



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Administrative Circular AC/HR/52

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Telework Policy (HR Manual Item 16.13)

Background

1. On a number of occasions, the Director-General has stressed the need for UNESCO to be an inclusive workplace, as an essential condition to staff well-being.
2. Flexible work arrangements, and amongst them telework, contribute to making the workplace more inclusive; they also support the global objective of gender equality.
3. It is in this context, that the Director-General has decided to introduce telework modalities in UNESCO. The purpose of the present Administrative Circular is to inform staff of the relevant provisions and procedures governing telework in UNESCO, which are set out in HR Manual Item 16.13.

Definition

4. Telework refers to a situation in which work is performed outside of the office premises, in an **alternative location**, for a scheduled period and is supported by communication and information technologies.
5. Telework, as defined in this policy, does **not** cover occasional work away from the office, where a staff member carries out office work away from the office on an ad hoc basis, or at certain peak periods. These will typically involve urgent assignments which require uninterrupted concentration, which may be more effectively performed away from the normal office site. Such occasional work away from the office must receive prior agreement from the manager and shall be documented (e-mail or written note, detailing the place of work with a complete address and the hours of work) for insurance purposes.

Scope of Application

6. The telework option is applicable to staff members on fixed-term contracts (including staff on fixed-term/project appointments). Staff members on temporary appointments are also eligible, provided their contracts have been renewed beyond 12 months.

Conditions for Telework

7. To qualify for telework, a number of specific conditions must be met, relating to the nature of the assigned tasks, the work location and the equipment.
8. Managers are expected to implement this policy, in an equitable and consistent manner across the board for all staff members of the organizational unit.

9. It must be understood that telework may be more suitable to some jobs or functions than to others and as such the decision on how best to implement this policy remains within the discretion of the manager who is responsible for the results of the organizational unit. In this regard, the granting or continuation of an already approved telework arrangements is not a staff entitlement and the denial of a request for telework is not subject to UNESCO's grievance/ appeals procedures. A flexible work arrangement may be deferred or cancelled at any time, normally within 10 working days' notice, such as where the manager considers the exigencies of work require staff members to return to a normal schedule of reporting to office.

Type of Jobs /Assignments

10. The option for telework should normally concern activities with defined, measurable outputs which do not require daily face to face communication with colleagues for completion. They could include research activities, analytical work, translation, revision, desk-top publishing, proofreading or editing documents, Web master or operator functions.
11. The **assignments/tasks** for which telework may be authorized should be:
- Convertible into expected **results/outputs** that can be **measured** in terms of quality and quantity;
 - **Non-dependent** for satisfactory completion on **face to face contacts/interaction**;
 - **Non-reliant on information, materials or facilities** that are not readily available in, or accessible from, the telework location.

The "Teleworker"

12. To be considered for telework, staff members must meet the following criteria:
- A demonstrated consistently good level of performance;
 - A demonstrated ability to work efficiently with minimal supervision, to establish priorities and to manage effectively his/her own time.
13. In addition, the teleworker shall:
- Be contactable by telephone or e-mail during agreed working hours as stated in the Telework Agreement;
 - Be available to attend unplanned meetings at the office, at short notice, as required by the supervisor, when the work requirements so demand;
 - Be responsible and accountable for the timely completion of tasks/assignments, and for submitting the agreed work products/completed assignments on time.

The Telework location and equipment

14. The telework location may be the staff member's home or another agreed workplace away from the office. The location shall normally be one which allows the staff member to reach the office within 2 hours, in case unplanned or unexpected demands require

their presence.

15. The telework location shall be safe and secure.
16. The staff member who has been authorized to telework will ensure that a proper work environment for teleworking is maintained (e.g. appropriate workspace, requisite equipment and conducive to concentration). The staff member is responsible for any costs incurred to set up and maintain the proper work environment. UNESCO will not be responsible for operating costs, maintenance of the telework place or any incidental cost associated with the use of the staff member's residence. Utility costs (including telephone line installation, office furniture, telephone calls and use of the internet) and travel costs from/to the telework place will not be reimbursed by UNESCO.

Modalities and duration

17. The telework arrangements are formalized in a **Telework Agreement**. These may be on a full week (5 days) or part week (1/ 2 / 3 / 4 days) basis. Telework Agreements are concluded for an initial period of maximum 6 months at the time.
18. If there are specific days on which a staff member's presence is required in the Office (e.g. staff meetings), these shall be specified in the Agreement.
19. The manager or the staff member may request that a telework arrangement be modified or discontinued, normally within 10 working days' notice, if either the manager considers that the needs of UNESCO necessitate the return to normal working hours, or the needs of the staff member have changed.

Conditions of service

20. Telework does not affect the nature of a staff member's contract, nor his/her conditions of service. Leave provisions (e.g. annual and sick leave, and the rules relating to official holidays) shall apply in exactly the same way to teleworkers. Teleworkers remain subject to the UNESCO Staff Regulations and Staff Rules in exactly the same way as if they were working on the office premises.
21. Teleworkers are bound by the terms of Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service while working at the telework location, and are subject to the same restrictions relating to outside activities as other staff.

Insurance

22. Staff members authorized to telework will be covered by UNESCO's Staff Compensation Plan for work-related accidental death and/or injury. Coverage will be deemed to apply in cases of death, injury or illness resulting from accidents occurring while staff members are performing official duties on behalf of UNESCO at the agreed telework location. In cases of accident, illness or death claimed as attributable to the performance of official duties when working at the telework location, staff members or survivors acting on their behalf will be required to provide evidence of a direct causal link between the performance of the official duties and the accident, illness or death.
23. While working from the telework location, an accident, illness or death that occurs during the following circumstances will not normally be considered to be attributable to performance of official duties on behalf of UNESCO:

- a) If the incident occurs away from the approved telework location, subject to (b);
 - b) If the incident occurs outside the direct commuting journey between home, the agreed telework location (if not home) and UNESCO (or any other destination authorized as official travel) for official purposes;
 - c) If the incident occurs outside the work schedule agreed and set out in the Telework Agreement.
 - d) Injuries caused by negligence (carelessness).
24. Staff members authorized to telework will not be covered under the Organization's Liability policy whilst working from the telework location. It is the staff members' individual responsibility to ensure adequate personal liability coverage as part of their household insurance, in case of personal accidents or injury that may not be considered under paragraph 20 above.

Requests for telework: approval process

25. Staff members should informally discuss their request with the manager and work unit in advance, so as to ensure the smooth running of the office.
26. Staff members who wish to apply for telework shall complete an application form (Telework Agreement) and submit it to their manager. The manager will review requests on a case-by-case basis and normally discuss them with the staff member.
27. The manager will make a recommendation to the ADG/Director of Bureau/Director of Field Office, who will approve, approve with modifications, or decline the request.
28. The staff member sends a copy of the telework agreement to the AO/EO, Chief HRM/SPI (Pension and Insurance) and to his/her HR Officer in the Benefits and Entitlements Unit.
29. The staff member is responsible for informing all relevant parties of the telework schedule.

Monitoring, contact and information

30. HRM will monitor the implementation of telework agreements. Any questions or issues raised in this Administrative Circular should be addressed to HRM/Policy: Anna Krotova, ext. 81838, e-mail: a.krotova@unesco.org.

Effective date

31. The provisions set out in this Administrative Circular enter into force immediately.

Annex:

- Telework Agreement

For the Director-General:

Ruth de Miranda
Director, HRM

Telework Agreement

Staff member (Name/title):

Sector/Bureau :

Duty Station :

Division/Section/ Unit :

Supervisor (Name/title):

1. Telework Agreement

a. Telework Schedule

- Days of the week covered by Telework:
- Agreed Working hours:
- Schedule of staff presence in UNESCO Office:

b. Telework Location

- **Home Address:**
- **Telephone(s):**
- **E-mail address at UNESCO:**

c. Assignments/Outputs:

c. Procedure for reporting progress: I undertake to report to my supervisor any challenges or difficulties as they arise and to submit to my supervisor a brief report of my telework experience at the end of the telework period.

e. Other (if required)

2. Start date of this Agreement: ____

3. End date of this Agreement : ____

4. I undertake to proceed promptly to the Office if unplanned / unexpected demands require my presence.

5. I am responsible for furnishing my Telework location with the necessary office equipment, and for maintaining it as a safe, secure and adequate work environment.

6. I understand the provisions governing insurance coverage with respect to the telework arrangements as outlined in the attached HR Manual Item 16.13. I take cognizance of these and I accept them.

I have read and understand UNESCO's Telework policy as outlined in the HR Item 16.13 attached to this Agreement. I undertake to respect the terms of this Agreement and to implement them in full compliance with UNESCO's policy. I understand that this Agreement may be suspended or terminated by UNESCO at any time, or if I so request.

Signed: _____
Staff member

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Supervisor

Date: _____

Copy:
Administrative Officer
HR Officer (HRM/ Benefits and Entitlements)

