

COVID-19: HR MEASURES applicable to HQ, Geneva

EXCEPTIONAL TELEWORKING (ETW) OUTSIDE THE DUTY STATION – Q & As

These Q & As are based on the COVID-19 HR Measures, V3 applicable to HQ, Geneva published on [25 May 2021](#). The Q & As are for guidance only. In the case of a conflict between the FAQs and the HR Measures, the HR Measures take precedence. This is a living document and will be updated as new questions arise.

For Q & As related to the “Impact of Teleworking on Legitimation Cards” please refer to the separate [Q & As in WHO eManual III.22.1](#).

DURATION & CALCULATION

- 1. I wish to request up to 4 days TW outside the duty station, which option should I choose – Exceptional or Occasional?**
 - A** Please choose Occasional for up to 4 days TW outside the duty station. Occasional Teleworking only requires supervisor approval whereas Exceptional (for Professional and higher level staff) requires ADG or DG further approval. Using Occasional will speed up the approval process.
- 2. In the event of Exceptional Teleworking (ETW) outside the duty station for 5 consecutive days, should a request for ETW be submitted for the 5 days, or only for the extra (1) day that doesn't fall within the 4 days per month?**
 - A** The request should be made as a block of 5 days using the Exceptional TW module. Occasional TW for up to four working days per calendar month should be used only if these four days are on a stand-alone basis.
- 3. Do requests for Occasional TW up to 4 days count towards the cumulative 90 days maximum of TW without impact to pay and benefits?**
 - A** Yes. All periods of TW outside the duty station requested under Occasional or Exceptional for Other reasons will count towards the maximum duration. Only periods of TW submitted and approved by SHW as “health related” will be excepted.
- 4. Is ETW during quarantine counted in the calculation of maximum duration?**
 - A** Yes. The only exception to the calculation is ETW for health reasons as approved by Staff Health and Wellbeing Services.
- 5. How long can I ask ETW for?**
 - A** As of 1 June 2021 the initial GSM request cannot be for more than 90 calendar days' limit i.e. the period where there is no impact to post adjustment/ HL credit accrual; requests beyond the 90 days (with impact) require a separate GSM submission. Requests for more than 90 days will therefore be returned for correction.
- 6. How do half days count in the calculation of 90 days?**
 - A** Half days are counted as full calendar days due to ETW being absence from the duty station.
- 7. Do I need to keep a count of the days I request?**
 - A** The official calculation of the number of calendar days per request is automatically done based on approved GSM requests. The cumulative calculation is done through reports extracted from GSM and is monitored by HRT. However, to avoid “Rejection” or “Return for correction” (which means resubmission through full approver workflow) it may be a good idea to keep your own count.
- 8. I have lost count of the number of days I have already requested. Who can I ask to provide me with this?**
 - A** If you think that you are reaching the maximum 90 days cumulative you may enquire to your HR Business Partner for the division.

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9. Do the first 90 days have to be consecutive?

No, the first 90 days are cumulative, i.e. they can be multiple requests at different times for short periods with breaks in between.

10. I have been working outside the duty station on approved ETW prior to 1 June 2021. Will these periods be counted when calculating the total ETW periods in 2021?

A No, the new measures apply to TW as from 1 June 2021 only and therefore the count starts from 1 June 2021. Previous TW will not be taken into consideration for the calculation of the maximum duration. However supervisors may take into account previous ETW in approving further requests.

11. I have been reassigned to HQ Geneva from another station but cannot travel due to restrictions and visa delays so I have had ETW approved from my previous duty station. Will this count to the maximum duration?

A No, these days do not count but the TW situation upon reassignment must be brought to our attention in the reasons for the TW request so it is documented and can be taken into account later, if need.

12. Does the 2nd period of 90 days have to directly follow the 1st period?

A No, there can be a break between the end of the first 90 day period and the start of the 2nd 90 day period. However once the 2nd period has commenced it cannot be interrupted.

13. Is there a minimum period I should return to the duty station between the first 90 days and the 2nd period of 90 days?

A No, there is no minimum or maximum duration between the two 90 day periods. Please keep in mind that these TW measures are for 2021 only and no requests will be approved beyond 31 December 2021.

14. If I apply for ETW for day 91-180, there may be occasions during that period where I want to come to the office. Is this possible, while the counting for day 91-180 (and related post-adjustment etc.) just continues?

A Staff members on an approved period of ETW are not expected to return to the office. The only way to officially return to the office would be to agree with your supervisor to formally end the approved period of ETW thereby ending your eligibility to further avail of ETW within these measures.

15. Can I amend the dates of my approved ETW?

A ETW requests cannot be amended in GSM once approved. You need to request deletion of the request and submit a new request. However, if you wish to extend the period you must submit a new request for the additional days.

16. If I fall sick during a period of approved ETW will the calculation of ETW continue?

A Yes, the calculation of the ETW period will continue in the meantime due to the absence from the duty station. You must however ensure to submit a request for Certified or Uncertified sick leave in GSM.

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17. How much notice do I have to give to extend my ETW?

- Ⓐ Extending ETW is not a question of notice but of formally submitting a new request that has to be assessed and decided upon by the different workflow approvers. To allow for this to happen it is recommended to take the relevant actions at least 3 weeks in advance. You may not leave the duty station for remote teleworking without your request having been fully approved and should bear this in mind before making travel arrangements.

18. Can I request ETW into 2022?

- Ⓐ No, the current COVID-19 HR Measures are valid from 1 June to 31 December 2021 only. No requests for ETW in or into 2022 will be approved under these measures.

19. I submitted a ETW for 90 days but may decide to return before the 90 days are over. What is the procedure?

- Ⓐ In this case you would have to submit a new request retroactively to account for the actual period spent on ETW. In the reasons for this request you have to ask for the deletion of the original request as becoming obsolete.

20. As the calculation of ETW periods is based on calendar days, does this mean the same counting of periods applies to part-time staff members.

- Ⓐ Yes.

21. Are weekends taken into account for the purpose of calculating the 90 days, i.e. a request for 2 weeks of TW outside the duty station starting on a Monday will result in a request for 12 days?

- Ⓐ Yes, where the weekend is embedded between consecutive TW weeks the weekend must be included.

APPROVAL

22. Will my TW request automatically go to my 1st and 2nd level supervisor?

- Ⓐ Yes, assuming that the hierarchy exists in GSM the request will go to 1st then 2nd level supervisor. The approval of the ADG of your division will be sought by your 2nd level supervisor prior to approving; then the request goes to HRT for validation and review of any impact on pay and benefits.

23. What criteria will be used to approve ETW requests?

- Ⓐ Requests will be reviewed in terms of practical feasibility and in the interest of the team/unit/division along with the personal justification of the staff member.

24. How will the ADG be informed of requests for TW as these are not in the GSM workflow?

- Ⓐ The approval of the ADG of your division will be sought through the GSM "Request Information" function. This is accessible when your 2nd level supervisor opens the workflow notification to review your request prior to approving the request.

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WORKING SCHEDULE & LEAVE

25. Can I change my working hours if I am TW from a time zone that is different from Geneva time zone?

- The weekly working hours for the duty station must be respected during periods of approved ETW i.e. 40 hours per week for HQ Geneva. Within the weekly working hours supervisors may approve flexible schedules during the ETW period for staff members who may be e.g. managing family situations, or working from another time zone. Supervisors must discuss with staff members and agree upon a daily working schedule.

26. Do I need to document any change to my working hours during TW?

- For insurance purposes it is essential that any deviation in schedule from the regular core hours & flexi-hours permissible for HQ, Geneva, is duly recorded in writing in an email exchange with the 1st level supervisor and stipulated in the ETW request.

27. I was unable to work for several hours due to my internet connection being unstable. How should I account for this time?

- Where a staff member is unable to work for reasons which may include no internet connection the time should be taken as annual leave. It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure a reliable internet connection is normally available for the entire period of ETW (*intermittent micro cuts being excepted*).

28. Where there is an impact on Home leave how will the credit points or the due date for home leave be counted in case the staff member TW outside the duty station for 6 months in 2021?

- The maximum impact to Home Leave credit points would be suspension of credit point accrual for 3 months i.e. 3 points. This would normally delay your next home leave due date by 3 months if you took your last home leave within the eligibility period or within the exceptional eligibility period permitted by COVID-19 HR Measures.

29. Can I combine remote ETW with home leave?

- In principle yes. You must however include a minimum period of (seven) consecutive days to be spent at the home leave location as annual leave in accordance with the WHO eManual provisions for Home Leave and indicate the full period of absence and the dates of ETW in the comments box of your home leave request. Please address your questions about combining remote ETW with home leave (HL) and its impact on the calculation of HL travel days to Mr Balachandar KRISHNASAMY krishnasamyb@who.int in GHR dealing with statutory travel and related entitlements.

30. If I fall sick during a period of approved ETW how should I account for this?

- Please submit a request for Certified or Uncertified sick leave in GSM. The calculation of the ETW period will continue in the meantime due to the absence from the duty station.

31. If I was unable to return after 90 days due to sick leave would my pay and benefits be impacted?

- Such situations would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

32. For ETW that is already approved in the system - if I have to take period(s) of leave unforeseen during this time period, what do I do?

- If the ETW is within the 1st period of 90 days, please submit a request for annual leave in GSM and obtain approval. Once approved, submit a new ETW request (or several, if necessary) to reflect only the period(s) of ETW without including any annual leave dates.

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- If the ETW is within the 2nd period of 90 days, please submit a request for annual leave in GSM and obtain approval. The ETW period as approved will not be affected by periods of embedded annual leave in this case.

33. Can I combine ETW with annual leave?

- Yes. The TW and leave periods must be requested separately for each period i.e. the annual leave through the GSM leave module and the TW period through the GSM ETW function. The dates cannot overlap.

END OF TELEWORKING AGREEMENT

34. I requested 4 months of teleworking but will only need 3 months, what should I do?

- When you return to the duty station you must submit a new request with the correct dates for retroactive approval “to cancel and supersede” your initial request and inform teleworking@who.int that your initial request is to be deleted.

35. Can I be asked to return to the duty station during my approved period of TW outside the duty station?

- Yes. ETW outside the duty station is not an entitlement. The 1st level supervisor, within reason and in agreement with the 2nd level supervisor, may ask the staff member to return any time to the duty station for work-related reasons without owing a detailed justification.

CARTE DE LEGITIMATION

36. What are the rules regarding the maximum duration up to which we can keep or renew a Carte de Légitimation (CdL).

- Staff members are requested to refer to the [Q & As](#) provided by HR Liaison Services on CdL.

37. How should I manage my own and my family’s Carte de Légitimation(s) while I am outside the duty station?

- Staff members must refer to the [Q & As](#) provided by HR Liaison Services on CdL. For any questions which are not addressed by the Q & As, kindly contact HRSmailbox@who.int.

38. Do I have to inform HR Liaison Services of my requests for ETW outside the duty station?

- Yes, if your or your family members’ Carte de Légitimation(s) are due to expire during your planned period outside the duty station. In that case and to avoid re-entry problems upon return to the duty station, you should request renewals well in time. HRS will receive regular reports from GSM to ensure accuracy of information provided.

IMPACT ON PAY AND BENEFITS

39. Will Education Grant be impacted during ETW?

- For the duration of these HR measures there will be no impact on Education Grant.

40. What benefits will be impacted by ETW of more than 90 days?

- The Post Adjustment may be impacted if this is lower at the place of ETW and the Home Leave accrual points.

41. How can I obtain information about tax obligations if I spend a long period ETW in another country?

- Staff members must inform themselves with the tax authorities in the country of the ETW location.

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42. I am a Professional staff member. What will be the impact on my salary if I request to telework for the maximum 180 days?

- A** The Post Adjustment will be modified to that of the teleworking location if lower than Geneva and accrual of HL credit points will cease irrespective of country of teleworking location.

TRAVEL & LOCATION OUTSIDE THE DUTY STATION

43. Can I request to ETW from any country I wish

- A** The choice of destination is in principle up to the staff member. However consideration should be given to time differences where the supervisor may require staff to be present during Geneva working hours, the availability of adequate internet connectivity and travel facilities.

44. What is the definition of ETW outside the duty station?

- A** This is considered to be teleworking from an address other than that declared in GSM as the staff member's normal residence at the duty station. This is essential for insurance purposes.

45. If I work from my secondary residence in Switzerland, do I need to submit a request for ETW?

- A** Yes if this differs from your principal place of residence i.e. home address as declared in GSM.

46. If I work from a friend's house in Geneva, do I need to submit a request for ETW?

- A** If this is only for a day or so, it is recommended to use Occasional Teleworking request in order to record for insurance purposes that the staff member is not at their regular address.

47. Who pays for travel if I am required to go on duty travel during the ETW outside the duty station period?

- A** The maximum WHO liability for duty travel remains as the cost between the duty station and the duty travel destination. The cost of travel will therefore be limited to either the duty station or ETW location and the duty travel destination, whichever is less. Any excess must be covered by the staff member.

APPLICABILITY

48. Do these measures apply to Consultants?

- A** No. Consultants who have been recruited to be in the duty station must remain in the duty station.

49. Do these measures apply to Temporary Appointments of 60 days or less?

- A** No. Staff members recruited on appointments of 60-days from Geneva may not leave the duty station to work from another location. If the services of such a staff member are required and recruitment can be effective from another location, the appointment would be based on that location. The latter does not apply to locally recruited staff.

DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING

50. Do I have to sign any written declaration to acknowledge the limitations of my GSM request?

- A** No. By making a request in GSM a staff member acknowledges that they have read and understood the implications of the request and the obligations related to ETW and accepts the disclaimer for insurance purposes.