

Hybrid Working Framework

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This framework will be reviewed annually by the University to ensure it is working effectively. Changes to this framework will be subject to consultation with the recognised trade unions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This framework has been developed to provide a framework for effective hybrid working that maximises the benefits of working remotely whilst ensuring a vibrant university community campus and colleague preferences for hybrid working.
- 1.2. This framework supports the University [Hybrid Working Principles](#)
- 1.3. Separate Hybrid Working Guidance is [available for managers](#), which should be read alongside this framework
- 1.4. This framework should be read and applied in conjunction with the University's Flexible Working Policy, Health and Safety Policies, IT Policies and Data Protection Policies.
- 1.5. Hybrid working at Brunel considers how best to organise work and work locations. This includes the place of work and when work is undertaken.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This framework applies to all colleagues directly employed by the University. It does not apply to agency workers, contractors or consultants although managers may wish to consider hybrid working arrangements for such workers where there are clear business advantages.
- 2.2. Hybrid working at Brunel is a non-contractual agreement which enables colleagues the opportunity to request to work away from campus, with the majority of time remaining as campus based. Agreements will depend on the role and service needs and may vary from week to week or across the academic year according to work patterns and flow. Hybrid working is an informal arrangement, locally implemented based on Brunel agreed principles and is built on trust.
- 2.3. Requests for flexible working, which relate to the individual's personal circumstances such

as caring responsibilities rather than their role and/or which seek a formal contractual change should be made in accordance with the [Universities Flexible Working Policy and Procedure](#) Flexible working requests agreed under the [Universities Flexible Working Policy and Procedure](#) amount to a formal change to terms and conditions of employment whereas hybrid working is undertaken on an informal and flexible basis to accommodate individual and business needs without a contractual change.

- 2.4. The University may instigate the need to work from home with minimum notice, for a number of emergency or government driven reasons, for example to control outbreaks of infectious diseases (e.g. Covid), or should emergency situations (e.g. fire, damage) require this.
- 2.5. Hybrid working also enables more effective and flexible use of our work spaces and this will be progressed with full consultation and due regard for role requirements, health and safety and equality and diversity.
- 2.6. Hybrid working is non-contractual and can be withdrawn at any time.

3. CONTRACTUAL TERMS

- 3.1. Hybrid working is voluntary and colleagues are not obliged to work away from campus if they do not wish to do so. It is recognised that some individuals prefer to work in an office-based setting, perhaps for their wellbeing, because they find it easier to focus at work or because their home environment is not conducive to effective working.
- 3.2. Hybrid working is undertaken on a flexible basis to allow for the best performance of duties at the most effective location. Specific days and times spent working away from campus should be agreed with the manager in advance and may be subject to change to accommodate core business activities and work requirements such as training, meetings and/or events.
- 3.3. Hybrid working is not contractual and consequently either the colleague or the manager may stop hybrid working at any time subject to discussion. No less than one week's notice should be given by either party (with the exception of campus emergencies or where mutually agreed to be a shorter period).
- 3.4. Primary place of work
 - 3.4.1. Where hybrid working arrangements are in place, the primary place of work will remain the University based location. The primary work location as specified in the colleague's contract of employment will not change as a result of hybrid working.
 - 3.4.2. The balance of time spent working on campus and at home will depend upon the duties being undertaken but it is expected that colleagues will normally spend the greater proportion of their time working at the main University location.
 - 3.4.3. In some circumstances it may be beneficial for the individual and the University to agree to increase to the proportion of time worked away from campus on a temporary basis. For example:
 - where social distancing requirements are needed for infection control;

- where a colleague feels well enough to work productively but due to an injury or contagious infection is unable to attend on campus;
- to focus on a particular time limited piece of work;
- to accommodate disruption at work such as maintenance and building works;
- to assist in supporting colleagues with a short-term personal situation i.e. caring for a sick relative or home emergency.
- Short-term travel/commuting disruption or difficulties

3.5. Travel expenses

- 3.5.1. Travel expenses are not payable for any travel costs incurred by hybrid workers traveling between University and home locations.

3.6. Hours of work

- 3.6.1. Colleagues working a hybrid arrangement must fulfil their contractual working hours as they would if working entirely at a University location.
- 3.6.2. It is important for wellbeing and productivity that colleagues continue to take regular breaks as per their contract of employment and the Working Time Regulations. This includes taking a break of at least 20 minutes if working more than six hours a day, a rest of at least 11 hours between working days and an uninterrupted break of 24 hours each week.
- 3.6.3. Managers may agree with a colleague to adjust the operation of their working hours to improve work-life balance where it will not negatively impact the work undertaken or services provided or members of the team. This could include adjusting start and finish times to accommodate personal commitments or rescheduling breaks to take children to/from school or to ease commuting and travelling. Under hybrid working this must remain fluid, any permanent requirement should be requested under the [Universities Flexible Working Policy and Procedure](#) for a permanent change in hours.
- 3.6.4. Colleagues who have an individual formal flexible working arrangement already in place should discuss this with their manager when considering hybrid working. Hybrid working should not be a substitute for on-going care arrangements and colleagues working away from campus should not be the sole carer for dependants during agreed working hours.

3.7. Absence and Leave

- 3.7.1. Colleagues should report any absence such as sickness in the same way they would if they were working at a University location and in line with the Absence Management Procedure.
- 3.7.2. Annual leave should be booked through CHIME in the usual way regardless of whether working at a University location or at home.

4. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1. Colleagues

- 4.1.1. While working away from campus it is expected that colleagues will:

- a) work independently, motivate themselves and use their own initiative and address any concerns directly with their manager;
- b) manage and organise their work effectively;
- c) manage distractions at home effectively
- d) have in place ongoing caring arrangements if individuals who require care are home whilst you are working from home;
- e) identify and attempt to resolve any new pressures created by hybrid working and as appropriate raise these with their manager as soon as possible;
- f) be aware of and make use of support and resources available from the University to support effective hybrid working and their physical and mental wellbeing;
- g) maintain contact with manager and colleagues
- h) take good care of equipment provided to them;
- i) ensure that information is protected and kept safe at all times.
- j) Undertake a home risk assessment and ensure that all obligations relating to display screen equipment regulations are met.

- 4.1.2. Colleagues will be subject to the same performance measures, processes and objectives while working away from campus that apply when working at a University location.
- 4.1.3. Colleagues are responsible for ensuring they keep their manager up to date on any changes to their remote working location.
- 4.1.4. As part of hybrid working arrangements, managers and colleagues should agree protocols for attending team meetings, individual meetings and for regular communication.
- 4.1.5. Most of the regulations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 apply to working away from campus as well as working at University locations. If working away from campus, colleagues are required to undertake a risk-assessment to ensure that work can be undertaken safely. Colleagues are responsible for implementing any actions identified in order to reduce/remove risks in their home and to make their work environment safe. If the remove working environment cannot be made safe, the colleague will need to work from a University location instead. Evidence of your risk assessment and DSE assessments should be supplied to your line manager.
- 4.1.6. While accidents at work are rare, they can happen and it is important that any accidents that happen while the colleague is working away from campus are reported to their manager and an Accident at Work form completed.
- 4.1.7. Abuse of hybrid working arrangements may result in disciplinary proceedings and/or removal of hybrid working arrangements.

4.2. Managers

- 4.2.1. Hybrid working will make demands of managers and training and guidance is available to assist with effective management of hybrid working. Individual support is available through the Human Resources team.
- 4.2.2. Managers are responsible for considering requests for hybrid working in a consistent and transparent way and with due regard for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 4.2.3. Managers should be clear with individual colleagues and their wider team(s) on expectations during hybrid working including:

- a) individuals' responsibilities;
- b) communication protocols for contacting each other and keeping each other up-to-date on work matters and work location;
- c) identifying which tasks/services need to be University based and how best to organise these (including rota arrangements if applicable);
- d) agreeing when and how team meetings and individual meetings will be held;
- e) clarifying the circumstances when an individual working away from campus might be required to come to the University (e.g. campus emergencies i.e. emergencies, covering absence, attendance at face to face meetings);
- f) desk and working space facilities and arrangements when working at University locations;
- g) health and safety arrangements;
- h) absence reporting arrangements;
- i) practical arrangements for post, stationery, printing, file management, etc;
- j) confidentiality and information security.

4.2.4. It is important that managers know where colleagues in their team(s) are working so that they can be reached in an emergency and so health and wellbeing can be supported.

4.2.5. Managers are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate homeworking risk assessments are completed and that any concerns are addressed appropriately (see section 8).

4.2.6. Managers are responsible for ensuring the provision of standard equipment (e.g. laptop, keyboard, mouse, headset) to support hybrid working (see section 6) and for arranging the return of the allocated equipment if the colleague leaves the Department or University.

5. IDENTIFYING ROLES SUITABLE FOR HYBRID WORKING

5.1. Not all roles or services are suitable for hybrid working. Decisions about where and when work is carried out should depend on the nature of the tasks involved. Some tasks lend themselves to be undertaken effectively working away from campus whereas others can only be carried out, or are more effectively carried out, in a University location. It is this combination of tasks that will define the 'hybrid' nature of individual roles.

5.2. In considering Hybrid Working the manager and colleague will discuss and consider:

5.2.1. The role

- a) the duties and responsibilities that could be undertaken effectively away from campus and how these will be measured/monitored through clear objectives and work outputs;
- b) any positive and negative effects of hybrid working on student experience, service provisions and/or other colleagues;
- c) the extent to which the role is student or customer facing;
- d) how dependent the role is on accessing University based equipment, records and services (that cannot be accessed remotely);
- e) communication principles and methods;
- f) team work and engagement;
- g) technology and equipment requirements;
- h) information and cyber security.

5.2.2. The colleague

- a) any inclusion risks that may arise due to hybrid working and how these can be mitigated;
- b) whether the colleague has any commitments such as childcare or caring responsibilities that may mean alternative measures need to be considered such as adjusted working hours or a formal flexible working request;
- c) individual behaviours including self-motivation, self-reliance and discipline to work and organise work without supervision;
- d) suitability of the home working environment including safe working spaces and access to broadband;
- e) health, safety and wellbeing (including DSE risk assessment);
- f) the ability of the colleague to attend University at short notice in an emergency or due to sickness cover requirements.

5.3. Hybrid working should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the arrangements are working effectively for both parties. Other circumstances where it may be necessary to review hybrid working arrangements include:

- a) an increased requirement for social distancing to maintain infection control;
- b) the colleague moves to a new role, either permanently or on a secondment or acting up basis;
- c) the colleague moves home in which case equipment and health and safety may need to be re-assessed;
- d) following a re-organisation of work in an area to consider any adjustments that are necessary as a result of changes to job descriptions, service provisions and or interdependencies with other service providers.

6. **EQUIPMENT, INSURANCE AND UTILITIES**

6.1. Hybrid working is voluntary and colleagues in positions that may be suitable for hybrid working are not obliged to work away from campus if they do not wish to do so.

6.2. Working away from campus could affect a colleague's home and contents insurance policy, mortgage, lease or rental agreement. If required, it is the colleague's responsibility to make any necessary arrangements with their insurer(s), mortgage provider or landlord before working away from campus. The University will not cover any additional costs related to home insurance premiums. Colleagues are not required to take out insurance to cover any University equipment as this is covered under the University's insurance policies.

6.3. There may be tax and social security implications if a colleague wishes to work some of their remote time outside the UK. Overseas working should be considered for a maximum of three months in any twelve-month period. Colleagues must have the approval of their manager along with the right to work in the country they will be working in. Any working outside the UK must be made in accordance with the [Universities Global Mobility Policy](#) and recorded by the Human Resources Directorate.

6.4. Technology plays a critical role in hybrid working. Colleagues need to be able to work seamlessly between University locations and their home. The University will provide standard equipment that it considers reasonably required to work away from campus and all such equipment will remain the University's property. This equipment will include a laptop,

keyboard, mouse and headset. Technology equipment provided by the university will be installed, maintained and tested by the University.

- 6.5. Following a [DSE self-assessment](#), if additional equipment is identified as required, colleagues may be referred to Occupational Health so that advice can be sought on potential adjustments or additional equipment that might be required. Additional equipment may be provided in exceptional circumstances and the purchasing of equipment must be agreed by the manager in advance and must follow the University's financial and procurement processes.
- 6.6. Where University equipment is provided colleagues should:
- a) use it only for the purposes for which it has been provided;
 - b) not allow family or friends to use it;
 - c) take reasonable care of it and use it only in accordance with any operating instructions and our policies and procedures;
 - d) not leave equipment in a vehicle;
 - e) bring it to campus when required for PAT testing;
 - f) ensure equipment is returned or make it available for collection if requested to do so.
- 6.7. If University equipment becomes damaged, colleagues should inform their manager so that appropriate repairs or replacements can be arranged. If University equipment is stolen then colleagues should report the incident to the police as soon as possible and obtain a crime reference number. In the case of theft or damage, colleagues should inform the University so they can consider whether to can make a claim under the University's insurance arrangements.
- 6.8. The University appreciates that the use of technology and IT equipment is crucial to working away from campus but that it can also develop faults, which may lead to delays in undertaking work. In the event of equipment failing or developing a fault, colleagues should inform their manager and make all reasonable attempts to get equipment fixed or replaced as quickly as possible. The Service Desk is the primary source of support for IT equipment related issues (01895 265888, Computing-Support@brunel.ac.uk).
- 6.9. Where colleagues choose to use any other personal equipment, for example a personal tablet or mobile telephone, the University is not responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement, or repair in the event of loss or damage to any personal equipment used when working for the University. However, the colleague is still expected to follow the appropriate IT polices to ensure that security and cyber obligations are addressed.
- 6.10. The University is not responsible for any associated costs of colleagues working away from campus including, but not limited to, the costs of heating, lighting, and electricity, telephone calls and broadband. Depending on their personal circumstances, colleagues may be able to claim tax relief, which they would have to arrange directly with HMRC.
- 6.11. The University is not be responsible for providing standard furniture such as desks or chairs for colleagues to work away from campus to undertake hybrid working except in exceptional circumstances where the need has been identified through a risk assessment and advised by Occupational Health due to for example a disability.
- 6.12. In the event that a colleague leaves the University, all equipment belonging to the University should be returned to the line manager by their leaving date.

7. DATA SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.1. All University equipment and University information and data must be kept securely. Colleagues should take all necessary steps to ensure that private and confidential University material is kept secure at all times. Please refer to the University policies on data protection and information security.
- 7.2. Colleagues should make themselves aware of the risks of cyber security and the University policies and procedures in relation to this which can be found [here](#).

8. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- 8.1. The University will take all reasonable steps to look after colleague health, safety and welfare while they are working away from campus. This includes ensuring there are measures in place to reduce any hazards whilst colleagues are working away from campus and upholding obligations under the Working Time Regulations.
- 8.2. Colleagues are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety while working at home. They are required to following [Health and Safety's guidance](#).
- 8.3. While working away from campus colleagues are required to keep in regular contact with their manager and must advise them about any health & safety risks and/or any working arrangements that may need to change to ensure that the homeworking environment remains safe.
- 8.4. Colleagues should not have physical face to face meetings in their home (unless agreed with their manager) and should not give third parties their home address for work purposes.
- 8.5. Managers are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate homeworking risk assessments are completed and that any concerns are addressed appropriately. This includes (but is not limited to):
 - a) checking that the colleagues work can be effectively undertaken away from campus and that adequate rest breaks are taken;
 - b) ensuring that there is regular contact with each colleague and their team whilst they are homeworking;
 - c) ensuring that homeworking colleagues have the correct standard equipment, and working set up (DSE assessment) to enable safe home working.

9. IMPLEMENTING HYBRID WORKING

- 9.1. The usual pattern of work during hybrid working should be managed at a local, departmental level as some services may require rota arrangements, some will be dependent upon student commitments and in all situations flexibility to support business needs will be required.
- 9.2. Managers should make new colleagues aware of hybrid working arrangements at the recruitment stage. It should be made clear to potential colleagues if hybrid working is available to them and principles under which this is applied.

- 9.3. Managers may need to consider if hybrid working should be delayed, paused or reduced to support effective onboarding, training and development in certain circumstances such as:
- during the first 6 months of employment for new colleagues;
 - apprenticeships, trainees and work placements;
 - colleagues with additional support, supervision and/or development in place to support a performance improvement plan;
 - colleagues returning from extended periods of leave and re-familiarising themselves with the work environment (e.g. sabbatical leave, career breaks, family leave and long-term sick leave).
- 9.4. Hybrid working is not a contractual or statutory requirement and there is no right of appeal against decision made. However, managers should discuss the reasons for declining a hybrid working request with the colleague and this does not prevent a colleague from making subsequent requests. Colleagues also remain entitled to submit a formal flexible working request in accordance with the University's Flexible Working Policy and Procedure, which includes an appeal stage if required.
- 9.5. As a non-contractual process there is no appeal against decisions made in line with Hybrid Working arrangements. This does not however affect the right of any colleagues to use the grievance procedure should they feel they have been unfairly treated.
- 9.6. All hybrid working arrangements should be regularly reviewed and can be amended or stopped at any time subject to discussion between the manager and the colleague. No less than one week's notice should be given by either party (with the exception of campus emergencies or where mutually agreed to be a shorter period).

10. APPENDICES and USEFUL LINKS

- 10.1. [Hybrid Working Principles](#)
- 10.2. [Hybrid Working Guidelines](#)
- 10.3. [Hybrid working FAQs](#)