



Guidelines for the availability of the coworkers at the department of works science, business administration and environmental psychology (AEM)

Background and Purpose

The technology of today makes it possible to work at a distance and still being more available in spite of the coworkers' absence from their work places. Many of the coworkers of SLU have laptops, smart phones and a possibility to work as long as the Internet is available. In addition to flexible working hours and yearly working hours this is making it possible for employees at the SLU to decide themselves, when they would like to do any assignment. New technical equipment doesn't imply that the coworker must be connected all the time, but it creates an increasing flexibility of work and increasing expectations of availability.

New ways of communication which can be tools of quick and easy communication can cause stress. For instance, sending an e-mail to a colleague in the evening may send other signals than what is written in the e-mail message. This could be interpreted as the coworker is expected to be available out of working hours. If a coworker chooses to work in the evening, that doesn't mean that the colleagues are expected to be available at the same time. Therefore the department will make it clear to everybody, that:

1. Coworkers are not expected to always be connected – Official telephone and e-mail are expected to be shut down out of working hours.
2. The coworkers of the SLU are expected to behave respectfully towards each other while communicating by e-mail and telephone.
3. The coworkers are expected to be aware of how the new technology and availability can be handled in an optimized manner.

Good manners while using telephone and e-mail

The Guidelines of Telephoning and E-mail within the SLU (SLU.ua.2016.1.1.1-81) are concerning the whole staff of the SLU and means good telephone manners, where the coworker is a good representative of the SLU and available during working hours.

Guidelines of efficient E-mail communication:

- Be explicit about the subject of the E-mail
- Be careful about who is going to be sent a copy (cc) of the e-mail. Don't do a cc when it isn't necessary!
- Express yourself explicit, while explaining your message.
- Stop syncing e-mails when you are on sick leave, on a holiday, out of working hours or when on any leave from work.
- Don't ever use e-mail in a state of conflict.

Think about the purpose of your e-mail and the value of it to your colleagues. Think about if the issue could be handled more efficient by a personal message rather than by e-mail.

Manners of accessibility

Replies by e-mail or by telephone are expected to be carried out in the normal working hours, i. e. during daytime on weekdays. When a coworker is absent owing to illness, custody of child, holidays and the like s/he isn't expected to reply on e-mails or phone calls until s/he is back into office.

When working at a distance

Coworkers having working hours of teachers have a right, as long as it works, to choose where to do their work (but if you work at home regularly, you must have a distance agreement). Work at a distance of other profession groups than those with working hours of teachers must agree on distance work with their superior to work outside their ordinary working place. Regular distance work must be agreed on by superior and coworker and also be approved, if there are any valid reasons for working at home. Distance work makes the coworker less accessible to superiors and colleagues and the coworker is expected to be available by e-mail and telephone.

When leaving for distance work or official journey, the coworkers are supposed to notify their superiors and colleagues about the coworkers' absence. The coworkers are also supposed to tell their colleagues and superiors how they can be reached and this information and when they are back into office is also supposed to be written on the coworkers' whiteboards near their work places.

The following positions have working hours of teachers:

PhD-students, Researchers, Teachers (lecturer, senior lecturer, Assistant and associate Professor, Professor),

The following positions have working hours of office:

Technical/Administrative (TA) staff, Research Assistant, Laboratory Assistant, Field Assistant

When attending on meetings

The coworkers are supposed to write down on their whiteboards near their offices a message of absence and estimated time when they are back into office.

In the event of unexpected absence

In the event of illness, custody of child or absence of any other unexpected reason the coworkers are supposed to notify their superiors and / or the administration, who could arrange a messages of absence on the telephone and on the whiteboards outside their offices. If the coworkers have the possibility of using e-mail, then it would be disareable with a message of absence on the e-mail.

In the event of a planned absence, the coworkers are supposed to leave a message of absence on their telephones, e-mails and whiteboards themselves.

In both of the events of unexpected absence and planned absence, the coworkers are expected to shut down their official telephones and e-mails. During the absence, the coworkers has no need for contacting coworkers, superiors and colleagues as long as the message of absence has been broadcasted.

Follow up

Everybody has a responsibility of being a good example regarding accessibility. Guidelines of accessibility will in an advantageous manner be connected to the departments' aims at a good communication and a pleasant working environment. The goals will be evaluated every year and updated when needed. Moreover, the guidelines could be used in regular group discussions on stress, working environment and accessibility. The guidelines may also be used in dialogue with coworkers, recruitments and introduction of new coworkers.

This decision is made by the head of department and in consultation with the Leading Group of the Department.

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Christina Lunner Kolstrup

Head of the Department of Work Science, Business Administration and Environmental Psychology

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