by the supervisor. Carried-over holiday time must be taken by 31 March of the following year.

If the balance has not been reduced by 31 March, the employee must present their supervisor with a binding reduction plan.

The basic principle is that holidays must be taken before over-hours (including overtime) are compensated. Employees are to discuss compensation of over-hours and overtime with their supervisor if a half-day or more is to be compensated at one time. Holidays are not paid out during an ongoing employment relationship. When an employee leaves ETH Zurich, they should try to manage their holiday planning/compensation to avoid a payout for any remaining time balance.

Unpaid absence

Unpaid absence may be approved within the parameters of operational and organisational requirements. The minimum duration of unpaid absence is usually one week, with a maximum of one year. Breaks

Each unit of four hours' work entitles the employee to a 15-minute paid break. This break is intended to interrupt working hours and is not to be taken near the beginning or end of working hours.

Work must be interrupted for at least 30 minutes at lunchtime. This interruption is not defined as part of working hours.

Business trips

A business trip is defined as when an employee performs activities for ETH Zurich outside their usual place of work for professional reasons and with the approval of their supervisor. For domestic business trips, travel time between place of work and destination and the work on-site count as working hours. For foreign business trips, the agreed working hours are recognised.

For each day of travel abroad, employees are to record a normal working day according to their employment contract. No over-hours or overtime arise. However, if the hours worked cannot be compensated by equivalent time off within the year, the hours worked on Sundays and public holidays will be paid with the usual supplements.

Anyone who must travel on a weekend may claim the following for the day of travel in consultation with their supervisor: a half working day for travel within Europe or for departures for travel outside Europe that take place after midday; a whole working day for travel outside Europe for departures that take place before midday.

In view of the communication technologies now available (e.g. Skype, Zoom) and to protect the environment, employees are encouraged to avoid travelling abroad as far as possible.

Short absences

Employees should organise scheduled absences such as doctor's appointments (whether for illness or accident) in their own time or compensate at peak times with flexible working hours.

Scheduled doctor's appointments include annual check-ups, health abnormalities that do not require urgent assessment by a doctor, tests and/or consultation with specialists or in hospital. It also includes therapy prescribed by a doctor (e.g. physiotherapy) for which the timing of treatment can be scheduled. This list is not exhaustive. The annual working hours allow wide scope for such absences, and they therefore do not count as working hours.

Christmas / New Year

ETH Zurich is closed on the days between Christmas and New Year. Holiday days can be used for this working time or the days can be compensated. Depending on operational needs, attendance may be arranged.

Employees at function level 10 and above who do not record working time have the option of compensation or taking holidays within the scope of their working time autonomy. If necessary, they shall arrange the details with their superior.

Loyalty premium / loyalty bonus

Paid leave resulting from loyalty premium must be taken within five years, otherwise it lapses.

Paid leave

Paid, partially paid or unpaid leave is governed by PO-ETH Art. 52, Holiday. Immediate family is taken to mean partners, children, parents and siblings (para. 2j).

Business lunch

Lunch with non-ETH guests for which attendance is mandated comes under working hours. According to Art. 54 para. 4 PO-ETH, the basis of a 30-minute lunch also applies to business lunches, meaning that time records must show 30 minutes.

Attendance at events

Participation in events relevant to work, both at ETH and elsewhere, is counted under working hours for the duration of the official part of the event. Recognition of the event is to be discussed with supervisors. For full-day events, such as work outings, the contractually agreed target working hours are recognised as working hours.

Lunch events of any type are voluntary and do not count as working hours.

Further information

[Working hours](#)

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