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**POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR REMOTE WORKING**

**2021-2023**

**1. Introduction**

This Policy has been developed to ensure fair treatment and consistency of approach for all staff working for the University where working remotely on an on-going basis is agreed.

These guidelines are not intended to address the ad hoc one-off arrangements agreed to work from home for short periods, i.e. one or two days, to complete specific pieces of work, nor are they intended to replace the University’s Flexible Working Policy arrangements or existing working practices.

The Vice-Chancellor’s Group will agree where remote working arrangements can take place across the University and will review periodically whether remote working arrangements meet the on-going requirements of both the University and the delivery of the service provided.

Employees do not have a legal right to request remote working arrangements and therefore a proposal to work remotely on an on-going basis may be refused for operational, logistical or legitimate University business reasons. Employees should discuss the possibility of working remotely with their line manager/Director or Head of Department/Institute.

**2. Purpose**

Working remotely means ‘performance and delivery of University work for agreed hours remotely (i.e. normally in the employee’s private dwelling) or another remote location’. Whilst there is an expectation that staff will normally be in the University workplace, based on either the Bishop Otter Campus or Bognor Regis Campus, it is accepted that occasionally there will be circumstances where the University agrees that it is beneficial for an individual or a team to work remotely on an on-going basis, or until such time as a different working arrangement is agreed.

Where remote working arrangements are agreed, these will be based on a management philosophy of trust and mutual benefit. Working remotely should not create additional workload for other employees, or otherwise affect operational efficiency and effectiveness.

**3. Flexible and agile working arrangements**

The University is a flexible and agile employer, supporting a wide mix of working practices and contractual terms and conditions across a variety of different roles. Different categories of staff have different terms and conditions, with some flexible and agile working options inherent in some categories more than others. Examples of flexible working arrangements already offered include:

* Full-time and part-time working hours (for example all year round or, working full-time during the semester and part-time outside of the semester).
* Semester-only working or working for less than 52 weeks per annum.
* Annualised hours, whereby staff are allocated a timetabled number of working hours across a semester or throughout the academic year.
* Compressed working arrangements whereby a post holder works their contractual hours across a number of longer working days each week.
* Working arrangements with different start and end times, e.g. 8.30-5.00; 9.00-5.30; 10.00-6.00, to provide essential cover arrangements.
* Working within a rota, i.e. to cover early morning, evening or weekend duties.
* On-call arrangements, where required to attend campus to provide out of hours support.
* Job-share arrangements, whereby two part-time post holders cover a full-time role.
* Interim arrangements, whereby a post holder covers a vacancy or ‘acts-up’ to provide cover arrangements.
* Seconded posts, e.g. Academy Trust or external organisations (either seconded to the University or seconded to an external organisation).

Agile or flexible working, including all of the areas above, can offer staff working in the University additional flexibility on how we undertake our roles whilst meeting the needs of those we provide a service to, be it students, staff or a combination of both.

Flexible working arrangements are agreed on appointment into a post or via the University’s Flexible Working Policy, whereas remote working arrangements may be considered, in addition to the flexible working arrangements above, where this is possible.

**4. Scope**

These guidelines are underpinned by an expectation that there is no detriment to students’ experience and impact on colleagues or provision of services and this is always a priority when considering remote working arrangements.

Working remotely:

* Is granted at the University’s discretion and requires the prior approval of the Head or Director of Department/Institute following consultation and agreement with the Vice-Chancellor’s Group.
* Will not attract subsidy since the benefits are seen as being mutual.
* Will not create the burden of any additional costs.
* Will not alter an employee’s general terms and conditions of employment and expectations on performance in role.
* Does not normally mean that equipment will be provided by the University for use at home, although this may be agreed in advance where required.
* Should not create additional workload for other employees, or otherwise affect operational efficiency and effectiveness.
* Will require staff to be present on campus for training, team or University events, meetings and committees, as requested by line managers (for example, to provide cover arrangements and/or be present at meetings and events with other team members in a face-to-face capacity, rather than online).

It is recognised that because of the nature of some roles, remote working would not be practical. Positions with at least one of the following requirements in their role will **not** normally be considered for remote working:

* Direct face-to-face contact on a frequent basis with students, staff or internal or external visitors.
* Where there is a need for face-to-face supervision such as allocating work on an ongoing basis, dealing with queries, checking work or organising rotas.
* Servicing and serving University facilities or assets (e.g. University buildings, accommodation, grounds), where this requires presence on-campus.
* Being a member of a team who will need to have face-to-face contact with other team members on a daily basis, for example, to enhance communications or to provide cover during breaks.

The Vice-Chancellor’s Group will not agree arrangements whereby a proportion of a post holder’s working hours is spent on campus and a proportion of working hours is spent working remotely. As a guideline:

* Remote working arrangements will be considered where the post holder works remotely for their whole working time (other than where required to attend campus, for example, participation in University meetings or committees or to attend professional development and University events, where the post holder will be expected to attend campus as agreed with their manager).
* There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Remote working arrangements will be tailored to different roles and department needs and University requirements. Therefore, where one arrangement is agreed for a role holder in one department, this does not set a precedent for the same agreement to remote working arrangements in another department, regardless of whether the role is similar/the same.
* The University reserves the right to require all staff to work on-campus and therefore an agreed remote working arrangement may be altered through discussion with an employee with appropriate notice, i.e. normally two months’ notice, unless a shorter timeframe is mutually agreed. This may include requiring employees to return to working on campus when requested to do so.

**5. Communication**

Good communication is an essential part of any successful remote working arrangement and provision must be made to allow effective communication with work colleagues and internal and external contacts at all times during the working day.

If contact is required during set hours or at specific times the employee must ensure that they are contactable at these times by telephone, email and online via Skype or Teams. The arrangements for contact will be agreed prior to working remotely and will be reviewed according to requirements.

The employee’s home contact number and mobile contact number should be made available to the University/line manager(s) to ensure contact is maintained.

Under no circumstances are arrangements to be made for students, or University representatives, to meet with the employee at their home. All such meetings should be carried out at the University campus or online in order to maintain the necessary level of professionalism and safety.

Visits from University staff to a remote worker’s home should only take place under exceptional circumstances, such as welfare reasons or for security purposes, agreed in advance by the line manager in discussion with the employee.

**6. Responsibilities**

The responsibility for making remote working a success rests equally with staff and managers, who together need to assess the opportunities and challenges openly and honestly, including the need to balance requests for flexible working/remote working equitably across teams where post holders carry out the same/similar role. Staff performance should be judged by measurable results and outcomes, not necessary by how many hours employees work, how long staff stay in the office, or whether they work remotely or on campus. Working arrangements need to be flexible enough to respond to the University’s requirements alongside personal circumstances. Managers and staff therefore need to be open to requests for change coming from both sides.

**Line manager responsibilities:**

* Fully induct the staff member working remotely into their role, carrying out probationary, induction or PRDP (Performance, Review, Development Plan) reviews effectively.
* Ensure the staff member working remotely is aware of expectations and required standards of work, including specific deliverables for their role requirements.
* Schedule and diarise regular one-to-one meetings (at least weekly) to ensure the staff member working remotely is kept abreast of all activities within the team/department and wider University requirements.
* Maintain effective and regular contact, including the staff member in training, team discussions and meetings, as with all other staff working on campus.
* Provide feedback and discuss and evaluate how the remote working arrangement is working, implementing and agreeing improvements where required (minimum every six months or more often as required).
* Set and agree on-going work objectives on a regular basis to ensure the employee fully understands their role requirements.

**Employee responsibilities:**

* Abide by the requirements of the Remote Working Policy.
* Provide contact details – mobile/home telephone number to facilitate communication with the University as appropriate.
* Use the University’s email address in all communications, rather than personal email.
* Remain available throughout the working day to answer queries from colleagues/line manager and participate in team/department meetings, attending training, events or meetings on campus when required.
* Deliver expected work role outcomes to required standards.
* Understand and consider all of the information within this Policy, including responsibilities regarding health and safety, data security and confidentiality and maintenance of broadband access and work-related equipment.

**7. Equality and Diversity**

This Policy will be implemented in line with the University’s commitments to equality and diversity.

Remote working may be requested as an adjustment to support staff with a disability. Managers who are considering remote working as an adjustment for a disability should consult with their lead Human Resources contact in the first instance who may seek further professional guidance from the University’s Occupational Health provider.

Remote working may be an option in circumstances where someone has short-term mobility issues where they are unable to travel to work but are otherwise fit for work. This would be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis. Normally these arrangements would be agreed on a temporary basis.

**8. Equipment and Technology**

The University will not normally provide a staff member working remotely with broadband connection or furniture to work off-campus. Only in circumstances where it is not possible for the remote worker to provide IT equipment would the University provide support.

The University will not normally allocate a dedicated office space or desk to a staff member working remotely. The opportunity to utilise shared ‘hot desking’ facilities may be available where the employee attends campus to participate in team, department or committee meetings, but this is not guaranteed. University campus facilities, i.e. the Learning Resource Centres and facilities providing refreshments, can be utilised on campus when required.

All staff working remotely are required to use their own and supplied equipment, for example workplace desk and telephone/broadband access, and are responsible for contacting the service provider in the event of any technical issues. IT Services can advise on appropriate IT equipment and access to appropriate software for the use of staff working remotely. University IT equipment may not be used by others, i.e. family members or friends.

Appropriate security must be obtained for all University information stored on a computer (including back-up arrangements) and there must be secure storage for any confidential information. Staff members are responsible for ensuring the security of all information, files, documents and data within their possession, including both paper and electronic material.

All employees are required to adhere to the University’s policies and guidance on data security. Further guidance on the use and access of data when remote working and the required security steps to be taken is outlined in the University’s IT and data security policies.

**9. Insurance**

It is the employee’s responsibility to assess the personal implications of remote working with respect to taxation, insurance or leasing arrangements. The University holds liability insurances that provide cover for the liabilities of the University and its employees whenever they are engaged in University business, irrespective of where the activity is taking place.

**10. Costs/expenses**

No contribution will be made by the University towards normal household expenses attached to remote working, such as heating, lighting or council tax costs.

When an employee is remote working, journeys made to the normal campus base (i.e. Bishop Otter Campus or Bognor Regis Campus) will not be reimbursed.

**11. Health and Safety considerations**

Most of the work that staff would undertake at home would be paper-based work or work on a computer and in general such work is not high risk. For staff working remotely they must undertake the online DSE training module and self-assessment for their workstation. It is expected staff will adopt the same principles as used on campus with regard to setting up their workstation and taking regular breaks.

All employees must adhere to the University’s Health and Safety policies, including staff working remotely.

**12. Considering a requirement or request for remote working**

In most circumstances, the University will decide on which posts can be fulfilled on a remote working basis and will agree in advance working arrangements at the point of appointment into a role, or during the course of employment where there is a change in working practices or operational requirements.

The University considers the majority of role requirements in the University are front facing, i.e. delivering teaching or professional support services to students, or front-facing support for managers or staff, or requirements covering essential service related facilities.

* Exceptionally, where a request to work remotely on an on-going basis is requested by an employee in writing (using the pro-forma identified at Appendix A), Heads and Directors of Department/Institute will carefully consider the request.
* The rationale for working remotely should consider the nature of the role, the scope of the role requirements, the expected role outcomes and how any implications for staff or resources will be managed.
* Where the Head/Director provides a prima facie case in support of the remote working request and considers this can be facilitated, the request will be passed to the Vice-Chancellor’s Staffing Group meeting for further consideration and/or sign-off.

**13. Expected timescale on decisions**

Normally an employee will receive a response on their request to work remotely within two months of the request being originally received (unless another timescale is agreed). The timescale should allow full consideration by the line manager/Head or Director of Department/Institute and the submission of a proposal to work remotely to the Vice-Chancellor’s Group Staffing Group.

Where the request to work remotely is not agreed, the line manager will discuss with the employee and will explain the reasons why the request cannot be facilitated.

Where the request to work remotely on an on-going basis is agreed, the line manager will discuss arrangements with the employee. The lead Human Resources contact will confirm with the employee the start date of the remote working arrangements in writing.

The line manager will ensure the team(s) working with the staff member working remotely are made aware of the remote working arrangements to ensure this is understood and embraced by team members.

The decision of the line manager and the Vice-Chancellor’s Group is final and there is no right of appeal.

**14. Flexible Working requests**

As an alternative to remote working arrangements, some employees will have a legal right to request flexible working arrangements, i.e. if they have children under 17 (or 19 where the child has a disability) or have, or expect to have, responsibility for a child, or have responsibility for an adult in need of care. This is detailed in the University’s guidelines for Flexible Working where a change in working pattern is proposed. Employees should utilise this Policy should they have reasons to submit a flexible working request. This Policy does not consider requests for remote working arrangements.

Although all requests for flexible working are considered carefully, the University is under no statutory obligation to grant a request to work flexibly if it cannot be accommodated.

**15. Further information**

This Policy is available from the Human Resources page of the Staff Intranet. If you have any questions relating to flexible or remote working arrangements, please contact your lead Human Resources contact or email HR@chi.ac.uk.

**Appendix A**

**Policy and Guidelines for Remote Working 2021-23**

**Pro-forma for consideration to work remotely**

Please ensure you have read the Remote Working Policy and Guidelines prior to completing and submitting this pro-forma. **Please complete as fully as possible to enable your application to be given full consideration**

**1. Staffing establishment details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Contact details:** *(email, work contact number)* |  |
| **Post:** *(please indicate role title)* |  |
| **Department/team:** |  |
| **Campus:** *Indicate your normal campus base and location and whether you work across both campuses* |  |
| **Current working pattern and arrangements -** *Indicate full-time (1.0fte) or part-time fte, whether semester-time only or all year round.* |  |
| **Proposed date remote working will take effect:**  |  |

**2. Rationale for submitting a request to work remotely on an on-going basis**

*(Your rationale should include, as a minimum, details relating to the nature of the role and role responsibilities, the scope of the role requirements, the expected role outcomes). Please expand as appropriate or attach further details:*

**3. Head or Director of Department/Institute to complete where request is supported** *(please provide a prima facie case in support of the remote working request, indicating how the working arrangement will be facilitated on an on-going basis and how any implications for staffing or resources will be managed):*

**Name of Head/Director of Department/Institute:**

**Signature:**

**Dated:**

Please return the fully completed document to the Chief Human Resources Officer via email: E.Whitaker@chi.ac.uk All requests to work remotely will be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor’s Group Staffing meeting for consideration (meetings take place approximately once per month, unless another timeframe is agreed).