



# Guidelines for Distance Work

## 1 Introduction

Flexibility in the workplace can be positive for both the employer and the staff members. It may increase the attractiveness of the University as an employer, and it may enable recruitment while also facilitating for the staff member in achieving a balance between work and leisure time.

It is always the needs and demands of the University that dictate where the work is to be done. The possibility of completing one's work-related task on a distance basis differs between staff members and are dependent on assignments and work content.

The objective behind the guidelines is to clarify the rules and protocol connected to distance work for staff members at the University of Skövde (the University). The guidelines are to function as support and are to define the responsibilities for both the employer and the staff member, clarify the circumstances surrounding distance work which may, among other things, have repercussions in terms of insurance coverage and the working environment, as well as lead to equal treatment when dealing with distance work.

## 2 Definition

Distance work entails work carried out on a regular, planned, and recurring basis, either at home or in another approved location away from one's regular workplace. Distance work may only be carried out within the borders of Sweden since distance work abroad is not stipulated in our local collective agreements and the legal position is furthermore unclear.

The University is the main workplace of our staff members, and this is primarily where work-related tasks are to be carried out.

Distance work does not concern business trips/missions or work that is carried out on a temporary basis or sporadically at another location other than on the premises of the University.

### **3 Application**

The guidelines apply to all staff members at the University. The guidelines rest on the European framework agreement concerning distance work and does not circumscribe laws, collective agreements, agreements regarding salary and employment terms and conditions, working hours agreements or steering documents.

### **4 Conditions Concerning Distance Work**

Distance work is never an obligation but rather a possibility and should be initiated by the staff member. Neither is it a right, and it will thus take place upon approval of the superior in charge. Distance work is based on mutual trust between the superior in charge and the staff member.

It is important for the University that we thrive and develop together. The activities and operations of the university have been developed for a high level of campus attendance. A vibrant campus contributes to a viable research and educational environment. Physical meetings and physical attendance at the workplace are important in empowering viable collaborations, learning, creativity, and development. Physical attendance is also vital for good accessibility, a sense of social community, and the possibility of making new connections as well as continuing to develop well-functioning teams.

The effect of distance work must not occur at the expense of efficiency, security, quality, service, or the working environment. Staff members should be accessible so that their superiors, colleagues, students and other stakeholders may reach them (e.g., by answering phone calls, communicating via email, participating in digital meetings).

The superior in charge may order the staff member to come to the main workplace upon short but reasonable notice, unless another arrangement has been reached with the employer.

### **5 Scope**

The scope of the distance work is to be documented in the individual agreement after consultation between the superior in charge and the staff member in connection with the annual staff appraisal dialogue.

Distance work should be scheduled so that it does not obstruct one's work and the staff member must attend physical meetings at the workplace when the need arises.

In regard to teachers, it is the annual working hours for teachers that apply, regulated by the working hours agreement, which afford greater freedom to plan one's work.

For staff members with a temporary employment contract (TA), the maximum amount of possible distance work is an average of 40% of the total working hours.

## **6 Working Environment and Working Space**

The Work Environment Act and the Swedish Work Environment Authority's regulations are applicable for distance work as well. When a staff member carries out distance work, it is the responsibility of the superior in charge to prevent ill health and to ensure that the staff member has a good working environment, in the same way as in the regular workplace.

The superior and the staff member must collaborate in order to procure a good working environment, both in the regular workplace and at the location for the distance work. It is the joint responsibility of both parties. The dialogue should cover physical, social as well as organizational aspects.

The employer should ascertain that the location for the distance work is functional and ergonomic. Staff members should note and report any risks connected to the working environment as well as notify the superior in charge if any working environment issues emerge.

Work materials should be handled with care and stored securely.

The University will not disburse compensation to the staff member for the provision of a workspace outside of the main workplace nor maintenance for the same.

## **7 Equipment at the Location of the Distance Work**

The University offers fully-equipped workspaces on campus. The university provides personal work tools to facilitate mobile and flexible work, such as a portable computer, headphones etc. which can be easily moved to the location for the distance work. The employer is not responsible for furnishing a location for distance work. The staff member is responsible for ensuring that the location in question is set up and furnished in a suitable way from a working environment point of view and with a functioning and secure internet connection.

In exceptional cases, after individual review, other equipment may be provided on loan in order to make the distance work possible.

All equipment that belongs to the University should be returned upon termination of the agreement concerning distance work.

## **8 Insurance**

### **8.1 Work-related Injuries**

All staff members are covered by an occupational injury insurance policy, which is also valid for distance work. In order for an injury that has occurred at home to be counted as an occupational injury, the accident must be directly connected to the work one is carrying out, that is one has to have injured oneself while conducting one's work-related tasks.

An occupational injury report must be completed in the same way as if the injury had occurred in the regular workplace.

### **8.2 Property**

Damage to equipment on loan from the University will be reimbursed by the employer. The employer will not insure the location of the distance work. Instead, it is the staff member's home insurance which must cover possible damage in this regard. Distance work presupposes that the staff member has the appropriate insurance coverage for this purpose.

## **9 Agreement and Follow-up**

An agreement about distance work must be completed in writing and should be limited to a maximum of 12 months.

Since the assignments and circumstances of the staff members vary, the conditions of the agreement must be clear to the staff member and to the superior based on the individual situation.

Follow-ups are to be carried out on a regular basis, such as during the annual staff appraisal dialogue or whenever the superior or the staff member feel it is necessary.

The agreement concerning distance work may be terminated with immediate effect if the employer deems that that the location of the distance work is unsuitable as a workplace or if distance work is considered inadvisable for any other reason.

## **10 Special Grounds**

Deviations from the guidelines may be made restrictively in individual and specific situations.

## **11 Effective Date**

These guidelines are in effect as of February 1, 2022.

