

# Agile Working Framework

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**Implementation Date:** September 2021

**Review Date:** August 2022

**(This document remains valid whilst under review)**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This framework sets out the University's provisions regarding Agile Working. The University recognises the benefits that a blend of working arrangements can bring. It helps achieve a better work-life balance, can improve employee motivation, performance and productivity, reduce stress and have a positive environmental impact. Flexibility in working arrangements also increases the ability of the University to be agile and to respond to business requirements within required timeframes.

The University's mission is to 'realise potential and shape futures through high quality practice based learning, teaching, research and enterprise' and much of this activity will require staff and students to attend campus. Therefore, our working arrangements should always be based on the needs of our students, to ensure high levels of student satisfaction and the needs of our research and enterprise activities.

The Framework to enable Agile Working is discretionary and informed by the needs above. In addition, Agile Working is entirely voluntary for staff. The University understands that not everyone may be able to or wish to work under the principles of this Framework and in those cases employees current working practices and arrangements will remain unchanged.

The University also acknowledges that many Academic staff currently work in a flexible and agile way and this remains unchanged. Given the variable nature of some academic workloads/working patterns throughout the academic year, the framework set out here is applicable to those who do not have this flexibility at present. The aim of this Framework is to provide an opportunity to apply these principles more widely across the University.

## **2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

The University is committed to equality and embraces diversity in our working, learning, research and teaching environment. Our policies, procedures and guidance apply to all employees, whether fixed-term, permanent, part-time, full-time or casual and irrespective of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. An Equality Impact Review has been completed and is published with this Framework.

## **3. SCOPE**

- 3.1 This framework applies to all University staff where part or all of the role can be carried out working remotely. Given the variable nature of some academic workloads/working patterns throughout the academic year, the framework set out here is applicable to those who do not have this flexibility at present.

- 3.2 The University understands that not everyone may be able or wish to work remotely and this framework incorporates flexibility as appropriate. The University also accepts that not all roles are suitable for working remotely. In addition, staff who work for the University on a casual basis or as a volunteer will need to be considered on a case by case basis.
- 3.3 This framework is non-contractual and may be withdrawn, updated or amended at any time. It should be noted that if it is agreed that a role and employee is categorised as a Remote Worker on an ongoing basis, then their contractual place of work will need to be amended and this will be through the Flexible Working policy and procedure.

#### **4. FRAMEWORK STATEMENT**

- 4.1 Agile Working is the practice of an individual performing all or part of their role away from their contractual place of work. This can be remotely from home or another suitable agreed non-University premises. The ability to perform a role under the Agile Working model is different to the statutory right to request flexible working. Flexible working is a statutory request process and is where colleagues need permanent or longer-term changes to their contractual arrangements. Agile Working is about flexibility of location for part of your working week, without a contractual change. Our Flexible Working Policy covers a contractual change relating to working hours and patterns over and above the Agile Working Framework. Discussions and decisions about working hours and patterns should take place with your line manager in the normal way through the Flexible Working policy and procedure.
- 4.2 Not all University roles will be able to be worked on an Agile Working basis, some roles will be required to be performed fully on the University campus. There is no right of appeal against the decision as to whether a role is campus based or eligible for Agile Working.
- 4.3 Agile Working can be beneficial for staff for a variety of reasons, including work-life balance and wellbeing. The University seeks to accommodate Agile Working where possible, provided it doesn't hinder the effective performance of an individual, team, or the University and it's not to the detriment of our students' experience.
- 4.4 University contractual terms, duties, responsibilities, policies and procedures apply to all staff, including those working remotely.

#### **5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 5.1 **University Executive Board (UEB)** to demonstrate their commitment and support to this Framework and to reflect this Framework within their own leadership practices.

## 5.2 All Directors, Deans, School Operation Managers and Heads of Service

- To determine eligibility and local application of remote working days/practices of Agile Working for staff in line with this Framework and apply it in a fair, transparent and timely way with regard to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Ensure that staff are aware of expectations and the required standard of work, including specific deliverables
- Provide feedback and to discuss and evaluate Agile Working arrangements with staff including considering trial periods to ensure appropriate outcomes are being delivered
- Ensure regular team meetings and one to ones are in place for staff both virtually and face to face as appropriate

## 5.3 Employees

- Deliver the expected work outcomes
- Understand and consider all the information within this Framework, in particular their own responsibilities regarding health safety and wellbeing, data security and confidentiality

## 5.4 Human Resources

- To provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on how to effectively deal with Agile Working at departmental or individual level
- To assist managers with the fair and consistent application of the Framework
- To engage with the relevant Trade Unions in implementing and updating the Framework to reflect the University and employee's needs.
- Monitoring and reporting on requests and outcomes.

5.5 **Equality and Diversity Team** to raise any equalities issues identified through review of equalities data or other feedback, in relation to the implementation of this Framework.

5.6 **Trade Unions** to engage in the review of the Framework and to support members in its application where applicable.

## AGILE WORKING ELIGIBILITY

6.1 Working arrangements are informed by operational needs and agreed in advance with the relevant Director, Dean, School Operations Manager and Head of Service to ensure that University fulfils its commitments to students, customers, partners, stakeholders, compliance and regulations. In this respect, the University identifies three categories of role, determining them eligible for Agile Working by role as follows:

6.1.1 **Campus Workers – likely to be required on University site 80% - 100% of the time**

These roles need to be carried out on campus. These could be roles involving: -

- direct face to face contact on a frequent basis (for example reception duties for internal and external visitors, library services, laboratory activities)
- serving other University facilities or assets (for example security office, engineers, cafeteria, gym staff, grounds worker);
- the need for practical face to face supervision, personal tutorage, teaching and assessments.

A Campus Workers' contractual place of work is the University. Occasional remote working may be possible for a campus worker role but it would be exceptional.

#### **6.1.2 Hybrid Workers – roles can be undertaken through a blend of on and off campus. This could be an average of up to 60% of the time working remotely.**

These percentages are not absolute and may vary in accordance with operational needs.

These roles can be performed without detriment to the outputs or significant increase in workload on colleagues.

- The work can be done from a location which best suits each activity
- Attendance on campus will be for things such as team activities and meetings, face to face teaching, pastoral responsibilities or where direct social interaction is more effective
- Some of the work may involve using equipment, technology or other resources which are on campus
- Some of the work is better suited to a location free from interruptions or distractions

Hybrid Workers contractual place of work is the University.

#### **6.1.3 Remote Workers – it is likely that roles could be undertaken remotely 80% - 100% of the time**

These roles mean the majority of work can be carried out off campus.

- The work is best done using a range of digital tools and remote technology
- The role does not regularly come to campus but can attend for ad hoc meetings and duties

Remote workers' contractual place of work will be their home address (unless agreed otherwise) and if agreed as an ongoing arrangement can be amended through the Flexible Working policy and procedure.

- 6.2 Staff who are in a role eligible for Agile Working, may be required to work fully on campus at particular times of the year to cover specific activities or duties in order to meet operational needs. These arrangements will be role/team dependent, and determined by the Director, Dean, School Operations Manager or Head of Service as relevant.
- 6.3 For roles eligible for Agile Working the actual remote working days or practices are to be agreed locally with an employee's line manager, in consultation with the relevant Director, Dean, School Operations Manager or Head of Service, to ensure service delivery based on the needs of the role, team and University. In agreeing the remote working days or practices, managers will need to ensure they take into account any equality and diversity considerations. The relevant remote working days/practices will be reviewed by the relevant Dean or Head of Service on a regular basis and initially after six months to ensure effective service delivery.
- 6.4 All staff, irrespective of their eligibility, may from time to time, with reasonable notice, be required to attend campus for meetings in their scheduled work time at the request of management. This will include the need to attend campus to collect IT equipment or facilitate repairs of IT equipment.

## **7. FLEXIBILITY**

- 7.1 The University understands that not everyone may be able or wish to work remotely. Remote working is optional and agreed in consultation with the line manager. In those cases where employees do not wish to work under the principles of this Framework their current working practices and arrangements will remain unchanged.
- 7.2 Whilst remote working is one of a range of potential reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities practiced by the University, such arrangements would be declared as reasonable adjustments, rather than agile working arrangements.

## **8. REMOTE WORKING PRACTICES**

### **8.1. Internet access**

Agile Working staff are required to have their own reliable internet connection and phone signal (where applicable) to perform their roles. This is essential to permit effective communication with colleagues, students and key stakeholders and the accessing of relevant information and systems that permit the effective performance of roles.

### **8.2. Accessibility**

- 8.2.1 Virtual accessibility is an important aspect of effective Agile Working. Staff should remain 'visible' and 'accessible', letting others know where and when they are working, within normal contracted working hours, and how they can be reached, whether working on or off campus.

- 8.2.2. Shared calendars, staff central staff profiles, status on Microsoft Teams and email signatures are just some of the methods of promoting accessibility.
- 8.2.3 Managers are expected to include all categories of Agile Workers in team activities and manage hybrid teams inclusively.
- 8.2.4 Agile Workers should remain as engaged and involved with the University as Campus Workers. The University will provide equal access to relevant information and opportunities, such as news, meetings and events, benefits and development and opportunities to apply for alternative roles, so as not to disadvantage a particular category of worker.
- 8.2.5 All staff should utilise the suite of available and relevant University recommended equipment and technology to engage effectively with colleagues and other stakeholders in Agile Working scenarios.

### **8.3. Suitability of the agile working environment**

Agile Working environments should meet the health safety and welfare requirements as covered in the working from home risk assessment and guidance available from the Occupational Safety and Health Services StaffCentral site. Specifically:-

- they should be safe and secure
- they should be appropriate to the nature of the work being conducted and free of distractions; Agile Working is not a substitute for suitable care arrangements for dependents, dependents should be cared for by someone other than the member of staff during their working hours.
- any accidents and ill health associated with home or remote working should be reported in line with University Policy.

### **8.4 Agile Working outside the UK**

Requests to perform role-related duties and work either partly or wholly outside of the United Kingdom will not be allowed other than in exceptional circumstances. This is due to the tax compliance risk and cost implications to the University and/or the individual. Requests which are thought to be exceptional must be discussed with the respective Dean or Director and the relevant HR Advisor and will require the approval of the Director of Finance before any overseas working agreement is implemented.

### **8.5 Maintaining safe, secure and healthy Agile Working practices**

- 8.5.1 Whilst there are many benefits to Agile Working, there are also some challenges. At times workers could feel more isolated and they may experience boundaries between work and personal life become blurred. The University encourages individuals to take steps to ensure healthy remote working. More information on good remote working practices can be found on

the Wellbeing site on StaffCentral. Staff are encouraged to speak to their managers if they encounter challenges with their working arrangement.

- 8.5.2 Carrying out computer or paper-based work remotely is generally deemed low risk, however, to ensure staff have safe working arrangements staff will be required to carry out relevant assessments by the University, including but not limited to, Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments. More information can be found on the Occupational Safety and Health Services site on StaffCentral.
- 8.5.3 Remote working employees who become pregnant, develop an injury or illness or change address should notify their line manager of this as soon as possible, so a new and/or specific risk assessment can be conducted and if appropriate Occupational Health advice sought. More information can be found on the Occupational Safety and Health Services site on StaffCentral.
- 8.5.4 The introduction of agile working brings many benefits but also introduces some issues that will require additional consideration to ensure we maintain safe and secure working environments. Some of these factors will apply not only to local activities within an individual school or department but may also form part of a collective building safety measure. Where employees undertake agile working it will be necessary to ensure that consideration is given to how individual roles contribute to both local and building safety arrangements. Where there is a safety impact remedial actions will be required before implementing agile working changes for staff concerned.

## **8.6 Information Security and Data Storage**

- 8.6.1 The University is committed to enabling and facilitating effective remote working via IT solutions. Policies are in place that detail both provision and requirements of remote working staff in relation to mitigation of associated risks, information security and adherence to data protection legislation which can be found on the IT Services site on StaffCentral and the Legal and Governance site on StaffCentral.

General reminders:-

- Only use approved technology for handling personal or confidential data.
- Consider confidentiality when holding conversations or sharing a screen.
- Don't mix University data with your own personal data.
- Do ensure your home devices are up to date in terms of anti-virus, security and software
- Be extra vigilant about opening web links and attachments in emails or other messages.
- Use secure networks, avoiding free wifi hotspots
- If you need to have hard copies of paperwork which contains personal data or confidential University data ensure that it is kept securely at home and destroyed safely when no longer needed.



- All data, regardless of where it is stored (files, chat, email, sharepoint) must be deleted when no longer required.
- Completely log out of computers once finished working (or if working on a personal device ensuring that all email and work systems are logged out).
- All documents should be accessed and saved to department's Sharepoint folders or OneDrive folder.
- Ensure Mandatory training is completed and up-to-date.

## **8.7 IT and Non-technical Equipment**

8.7.1 The University will provide staff with appropriate working equipment to enable them to do their role together with the provision of a designated work location and work station, a shared working space or a shared desk facility (which includes the provision of a desk and chair). In addition, the standard desktop equipment provided by the university for staff consists of a single desktop or laptop with a separate screen, keyboard, mouse and headset. If a laptop is provided this will also come with a riser and external screen.

These provisions are provided primarily to conduct their role at their contractual place of work. However, any provision will need to be flexible depending on the individual needs of the employee and their role. In this respect, consideration will be given to the frequency and regularity of the staff members' on campus working, the requirements of their role and any specific individual adjustments required. Workers who are issued with a University laptop can use this for working remotely and on campus as required.

8.7.2 Any additional provision of working equipment for use when working remotely will be fully considered with reference to any relevant assessments by the University, including but not limited to, Display Screen Equipment (DSE).

8.7.3 Workers who require specific adjustments and equipment associated with an injury or illness should notify their line manager of this as soon as possible, so that a new and/or specific risk assessment can be conducted and if appropriate Occupational Health advice sought.

8.7.4 The use of home equipment for specific purposes, including the use of core business applications though the Secure Remote Access service is permitted in line with current policies. These policies are regularly reviewed.

## **8.8 Access to remote working locations**

8.8.1 Exceptionally, there may be an unavoidable reason for the University to need to access a staff members remote working location. This could be to:

- install, inspect, replace, repair, maintain, service or retrieve University property during the course of employment, where it is not possible or appropriate to do so on campus;
- inspect or investigate significant health and safety concerns

8.8.2 Staff may be asked to consent to the University or its representatives, at reasonable times and on reasonable notice, accessing their remote workplace. The University will only do so where it deems it absolutely necessary, and where there are not suitable alternative methods of achieving the required outcomes, for example for resolution of an IT issue that cannot be resolved without physical access to equipment.

## **8.9 Contractual implications**

8.9.1 Contractual obligations and University policies apply to all regardless of work location. Employees are required to comply with all University policies and procedures, including but not limited to, data protection, IT policies, annual leave and sickness, absence whether working remotely or from a University premises.

8.9.2 A contractual place of work will be listed as a staff member's home address for Remote Workers only. All other Hybrid and Campus Workers contractual places of work will be the University premises.

## **8.10 Meetings and Personal security**

8.10.1 Managers should plan for meetings to be virtual or blended to help minimise the detriment to those accessing remotely. It is recognised, however, that meetings can take place in a variety of ways and will, therefore, be determined locally as there may be occasions when it is agreed to hold face to face meetings on University premises. For reasons of personal security, face to face work meetings at individuals' homes are not permitted, unless approved in advance by the relevant line manager and relevant safety assessments have been conducted.

8.10.2 For the employee's own security it is also recommended that employees who are fully remote working or hybrid working should:

- a. not release their personal data or information to external contacts, colleagues or students, such as home address or personal telephone number
- b. use IT approved technology
- c. ensure that colleagues are aware of the Remote Workers whereabouts and how to contact them

## **8.11 Insurance and other considerations**

- 8.11.1 Individuals working remotely are responsible for assessing the personal implications of home working in respect of insurance, taxation, mortgage, utilities provision and any leasing and landlord agreements.
- 8.11.2 The University holds liability insurance that provides cover for legal liabilities of the University and its members of staff whenever they are engaged in University business. This cover applies irrespective of where the activity is taking place.
- 8.11.3 All individuals are responsible for the security of the University's property within their control and for avoiding loss. Directors, Deans, Heads of Service and Remote Workers must ensure reasonable steps are taken to ensure the care, custody and security of University owned assets within their control, in line with the University Financial Regulations.

## **8.12 Associated costs/expenses**

- 8.12.1 Agile working is entirely voluntary and all staff have the right to work from a University premises full time should they wish to. In this respect, the University does not make financial contributions to staff whilst they work remotely for normal household expenses such as heating, lighting, internet and phone lines or council tax costs. Likewise as voluntary arrangement travel from home to University premises is not claimable.

Staff may be able to claim Income Tax relief for employment expenses by following the steps from the UK Government website - [Claim tax relief for your job expenses - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-for-your-job-expenses).

Please note, outside of COVID restrictions, this can only be claimed if staff are required to work from home. If this is voluntary this tax relief may not be claimable.

- 8.12.2 Staff are reimbursed for travel based on the Staff Expenses Policy.

## **8.13 The right to withdraw remote working**

The University reserves the right to terminate any non-contractual Agile Working agreements for business reasons at any time on reasonable notice to fulfil organisational requirements. Staff also have the right to confirm they no longer wish to work under the principles of this Framework.