Remote Working Policy
**Introduction**

This policy replaces the [Remote Working/Working from Home Protocol](#) which was a temporary arrangement introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The University is committed to the health, safety, and wellbeing of employees. All employees availing of this policy will work in conjunction with line management to adhere to and implement all the appropriate and necessary arrangements to facilitate remote working from home at this time.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the terms and conditions for remote working and the University supports available during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Scope**

This policy will apply to all employees within the University. This policy does not apply to companies within the DCU Commercial Group who may have their own separate remote working policies.

**Policy Statement**

The University is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of employees and acknowledges and values the hard work that our colleagues are doing to ensure that the University can continue to operate as normal as we can at this time. We encourage Line Managers to support employees at this time by maintaining regular contact with their teams, and provide encouragement and support where and when required. Respect, kindness and empathy are even more important at this time.

The guidelines outlined in this policy are being provided to support employee and Line Managers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The policy is designed on two fundamental principles which cannot be compromised:

1) ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of employees;

   &

2) ensuring we continue to deliver a high-quality education and research to our students, colleagues and other key stakeholders.
Principles of Operation

The principles of operation of this policy are as follows:

- This temporary arrangement is in place to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of employees while ensuring the continuity of University business and delivery of service to our students.
- All remote working arrangements should be agreed in advance with Line Management and discussions should take place regarding work to be undertaken during this period.
- Regular contact and communication with updates on progress should be maintained between employees and Line Managers.
- Ideally, employees will work in line with the standard University hours, however flexibility shall be applied where employees have other commitments including for example, childcare or care for older relatives.
- Where the nature of the work undertaken by certain employees is not possible to be carried out remotely, alternative work arrangements and /or opportunities should be explored with the employee to support the ongoing work of their department, the wider University or public service.
- The Health and Safety of all employees is paramount and employees working remotely must ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk whilst working at home during the period of this arrangement.
- All employees are required to follow the HSE Advice and Guidelines in relation to the COVID-19 at all times.

Safety Health & Wellbeing

The University has as its top priority the safety, health and wellbeing of its employees. With this in mind the University has a number of supports in place to ensure that the safety, health and wellbeing of employees is maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of these supports are outlined on the Human Resource Department COVID-19 information webpage.

In addition to the University supports outlined, it is vitally important that employees take responsibility for looking after their own safety health and wellbeing at this time. Employees working remotely should ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk whilst working at home during the period of this arrangement.

It is also important to maintain a balance between working life and personal time. Employees are encouraged to try and keep a healthy routine. To eat a healthy balanced diet, take regular exercise whilst maintaining the public health social distancing and travel guidelines, keep regular sleeping patterns. Additional supports are available on the Government’s In This Together website.
If you are experiencing difficulties, or feel you need some confidential advice outside of the normal University support channels, the University’s Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) remains available through the provider, Inspire Workplaces. The EAP provides free and confidential professional counselling and information services designed to support employees and their immediate family members to resolve personal or work related concerns.

**Sick Leave & Special Leave with Pay for COVID-19 absences**

Please note that should an employee suffer an illness related to the Coronavirus it will be recorded as special leave and will not affect the individual’s sick leave entitlement, subject to appropriate confirmation. Further Information can be found on the [HR COVID-19 Information Webpage](https://example.com).

All other provisions of the [DCU Sick Leave Policy](https://example.com) remain unchanged and both employees and managers should continue to report sick leave through the normal channels.

**Equipment & Resources**

For the duration of the current remote working arrangement it is the responsibility of the relevant Line Manager to ensure employees are sufficiently equipped with the necessary equipment and resources to enable them to carry out their work from home / remotely. In certain instances, should there be a requirement to do so, employees may temporarily use some of their office equipment in their home environment. This is based on the following principles:

- Employees agree in advance with their Line Manager that they will be taking home certain office equipment;
- Office equipment is defined as an office chair, monitor and / or a PC desktop;
- Employees must have a suitable means of transporting the equipment;
- Employees must only take their own equipment and must agree to return this equipment when they return to on campus working;
- Employees must inform Security in advance and agree with them a time to collect the equipment; &
- While on campus employees must adhere to the health and safety guidelines outlined in the [COVID-19 Return to Work on Campus Policy](https://example.com) and existing COVID-19 related [HSE Advice and Guidelines](https://example.com).
If there are other additional equipment or resource needs these should be raised with the respective Line Manager in the first instance. The Manager will then review the situation to determine how best these needs may be met.

The Health & Safety Office is available to provide advice and guidance on relevant health and safety related matters in relation to remote working. In addition, the office has put together some Health and Safety Tips for working from home. Employees are also reminded and encouraged to consult local departmental Safety Statements.

**Return to Work on Campus**

All employees should be aware of the Covid-19 Return to Work on Campus Policy which has been designed to outline the current working arrangements in line with government directives for on campus working. If an employee is required to temporarily visit or return to work in an on-campus facility, they must be familiar with and adhere to the specific COVID-19 safety and social distancing measures outlined in the Covid-19 Return to Work on Campus Policy. Employees should also at all times, follow the HSE Advice and Guidelines in relation to COVID-19.

**Hours of Work / Working Arrangements**

While working from home, it would be expected that employees would continue to work contracted hours where this is practicable. However, the University is very conscious of the fact that many employees have increased caring responsibilities for both children and elderly and vulnerable family members, which may bring additional pressure and complexity at this time. It is therefore important for Heads of School / Unit / Line Managers to show understanding, discretion and compassion when dealing with employees in this regard. If this is a particular issue for employees, they are encouraged to have discussions with their Line Manager in the first instance, regarding what flexible working options may assist. Examples of this could be working outside of normal hours or splitting the work day by logging on early in the morning and later in the evening to carry out work.

Line Managers also need to be conscious of ensuring that an ‘always on’ culture does not develop within their area. They should therefore, where possible, avoid sending emails or phoning employees outside of normal business hours, even if they aware that an employee is normally working outside of normal business hours.

While working from home it is important to take regular rest breaks. Many employees will have more screen time than if they were working in the office environment therefore the breaks are important to ensure that they get up and move about for a few minutes.
ZOOM / Video Calls
The University recognises that while Zoom / Video calls are a very useful tool in maintaining contact with individuals and teams they do also present their own challenges. Common issues identified include, but are not limited to the following:

- more focus required, compared face to face interaction;
- silence creates a natural rhythm in face to face conversation, however on a video call it creates anxiety (a delay of only 1.2 seconds can create a feeling of negativity); &
- video calls do not allow for the normal separation of work and personal life.

To mitigate these challenges the University would suggest the following measures:

- limit the number and duration of Zoom/video meetings per day;
- allow for having good breaks between meetings;
- as with any other meeting, do not schedule outside of normal business hours, including lunchtime; &
- ask the question does the conversation have to be via video call as opposed to phone.

Annual Leave
It is important now, more than ever, to ensure there is a balance between work and home life. With that in mind the University is encouraging employees to regularly take annual leave and, if possible, to take two weeks annual leave during the summer period. To facilitate this practice the University is introducing the following measures for the 2020 annual leave year:

- there will be no University meetings held between 20 July & 14 August 2020;
- employees are encouraged and supported to take two weeks during this period;
- Christmas closure will be extended to two full weeks, and 7 days Annual leave will be required for this to happen; &
- for this year only employees will be permitted to carry over a maximum of 10 days annual leave into 2021.

All other provisions of the DCU Annual Leave Policy remain unchanged and employees should continue to request annual leave through the CORE Portal.

Flexi-Time
The accrual of Flexi leave is suspended during the COVID-19 emergency. Flexi-time balances will be restored to the values as at 16th March 2020 when normal on campus working arrangements resume.
Communication Channels

While there are a number of formal channels of communication in place, it is vitally important for Line Managers and employees to stay in regular contact through informal operational channels.

While regular communication will help ensure operational efficiency, equally if not more important will be ensuring all colleagues maintain wellbeing during this challenging time. In addition to work related matters, take the opportunity to check in with employees regarding their overall health and wellbeing. Ensure they are keeping well and offer any appropriate supports they may need at this time. Remind employees about the availability of the University’s Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

If an employee does have a specific concern regarding working from home, or other work-related matters, they should discuss the issue with their Line Manager at the earliest opportunity. Please note that normal order of escalation of issues are still in place and are as follows - Line Manager, Head of School/Unit, Deputy Dean (if applicable), Executive Dean and HR. In addition colleagues also have the option of raising individual or collective issues through their respective union.

Data Protection & ISS Security

Whilst working from home it is important that all employees continue to protect confidential University information and comply with Data Protection legislation. All employees should therefore adhere to the advice and guidance provided by the Data Protection Unit, specifically the Data Protection & Working from Home guide.

In addition, employees should be conscious of IT security and systems and should adhere to the guidelines on Remote Working issued by the Information Systems & Support Department ISS Advice Remote Working.

As per normal working arrangements all employees should adhere to all relevant ISS security policies as outlined at this link.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employees

- Agree work to be carried out with your Line Manager while you are working remotely. Make sure you are clear about what is expected of you.
• Ensure you have up-to-date contact details of your Manager and Team to enable regular communication.

• Maintain regular contact with your Line Manager regarding work and any challenges or issues that you may be experiencing.

• Be available during normal business hours (where possible) for calls and meetings by phone, Zoom or other agreed methods.

• Stay in touch and keep connected with your team, colleagues and friends at the University.

• Be responsible for maintaining your own safety, health and wellbeing.

• Ensure that you do not place yourself or other at risk whilst working at home during this time.

• Inform your Line Manager and HR if you have been medically diagnosed with COVID-19 or are instructed to self-isolate so you can avail of the Special Leave with Pay arrangements. Ensure you to seek the appropriate medical attention and follow the advice given. Do not resume work until certified fit by HSE / Medical Advisor.

• Please be aware that University Policies and Procedures remain in place at this time, along with normal reporting requirements.

• Please ensure you follow the advice of the Data Protection Officer about Data Protection & Working from Home.

• Please ensure to follow the advice of ISS Advice Remote Working.

• Ensure to follow all the advice and guidelines as outlined in the Covid-19 Return to Work on Campus Policy and the HSE Advice and Guidelines.

• As with all University policies employees are expected to fully comply with the provisions outlined in this document.

Line Managers/Heads of School/Unit

The primary role of Line Managers/Heads of School/Unit is to constructively engage with all employees within their team to ensure the successful implementation and operation of this policy. The specific responsibilities and supports available to Managers are outlined in the Managers Toolkit. A copy of this toolkit will be available to all employees in a relevant Line Management role.

Definitions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Word or Phrase</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Remote Working</td>
<td>‘Remote Working’ - Work performed by an employee at a location outside of</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>the defined office locations either in the home or at another location</td>
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<td>which involves the electronic</td>
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access to, processing and/or storage of the University’s software, systems and information/data.

Related Documentation
This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Link</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Return to Work on Campus Policy</td>
<td>Click Here</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HR COVID-19 Information Webpage</td>
<td>Click Here</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ISS Advice on Remote Working</td>
<td>Click Here</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Data Protection &amp; Working From Home Guide</td>
<td>Click Here</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Health &amp; Safety Office – Guidance for working from home</td>
<td>Click Here</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>HSE COVID-19 Advice &amp; Guidelines</td>
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<td>DCU Employee Assistance Programme</td>
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<tr>
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<td>In This Together – Guide to Maintaining Mental Health</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>LinkedIn Learning – ‘Learning Zoom’</td>
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Frequently Asked Questions
Access the HR website for a list of FAQs relating to remote working.

Contact
Please contact your relevant HR Business Partner to discuss any aspect of this policy.

Policy Review
This policy will be reviewed and owned by the HR Department. The policy, and the measures therein, will be reviewed regularly and will stay in place until we have received new or updated information in line with public health direction in line with Government policy.

Version Control

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<th>Document Name</th>
<th>Remote Working Policy</th>
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<td>Version Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
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