ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Official Regulations Governing Travel during the COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Background

In normal circumstances ETH members take trips to many different countries and regions across the globe. The coronavirus pandemic has severely curtailed most travel activity. There are only limited signs of a gradual easing of the lockdown. The difficult situation created by the pandemic has made it much more complex to arrange and complete travel plans, both for outbound and inbound travel.

All *outbound and inbound travel to Switzerland* is regulated by the COVID-19 Ordinance on International Passenger Transport Measures, which provides a list of countries or areas with an increased infection risk. This list is updated regularly. When entering Switzerland from these countries, all travellers must observe a 10-day quarantine period and must report their arrival in the country within two days to the responsible cantonal authority for their residence. When on campus, they are strongly advised to wear a mask for another four days after the end of the quarantine period.

In addition, Art. 3 of the COVID-19 Ordinance 3 sets out the *restrictions for foreigners entering Switzerland* from high-risk countries or regions. More information is available on the website of the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM).

The following section outlines and clarifies the relevant procedures for travelling abroad, and especially the requirements when returning to Switzerland:

- Research and business trips by ETH professors and staff
- Study and research trips by ETH students
- Private trips by ETH members
- Recommendations for ETH members sharing a household with someone returning to Switzerland from a high-risk area
- Taking up a post at ETH
- Students entering Switzerland for exams, study, traineeships, etc.

For the sake of general protection, travel should be restricted to the absolute minimum necessary.

Travel by candidates for professorships being considered for appointments will be handled separately by the Office for Faculty Affairs and is not covered by this information sheet.

2. Trips abroad
2.1 Research and business trips by ETH professors and staff

Before travelling to countries or regions with an increased infection risk, ETH professors and employees must carefully weigh up the risks and benefits of their journey. If possible, the trip should be delayed until the risk no longer exists. Business trips that cannot be delayed to countries or areas with an increased infection risk require the approval of the supervisor and the employee's consent.

Professors should consult their head of department, while those in charge of organisational units (academic departments, staff units) should check with the responsible member of the Executive Board. It is also advisable to clarify the situation at the local destination by contacting the respective embassy or consulate. The HR department is also available for advice if necessary.
Federal Office of Public Health website

Travellers should draw up a safety protocol based on government criteria and FOPH recommendations, if necessary with the support of SSHE in special cases. If the trip involves a stay at an institution such as a university, research station, etc., ETH members should request the local security protocol for that institution and forward it to the SSHE to perform a risk assessment.

2.2. Study and research trips by ETH students

Trips abroad organised by the students themselves for study purposes (masters theses, traineeships, visiting students, etc.) are taken at the individual student's own risk and responsibility. When travelling to countries or areas with an increased infection risk, they must carefully weigh up the risks and benefits of their visit. They are advised to check the local situation with the embassy or consulate of their destination country. No contributions will be made to travel costs.
FOPH information for travellers

Students should also request the local security protocol for the institution they are visiting. The responsible entities in their department or SSHE can provide more advice if necessary.

2.3. Private trips by ETH members

Private travel to countries or areas with an increased infection risk is at the individual's own risk and responsibility. Before planning holidays abroad, ETH members should therefore check the government's travel restrictions applying to their return to Switzerland and the various precautionary measures and directives issued by the authorities. The list of countries or regions with an increased infection risk, together with the mandatory quarantine requirements, may in some cases change while ETH members are on holiday. Before travelling to high-risk areas, ETH staff must inform their supervisor so that potential quarantine periods can be accommodated in forward planning. If a country is included in the government list while the ETH member is on holiday, they must inform their supervisor before coming back to work and must respect all the regulations imposed by the authorities and the university. They should contact their personnel manager for more detailed information.

	Before departure	After return		
	List of the federation	Remote working possible during quarantine	Remote working not possible during quarantine	Return to ETH
Case 1	Country/region not listed	10-day quarantine period qualifies as working time		Staff strongly advised to wear masks in and around ETH buildings for another 4 days after the quarantine period
Case 2	Country/region already listed	10-day period qualifies as working time	10-day period does not qualify as working time but is deducted from employee's time credits	

2.4. Recommendations for ETH members sharing a household with someone returning to Switzerland from a high-risk area

If persons from the same household as ETH members (relatives, partners) travel to a country or region with an increased infection risk, ETH Zurich recommends the ETH employee should work remotely from home for 10 days after that person returns to Switzerland, as long as the nature of their work permits. Thereafter ETH staff can return to their workplace, but are strongly advised to always wear masks on campus for another four days.

If a member of staff is unable to work remotely from home, they may attend the university as long as they wear a mask for 14 days and avoid close contact.

This is an internal recommendation by the university designed to protect all ETH members. Compliance with the rules on remote working is the responsibility of individual employees and should apply when it is not possible to avoid close contact with other household members during the quarantine period. Supervisors should be informed, so that remote working from home can be organised.

2.5. Taking up a post at ETH

Anyone entering Switzerland from countries or regions with an increased infection risk who is due to take up a post at ETH must enter a 10-day self-quarantine period in compliance with government regulations. As long as they are symptom-free by the end of that period, they can attend the university. To reduce the potential risk, however, they are strongly advised to wear a mask on campus for another four days. On arrival in Switzerland, they should be guided by the information and regulations provided by the authorities.

Supervisors must inform inbound travellers about these requirements before their arrival. They must also make sure the 10-day quarantine period is complied with and the necessary food and lodging is available during the isolation period. The period spent in quarantine or working remotely should be logged as working hours in the ETHIS time-recording system, ticking the box "not at work".

Interviews with people located abroad should always be conducted online.

2.6. Students entering Switzerland for exam/study purposes

Students arriving in Switzerland from a country or area with an increased infection risk in order to start a study programme, project or internship, or to take examinations at ETH Zurich, are subject to a 10-day quarantine period in accordance with government regulations. As long as they are symptom-free at the end of this period, they can come to the university but are strongly advised to always wear masks on campus for another four days in order to reduce the transmission risk.

3. Returning to Switzerland and duty to report your arrival

After returning from a country or region with an increased infection risk, travellers must comply with the 10-day quarantine period imposed by the authorities. Government regulations require travellers to report their arrival to the cantonal authority where they live within two days of their return. The online form and contact details for the relevant cantonal authority can be found here. Having completed the 10-day quarantine period studying or working from home, travellers can come to the university as long as they are symptom-free, but are strongly advised to always wear a mask on campus for another four days in order to reduce the transmission risk.

They should inform the cantonal health service immediately if they develop any symptoms. They should also consult the relevant ETH Zurich information sheet COVID19: Communication of illness, handling close contacts and supporting contact tracing - for ETH staff.

If ETH staff have any questions they should contact their personnel manager. Students should contact their responsible Student Administration or Academic Services.