# 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 colleagues and students and we want everyone to continue to contribute to this environment and atmosphere. There are many benefits to on-campus face to face interactions with colleagues, students and stakeholders including relationship building; team working; knowledge transfer and collaboration. And for some, there are also positive aspects to remote working, better work-life balance; increased productivity and reduced commuting times for example.

The principles and associated guidance harness the benefits of both approaches to enable greater flexibility, whilst 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 is to support Directors/Heads of Service, managers and colleagues to hold regular conversations at a School/Service, team and at an individual level around ways of working.

## Eligibility

These principles apply to Professional Services colleagues (including technicians).

Our Academic colleagues continue to have significant flexibility in determining where they work and should review the academic principles.

## Hybrid Working Principles

These principles should be used to determine the most appropriate and effective place to carry out a role or set of tasks – this will help discussions around **where** activities are carried and not **when** the activities are carried out.

Working times should continue to be agreed in line with contracts of employment and through agreement with your line manager.

- ☑ As a campus-based university, it is expected that some elements of campus presence will exist in all roles.

- ☑ Hybrid working creates an environment that allows colleagues to work effectively, both individually and collectively, whilst 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, colleagues are encouraged to agree their environment to meet their diary and working commitments.

☑ 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/task. This includes roles which cannot be reasonably carried out at home or remotely, like catering, cleaning and some student support roles. **Hybrid working roles;** where some degree of home or remote working may be appropriate. These roles/tasks are not required to be carried out entirely at an agreed university location.

☑ Role categories and parameters for campus and remote working will be determined at a School/Service and team level and agreed by the Director/Head of Service to ensure consistency of approach. These approaches may change to ensure alignment to the expected service levels for students and colleagues with no detrimental impacts.

☑ Whilst it is recognised that some roles are less dependent on physical interaction at a university campus, all roles will require campus presence. There are no roles for which entirely home-working will be deemed appropriate. Each Director/Head of Service will determine what campus presence is required to meet expected service levels for students and colleagues.

☑ Collaboration across the University is key to our success. Hybrid working arrangements should therefore be flexible and not create operational issues (e.g. making arrangements that prevent work progressing due to colleague 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, ensuring that there is no detriment to business needs.

☑ 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.

☑ There is no automatic right to hybrid working and all arrangements will be non-contractual and should be assessed taking university needs into consideration in the first instance. Other factors may also be considered, such as wellbeing and sustainability benefits.

☑ It is expected that workstation assessments are completed for both on-campus location and home-working environments to ensure that the work environment (lighting, temperature, space, etc) and equipment (screen, chair, table, mouse, keyboard, etc) are suitable for the tasks and that the general health and safety hazards (electrical, fire, manual handling, etc) are being addressed).

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

✅ Colleagues should not take on caring responsibilities whilst working at home or remotely and must have adequate support arrangements in place. Colleagues are expected to be available during their contracted hours and focused on delivering work activity.

## Other Flexible Working Arrangement Options

Hybrid working is defined as determining where the most appropriate and effective place is to carry out a role or set of tasks. There are, however, a number of other existing flexible working arrangements across the University.

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

The Flexi-time Scheme enables eligible colleagues with approval to vary their start and finish times throughout their working week. It is the responsibility of line managers and colleagues to ensure that service delivery is not negatively impacted due to colleague availability of those utilising the flexi-scheme.

## Assessing suitability for Hybrid Working Arrangements

Due to the nature of some roles, not everyone within Professional Services will be able to work in a hybrid way.

Roles eligible for hybrid working are those that have tasks 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 School/Service are done in a consistent manner. It should be acknowledged that different arrangements may be agreed across 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 School/Service should regularly review the principles taking into consideration the services provided within a given role or team.

Consideration should be given to:

- ✅ the need to effectively cover the service on campus and operational requirements.
- ✅ the different types of roles and tasks and whether varied arrangements can be put in place.
- ✅ 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.

## Manager and Colleague Discussions

Managers and colleagues are encouraged to meet regularly to discuss University, School/Service 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 to agree how the team will approach this together.

**Appendix 1** details some prompts, questions and further considerations to help structure these discussions.

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

### Responsibilities of Managers

- ☑ Routinely discuss and review with your teams how to apply the principles locally.
- ☑ Explain the rationale as to why campus presence continues to 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 colleagues 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 biases' e.g. opportunities and urgent tasks being given to those physically present on campus.
- ☑ Ensure you apply the principles to yourself and 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 Colleagues

- ☑ Keep in touch regularly with your colleagues and team, using relevant technology and equipment.
- ☑ Continue to 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 during your contracted hours.
- ☑ Keep yourself up to date with University, School/Service 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

Health and wellbeing is at the heart of the colleague experience and we recognise that there are many benefits of hybrid working, including a better work-life balance whilst maintaining the community and vibrant spirit of the University.

The Workload Guidance should be followed and supported by managers when colleagues are working from home or on-campus.

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

Further information is available on our Health and Wellbeing Intranet Pages

## Technology and Equipment

We are committed to ensuring that colleagues have the appropriate technology and equipment to complete their role successfully, both at home and on campus. This is an ongoing process whilst we continue to work on enhancing the spaces.

The End User Device Policy outlines the equipment that will be allocated which in most cases will be a managed laptop with a headset and carry bag, which can be used both at home and on-campus. Colleagues can also request for an additional screen, mouse and keyboard for home working.

For any additional furniture required, colleagues can claim a one-off payment of up to £250, this is to help pay for items such as a chair or desk. Your manager must approve all purchases in advance, which should be claimed through the normal staff expenses process, with items receipted. If you have specific disabilities, this limit may be extended further to ensure you have suitable equipment – requests should be discussed with your line manager and the People Team.

Colleagues are required to complete a home-working workstation assessment to ensure they have considered the general health and safety hazards in the home workplace as the University has little direct control of this aspect. The following need to be reviewed:

- ☑ The ergonomics of the home-work area/environment. There should be suitable access to the room, the colleague needs to ensure good housekeeping, including adequate lighting, ventilation and heating, remove trailing leads, and not using the floor and high shelves for storage.
- ☑ Work equipment and use– the fixed electrical system you are connecting to is in good condition, the University will provide safe and tested electrical equipment.
- ☑ Work process – enough working space and lighting for the task.
- ☑ Other aspects -fire arrangements, lone working, taking breaks.

We are unable to provide dual set-ups (at home and on-campus), however as per the End User Device Policy, where colleagues require specialist equipment to complete their role or where there is 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.

As hybrid working is optional, we are not making financial contributions for normal household expenditure such as heating, lighting and broadband costs for those working in a hybrid way.

## Shared Desk Areas

The move to hybrid working means that team members will not all be on campus on the same day, therefore, not everyone will need a permanent fixed desk space on campus – hot desks are also available. Working in a hybrid way means we have 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.

The allocation of shared desk spaces in professional service areas is managed locally. If you intend to work from a hot desk you may need to book this in advance via resource booker. Effective team communication and planning 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 colleagues to use when they are visiting the campus or need some quieter space.

A clear desk policy is in place across all shared desk areas.

## Outputs and Performance

A hybrid working model relies on effective communication and the continued successful delivery of tasks, as well as trust.

Setting clear objectives and participating fully in the My Contribution objective setting and review process is key to the successful implementation of hybrid working. This ensures that colleagues and managers are clear on agreed objectives, outputs, and achievable outcomes. Regular meaningful one to one conversations with colleagues and their line managers around objectives and expectations, are also key.

Changes may be made to an individual or team's hybrid working arrangements or removal of hybrid working, if it adversely affects the delivery of the  service or student experience.

## Support Documents and Intranet Pages

Hybrid Working FAQs

Support for Homeworking

Home Working Policy
Workload Guidance for Employees
Workload Guidance for Managers
Health and Safety Intranet Page
Essential Skillz training – specifically for Homeworker Safety Risk Assessment, Homeworking & Workstation assessments and DSE training module.

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 & Hybrid Working Reviews

**School/Service Needs**

- ☑ What are our on-campus needs?
- ☑ What are the different needs of the roles and teams?
- ☑ Is everyone clear on the rationale for completing tasks or roles in certain locations?
- ☑ Which stakeholders should we continue to 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 are required?
- ☑ 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 the 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 anyone that would benefit from more frequent remote working due to a disability/health condition, can this be accommodated?

**Working environment & Equipment**

- ☑ Do we have teams or colleagues who need to be on campus either permanently or most of the time?
- ☑ 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?
- ☑ What is the home set up for colleagues – complete work station assessments to ensure that general health and safety hazards and overall wellbeing are being addressed

**Other considerations**

- ☑ What are our specific team measures and when should we review?

## Appendix 2 - Tips for Managing and Reviewing a Hybrid Team

- Agree and review your team parameters and principles that everyone will work to, to enable successful hybrid working. This is especially important for newly created hybrid teams.

- Agree appropriate communication methods including the frequency of meetings and whether they will be online or in person (or a mix) and decide when the team will get together face to face. Harness technology to ensure everyone has the information that they need.

- Share working arrangements and help people to understand where everyone is working and when, e.g. sharing diaries and on-campus rotas.

- Continue to talk to people about their working preferences, not everyone will want to work remotely or in a hybrid way. Where colleagues want to work on campus on a full-time basis this should be accommodated.

- 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– and they know how to use it effectively. This will support all team members in fully participating in communication, collaboration and team meetings.

- Support your team, whether working full-time or part-time hours, 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 colleagues 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.