

# Guidelines for remote work at Karolinska Institutet

Dnr 1-1049/2024

Valid from 2025-06-16

This is a translation of the Swedish document *Riktlinjer för distansarbete vid Karolinska Institutet*. In the event of any discrepancy between the versions, the Swedish version constitutes the official decision, and the Swedish wording will prevail.



**Karolinska  
Institutet**





# Guidelines for remote work at Karolinska Institutet

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Reference number	Replaces documents:	Decision date:	Period of validity:
Dnr 1-1049/2024	1-533/2021	2025-06-16	2025-06-16 ongoing
Decision: University Director		Document type: Guidelines	
Administrative responsibility: HR-department/Labour Law and Work environment		Preparation with: Administrative managers, GVS, chief legal officer, rule group	
Revision with respect to: Remote work from abroad etc.			

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# 1 Introduction

According to the central collective agreement on remote work, there must be locally developed overarching guidelines for remote work at government agencies that utilise this work format. Remote work refers to work that could also be performed on-site at Karolinska Institutet (KI) but is regularly carried out outside of these premises.

## 2 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify the applicable rules for managers and employees regarding remote work within Sweden and from abroad.

## 3 Remote work and basic conditions

### 3.1 Remote work

Remote work is a way of organising and/or performing work using information technology within the framework of an employment contract or relationship, where work that could also be performed at the employer's premises is regularly carried out elsewhere.

### 3.2 Basic conditions

Remote work, whether in Sweden or abroad, is neither a right nor an obligation that can be unilaterally demanded by either KI or the employee. It is an option based on mutual agreement between the manager and the employee. The needs and requirements of the organisation determine where the work should be performed and whether remote work is feasible.

When working remotely, the following applies:

Collective agreements, rules, and other guidelines apply equally regardless of where the work is performed.

There is a mutual duty of loyalty between KI and the employee, meaning the employee must comply with the laws and regulations applicable to employment in Sweden, even when working remotely from abroad.

Even if a remote work agreement exists, KI may require the employee to return to the main workplace on short notice.



If organisational needs change or if remote work is otherwise deemed unsuitable, the agreement may need to be revised or terminated.

The employee must remain accessible to managers, colleagues, and other stakeholders during working hours, including answering calls, participating in digital meetings, and maintaining communication.

### **3.3 Remote work from abroad**

Remote work from abroad is only permitted by agreement and only when the employee works remotely from another EU/EEA country for a short period, not exceeding two weeks on occasional instances. Swedish labour law applies to the employment relationship during such periods, provided the employee is employed in Sweden and intends to return to work in Sweden.

Remote work from abroad does not include:

Posting to another country under the URA Agreement on foreign contracts and employment conditions abroad.

Official travel abroad under the Agreement on compensation for travel and assignments abroad (Avtal om ersättning m.m. vid tjänsteresa och förrättning utomlands.)

## **4 Main workplace and remote workplace**

The main workplace is the location where the work is normally performed or based, as stated in the employment contract or certificate of employment. It also constitutes the official place of work for tax purposes.

The remote workplace is usually the employee's home, but the manager and employee may agree on another temporary remote location. For remote work from abroad, the temporary remote workplace within the EU/EEA must be specified in the agreement.

## **5 Work tasks**

KI determines which tasks are suitable for remote work. This decision must consider operational needs as well as the work environment. National and



internal regulations may also affect which tasks are appropriate for remote work.

Tasks involving the exercise of public authority, handling of personal data, and/or sensitive information must be performed securely and in compliance with GDPR and other regulations. Tasks that may endanger the employee's safety must be carried out within secure premises.

## **5.1 Special considerations for remote work from abroad**

Tasks must be feasible and appropriate to perform from abroad.

## **6 Scope**

For remote work within Sweden, more than half of the work must be performed on-site at KI. Manager and employee may temporarily agree otherwise.

It may be justified to allow remote work exceeding 49% of full-time for a limited period if there are special reasons, such as recruitment difficulties or medical grounds.

For remote work from abroad, the scope is full-time for the agreed period, up to a maximum of two weeks.

## **7 Work environment responsibility**

KI is responsible for the work environment, including during remote work. KI must ensure that the remote workplace is functional and ergonomic, and that the employee can work undisturbed and within agreed working hours.

It is a shared responsibility between manager and employee to maintain dialogue about the remote work environment, covering physical, psychosocial, and organisational aspects.



Employees must report any work environment issues and allow KI to visit the remote workplace after prior contact.

## **7.1 Special considerations for remote work from abroad**

Swedish work environment regulations are national and only apply within Sweden. It is not possible to contractually extend them to another country. The host country's work environment laws may apply in the relationship between KI and the employee.

If remote work from abroad is permitted, KI must take reasonable steps to minimize risks and ensure a good work environment during the remote period.

It is also important to ensure that the host country is safe to travel to and that the employee has appropriate insurance.

The employee must inform KI of any risks or work environment issues that arise during the remote work period.

## **8 Design and equipment of the remote workplace**

Since a remote work agreement is voluntary for both KI and the employee, the employee cannot demand specific equipment.

KI is responsible for equipment at the main workplace, meaning that KI's offer of remote work assumes the employee is responsible for ensuring the remote workplace is appropriately designed and furnished from a work environment perspective.

KI may lend equipment for the remote workplace if there are special reasons, such as extensive remote work or medical grounds.



As remote work involves the use of information technology, it is essential that the employee has access to a mobile phone and a laptop at the remote workplace.

Another key requirement is a functioning internet connection that allows digital communication during working hours. The employee is responsible for having the necessary internet access.

## 9 Insurances

Remote work requires the employee to have their own insurance coverage. KI cannot insure the remote workplace.

Damage to the employee's home or other temporary remote workplace caused by KI's property is covered by the employee's own insurance. Whether an incident during remote work qualifies as a work-related injury and is covered by work injury insurance must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Any damage to property other than KI's must be covered by the employee's home insurance.

### 9.1 Special considerations for insurance during remote work from abroad

None of the insurance policies arranged through the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (Kammarkollegiet), which apply to postings under the URA agreement or business travel, are valid during remote work from abroad.

Therefore, the employee must have their own insurance during their stay abroad, covering travel, property damage or loss, accidents, work-related injuries, and both emergency and, where applicable, planned medical care in the host country.



## 10 Costs

The employee is responsible for any costs incurred due to remote work. The employee is only entitled to reimbursement for remote work-related expenses if these have been approved in advance by KI.

Reimbursed costs may be considered taxable income.

## 11 Remote work agreement

A remote work agreement within Sweden may be valid indefinitely or for a limited period.

Such an agreement may be terminated with mutual notice.

The manager may terminate the agreement with immediate effect if it is not followed or if KI deems the remote workplace unsafe.

For agreements valid indefinitely, the manager and employee must regularly review the conditions for continued remote work, for example during performance reviews.

A list of equipment lent by KI to the employee must be attached to the written agreement.