

## HYBRID WORKING FOR PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

### MANAGERS TOOLKIT

Please familiarise yourself with the **University Hybrid Working Framework**.

Hybrid working is an informal arrangement for colleagues whose role allows them to work effectively from campus and from home. If a colleague would like a permanent change to their working arrangements e.g. contractual hours, regular pattern of work etc, they should make a request under the Flexible Working Policy. The Flexible Working Policy is not intended to be used where a hybrid working would be more appropriate.

Hybrid Working is a new concept for colleagues across professional support services (PSS). They are a varied group with different functions, stakeholders, sizes and working practices, so there is unlikely to be a 'one size fits all' approach and there are no precedents.

Decisions must therefore be made locally and likely will change as teams settle into new ways of working.

Regular review of arrangements should be carried out and adjusted accordingly.

#### Considerations

**Communication** within teams will be vital. Managers should be clear what type of communications should be used by teams and be clear in terms of performance expectations of individuals.

**Sense of Team** - Managers should think about how to retain a sense of 'team' where colleagues are working on and off campus, for example inclusive social activities or team events.

**Work/Life Balance** - For many, the pandemic has led to a blurring between work and home life. Meetings often subsume the day and emails creep into evenings and weekends. All managers must be clear with colleagues that such practices must not continue. Colleagues should be clear about working times and should maintain a healthy work/life balance.

**Working Practices** - Managers can use hybrid working as an opportunity to pause and consider working practices in their department. Where there may be issues with workloads, an 'always on' culture and/or 24/7 expectations (which has increased over the pandemic), consideration should be given as to how these issues could be tackled.

**Visibility Bias** - Managers must ensure that hybrid working does not lead to 'visibility bias' i.e. opportunities and urgent tasks being given to those physically present in the office.

**Decision Making** - Teams will have different ways of approaching hybrid working. In some areas, parameters may be set by senior teams and operational managers will be asked to work within those parameters. Alternatively, all decisions may be left to operational managers. In small teams, it may be possible for managers to consider individual requests from all colleagues and to accommodate them. All decisions must ensure that the campus remains a vibrant community ensuring that student and business needs are critical.

<b>Considerations for Department/Team Parameters</b>	
<b>Area</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
Business Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is our business need?</li> <li>• What are the different needs for each role in the area?</li> <li>• Are there any stakeholders we need to check in with e.g. academics in academic departments?</li> <li>• Do we need to manage stakeholder expectations?</li> <li>• Any potential risks/challenges arising from hybrid working?</li> </ul>
Working Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core office hours are 8.30am to 5.00pm. Are there different hours and what should they be?</li> <li>• Will they differ by area/role?</li> <li>• Are we content to allow some flexibility in how/when people work their contractual hours?</li> <li>• Would there be some benefit if people flex hours (e.g. to take account of international stakeholders and time differences)?</li> <li>• Is there a fair distribution of work across the team and/or are there areas/colleagues who are over or under-utilised?</li> </ul>
Place of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hybrid working is based on a minimum of 60% of working hours on campus.</li> <li>• A department minimum such as everyone must be on campus for 1 day per week should be encouraged?</li> <li>• Does this depend on the role?</li> <li>• How much office cover do we need in the team/department?</li> <li>• Do we have particular meetings/events where people must be on campus e.g. one team meeting a week/month?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we have any colleagues who want to work solely on campus?</li> </ul>
Working Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we have teams who need to be on site and who have a continual requirement for desk space?</li> <li>• Will colleagues spend any time working in any other areas of the University other than their office location?</li> <li>• Do we need to liaise with other teams to consider requirements in relation to our on campus work environment for example Health and Safety compliance such as having cover of sufficient fire wardens and first aiders?</li> <li>• The potential for lone working should be avoided.</li> </ul>
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No additional equipment or kit will be provided for working off campus</li> <li>• In exceptional circumstances colleagues may require adjustments in their home/campus work environment – which must be confirmed through OH and agreed with HR.</li> <li>• How will we ensure that their adjustments are always in place?</li> </ul>
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we need to reduce the number of meetings?</li> <li>• When will meetings be hybrid/all online/all in person?</li> <li>• Should there be set team meetings with all relevant people being on site?</li> </ul>
Other Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will we deal with competing personal preferences to ensure fairness across the team?</li> <li>• How and when will we review arrangements?</li> </ul>

### Discussions with Colleagues

**Individual Discussions** - Where possible, managers should have individual discussions with colleagues, possibly as part of regular 1:1s. In some departments, it may be more appropriate to have discussions at team level. This may include departmental parameters for hybrid working and being clear that business need and the requirements of the role are apriority.

**Accommodate preferences** - Managers should try, where possible, to accommodate the preferences of individual team members. It may be necessary to have discussions with a number of colleagues to achieve a compromised position which works best for a number of colleagues.

**Be Clear About Expectations** - Managers must be clear with colleagues that hybrid working arrangements can be changed although notice will be given, when possible.

**Resolve Concerns Locally** - Any concerns about hybrid working arrangements should be resolved locally with the manager and, if necessary, escalated up the line-management route, with exceptional cases being considered by the Director of Service or School Manager. Ideally the outcome of any concerns will be confirmed in writing. Where agreement cannot be reached the default position will be 100% working on campus.

<b>Conversation Template</b>	
<b>Area</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
Explore personal preferences in relation to hybrid working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the preferred hybrid working pattern?</li> <li>• What circumstances are relevant to the request? These could include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better work/life balance and ability to fulfil personal responsibilities.</li> <li>• Achieving space to concentrate.</li> <li>• Avoiding a lengthy commute on some days to enhance productivity.</li> <li>• Lack of suitable homeworking arrangements (for example space or technology related).</li> <li>• Being new to their role/at an early stage in their career meaning that mentoring/coaching and informal learning opportunities gained by working on campus are important.</li> </ul> </li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Hours Noting full contractual hours must be worked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would the colleague like to work outside of office hours?</li> <li>• Why and what are the circumstances to this request?</li> <li>• What is the business reason and how will it impact service and other colleagues?</li> </ul>
Inclusion and fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the preferred pattern cannot be accommodated, it is important to explore alternatives and compromises.</li> <li>• The manager may explore how to accommodate requests from other colleagues as a compromise across a team.</li> <li>• Where agreement cannot be reached the default position is 100% working on campus.</li> </ul>
Are there particular requirements of the role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What tasks and responsibilities does the role entail? Does it matter where they are carried out from?</li> </ul>

that need to be considered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there particular tasks, events or meetings which must be attended in person?</li> <li>• Are there particular collaborations or stakeholder engagements which must be attended in person?</li> <li>• Are there any changes to working practices which would be beneficial (although these should not change the role or the responsibilities of the role)?</li> </ul>
Practical considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the colleague have agreed reasonable adjustments? If so, can they be reasonably replicated off campus?</li> <li>• Does the colleague report having a suitable space to work from home and a good internet connection?</li> </ul>
Confirmation and review of arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed hybrid working arrangements should be confirmed by email from the line manager.</li> <li>• Colleagues should raise any concerns or feedback about their arrangements with their line manager.</li> <li>• Arrangements should be regularly reviewed.</li> </ul>