



Remote Work from Outside the U.S. December 10, 2021

Penn State is a global university and values global collaborations. The business needs of University programs sometimes may require Penn State employees to travel and undertake work from non-U.S. locations.

Extended periods of work outside the United States by faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, and staff, is not permitted without advance approval as specified below.

Penn State takes very seriously its obligations to comply with all applicable rules and requirements for work and employment outside the United States. In rare cases, the University may, in its discretion, consider permitting extended periods of work from locations outside the United States where there is a compelling University business justification for such an arrangement, or in other exceptional situations. The University reviews these situations carefully, because international work arrangements present complex regulatory challenges for the University, which vary by country.

Extended periods of work from a non-U.S. location (e.g., including remote telework) which is based solely on personal preference or convenience generally is not a sufficient justification to work from a non-U.S. location.

All requests to work from non-U.S. locations for an extended period of time must be made by the unit executive to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs for faculty members and to the unit HRSP for staff employees. Any University-affiliated travel outside the U.S. also must comply with [TR01 International Travel Requirements](#), including registering with the Travel Safety Network.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does an ‘extended period of time’ mean?

“Extended period of time” generally means a period of time longer than a short trip or short visit to another country. The period of time spent in the other country need not be continuous to constitute an “extended period of time.” For example, frequent trips to another country during the appointment period that in the aggregate equal or exceed time spent in the U.S. falls under the scope of this guidance and is not permitted without advance approval from the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost. Consult with your HRSP if you have questions about whether your proposed non-U.S. work constitutes an extended period of time.

What kinds of work are not permitted?

“Work” includes any University-directed job responsibility that is performed. This may include teaching a class, engaging in research, or attending virtual meetings.

Does this guidance pertain to faculty on sabbaticals or similar formal study leaves?

Generally, no. Sabbaticals and similar formal study leaves are typically structured as leaves from the University in which faculty are engaged in self-directed work.



Can I still attend a conference in another country?

The guidance described above does not apply to short business trips to another country to attend a conference or event. Nevertheless, any University-affiliated travel outside the U.S. must comply with [TR01 International Travel Requirements](#) and individuals traveling should follow their unit's usual process for travel requests or permissions.

Does this guidance apply during the summer to faculty on 36-week contracts?

The guidance described above generally does not apply to activities in which faculty might engage outside of the appointment period and without University funds. Faculty members are encouraged to consult their unit's [AD77 guidelines](#) for further information about activities that are permitted to occur both during and outside the appointment period. Faculty drawing summer salary from the University (e.g., under sponsored projects) should notify their unit executive about any planned work from a non-U.S. location to ensure compliance with all sponsor and other requirements. All faculty traveling internationally are responsible for complying with any applicable requirements regarding visas, export control, internet usage, etc.

Does this guidance apply to graduate students or faculty members doing field work?

Field work for research purposes may, at the University's discretion, be considered a compelling business justification for work outside the U.S. for an extended period of time. Such requests should follow the guidance described above.

Does it matter whether the faculty member is a U.S. citizen or not?

This guidance generally applies to both U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens.

Does this apply to faculty who are teaching an Education Abroad course?

Faculty teaching a Penn State course outside of the U.S. through Education Abroad should follow the approval processes in the Office of Global Programs.

Whom should I address my questions to?

Individuals with questions about work from outside the U.S. should first contact their HRSP. Questions can be elevated to the unit executive or the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (vpfa@psu.edu) as warranted.