

UWE Bristol Guidelines for working from home (July 2014 version)

Please note, this policy is subject to a temporary working from home policy that should be referred to as of 1 June 2020, which reflects the current approach to working from home due to coronavirus (also known as COVID-19).

1. Introduction

1.1 For a variety of reasons, and with varying degrees of frequency, staff may undertake some of their duties away from their normal place of work at the University premises. Whilst there is an expectation that normally staff will be in the workplace, it is accepted that there will be circumstances where working from home is mutually beneficial for the University and staff member.

1.2 These guidelines define arrangements for working from home to perform University work, set out entitlements, eligibility criteria and other conditions that apply, and have been developed to provide a clear approach to working from home

1.3 The intention is that this will ensure fair treatment and consistency of approach, which is understood by all managers and employees. It provides a standard framework for reporting, monitoring and managing home working in line with business and individual need. This document takes into account current employment legislation and will be implemented in conjunction with the University's Equalities Scheme, and the Equal Opportunities Policy.

2. Purpose

2.1 Working from home means performance of University work for agreed hours from the home (i.e. normally in the employee's private dwelling) or another remote location. The flexibility and productivity outcomes available from working from home can be attractive to both the University and employees. The arrangements are based on a management philosophy of trust and mutual benefit. The employee will retain a dedicated office workstation (or desk-sharing arrangement) at their normal place of work.

2.2 The University is mindful that working from home can:

- be mutually beneficial where work needs to be done with minimum distraction or interruption
- assist with flexibility around reasonable caring, dependent or domestic responsibilities; as part of a phased return to work after maternity or sick leave; or as a reasonable adjustment.
- save use of cars, commuting time and can ease car-parking requirements. It can also reduce congestion at peak times and reduce pollution which will help reduce the University's carbon footprint.

2.3 Working from home:

- is voluntary and is not intended to create a situation where staff feel obliged to work excessive hours;
- should not create additional workload for other employees, or otherwise affect operational efficiency and effectiveness
- is not a contractual right through either express or implied terms.
- will not alter an employee's terms and conditions of employment; does not attract subsidy since the benefits are seen as being mutual; does not normally mean that equipment will be provided by the University for use at home.
- arrangements will be subject to review to ensure that they remain
- appropriate for all parties and may be modified through discussion.

3. Scope

3.1 These guidelines can be applied in principle to all University employees, regardless of contract type or duration, other than those employed on a casual basis, although it is recognised that because of the nature of some roles, home working is not practical for all.

3.2 Certain roles have aspects for which working from home would appear to be well suited, and some examples as given below:

- report writing
- desk based research
- completion of notes or minutes
- preparation or administration for academic work
- marking
- lecture preparation

3.3 Positions with the following requirements will **not** normally be considered for home working:

- direct customer face to face contact on a frequent basis (for example reception); being a member of a team who needs to have frequent face to face contact with other team members;
- servicing and serving other University facilities or assets (e.g. security office, physical recreation assistant, grounds worker);
- a high level of supervision or line management responsibility; delivery of teaching

4. Health and safety considerations

4.1 Most of the work that staff would undertake at home is paper-based work or work on a computer, and as such should not introduce health and safety risks not already present in the home environment.

4.2 The home worker should refer to guidance on the University's web pages regarding the use of [Display Screen Equipment](#) (DSE) and the principles for setting up an appropriate workstation at home.

4.3 The home worker should refer to the safety guidance note regarding [lone working](#) on the University's Health and Safety website, as well as the "[Working Alone](#)" leaflet available at www.hse.gov.uk.

5. Key information for employees who wish to home work

5.1 Equipment and technology

5.1.1 As the University campus remains a work base for the employee and a desk and equipment is provided on campus, the University will not normally provide the employee with additional IT equipment, phone, broadband connection or furniture to work from home.

5.1.2 The employee is responsible for ensuring that they have suitable telephone and broadband services where required, and for contacting the service provider in the event of any technical issues. It is not possible for the University to provide IT support for equipment owned by employees.

5.1.3 Employees who are using University supplied and supported equipment can receive telephone support from IT Services, but if the issue cannot be resolved by telephone, they will be required to bring the equipment on-site, as home visits are not possible. The ITS helpdesk is available on +44 (0)117 328 3612 or dial extension 123 (24 hrs) and at itonline@uwe.ac.uk.

5.1.4 All employees are required to use their own and supplied equipment correctly and to take reasonable steps to maintain any equipment provided, removing defective

equipment from use and reporting defects on supplied equipment to their line manager. University equipment may not be used by others i.e. family and friends etc.

5.1.5 While employed by the University, staff can [install Office 365 desktop apps](#) on up to five personal computers.

5.2. Security of information / data protection

5.2.1 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. Employees are responsible for ensuring the security of University property and all University information, files, documents, data etc. within their possession, including both paper and electronic material. Staff should discuss the security implications of working from home with their local IT team.

5.2.2 In most cases it will not be necessary for employees to transfer private or confidential information from the University to home as these files should be stored and accessed by using either:

- the [External Access System \(XA\)](#) to remotely access the data using the Staff Desktop or
- work on the data in SharePoint, where the data is held securely and any communication over the internet is encrypted.

Both of these methods avoid the need to store any data on the local computer. The computer must also be password-protected

5.2.3 Further guidance on the use and access of University IT resources when working from home and the required security steps to be taken is available on the ITS web pages: [Data protection and encryption facilities](#)

5.2.4 All home workers are required to adhere to the University's [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and [Data Protection Policy](#) whilst undertaking University business.

5.3 Insurance

5.3.1 The employee must understand that it is their responsibility to assess the implications for them of home working, for example with respect to taxation, insurance, mortgage, rental or leasing arrangements. Homeworking will be agreed on the basis that the employee has addressed any potential issues.

5.3.2 University equipment would be covered by the University's own insurance.

5.3.3 The University holds liability insurances that provide cover for the legal liabilities of the University and its employees whenever they are engaged in University business. This cover applies irrespective of where the activity is taking place.

5.4 Costs/expenses

5.4.1 No contribution will be made by the University towards normal household expenses attached to home working, such as heating, lighting or council tax costs. When an employee is working at or from home, journeys made to the normal office base will not be reimbursed as normal home to work rules apply.

5.5 Communication

5.5.1 Good communication is an essential part of any successful home working arrangement. Provision must be made to allow effective communication with work colleagues and external clients during the working day.

5.5.2 Employees must be contactable throughout normal working hours by the line manager and other University employees. The arrangements for contact should be agreed prior to working from home. The employee's home phone number and home address may not be divulged without their express permission.

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

6. Requests for home working

6.1 This guidance should ensure an appropriate and equitable response to employee requests for home working, with decisions taken and communicated in an efficient and fair manner. It is granted at the University's discretion and requires the approval of the appropriate line manager following discussion with the employee. It is recognised that some academic staff already work from home and do not need to seek agreement for each occasion of home working. However, they should be reminded of the guidance set out in this document.

6.2 An employee should approach their line manager with a request for home working, and a rationale for why this request is being made (for example to enable them to complete a report). Normally this rationale will outline the benefits of working from home and the expected outcomes. .

6.3 If the request is supported then this will apply on an adhoc basis as and when required and as agreed between the employee and the manager.

6.4 A manager may refuse a request to work from home, but should aim to be as flexible as possible in accommodating such a request.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Line manager responsibilities:

- To consider requests for home working and how this can benefit the University, individual and the environment and be flexible in their approach.
- To notify employees of relevant arrangements, and to provide the employee with a copy of this home working guidance.
- To ensure that the employee is aware of expectations and the required standard of work.
- To provide feedback and to discuss and evaluate the arrangement.

7.2 Employee responsibilities:

- To abide by the requirements of this document.
- To give details of a mobile and/or home telephone number and to facilitate communication with the University as appropriate.
- To deliver the expected work outcomes.
- Understand and consider all the information within these guidelines, in particular their own responsibilities regarding health and safety, data security and confidentiality.
- To record the actual time worked on their flexi sheet (where appropriate)

7.3 Human Resources responsibilities:

- To provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on how to effectively deal with home working at departmental or individual level.
- To assist managers with the fair and consistent application of the guidelines.

8. Other relevant guidelines

8.1 All employees have the legal right to request flexible work arrangements and home working may be a practical alternative to travel, or considered as a reasonable adjustment for disabled staff.

8.2 In certain adverse conditions home working may be considered when severe weather makes travelling difficult and this is detailed in the University's [Adverse Conditions Policy](#).