



Hybrid Working Principles and Guidance

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Purpose

As a campus-based university, we are committed to creating vibrant campus spaces for our staff and students and we want all staff to continue contributing to this environment and atmosphere. There are many benefits to on campus face to face interactions with colleagues, students and stakeholders such as:

- ✔ Relationship building
- ✔ Teamworking
- ✔ Knowledge transfer
- ✔ Collaboration
- ✔ Clearer boundaries between work location and home
- ✔ Health and wellbeing

It is clear that for some there are also many positive aspects to remote working such as:

- ✔ Better work-life balance
- ✔ Time and space to focus
- ✔ Increased productivity
- ✔ Reduced commuting times

The principles and associated guidance seek to harness the benefits of both approaches to enable greater flexibility, for eligible staff, around where they carry out their role, while also ensuring that the needs of the University, students, stakeholders and customers continue to be met by keeping the University's purpose and strategy at the heart of decision making.

The purpose of this guidance document is to support Directors/Heads of Service, managers and staff to participate in conversations at a department, team and individual level around potential ways of working.

Eligibility

The principles apply to eligible Professional Services staff at the University, as it is acknowledged that Academic colleagues already have significant flexibility in determining where they work. These arrangements will continue to be managed locally by line managers, ensuring that that learning and teaching activities are carried out with an excellent student experience being paramount.



The University's Hybrid Working Principles

The following principles have been created in conjunction with feedback from across the University and should be used to aid conversations in determining the most appropriate and effective place to carry out a role or set of tasks within the [Hybrid Working trial starting in May](#). At this time, the principles are based around **where** activities are carried and not **when** the activities are carried out. Working times should be agreed in line with contracts of employment and through agreement with your line manager.

- ✔ As a campus-based university, we want to ensure a vibrant campus atmosphere for staff, students and visitors. It is therefore expected that some elements of campus presence will exist in all roles. As this is a trial, there will be no contractual changes made during this period
- ✔ The aim of the trial is to create an environment that allows staff to work effectively, both individually and collectively while continuing to provide an excellent educational experience for our students, deliver high quality research outputs and effective engagement with public, private and third sector bodies to maximise knowledge exchange and innovation.
- ✔ Working with managers and enabled by appropriate technology, staff will be encouraged to select their environment to meet their diary and working commitments on a daily basis.
- ✔ To support working arrangement conversations, the following two categories of roles have been determined:

Campus based roles where physical presence at an agreed university location is required to carry out a role. This includes roles which cannot be reasonably undertaken at home or remotely, like catering, cleaning and some student support roles.

Hybrid working roles that are not required to be carried out entirely at an agreed University location. This includes all other roles, where some degree of home or remote working may be appropriate.

- ✔ Role categories and parameters for campus and remote working will be determined at a departmental and team level and agreed by the Director/Head of Service to ensure consistency of approach. Further work will continue so as to understand



linkages around teaching, research, operational and service strategies and to ensure that there is alignment with and no detrimental impacts to the student experience.

- ✔ Whilst it is recognised that some roles are less dependent on physical interaction on University premises, it is envisaged that all roles will require time on campus for specific meetings (for example, one to ones, team meetings), for collaboration or project work. There are no roles for which entirely home-working will be deemed appropriate. Each department Director/Heads of Service will determine what campus presence is required to meet University needs throughout the duration of the trial.
- ✔ Collaboration across the University is key to our success. Hybrid working arrangements should therefore be flexible in nature and not create operational issues across Schools or departments (e.g. making arrangements that prevent work progressing due to staff availability).
- ✔ Rather than setting a fixed and regular routine, arrangements should be agile to achieve the best outcomes in the right setting at any given time, ensuring collaboration takes place, when needed, and in the appropriate setting.
- ✔ Effective engagement is key to our success and the University takes pride in collaborative and supportive team working, partnering with students, colleagues and stakeholders alike and these principles should be core to decisions around hybrid working.
- ✔ All requests for hybrid working arrangements will be non-contractual in nature and should be assessed taking into consideration University needs in the first instance, however other factors may also be considered, such as staff wellbeing and sustainability benefits. There is no automatic right to hybrid working arrangements due to the forced remote working arrangements in place during the pandemic.
- ✔ Changes may be made to an individual or team's hybrid working arrangements if it is established that they have adversely affected the performance of the University, student experience or other relevant service needs.
- ✔ Staff should not undertake caring responsibilities while working at home or remotely and must have adequate support arrangements in place, which can be supported by university HR policies and procedures.

Other Flexible Working Arrangement Options

For the purpose of the trial, hybrid working is defined as determining where the most appropriate and effective place is to carry out a role or set of tasks. This is a flexible and non-contractual



arrangement agreed between staff and managers in line with the principles and the agreed parameters as approved by the Director/Head of Service. There are however a number of other existing flexible working arrangements across the University.

[Flexible Working Policy](#)

The University has a [Flexible Working Policy](#) which enables eligible staff to submit a formal application to change contractual working arrangements, such as days, hours and location of work.

Eligible staff can apply, stating reasons as to why a contractual change is needed (e.g. child care, medical reasons etc). The request is then formally reviewed in line with the policy, which may include meeting with your line manager and Dean or Director to explore your request further.

Only one application for a formal change in working arrangements can be made within a 12-month period and while the University has a duty to consider applications seriously, the policy does not provide an automatic right to change working arrangements. It is however believed that while working in a hybrid way is non contractual it gives a greater level of flexibility to staff.

[Flexitime Scheme](#)

The University runs a [Flexi-time Scheme](#). This scheme enables eligible staff to vary their start and finish times throughout their working week. It is the responsibility of line managers and staff to ensure that service delivery within a department is not negatively impacted due to staff availability of those utilising the flexi scheme.

All arrangements should be pre agreed between line managers and staff and any additional hours worked as part of the scheme should be done so aligned with University needs.

Discussion and consideration should be given as to whether or not flexi-time can also be used in conjunction with other flexible arrangements. There is however no automatic right for this to occur and departmental service delivery should be the driving factor.

[Special Leave](#)

The University also has other leave options available to support staff in particular circumstances. These include:

[Family friendly leave options](#)

There are a number of options aimed to help support staff in achieving a healthy work/life balance, recognising that many have caring responsibilities. For example, [Time off for Dependent Care](#), which helps to support staff with up to two paid leave days per 12 month to deal with emergency situations which may occur. [Parental Leave](#) offers eligible staff unpaid leave to care for children under the age of 18 years old. More information can be found about all our family leave options on the [HR Intranet pages](#).



Other special leave options

There are also a number of other special leave options, aiming to support staff with a wide range of circumstances when they may need to take time away from work. These include: up to five days paid compassionate leave, in cases of serious illness of a close relative or if a close relative passes away and up to five days paid for Fertility Treatment Leave. More information around eligibility and how to apply for appropriate special leave options can be found within the [HR Intranet Pages](#).

Assessing suitability for Hybrid Working Arrangements

It is acknowledged that due to the nature of some University roles, not all staff within Professional Services will be able to work in a hybrid way due to their roles being more focused on campus-based activities, however there may be other University policies which enable flexible working arrangements within these staffing groups.

Roles eligible for hybrid working are those that are not required to be carried out entirely at an agreed University location. Decisions around suitability for hybrid working and the level of campus presence required will be decided by the Director/Head of Service, who will be accountable for ensuring decisions made across the department are done so in a consistent manner. It should be acknowledged that different arrangements may be agreed across departments and teams depending on the service needs, however application of the principles should ensure a fair and consistent approach to decision making.

To assess and determine appropriate working arrangements, the department should review the principles taking into consideration the services provided within a given role or team.

Consideration should be given to

- ☑ the departmental need to effectively cover the service on campus.
- ☑ the different types of roles and tasks in the department and whether varied arrangements can be put in place depending.
- ☑ the need, purpose and frequency for campus presence such as for carrying out specific roles or tasks, collaborating, attending meetings and one-to-ones.
- ☑ the developmental needs of the team and whether more on campus presence would be beneficial for learning, specifically for those earlier in their career.
- ☑ the space and technology required for hybrid working to be successful within the department.

Manager and Staff discussions

Managers and staff are encouraged to meet regularly to discuss University, department and team needs in addition to personal circumstances to implement arrangements. In some instances, it may be helpful to do this at a team level, so as to agree how the team will approach this together. **Appendix 1** details some prompts, questions and further considerations to help structure these discussions.

Roles and Responsibilities



For hybrid working to be successful it requires commitment from all involved including senior managers, line managers and staff.

Responsibilities of Managers

- ✔ Work with your Director/Head of Service to determine what type of arrangements and parameters could be implemented to ensure department service levels are met.
- ✔ Discuss with your teams how to apply the principles locally.
- ✔ Explain the rationale as to why campus presence may be required as opposed to remote working.
- ✔ Discuss and consider hybrid working arrangements fairly and consistently in line with the principles.
- ✔ Establish and maintain effective communication and collaboration within your team.
- ✔ Ensure all staff are treated fairly in relation to performance reviews, reward and recognition regardless of where they carry out work.
- ✔ Ensure that hybrid working does not lead to 'visibility bias's e.g. opportunities and urgent tasks being given to those physically present on campus.
- ✔ Ensure you are on campus regularly enough to provide appropriate support and development to your teams.

See **Appendix 2** – tips for managing a hybrid working team.

Responsibilities of all staff

- ✔ Keep in touch with your colleagues and team, using relevant technology and equipment.
- ✔ Feed into and comply with local/team rules for hybrid working such as attending team meetings when required.
- ✔ Ensure you are available and accessible whilst working remotely.
- ✔ Keep yourself up to date with University, department and team communications.
- ✔ Maintain all necessary standards of performance and attendance and remain open to feedback and support.
- ✔ Have a suitable place to work remotely with a reliable internet connection.
- ✔ Follow all relevant health and safety expectations whilst working from home.

Health & Wellbeing

We are committed to placing health and wellbeing at the heart of the experience of working at the University, ensuring that everyone can work in a supportive environment at home and on campus. The University will work with staff to ensure safe and appropriate working arrangements are in place. We recognise the benefits of hybrid working for both staff and the University, resulting in a better work-life balance whilst also maintaining the community and vibrant spirit of the University.

The University's [Workload Guidance](#) should be followed and supported by managers when staff are working from home or on-campus.



We will support managers and staff with individual circumstances relating to health conditions, disability, including hidden disabilities and personal situations, which may require reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 to be considered and additional support with working arrangements in the future.

If a staff member states that they have a health reason for not returning to campus, managers should liaise with HR to progress a referral to the University's Occupational Health Provider.

Support is also available for staff who are experiencing anxiety, stress or mental ill-health at the prospect of returning to work.

Please contact [Human Resources](#) to discuss individual situations. You can also access the [Health and Wellbeing Intranet Pages](#) to review some of the support available to staff and managers including: line manager support tools and mental health support tools.

Technology and Equipment

The University is committed to ensuring that staff have the appropriate technology and equipment to complete their role successfully, both at home and on campus. This is an ongoing process whilst the University continues working on enhancing the spaces and equipment needed to support a more flexible approach to location and the completion of tasks.

The University intends to move away from fixed desktop PCs for the majority of staff and adopt more flexible workspaces. To support this approach, there will be a number of shared desk spaces that will have laptop docking facilities, monitors and keyboards which a laptop can be connected. Other spaces will be intended for collaborative and/or group working and will have access to power sockets to ensure that they are laptop friendly.

The [End User Device Policy](#) outlines the equipment that will be allocated to each staff member. In most cases this will be a managed laptop with a headset and carry bag, which can be used both at home and on campus. Staff can also request for an additional screen, mouse and keyboard for home working. For any additional furniture required, staff can claim a one-off payment of up to £250, this is to help pay for items such as a chair or desk.

The University will be unable to provide dual set-ups (at home and on campus) for all staff. However, as per the [End User Device Policy](#), where staff require specialist equipment to complete their role or where a member of staff has a personal need for a dual set-up (linked to a health condition, or reasonable adjustments), this will be discussed and agreed on an individual basis.

The University does not make financial contributions for normal household expenditure such as heating, lighting and broadband costs for staff working in a hybrid model. Hybrid working is optional, and staff may opt not to participate and remain working at their contractual place of work. If you opt to work remotely at home for some of your working week and this is agreed in line with



the Hybrid Working Principles, as from 06 April 2022 you will be unable to claim tax relief on any household expenses which you might occur whilst working at home. HMRC will however allow you to claim tax relief for 2020-2021 and 2021-22 tax years. If you have not already claimed, you can still make claims for both years and HMRC will accept backdated claims for up to four years. You can claim [here](#).

Shared Desk Areas

The move to hybrid working means that all staff within one team may rarely be required on campus on the same day, therefore, not everyone will need a permanent fixed desk space on campus. Working in a hybrid way will give the University an opportunity to use space across the campuses differently and free up more space for learning, teaching and research purposes as well as creating more private and collaboration spaces. It is anticipated that most team spaces will be a mix of fixed desk areas and shared desk areas, this set up will be tested within the Sighthill campus during the trial.

There will be no requirement to book shared desk spaces. Effective team communication and planning across the department will be required to ensure that space is managed and used efficiently and effectively.

Lockers will be available to store items which need to be stored securely. For other items that don't need to be locked away there will be additional team storage in rooms, such as cabinets.

Generic hot desk areas will be created across each campus for staff to use when they are visiting the campus or need some quieter space. They may also be used as additional desk space if an entire department is on campus at the same time.

A clear desk policy will be adopted across all shared desk areas and all staff will have responsibility for keeping the desk spaces clean.

Outputs and Performance

A hybrid working model is based on trust and relies on effective communication and the continued successful delivery of tasks.

Setting clear objectives and participating fully in the University's [My Contribution](#) objective setting and review process is key to the successful implementation of hybrid working. This ensures that staff and managers are clear on agreed objectives, outputs, and achievable outcomes. It is also key that staff have regular meaningful one to one conversations with their line managers around objectives and expectations.



Changes may be made to an individual or team's hybrid working arrangements if it is established they have adversely affected the performance of the University, student experience or other relevant service needs.

Support Documents and intranet pages

Hybrid Working

[Hybrid Working FAQs](#)

Support for Homeworking

[Home Working Policy](#)

[Workload Guidance for Employees](#)

[Workload Guidance for Managers](#)

[Health and Safety Intranet Page](#)

Flexible Working Arrangement Documents

[Flexible Working Policy](#)

[Flexitime Scheme](#)

[Family Friendly Leave Options](#)

[Leave in Special Circumstances Options](#)

Health and Wellbeing Support

[Health and Wellbeing Intranet Pages](#)

[Health and Safety Intranet page](#)



Appendix 1 - Prompts and Questions to support conversations

- ☑ **Departmental Needs**
 - ☑ What are our on-campus departmental needs?
 - ☑ What are the different needs of the roles or teams in the department?
 - ☑ Is everyone clear on the rationale for completing tasks or role in certain locations?
 - ☑ Which stakeholders should we check in with to ensure service needs are met? e.g. academics, students etc.
 - ☑ Are there any potential operational risks or challenges arising that have not been considered so far?

- ☑ **Place of work**
 - ☑ How much on-campus visibility and cover do we need in the team or department?
 - ☑ What different roles within the team will have different arrangements and why?
 - ☑ Do we require a rota system? What will this look like?
 - ☑ What are the peak periods when more staff will be required on campus e.g. graduation?
 - ☑ Do we have particular meetings/events where all staff in a team must be on campus e.g. one-to-ones, weekly/monthly team meetings etc?
 - ☑ Does anyone have a preference to work solely on campus?
 - ☑ Do we have any staff who would benefit from more frequent remote working due to a disability / health condition, can this be accommodated?

- ☑ **Working environment & Equipment**
 - ☑ What campus/office set up would be most beneficial if staff are working in a more hybrid way?
 - ☑ Do we have teams or staff who need to be on campus either permanently or most of the time and as such would need a fixed desk?
 - ☑ Do we have anyone that need specialist equipment on campus and at home? Are there any reasonable adjustments that need to be considered?
 - ☑ What spaces are needed across other campuses when visiting?
 - ☑ When should meetings be hybrid/all online/all in person?

- ☑ **Other considerations**
 - ☑ How and when should we review arrangements and if they are working?
 - ☑ What are our specific team measures?



Appendix 2 - Tips for Managing a Hybrid Team

- ☑ Agree your team parameters for successful hybrid working. Consider setting some team principles or rules that everyone will work to. Hybrid teams work best when the team decides what will work for them. These rules or principles should be reviewed regularly and adapted where required. This is especially important for newly created hybrid teams – learn from your own experiences over the last two years.
- ☑ Agree appropriate communication methods. For instance, discuss the frequency of meetings and whether they will be online or in person and decide when the team will get together face to face. Harness technology to ensure everyone has the information that they need to complete their role effectively.
- ☑ Share working arrangements. Help people to understand where everyone is working and when. This could include sharing diaries and on-campus rotas.
- ☑ Talk to people about their working preferences. Not everyone will want to work remotely or in a hybrid way, but they may benefit from other forms of flexibility. Where staff want to work on campus on a full-time basis this should be accommodated – not everyone can or wants to work remotely.
- ☑ Schedule face to face time for everyone. This might be a weekly or monthly meeting or a quarterly away-day – different teams will need different amounts of in person time. A regular in person get-together will help to build effective team relationships and will especially benefit new starters.
- ☑ Ensure that the team has the appropriate technology and equipment necessary to enable successful hybrid working – and they know how to use it effectively. This will support all team members in fully participating in communication, collaboration and team meetings. Talk to your team to check that they have what they need.
- ☑ Make it clear to your team that they do not have to respond to all messages immediately and support them in managing their work life balance in line with the University's [Workload Guidance](#). Managers can be a powerful role model in good digital practice.
- ☑ Review and update objectives regularly and build in time for feedback. When staff work remotely, performance is harder to observe, therefore, making clear, measurable and time



bound outputs and objectives even more important. When teams work in a hybrid way performance should be assessed by outcomes and contribution rather than time in the office.

- ☑ Think carefully about inclusion and fairness. Managers should ensure that work, information and opportunities are distributed equally throughout the team; these decisions should not be made on the basis of who is working in the office or at home.
- ☑ It is also key to celebrate success and performance outcomes when teams are working in a hybrid model. This may include recognising achievements or qualifications attained and ensuring you take the time to give a meaningful thank you. Recognition can be achieved virtually as well as face to face.