



<b>Hybrid Working</b>	Created: May 2021 Last updated: June 2021    Issue version: 1 Approved by: Governing Body 16.06.21 Author(s): Human Resources Manager Statutory?: No Related documents: <a href="#">Hybrid working guidance</a> <a href="#">Flexible working requests policy</a>
<b>Policy</b>	

## Introduction

Hybrid working (HW) is an approach where some or all of the employees' contracted hours may be worked from home/remotely. Unlike formal flexible working requests, which may change an employees' terms and conditions, HW is an informal arrangement on how and where normal hours are worked.

Please refer to the [Hybrid working guidance](#) for details on how the policy can be implemented.

## Policy

Our aim is to provide an excellent, efficient service to our students, staff and visitors. We are committed to providing opportunities for working patterns and practices that meet the needs of teams and individuals. HW may not be possible for all and it is essential to consider operational need in deciding what is appropriate. However, a flexible, open-minded and creative approach is encouraged.

### **A consistent, fair and transparent approach is required and this policy sets out that:**

- the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and College policies will apply to consideration and implementation of HW;
- operational need, resource availability and team and individual wellbeing will be key deciding factors in whether HW can be implemented;
- managers should consider how HW *could* work regardless of past practice;
- any employee working remotely is bound by their normal terms, conditions and College policies (e.g. data protection, health and safety, booking/reporting absence, performance, time-keeping);
- HW is not intended to be contractually binding. Patterns and practices may vary over time, according to operational or individual need;
- no incentives or disincentives shall be made in terms of benefits or remuneration;
- no alternatives will be available for benefits that are only available on-site (e.g. lunch)
- where it is proposed that there will be more than 20% remote working this must be considered by a senior manager before a decision is made;
- where no hybrid or flexible working arrangement is in place, the default is 100% on-site working;
- HW is an informal, non-statutory arrangement. However, a record of what has been agreed with teams/individuals should be kept;
- nothing in this policy is intended to replace the statutory entitlement to request flexible working;
- where HW is agreed, College will provide reasonable support to enable remote working, such as the provision of IT equipment/software
- in the event of disagreement, (where a flexible working process have not been initiated) cases will be assessed by a senior manager. Their decision is final and there is no right of appeal;
- this policy does not apply during times of national restrictions (e.g. pandemic scenarios) and/or where emergency continuity planning is in place.



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<b>Guidance</b>	

Hybrid working (HW) can be of benefit to employees, enabling them to manage home and work life more effectively, to carry out work that requires uninterrupted periods more efficiently and to reduce weekly commuting costs and time. It can benefit departments by allowing more flexibility, reducing the amount of physical space needed to accommodate everyone and minimising the amount of working time lost as a result of commuting delays or ad-hoc interruptions.

HW can also bring challenges so it's important to give careful consideration to what can be accommodated to ensure teams can be supported effectively and individuals can perform their roles efficiently. It is important to balance the need to work collaboratively with individual and team preferences and consider the pros and cons in terms of wellbeing and working relationships. Managing a dispersed team can also bring practical difficulties that will need to be assessed (how and when are meetings held? How is unexpected absence covered? How are ad-hoc but important work-related communications passed on to remote staff?).

It is important to note that there is a difference between HW and working arrangements that take place as a result of emergency business continuity processes, such as during the pandemic. Just because a role can be done from home when needed, doesn't mean that is the best option longer term. Equally, just because individuals can work on-site does not necessary mean they have to do so 100% of the time if their role allows for some form of HW.

### What might HW look like?

It is anticipated that, where HW is implemented, individuals will fall into one of the following categories:

Pattern	Considerations
Working on-site 100% of the time	This may be the only option in certain roles (e.g. Housekeeping Assistants, Chefs and KPs, Nursery, Lodge Porters, Catering, Maintenance). <b><i>This is the default working practice.</i></b>
Mainly working on-site with occasional ad-hoc remote working	Days/hours should be agreed in advance where possible and are not a substitute for occasions where annual or flexible leave would have been booked.
Mainly working on site with up to 20% regular remote working	e.g. one day per week working from home or two half-days. May be annualised to allow for increased remote working during certain periods (e.g. out of term).
Working remotely more than 20% of the time	Must be a regular pattern and considered by a senior manager before a decision is made. May be annualised.
Working remotely with occasional, ad-hoc on-site working	Must be considered by a senior manager, likely to only be possible for a very limited number of roles.
Working remotely 100% of the time	Likely to be possible in only the most exceptional cases (e.g. staff based entirely overseas).



## Who decides on whether HW can or should be adopted?

Managers are encouraged to think through possible scenarios and discuss and plan a pro-active approach to HW with their team in a collaborative and transparent way. Discussing options as a team in the first instance will help to manage expectations as to what's possible and ensure that everyone who is able to benefit from HW is given the same information and opportunity to request HW.

Any arrangements are ultimately the departmental manager's decision as they have to assess what works for individuals and how that fits with the rest of the team and overall operational needs. Any consideration of HW which could result in an individual or team collectively working remotely for more than 20% of the time should be referred to a senior manager who will assess how that might fit with the College's wider operational needs.

Managers are also encouraged to set a trial period and regularly review how HW is working in practice. As a new form of working, it is likely that needs and preferences will change over time and having a trial period will also help manage expectations and will give managers the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.

## Things to think about

- Can any of the role be carried out remotely? If so, how much?
- How much regular supervision is needed?
- Are there some tasks that might be more efficiently carried out at home (e.g. writing minutes, committee papers, planning, project-work, detailed and focused work)?
- How much of the work involves collaboration with others?
  - Do colleagues need to work together in the same place at the same time? (Remote working not suitable for this kind of activity)
  - Do colleagues need to work together at the same time but location is not important? (Remote working might be suitable for this kind of activity)
  - Can work be carried out independently? (Remote working is suitable)
- How would HW affect the individual's wellbeing?
- Can we provide the resources they would need to work remotely on a regular basis (e.g. IT equipment)?
- Can the individual satisfy health and safety requirements (DSE, for example)?
- Can the individual adhere to GDPR policies while working remotely?
- Do other departments need to be consulted to see how they might be affected?
- What would the impact be on the wider team?
- How will sickness absence be covered?
- How would emergencies/urgent work be dealt with?
- How would team meetings be held?
- How would important information be communicated?
- What could be done to ensure that any individual who is working remotely feels included?
- How can work be organised so that work is not missed or duplicated?



- Can any alternatives be considered, such as a change in start/finish times, compressed working hours or reorganisation of work across the team?
- What are the individuals' preferences and are there any exceptional circumstances, such as a disability?

**Advice and guidance can be obtained from HR at any point**

### Step by step

1. Consider whether HW could apply to your team and their work
2. Discuss with the team/individuals and consider any requests for HW arrangements
3. Agree and document (an email is fine) what HW will be put in place
4. Agree a regular review period
5. Make it clear that any arrangements are informal, do not affect terms and conditions and can be changed at any point, with reasonable notice, depending on operational need or changes in individual circumstances.

### Points to note

- HW is not the same as a statutory flexible working request. Some requests may be better considered under the flexible working policy – see below.
- Managers should pay close attention to equality and diversity, ensuring that all HW arrangements are considered in a fair, consistent and transparent way.
- Managers will need to be mindful that those working remotely are not inadvertently excluded from communications or opportunities that may arise through ad-hoc, informal conversations that may take place on-site.
- Those working remotely will continue to have the same entitlements as those on-site, save for where this is not reasonably practical, such as lunch.
- Normal policies and practices should be applied equally to remote and on-site working.
- Health and Safety policies apply just as much to working from home as to the office, it is important to be aware of DSE requirements and the College should provide reasonable support to enable remote working where it has been agreed that this can be implemented (such as IT equipment).
- GDPR policies apply and it is important that anyone working remotely has undertaken data protection training and can comply with the requirements of GDPR.
- Employees working from home are responsible for ensuring that they have reliable wifi/network connectivity which is suitable for the kind of work they are doing. It is assumed that all employees wishing to work from home already have a broadband/wifi package that will allow for home-working. If this is not the case please discuss with HR in the first instance.
- Employees can claim tax relief for home working (<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>).
- Employees may need to check with their mortgage lenders/insurance providers or landlords to make sure none of their policies or agreements are affected by regular home-working.



## What ifs

### What if a manager can't accommodate all HW preferences?

- Discuss alternatives with the team as a whole to try to find a compromise where everyone can benefit from at least some HW.
- Implement HW on a rota so that some people HW for some of the time only.
- Trail alternative options – sometimes it's not clear if something will work until it's in operation.

### What if an individual disagrees with a HW decision?

- The issue can be referred to a senior manager. Their decision is final.
- The individual can submit a formal flexible working request

### What if HW leads to a dip in performance or morale or efficiency?

- Keep arrangements under regular review.
- Address any concerns with individuals.
- Ensure that there are regular opportunities for the team to interact and collaborate.
- Communicate regularly.
- HW working arrangements may need to change a few times before the right balance is achieved.

## Flexible working requests

A formal flexible working request can be made where an individual wants to change their working hours or working pattern on a permanent basis. This may be appropriate where the individual needs some certainty over their future working pattern. Please see the separate [Flexible Working Policy and guidance](#) for help on dealing with these requests.

If it is not possible to agree a HW arrangement, a flexible working request can be made instead.

Any flexible working agreement can be made on an initial trail/temporary basis but a final decision must be made in accordance with statutory flexible working regulations.

Any final decisions constitute a change to an individuals' terms and conditions and there is no automatic right to revert to any previous working hours or pattern once an agreement is made.

Where an employee disagrees with the outcome of a flexible working request, they have the right to appeal.



Employees may not make more than one flexible working request in any 12 month period.

Flexible working and HW arrangements can operate together, for example, reduced hours per week, with some of those being worked remotely.

**There are many possibilities with hybrid working and this guide cannot cover all the options. Please discuss your needs with HR at an early stage if you have any queries or concerns or would like help.**