

UWE Bristol Guidelines for working from home (June 2020 version)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Temporary changes to working from home policies and procedures

Please note, this is temporary working from home guidance that should be referred to as of 1 June 2020, which reflects the current approach to home working due to COVID-19.

Executive Summary

As a result of coronavirus (also known as COVID-19), we recognise our organisation needs to adapt its ways of working, whilst following current government guidance to help reduce the spread of coronavirus and safeguard the health, safety and welfare of our students and staff during the coronavirus outbreak, while continuing our operations as normally as possible.

This document explains what temporary changes we are making to our usual policies and procedures on [working from home](#).

The continued need for these changes will be reviewed on 1 August 2020 and then every month thereafter. When the University is reasonably satisfied, in line with HM Government and Public Health England guidance, that it is able to resume normal operations this document will be rescinded.

Principles

Recognising staff have been asked to work remotely where possible and that the need for social distancing will continue for some time, current policies and procedures will be temporarily varied, to accommodate us to focus on critical organisational priorities whilst safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

Subject to that main principle, current policies and procedures will otherwise be operated in the usual way so as to maintain a normal business approach as far as possible. Where necessary, minor modifications to procedures will be implemented to accommodate current government guidance, and legislation, in connection with this crisis.

Any such variations should be implemented and operated so as to cause no long-term detriment to employees. Policies and procedures will at all times be operated in a way which is reasonable and fair.

The University's practice should remain compliant with legislation.

Staff will be expected to work co-operatively with management in relation to the operation of this policy.

The accompanying pages provide more detail in relation to one specific set of guidelines. Changes may also be made to other University policies and procedures on a temporary basis during this period.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Temporary changes to workplace policies and procedures.

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UWE Bristol Guidelines for working from home

What is our normal policy?

Under our normal policy

Purpose: working from home means performance of University work for agreed hours from the home or another remote location and:

- is voluntary;
- should not affect operational efficiency and effectiveness;
- does not normally mean that equipment will be provided by the University for use at home.

Scope: the 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.

Health and safety considerations: the home worker should refer to guidance on the use of [Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\)](#) and should refer to the safety guidance note regarding [lone working](#).

Equipment and technology: the University will not normally provide the employee with additional IT equipment, phone, broadband connection or furniture to work from home. 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.

Security of information/data protection: 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.

Insurance: it is the employee's responsibility to assess the implications for them of home working, for example with respect to taxation, insurance, mortgage, rental or leasing arrangements and homeworking will be agreed on the basis that the employee has addressed any potential issues. University equipment is covered by the University's own insurance. 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.

Costs/expenses: no contribution will be made by the University towards normal household expenses attached to home working, such as heating, lighting or council tax costs.

Communication: employees must be contactable throughout normal working hours by the line manager and other University employees.

Requests for home working: an employee would approach their line manager to request home working, with a rationale outlining the benefits and the expected outcomes. If the request is supported then it would apply on an adhoc basis as and when required and as agreed.

Responsibilities: are outlined for line managers, employees and Human Resources.

What is changing temporarily?

Purpose: given the urgent and unprecedented need to restrict travel and access to the University campus as a result of social distancing, working from home is not voluntary. It is recognised that there may be an adverse impact on operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Some equipment may be provided by the University for use at home, for example a laptop. Individual employees, with the permission of their manager, may also have arranged to take smaller items, such as a keyboard, mouse, riser, monitor etc. to facilitate their ability to work from home. These items remain the property of the University and will need to be returned when the period of working from home comes to an end.

Scope: the guidelines may be applied to those employed on a casual basis, where appropriate.

Health and safety considerations: given the exceptional requirement to work from home, the University has produced a simple [home workspace checklist](#). This should enable employees to set up their workspace following simple steps and this replaces the current guidance on the use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE). Employees are advised that for

their comfort, they should take regular and frequent breaks and simple [workstation exercises](#) are recommended.

Staff who experience pain and discomfort while using display screen equipment at home should immediately contact their line manager.

Every effort will be made to try to ensure that people can set up an appropriate workspace at home and will take account of what is immediately available to the person.

Reasonable adjustments and disability: employees with existing health conditions requiring additional reasonable adjustments due to the change to homeworking should discuss their needs with their line manager.

Managers who require further advice and support about reasonable adjustments connected to workstation set-up, should contact safety@uwe.ac.uk. The Health and Safety team will help to identify what, if any further action can reasonably be implemented. This may also include a discussion with HR Advisers, Occupational Health and WECIL (West of England Centre for Inclusive Living).

Where it is not possible to make reasonable adjustments, staff may need to take 'special leave' with the agreement of their people manager, in order to ensure their health and wellbeing.

Equipment and technology: where required the University may provide the employee with additional IT equipment to enable them to work from home.

Security of information/data protection: employees continue to be 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. Employees should familiarise themselves with the guidance on [data protection](#) when working from home.

Communication: the University recognises that good communication is essential to home working and that whilst there is normally an expectation that employees must be contactable throughout normal working hours by their line manager and other University employees, this may be more difficult at present. Employees should talk to their people manager regarding flexibility that may be required in working hours, for example to manage caring responsibilities.

Requests for home working: as there is currently an organisational need for working from home in response to the coronavirus pandemic, requests for home working are not needed until further notice. This should not be assumed to be a permanent arrangement. The University appreciates the flexibility that employees are showing in being able to continue to work during these challenging times.

Dated: 1 June 2020