

COVID-19: latest HR measures

(Update of version 1 of 1 July 2020)



**World Health
Organization**

In response to the return to premises in some locations, and the evolving status of restrictions in Switzerland, France, Malaysia and other WHO duty stations, **the following HR measures related to COVID-19 from the Administrator message of 1 July 2020 are updated as follows** (changes marked in **bold**).

Measures affecting global entitlements

Annual Leave



- Staff are reminded that a minimum of half the annual leave credit for 2020 must be taken before 31 December 2020. This applies to continuing, fixed-term and temporary staff in accordance with Staff Rule 630.5.
- The Organization will allow an exceptional carry over of up to 15 annual leave days¹ (or half the annual leave accrual) beyond the current maximum of 60 days as of 31 December 2020 (i.e. up to 75 days).
- Staff must reduce the carry-over to a maximum of 60 days by 31 December 2021.
- The Organization will allow up to 45 days annual leave days encashment (i.e. 15 days beyond the 30 days set out in SR 630.8) on separation for continuing and fixed-term staff until 31 December 2021, as per paragraph 30 of the Administrative Guidelines for Offices on the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak, dated 7 May 2020. **Payment shall be made based on the GSM leave balance as confirmed in the local clearance certificate.**

Home Leave (eManual III.6.13)



- The Organization will continue to allow flexibility in deferring home leave that cannot be taken because of travel restrictions or other restrictions.
- Staff will maintain their home leave due date and therefore be permitted to accumulate credits for their next home leave without forfeiting the current one.
- As an exception to paragraph 260 of eManual III.6.13, the required period between home leaves (12 months at 24-month duty stations and 6 months at 12-month duty stations) will be reduced to 6 months and 3 months respectively.
- As an exception to paragraph 60 of eManual III.6.13, the Organization will reduce the period an appointment is expected to

¹ Temporary staff are excluded from these measures because, provided they take their minimum annual days, they will not exceed the 30 days on separation or the 60 days annual carry-over limits.

continue after home leave from 6 months to 3 months at 24-month duty stations, and from 3 months to 6 weeks at 12-month duty stations.

- These exceptions will be based on a staff declaration (in GSM) that home leave travel needs to be deferred due to COVID-19 travel issues without prejudice to the next due date, and supervisor approval. This flexibility will remain in place for all home leaves up to 31 December 2021.

Statutory travel



- Due to the evolving situation in the context of COVID-19, some staff have taken the lump sum option for statutory travel but are now facing significant financial disadvantages in procuring their own tickets.
- In these circumstances, ADG/BOS may approve requests for exceptions to:
 - cancel the lump sum option taken up to 30 June 2020 and allow staff to avail of Organization-assisted travel (from 1 July the normal provisions of the e-Manual apply);
 - **for travel taken up to 30 June 2020**, allow staff to request reimbursement of additional costs (based upon a strong justification) above the lump sum amount paid to them on their travel claims or statutory travel; and
 - allow advances related to statutory travel **for TRs issued through 31 December 2020** to stay open up to a maximum period of one year prior to submission of the travel claim to reconcile the advance. Any advances remaining open beyond this period will be reviewed for exceptional extension as conditions warrant.
- **For staff support, please contact the Global HR Operations (GHR/HRT): Mr Balachandar Krishnasamy at krishnasamyb@who.int or Mrs Rosilah Abdul Latip at abdullatipr@who.int.**

Measures affecting Teleworking

Teleworking under quarantine (all staff)



- Staff are encouraged to travel to locations that do not require quarantine on arrival².
- When that is not possible and staff are required to quarantine on arrival, staff and supervisors may explore the viability of teleworking arrangements, depending on the exigencies of the work to be performed, for all or part of the quarantine period, including in combination with annual leave.
- In cases of quarantine where teleworking is not viable, staff will be required to use annual leave for periods of quarantine.
- The same process should be followed for any required quarantine on return to the duty station.
- In line with current procedures, staff must submit a request for exceptional teleworking through GSM staff self-service for any periods of teleworking outside the duty station, including for periods of quarantine. Any related questions for HQ staff should be sent to teleworking@who.int.

Teleworking at duty station (HQ Geneva)



- For staff returning to the premises during each phase, the Organization will continue to allow some flexibility for teleworking at the duty station. Such teleworking arrangements should be decided upon between the supervisor and the staff member, until further notice.
- All other staff who have not been asked to return to the premises will remain on general teleworking arrangements as per the Administrator Message of 14 March 2020.
- No teleworking request through GSM will be required unless there are exceptional circumstances i.e. working from outside the duty station or teleworking for medical reasons.

² In this regard, staff will be reminded that home leave is not limited to travel to the recognized place of residence (which may be subject to quarantine) but can be exercised to an alternate place (which may not be under quarantine). Requests for an alternate place for home leave may be made through GSM.

Remote Teleworking outside duty station (HQ Geneva)



- **Aligning WHO with measures on return to the workplace announced by UN HQ and several Geneva-based Organizations, and taking note of the current conditions in Switzerland, the existing arrangements for exceptional teleworking outside the duty station are to be concluded by 1 October 2020.³ This communication serves as the minimum two weeks' notice referred to in earlier communications. Supervisors and staff should discuss the necessary work arrangements which may include full or partial return to the premises.**
- **New requests (or extensions) for remote teleworking outside the duty station will no longer be approved unless they meet the criteria set out below. In this regard, requests for exceptional teleworking outside the duty station may be exceptionally approved for:**
 1. **Health-related reasons for the staff member, as certified by Staff Health and Wellbeing (SHW). These requests and supporting documentation should be submitted directly to SHW at shws@who.int; or**
 2. **Other serious compelling and personal reasons. These requests and supporting documentation should be submitted directly to HRT at teleworking@who.int. In this context, staff should note that circumstances of an essentially private nature do not constitute a compelling reason.**
- **Requests for occasional teleworking outside the duty station of up to four days per calendar month can still be made under the Occasional Teleworking policy in place (see Information Notes of 15/2014 and 24/2019); requests should be submitted through the “Regular (Occasional) Teleworking” option in GSM staff self-service.**
- **The WHO Administrative Guidelines of 7 May 2020 allow exceptional teleworking (if feasible) for mandatory periods of quarantine. Requests should be submitted through the “Exceptional Teleworking” option in GSM staff self-service.**
- **For absences from the office or duty station for private matters, staff should continue to use the various forms of leave available to them, including annual leave.**

³ Staff members should take the necessary steps to ensure their timely return. Only attestations from the WHO Travel unit may be accepted as proof of non-availability of flights. COVID-19 protection measures (e.g. mandatory testing or quarantine) are separate and distinct issues from flights being available or not.

Note: Regions and other offices will continue to tailor teleworking (including remote teleworking) and on-site arrangements depending on the circumstances in their duty stations. Regional staff should contact their HR focal point on any questions.

In light of this message, the necessary changes will be made to the Administrative Guidelines and related FAQs.

Best regards,

Jennifer Linkins
Director, HRT a.i.