

Employee Wellbeing - Interim Hybrid Working Arrangement Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure outlines the specific terms and conditions for a Hybrid Working Arrangement (HWA), including how to apply, implement and monitor the HWA.

(2) This Procedure is to be read in conjunction with the [Employee Wellbeing - Flexible Work Arrangements Procedure](#)

Section 2 - TEQSA/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(3) HESF: 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to employees who wish to apply to work under a HWA at a location other than their designated location of work (e.g. campus/site) known as Working from Home for the purposes of this procedure.

(5) An HWA application may be made as follows:

- a. A full time employee may apply to work up to a maximum of 50% of the hours of their employment.
- b. A part time employee, may apply to work up to a maximum of 50% of the time fraction of their employment.

(6) Examples of a HWA up to a maximum of 50% of the hours of employment may include (but are not be limited to):

- a. Weekly split (2 days working from home / 3 days in the office each week)*
- b. Alternating weekly (5 days working from home / 5 days in the office the following week)*
- c. A fortnightly arrangement (Week 1: 2 Days from home and 3 days in the office / Week 2: 3 Days from home and 2 days in the office)*

*based on a full time employee

(7) A HWA may be approved for a defined period up to a maximum period of twelve (12) months, or a defined period up to a maximum term of a fixed-term contract (if less than 12 months). Fixed-term contracts that are renewed during this period, will require a new HWA application.

(8) During a period of approved HWA, an employee of the University remains bound to comply with the University's statutes, regulations and policies. University statute, regulation and policy may be varied, replaced or withdrawn by the University in accordance with the ordinary governance of the University and can be obtained through the University's intranet site.

(9) This Procedure acknowledges that Academic and Tafe Teachers have an accepted level of flexibility to work, both on and off campus during the course of their employment, however Deans, Academic staff and Tafe Teachers are

strongly encouraged to discuss which delivery and/or attendance options provides the most effective operational arrangements and enhanced student experience possible.

(10) Research-only employees are encouraged to discuss with their manager where their research may be undertaken.

(11) This Procedure may be used to guide discussions regarding the identification and implementation of delivery options which enhance student experience. A HWA may be utilised in this circumstance to formalise any variation to the normal accepted level of flexibility for Academic and Research employees and Tafe Teachers.

(12) If a HWA arrangement is not deemed suitable for an employees' particular requirements, they are encouraged to discuss this with their manager and P&C Business Partner and consider other additional flexibility options which are available under the Enterprise Agreement(s) and other university policy.

(13) The HWA Procedure will be reviewed 3 months prior to the 12 month period (no later than April 2022) with further guidance on ongoing arrangements to be consulted upon following the review.

GENERAL EXCLUSIONS

(14) Some roles are generally considered not suitable or not appropriate for working from an alternative location and must be performed on campus.

(15) These roles normally, but are not limited to:

- a. require face-to-face interaction with students and clients;
- b. require close supervision of other employees;
- c. cannot be performed effectively without accessing information, facilities and/or on premise systems
- d. require access to on campus activities/programs/events
- e. require access to confidential and commercially sensitive material
- f. require participation in specific university activities (e.g. Final Fridays, Open Day, Graduations, etc)

Section 4 - Definitions

(16) Nil.

Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

(17) [Employee Wellbeing Policy](#)

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Employee	Discuss requests for HWA with Manager. Request special consideration HWA arrangements in writing, providing any required evidence as detailed in this Procedure. Undertake HWA arrangements in accordance with this Procedure.

Roles	Responsibilities
Vice President, People and Culture	Determine, in extraordinary circumstances, requests from Employees who wish to apply to work at an interstate or international location on a temporary basis. Determine applications from Employees for special consideration for a HWA greater than 50% of the hours of their employment or another working arrangement where they are in a COVID-19 Heightened Risk Group.
Managers	Determine applications for HWAs of up to 50% of an employee's normal working time.
Managers Supervisor	Determine reviews of decision in regards to HWA on process and/or medical grounds (COVID 19 High Risk Groups).

Part B - Guiding Principles

(18) The University remains committed to policies and procedures which encourage and support flexible working arrangements in the workplace and in the home.

(19) The University recognises that in a COVID normal world there are circumstances where a hybrid working arrangement may assist employees to balance their work, family, health and other responsibilities.

(20) The University also acknowledges that it is not always appropriate or practical for an employee to carry out all or part of their duties from home, particularly when students are on campus, and for specific research, teaching and partnerships activities.

(21) The University provides for and encourages work location flexibility and supports its employees to work on campus and at home where the role and/or the service delivery model allows. This enables the benefits of on campus team collaboration with the flexibility of working from home.

(22) The University recognises that each department, team and individual employee circumstance varies and therefore this Procedure is not intended to cover every operational or individual circumstance however is to be used to guide discussions between employees and their managers on how to implement hybrid working arrangements in their area or team.

(23) The University acknowledges that the COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in changes to the way that almost all work is carried out and it is understood that this has had a significant impact for some employees. The University also acknowledges the gendered impact of COVID and will continue to support those who have been or continue to be adversely effected.

Part C - OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

(24) Each request for a HWA shall be discussed and agreed between the Manager and Employee.

(25) Employees and Managers shall discuss the preferred arrangements for both individuals and teams and must take into consideration the workload of the entire team and the quality of the student experience and/or operational needs of the University to ensure services can be delivered at all times.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR COVID-19 HEIGHTENED RISK GROUPS

(26) Employees may apply for special consideration for a HWA greater than 50% of the hours of their employment or another working arrangement where they are in a COVID-19 Heightened Risk Group. Applications will be considered based on an individuals' circumstance, impacts on team workloads, student experience and operational needs. Approval from the Chief Human Resources Officer or delegate will be required. Employees should discuss their situation with their Manager and P&C Business Partner prior to submitting their request.

(27) Some employees may be at greater risk of more serious illness with COVID-19 and if an employee is in one of the following COVID-19 heightened risk groups and the current health advice is that they should work from home, they may apply for a HWA for the full hours of the employees' employment contract:

- a. people 65 years and older with one or more [Chronic Medical Conditions](#)
- b. people 70 years and older,
- c. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more [Chronic Medical Conditions](#); and
- d. people with [compromised immune systems](#)

(28) The employee will be required to provide relevant documentary evidence to support their HWA application (e.g. medical certificate).

(29) Employees who have carer responsibilities for a household member who has a chronic medical condition, should provide documentary evidence and discuss their situation with their Manager and P&C Business Partner prior to submitting an application.

LEADERSHIP AND SUPERVISORY ROLES

(30) Those employees who are in a leadership or supervisory role, must also consider and balance personal flexibility with any potential impact on other team member's workloads, supporting the team, team cohesion, attending key meetings/events and contributing to an on-campus collaborative work environment.

ON-CAMPUS REQUIREMENTS

(31) There will be occasions where attendance is required on-campus on a day that an employee would normally be working from home. It is expected that they will make themselves available to work on-campus in such circumstances.

CARER RESPONSIBILITIES

(32) Employees are responsible for ensuring that child care or dependent care arrangements are in place whilst working from home in order to not impact an employees' ability to undertake their role and participate in university activities at the same standard as on- campus employees.

WORKING FROM A LOCATION THAT IS INTERSTATE OR FROM AN INTERNATIONAL LOCATION

(33) Working from an interstate or international location is not a hybrid working arrangement and is not available to all employees at this time. Employees who wish to apply to work at an interstate or international location on a temporary basis, will only be considered in extraordinary circumstances, and must be approved by the Chief Human Resources Officer. Employees should discuss their situation with their Manager and P&C Business Partner prior to submitting their request.

CURRENT FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

(34) A HWA will take into consideration any other forms of approved flexible working or attendance arrangements currently in place at the time of application. These must be declared when applying for a HWA.

Part D - APPROVING THE APPLICATION

(35) Managers will work with individuals and teams and consider all applications from employees who apply for a HWA, ensuring an appropriate balance for the entire team has been considered and that there is sufficient on campus employee coverage for university services that are required to be delivered.

(36) Managers are authorised to approve HWAs of up to 50% of an employee's normal working time. In reviewing the application, Managers may assess and consider, among other matters, the following:

- a. if the role can be performed from home and will meet the operational requirements and/or service delivery requirements;
- b. impact on student experience
- c. overall team service coverage
- d. other approved flexibility, or attendance arrangements; and
- e. completion of the Working Safely from Home OH&S module and satisfying the requirements of the Working from Home checklist.

(37) If approved, the Manager will communicate the approval of the application to the employee, and the arrangement will commence from the agreed date.

(38) Employees and Managers are to record the HWA via the approved [form](#) as a way of the University maintaining records for each arrangement. People & Culture will require a copy of the HWA arrangement.

REFUSING THE APPLICATION

(39) Managers are authorised to refuse an application for a HWA and will communicate the decision to the employee directly.

REVIEW OF A DECISION

(40) Where an employee has been refused an application for a HWA they may seek to have the decision reviewed on process and/or medical grounds (COVID 19 High Risk Groups). The review will be conducted by the Managers' Supervisor.

(41) The employee must provide sufficient detail (process/medical) to enable their Managers Supervisor to undertake a review.

HYBRID WORKING ARRANGEMENT REVIEW

(42) The employee and Manager are encouraged to meet regularly to discuss the HWA to ensure it continues to meet the needs of both the University and the employee and the HWA should be reviewed on at least a quarterly basis.

(43) A Manager may cease the HWA, if the arrangement is not working and/or formal reviews have not rectified any substantive issue by giving the employee at least four weeks' notice.

VARYING THE ARRANGEMENT

(44) HWAs may be varied at any time at the University's discretion, in consultation with the employee and by providing at least four weeks' notice.

(45) If there is a need to vary the arrangement, an employee will be required to discuss this with their Manager and reach agreement on the new arrangement. This will need to be formalised via completing a new HWA which will supersede the existing arrangement. Changes that would negatively impact service delivery, the team and/or the work, and/or ability to perform the role will not be approved.

(46) A HWA is not transferable from one position to another. If an employee secures a new position, they must re-apply for a new HWA with their new manager.

RENEWING THE ARRANGEMENT

(47) If an employee wishes to renew their HWA, they will be required to apply for renewal at least 6 weeks prior to the expiry of the term of their arrangement.

CANCELLING THE ARRANGEMENT

(48) A HWA can be cancelled at any time at the University's discretion, in consultation with the employee and by giving the employee at least four weeks' notice.

(49) The arrangement may be ended at the employee's initiative, by mutual agreement with their Manager.

Part E - WORKING FROM HOME WORKSPACE SET UP & EXPECTATIONS

(50) When working from home, employees are required to perform and participate at the same standard as on-campus employees, and are responsible for achieving the required work outputs and effectively managing their time.

(51) When working from home, employees are expected to be available during normal working hours to make and receive phone calls and or attend meetings as required.

(52) Employees are expected to work their ordinary hours or unless flexibility has been otherwise agreed under the Enterprise Agreement or other flexible work arrangements as defined in university policy.

(53) The Manager is responsible for effectively managing the team while working remotely. This may include:

- a. ensuring employees with a HWA are included in onsite activities by other means where appropriate and/or possible (e.g. zoom links);
- b. maintaining regular contact; and
- c. setting and documenting performance expectations.

EQUIPMENT

(54) Unless otherwise stated in the contract of employment, the university will provide an employee who is working from home with one University enabled laptop for use under the HWA. The provision of laptops will be considered based on hardware availability and budgetary constraints. Transitional arrangements may be considered if laptops are unavailable at the time of application. This should be discussed with the Manager.

(55) If the employee requires additional specialist equipment to complete their work, this should be discussed with the Manager.

(56) Where an application for specialist equipment relates to a reasonable workplace adjustment, this should also be discussed with the P&C Business Partner who can source specialist advice.

(57) The University will cover insurance for university provided equipment and where required, employees must make the equipment available for repairs, maintenance and return to University premises when requested.

(58) Employees are responsible for ensuring that a reliable and functional internet connection is available to conduct their work effectively and are responsible for all internet costs. If circumstances don't allow for adequate internet connectivity the employee should discuss this with their Manager and IT for advice. If they are having technical difficulties affecting their ability to perform their role in a HWA, the employee should work on-campus until the problem is resolved.

(59) The cost of any equipment such as personal IT equipment or home office furniture, required to set up in a HWA

are personal expenses. The University will not provide reimbursement to employees for these items.

(60) Employees are encouraged to review the ATO website for information regarding working from home items they can claim on their tax return. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. electricity expenses associated with heating, cooling and lighting the area from which they are working and running items they are using for work;
- b. phone and internet expenses;
- c. computer consumables (for example, printer paper and ink) and stationery; and
- d. home-office equipment, including computers, monitors, printers, phones, furniture and furnishings.

Part F - OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

WELLBEING

(61) When working from home, it is important to look after oneself both mentally and physically and stay connected to the Manager and/or team members. Employees should ensure:

- a. they have a dedicated workspace that is set up properly and free from distractions;
- b. they develop a schedule, including periods of focused work and appropriate breaks;
- c. they participate in regular meetings and one to one conversations by phone or zoom/webex

(62) The University provides an [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) which is a free professional confidential counselling service available to employees and their immediate family members to access should they need short-term support for work-related or personal reasons that may be affecting them.

SAFETY

(63) Before a HWA can commence employees are expected to complete the [Working Safely Remotely](#) module and satisfying the requirements of the [Working Safely Remotely Checklist](#). The checklist will form part of their [Hybrid Working Arrangement Form](#).

(64) Employees must accept responsibility for covering any costs to ensure their home location is safe and meets the requirements outlined in the [Working Safely Remotely Checklist](#) (in final section of Working Safely Remotely module).

(65) Prior to the commencement of the HWA employees must provide their Manager and update [VU People First](#) with their current address, current phone contact details and emergency contact details so that they can be contacted in an emergency. If contact details change during the HWA, the employee is responsible for ensuring these are updated in a timely manner.

WORKCOVER

(66) Employees are covered by WorkCover if they are injured whilst performing approved University work in their designated working from home location within their designated work hours.

(67) If employees sustain an injury while working from home, they must notify their Manager as soon as possible. They must also report the incident or hazard in the [QuickSafe Incident Management System](#).

Section 7 - Supporting Documents and Information

(68) Nil.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	15th April 2021
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Accountable Officer	Lisa Line Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital Lisa.Line@vu.edu.au
Responsible Officer	Simone Wright Chief Human Resources Officer 9919 5447
Enquiries Contact	Simone Wright Chief Human Resources Officer 9919 5447