



Fact Sheet

Working Hours

This English translation is provided for convenience purposes only. The original German text fully prevails.

Full-time employees work 42 hours per week, which corresponds to 8.4 hours (8h 24m) per day (variations from this rule apply to certain professions and are regulated separately). The working hours of part-time employees are reduced in accordance with their employment degree.

Daily Schedule and Breaks (§ 118 et seq. of the implementation ordinance to the employment act of the Canton of Zurich, VVO – in German)

The general time frame during which employees are to work is between 6:00am and 8:00pm; it is not permitted to work more than 11 hours per day. During this general time frame, working hours can be adapted to work-related and personal needs (“flexitime”). Exact details must be agreed with the line manager. Special provisions apply in the case of night shifts, Sunday work, shift work, and on-call duty.

Employees who work more than six hours per day are required to take a break of at least 30 minutes that is not calculated as part of their working hours (this is generally the lunch break). Breaks lasting a maximum of 15 minutes per half working day may be calculated as part of the regular working hours.

Individual Record of Working Hours

Administrative and technical staff members are required to record their working hours precisely in the employee time sheet provided by the University (available for download from www.pa.uzh.ch) and to present the time sheet to their line manager for countersigning at the end of each month.

Members of the non-professorial academic staff are not required to record their working hours but may do so, if desired. The Human Resources department recommends that at least a record of absences is kept (vacation, work-related stays abroad, external continuing education courses, absences due to illness, accident, maternity leave, etc.)

Claims to remuneration for unused vacation or for overtime or extra hours are only considered if employees have kept an accurate record of their working hours and have presented this record to their line manager for countersigning each month.

Extra Hours (§ 121 VVO)

If you work more than your specified number of hours, you are either working extra hours or overtime. It is important to distinguish between these two terms. This section is about extra hours; further information on overtime is provided below.

During Employment

Flexitime can result in a positive or negative balance of hours worked (too many or too few hours) that must be compensated for during the calendar year. Extra hours can be compensated by taking a maximum of 15 whole days off per calendar year. However, compensation of more than one consecutive day of extra hours is only permitted after employees have taken all their vacation.

This means that as a rule, employees must take their vacation before they are allowed to compensate extra hours (= positive working hours balance).

This principle does not apply absolutely, however. For example, compensation of extra hours of up to one day is always permitted. This makes it possible, in particular, to take advantage of what are known as “bridge days” (e.g. after Ascension Day) or to take extra hours off (e.g. by finishing work earlier or by taking the morning of Sechseläuten or Knabenschiessen off). However, employees must have taken all their vacation before they are permitted to take consecutive compensation days.

At the end of the calendar year, a positive or negative balance of two weeks at the most – i.e. max. 84 hours per year for full-time employees – may be carried over to the new year. A negative balance of hours worked that is higher than this amount must be set off with unused vacation. A positive balance of hours worked that is higher than this amount is forfeited at the end of the year.

Line managers can approve the transfer of a working hours balance of more than two weeks to a new year for work-related or compelling personal reasons. This approval must also be signed off by the next-higher line manager. The Executive Board of the University (EB) has defined the responsibilities as follows:

	Faculties	Central Services	Direct reports of members of the Executive Board of the University
1. Approval	Direct line manager (DLM)	Direct line manager	Direct line manager
2. Signature	Next-higher line manager level (at least head of institute/department)	Next-higher line manager level (at least direct report of members of the EB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Vice President Faculty Affairs and Scientific Information (PR FSI) – Direct reports of the PR FSI: the President – Direct reports of the President: the PRI FSI
Escalation level	Dean	Member of the EB	None

Leaving the University

The balance of hours worked must be zero at the end of employment: A negative balance (i.e. too few hours worked) will be deducted from the final salary payment. The departing employee must compensate for a positive balance (i.e. too many hours worked) before the end of employment. Only in the case of important work-related or personal reasons will additional hours be remunerated when an employee leaves the University:

Additional hours that could not be compensated for due to convincing personal reasons are remunerated without an overtime supplement. In the case of management positions (pay categories 24 to 29), remuneration for additional hours is only possible if the balance of hours worked (sum of extra hours and overtime) is greater than 120 hours.

Additional hours that could not be compensated for due to compelling work-related reasons are remunerated as overtime, i.e. up to and including pay category 16 with a supplement of 25%.

Overtime (§ 125 et seq. VVO)

Overtime is the term used for working hours that exceed the agreed number of working hours and that the employee’s line manager has authorized in writing for a limited, clearly defined period of time and for extraordinary projects in advance or, in exceptional cases, after overtime has been accumulated. If compensating for these additional hours is operationally possible within one month, this time is not deemed overtime. Only additional hours that cannot be compensated for within one month are deemed authorized overtime.

The competency to authorize overtime of up to 20 hours per calendar month rests with the line manager. Overtime in excess of 20 hours per calendar month requires advance permission from Human Resources. Employees must take time off to compensate for overtime within the calendar year. A time supplement of 25% is granted for pay category 16 and below. In exceptional cases: When operational circumstances prevent an employee from compensating for additional hours, overtime may be remunerated with a supplement of 25% (max. 120 hours per calendar year). No supplement is paid to employees in pay category 17 and higher. The provisions of § 128 VVO apply to employees in pay category 24 and higher; the responsible HR consultant can provide further information.

Vacation (§ 79 et seq. VVO)

Vacation is designed to promote rest and relaxation, and must be taken. As the employer, UZH determines when vacation is taken. Line managers take the employees' wishes into consideration to the extent that this is compatible with operational interests. They ensure that employees can cover for one another without the need to employ temporary staff.

As a basic principle, two weeks of vacation per year are to be taken consecutively. Any leftover vacation from the current year (up to a maximum of two weeks) must be used by the middle of the following year. Line managers bear responsibility for ensuring that their team takes vacation correctly. If an employee does not take vacation in due time, the line manager may instruct him or her to do so. Unused vacation may not be remunerated during the term of employment.

Taking Vacation during a Period of Continued Pay Resulting from Illness or Accident

If an employee wishes to take vacation during a period of (partial) inability to work, they must be in a position to benefit from vacation ("ferienfähig")¹. Usually, this is the case if an employee is partially unable to work; if they are completely unable to work, they must present a doctor's note which confirms their ability to benefit from a vacation. If the employee is able to benefit from vacation, the relevant vacation days are deducted from their vacation balance in full regardless of whether they are completely or partially unable to work. The period of continued pay is interrupted for the length of the vacation and extended accordingly. In other words, the full salary is paid during the vacation.

Unused vacation is remunerated only upon termination of the employment relationship if work-related or compelling personal reasons prevented the employee from taking vacation by the end of the notice period. Please see the separate Vacation Fact Sheet for further information, particularly about carrying over more than two weeks of vacation to the following year in exceptional cases.

Legal Information

This fact sheet summarizes the most important provisions on the topic of working hours. Only the provisions of the applicable laws and ordinances are legally binding.

¹ A distinction must be made between (in)ability to work ("Arbeits[un]fähigkeit") and the ability to benefit from vacation ("Ferienfähigkeit"). The latter applies when an employee is in a position to enjoy rest and recreation during their vacation despite having an existing health impairment. Unlike the inability to work, which can be expressed as a percentage, the ability to benefit from vacation is either given in full or not at all.