Hybrid Working Guidance

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1. Introduction

1.1 The University recognises the benefits of more flexible ways of working, including where employees work. It can offer staff flexibility, help create an inclusive culture, support positive staff health and wellbeing and positively impact productivity. It also enables a more effective and sustainable use of the University's estate.

1.2 Hybrid working is where some work is being undertaken on University premises and some work remotely – it about where staff work.

1.3 This guidance is to assist staff in requesting, supporting and managing requests to work a mixture of on and off campus in an ad hoc, occasional, or regular pattern of work. No single set of working arrangements will suit all areas and roles and may vary throughout the year in response to the academic cycle. There is no expectation that staff must work in a hybrid way.

1.4 It is acknowledged that the nature of academia requires academic and research colleagues a heightened level of flexibility in their work approach. While it is recognised that many colleagues may already engage in hybrid work practices, it is imperative that, in doing so, colleagues adhere to the principles outlined in this guidance.

1.5 The University is committed to a blended approach where operationally feasible, to enable effective utilisation of our estate and where of benefit to the organisation, its staff, and students.

2. Scope of the Guidance

2.1 This guidance applies to all employees who hold roles that can be performed in-part off campus. There will be some roles and some work which can only be performed in person and/or campus, such as roles or work on campus supporting infrastructure operations or providing essential frontline services or student facing roles and activities.

2.2 This guidance does not include permanent changes to working patterns, location, or hours, encompassing statutory rights, these are covered by the [Flexible Working Policy.](#)

2.3 Living and working outside of the UK and permanent fully remote working are not permitted under this guidance.

3. Approach to Hybrid Working

3.1 There is an expectation of regular on campus working for employees who adopt hybrid working. The University campus remains the centre of its identity and gravity for staff and students. Student feedback tells us that there is a preference for face-to-face teaching and access to staff in person. Our Staff Engagement Survey tells us that staff value the sense of purpose and community at St Mary's. Face-to-face working can be important for a sense of belonging and social connection; creativity and collaboration; and support for those new to the University. It is also crucial to our 49% commuter students to be able to access academic face to face support through the work our academics are doing.

3.2 An employee's contractual place of work remains the campus (unless exceptionally provided otherwise in contract). Some staff may prefer to work on campus, and this will be accommodated.

3.3 The degree to which hybrid working is available will be dependent on the job role and team requirements. It may vary at different times of the year, to meet business needs. Hybrid working must not hinder the effective performance of the individual,

the team or wider University. It must not create additional workload for other employees or impact service provision.

3.4 Regardless of working location, staff are required to comply with all University policies and procedures.

3.5 Staff must have equal access to opportunities, support, and training regardless of where their work is undertaken.

4. Implementing and Requests for Hybrid Working

4.1 The introduction of hybrid working in a team must be deliberate and considered, taking into account the activity being undertaken and subject to operational priorities, the needs of the whole team, stakeholders and service users. Many teams may already be working in a hybrid way. As such, hybrid working will be led by and the parameters for each Faculty and Department defined by the relevant Deans and Directors.

4.2 A request by a member of staff in that Faculty or Department for a hybrid working arrangement may be made verbally or in writing to and agreed with the line manager. Requests will be considered according to this guidance and the outcome confirmed as soon as reasonably possible.

4.3 Any arrangements only apply to the role currently held at the time of making the request and will be reviewed regularly at 3 monthly intervals for the first year and then every 6 months.

4.4 Line managers can alter or withdraw hybrid working arrangements due to changing organisational needs, performance concerns or any other reasons. A discussion will take place with the staff members affected and where possible reasonable notice will be given.

4.5 Any arrangements agreed will not be contractually binding or result in changes to terms and conditions.

4.6 Requests may be declined if the impact on workload, others or University business and operational requirements or service provision is deemed detrimental.

4.7 A request is unlikely to be agreed if the member of staff's most recent appraisal identifies any aspect of performance as unsatisfactory, unexpired warning, or training need and/or supervision to carry out work to the required standard.

Relevant Policy Headings

- **Date Written:** 21 February 2024
- **Author:** Director of Human Resources
- **Version number:** Version 1
- **Person responsible:** Deans and Directors
- **Effective from:** 25 March 2024
- **Review date:** 25 March 2026
- **Impact Assessment date:** N/A
- **History (where discussed / who circulated to / committees considered:** SLT

Appendix 1 – Expectations of and support for hybrid workers

Wellbeing and Inclusion

- All team members will be included in team activities regardless of where they work
- Regular contact with the line manager should take place (minimum fortnightly) including opportunities to discuss issues or concerns regarding hybrid working
- Whilst hybrid working is underpinned by a commitment to enabling and promoting staff wellbeing, when working remotely it is important to be mindful of not overworking – staff are encouraged to take a break between meetings, a lunch break or break of at least 20 mins during a working day of more than 6 hours to ensure mental and physical wellbeing
- Early morning or evening meetings should be avoided as much as possible to support the wellbeing of staff
- Staff should not be expected to send or respond to emails after 6pm or before 8am or at weekends. In an emergency the staff member should be contacted by telephone
- Staff are encouraged to join staff networks to stay connected
- Staff should not work if they are unwell. Any absences should be reported in accordance with procedures
- If any member of staff feels any aspects of their work is impacting their wellbeing they should speak to their line manager and consider a referral to their GP, Employee Assistance Programme, or Occupational Health for guidance and support.

Accessibility and Collaboration

- Working off campus requires flexibility and mutual trust and confidence

- Hybrid working must not be used to replace childcare or other personal commitments

- Staff will be expected to be working and remain available and contactable during normal working hours and deliver work and responsibilities to required standards

- Staff must make their availability visible to others through Teams/Outlook calendar and be contactable via Teams/email during normal office hours and be contactable for calls by phone or laptop. For emergency reasons the line manager must be aware where all staff are based and that they are contactable

- Staff must be able to attend campus as required and be willing to attend activities and meetings in the workplace as necessary or where specifically requested. As far as possible reasonable notice will be provided

Equipment, Information Security, and Health and Safety

- To enable the University to better utilise space for the benefit of staff and students in a hybrid working environment the following guidance applies:

    - up to 60% 3 days in the office desk share or hot desk will be made available

    - up to 80% 4 or 5 days in office a dedicated desk will be made available

- The management of the desk environment is through the Line Manager/Head of Department

- Hot desks and desk sharing within team spaces will be made available for those at campus 3 days a week or less

- Subject to space, suitable available lockers or lockable shared pedestals will be made available whilst desk sharing

- Data and information must be always kept secure and managed in accordance with [University policies.](#)

- IT equipment will be provided to support staff working across multiple locations, but subject to the role's requirements, there will not be a duplicate set of equipment for home use. Such equipment remains the property of the University.

- [IT support can be accessed here.](#)

- Microsoft teams should be used as the default communication between the University and its staff for both voice and video calling.