Directive on Shortening Quarantine
(Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2)
(23 February 2021)

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

1. Purpose of the Directive

Further to the resolution of the Executive Board of the University of 23 February 2021, UZH ("employer") has issued this directive setting out the procedure for shortening quarantine at UZH. It is intended to support continuing operations at UZH, while ensuring the greatest level of employee protection during the exceptional situation that has arising owing to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The directive is founded on the Federal Council decision of 27 January 2021 on shortening quarantine,¹ which the Canton of Zurich implemented effective 8 February 2021.

2. Validity of the Directive

This directive is valid only for the current exceptional situation and remains in effect until further notice. The employer will regularly evaluate the directive. If necessary, the directive may be extended via e-mail.

3. Shortening Quarantine – Powers and Criteria

At UZH, a test to shorten quarantine may be mandated for individual organizational units and for specific individuals within those organizational units, as described below. This ensures that testing remains within reasonable bounds. It is subject to a formalized process (see section 4 of this directive).

Quarantine may be shortened in organizational units with individuals who:

− for operational reasons usually work on site, in compliance with the statutory and official requirements issued by the federal government and the Canton of Zurich,

− and are regarded as key personnel in the maintenance of the operations of that organizational unit, in that the value of each day on which they are present on site outweighs the cost and effort involved in shortening their quarantine,

− and, if a shorter quarantine is approved, are able at all times to wear a mask and to maintain a distance of 1.5 meters from other individuals up to the end of the original quarantine period.

Quarantine cannot be shortened for any other purpose.

¹ See also the Ordinance on Measures during the Special Situation to combat the COVID-19 Epidemic (COVID-19 Special Situation Ordinance (Contact Quarantine and Isolation) of 27 January 2021 (in German, French, and Italian). To date, anyone who had been in contact with an infected person, or who had traveled to Switzerland from a state or territory with a higher risk of infection, had to stay in quarantine for ten days. Quarantine may now be lifted if, on or after the seventh day of quarantine, the person concerned undergoes a rapid antigen or PCR test that produces a negative result. Up to the end of the original quarantine period, a mask must always be worn and a minimum distance of 1.5 meters from other individuals must be maintained, except within the home or residential space.
4. Testing

Organizational units that are planning to shorten quarantine for their employees must organize the associated process themselves.

Internal approval to shorten quarantine is granted via official channels, i.e. line managers submit the order for approval to their immediate supervisor (or the head of the organizational unit), accompanied by a sufficient supporting argument and a cost-benefit analysis (see section 3).

In principle, the employer may mandate a test in order to shorten quarantine. Testing costs must be covered by the employer in such cases.

The employees concerned conduct the test at their place of residence. They then present the cantonal confirmation of shortened quarantine to their line manager, who forwards it to Human Resources to be stored in the employee's file. Only once this confirmation has been received will line managers approve the return of the employees concerned to their on-site workplace.

The costs of the test to shorten quarantine are settled as incurred by means of an expenses claim accompanied by the original receipt, and reimbursed to employees by the organizational unit.

5. Rules of Conduct at the Workplace in the Case of Shortened Quarantine

Up to the end of the original quarantine period, the employee concerned must always wear a mask and maintain a minimum distance of 1.5 meters from others for the whole time that they are on UZH premises.

6. Voluntary Tests to Shorten Quarantine

UZH values the solidarity that employees demonstrate with their colleagues by undertaking tests to shorten quarantine.

Testing to shorten quarantine is nonetheless voluntary.

If an employee is not prepared to be tested in order to shorten their quarantine, they should contact their line manager at an early stage.

The line manager will then examine and decide upon the allocation of other work to that employee, or the option of taking leave, i.e. by reducing overtime hours, or taking annual or unpaid leave. Cases are escalated via official channels, with the attendant consequences under personnel law.