Hybrid Working
Guidance for Staff and Managers

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EST 1892 LSBU

Contents

Appendices:

1. Introduction

This guidance sets out LSBU's approach to Hybrid working. ACAS defines hybrid working as 'a type of flexible working where staff split their time between working remotely and in their employer's workplace'. This differs from fully remote working where employee contract states the place of work is home and they are not expected to work on site regularly.

The University has developed this policy for all staff as part of its commitment to supporting flexible working. The pandemic illustrated that more remote working, as well as being a necessary response to the pandemic, is possible and desirable for many in the workforce, resulting in greater productivity for some staff groups. We recognise the enormous opportunity we have to learn from the past two years to balance the on-site working with opportunities for some staff to work from home thereby helping to create a more flexible, productive and inclusive workplace culture.

Hybrid working is an important element of both our: strategy for adapting to, and thriving in, the new working environment following the coronavirus pandemic; and commitment to supporting a positive work-life balance for our employees, aligned to our Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Colleagues undertaking hybrid work are still subject to all the usual University policies, procedures, and standards. Contractual obligations set out in an individual's Contract of Employment also continue to apply. Nothing in this guidance is intended to supersede contractual, or previously agreed, flexible working arrangements, or adjustments agreed in accordance with advice from LSBU's occupational health provider.

The policy applies to all employees and agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

2. Policy aims

This policy aims to:

o Set out LSBU's contractual position on hybrid working
o Clarify staff categories in relation to hybrid working at LSBU
o Clarify what is expected from employees and managers

3. Contractual Position

An employees' place of work will remain as stated in their contract of employment. No arrangements under this policy will vary any contract of employment.

Hybrid working is an optional flexibility and staff may choose to continue or resume working on campus full-time if that is their preference.

All previous arrangements for Academic staff, including on-campus/off-campus working ratios, will remain unchanged, and in accordance with Clause 1.22 of the London South Bank Agreement Guidelines for the Determination of Lecturers' Duties (the 'South Bank Agreement'), which states that Staff are only required to be present at the University for teaching and those aspects of the duties set out below which can only be undertaken effectively at the institution.

4. Staff categories

Dependent on job role requirements, and the organisational need, three broad categories of staff are outlined below:

● **Category 1: Predominantly campus based -** Those required to work onsite for all or the majority of the time. This group comprises PSG and academic support staff whose job roles needs to be performed predominantly on campus. They are mostly involved in the delivery of in-person work

which requires onsite presence, although there may be an exceptional management agreement for remote work as a single, one-off occurrence.

- **Category 2: Hybrid staff - Those where a balance of on-site and remote working is appropriate** This group comprise Academic, PSG and academic support staff who can carry out large amounts of work remotely but who may also deliver services and activities on site. These include events, teaching, meetings and interactions with students where face-to-face contact is necessary and / or beneficial. This role might involve working on a shared rota basis with colleagues and sometimes being campus based on the same day / days each week.

- **Category 3: Variable hybrid staff appropriate -** This group comprises PSG and academic support staff whose roles require a significant presence on campus at certain times of the academic year e.g. during admissions and registration, graduation (similar to category 1). At other times, however, their work could be undertaken from home (similar to category 2).

- **Category 4: Remote role** This group comprise PSG and academic support staff whose contract of employment cite their home as their primary place of work. Staff in this category are allowed to work remotely 100% of the time (LSBU does not employ anyone in this category).

5. Key Principles

The University recognises there are both personal and organisational benefits to well managed/effective hybrid working arrangements. These include: allowing for more flexibility in working styles; supporting staff wellbeing and mental health; supporting staff with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities; improving work-life balance; and this can help attract new staff while also attracting them from a wider geographic area.

Our campuses, however, remain the focal point of our vibrant University community so any hybrid working arrangement must prioritise the needs of LSBU, the needs of students and internal customers as an over-riding principle while also considering staff work preferences and wellbeing. Colleagues who want to work on campus are entitled to do so.

There can be no 'one size fits all' approach. The organisation is made up of a variety of teams with differing services, needs, sizes, customer/student-facing roles, core hours, practices and nuances. Decisions will therefore need to be made at a local level based on business needs and the requirements of each staff role. However, the general expectation is that everyone will work on campus 3 days a week (pro rata for part time staff), unless the individual has a formally agreed flexible working agreement or Occupational Health recommendations.

Given the degree of flexibility that our hybrid working arrangements provide, we expect our workforce to also be flexible, which may involve some compromise for some.

Colleagues working from home must be available to be present on campus within a given notification period to attend team days or 'seasonal' needs such as high demand from students at the start of term. At least 48 working hours' notice will be given. This may be less, however, for example where last-minute sickness cover is required. More notice may be required where staff need to make alterations in carer arrangements in order to attend campus.

Only in a small number of exceptional cases would colleagues not be required to attend campus for some work activity.

Employees are expected to familiarise themselves with LSBU's procedures as part of their induction and ongoing development, and to understand the university's expectations in terms of flexible working.

Where staff are sick and unable to work, they must inform their line manager as soon as possible also paying attention to any local arrangements. The Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure will apply in these circumstances. If staff show symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, they must follow the Government's guidance.

LSBU can make occupational health referrals for anyone who believes themselves to be highly vulnerable, so that any resulting recommendations can be reviewed and implemented where practical. Where an employee raises a concern of this nature, the manager should liaise with their HRBP/Advisor ASAP so the referral can be actioned promptly.

Staff who wish to request flexible working arrangements, for example to balance work with caring responsibilities, should follow the procedure in the Flexible Working Policy. Flexible working applications, however, should not normally be used where it has not been possible to accommodate the requested arrangements through hybrid working discussions, because a very similar decision-making process applies in both cases.

If an employee has any queries, these should be raised as soon as possible with their manager, so advice or other support can be provided.

We will consider the needs of different groups of staff, including those with caring responsibilities, and those protected under the Equality Act 2010. Whilst new employees are not required to complete a Personal Health and Circumstances Questionnaire (PCHQ), we will consider re-introducing the PCHQ questionnaire and offering OH assessments to new staff should the Government re-introduce the vulnerability designations used previously.

6. Hybrid working in practice

Decisions on hybrid working arrangements are taken and implemented at a local level, overseen by the Dean / Director. Managers will be responsible for deciding on the suitability of hybrid working arrangements for roles within their area of responsibility. These decisions will be informed by the responsibilities and service requirements/provisions of the particular area, the potential impact on staff and the impact on the student experience.

Hybrid working cannot guarantee a desired working arrangement for every member of staff or team. LSBU's organisational needs; student experience and outcomes; academic performance; and the needs of our wider workforce will always take priority. Flexible working is separate to Hybrid working, and formal requests are managed on an individual basis in accordance with the Flexible Working Policy. Requests on an individual basis, such as a change to total working hours or a permanent change to a working pattern, can be made and these will be considered by management.

All colleagues should approach discussions regarding hybrid working in a spirit of co-operation and fairness recognising that they may need to compromise and that their request will be considered in the context of the team. Preferences of colleagues will be considered, but the priority is to deliver business needs and the requirement of the role. Therefore, it may not always be possible to accommodate individual preferences.

Colleagues must have the opportunity to put forward potential solutions to any management concerns and managers must take a fair and equitable approach when reviewing hybrid working arrangements for their team.

When making decisions, the key principles in section 5 will be carefully considered in the context of the team or individual request. Although a consistent approach to decision making will be taken, it is recognised that outcomes are likely to differ, particularly between teams or departments due to their differing roles in the organisation.

Agreed hybrid working arrangements will normally be confirmed by email but in cases where agreement cannot be reached, the decision of the Dean / Director will stand. In the event of a dispute, reasons for the decision will be recorded in writing by the decision maker. The matter will then be escalated through line management with exceptional cases being considered by the Executive lead for the area with reference to the HR Business Partnering team for advice concerning complex cases.

6.1. Working Hours

o There are core hours during which staff will need to be available where these fall within normal working hours. These core hours are 9.30am (10am in some areas) to 11.30am and 2pm to 3.30pm. Working patterns must be agreed with line managers.

o We appreciate that staff may be sharing their home with others, however a suitable space for home working effectively is required and caring responsibilities are not compatible with working from home. Alternative care arrangements must therefore be made during working hours for children or dependents who cannot be left safely be on their own.

o Staff should be as clear as possible with their line manager about their hours of work for days on which they are working remotely. Making use of tools such as shared calendars and out-of-office messaging can help colleagues to be aware of staff availability on these days.

o The restriction listed in Section 7 of the Overtime for Support staff – Authorisation procedure which states, 'University work done at home does not qualify for overtime will no longer apply. All other authorisation procedures for overtime including prior approval from the Dean, Director or Head of Department will continue to apply".

6.2 Expenses and Reimbursement

o Internet services and utilities (e.g., water, gas, and electricity) will not normally be paid for or reimbursed by the University.

o The University will pay all charges on any mobile phone provided by the LSBU Group with the proviso that it must be used only for work-related purposes. Other call costs will only be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances and when the costs to be incurred have been agreed in advance with line manager. Itemised billing is required, and staff should submit any claim through the "My Workplace" expenses claim system.

o Home to work travel will not be eligible for expenses but any travel undertaken on company business to a different location from that stated on an employee contract would be reimbursed in accordance with LSBU's Expenses Policy.

o Staff are expected to be responsible for having an adequate 'Working from Home' set up and LSBU will not provide the following:

- Home internet / Wi-Fi or subsidy
- Telephone or mobile telephone (unless required as part of role)
- Printing or subsidised printing costs
- Desk (unless DSE specified)

6.3. Tax and Working Abroad

o Staff may be able to claim tax relief for any household expenses incurred as a result of working from home, provided the expenses are solely work related. If staff wish to benefit from this tax relief, further information is available from the Government's guide on claiming tax relief for job

expenses at www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home and by using Inland Revenue Tax Relief Form P87.

- o In some cases, there are tax implications relating to working from another country. Working from home from another country often builds up tax liabilities or obligations and is not permitted by LSBU.

- o Staff are responsible for checking applicable mortgage or rental agreements to ensure they are permitted to work from home, and for obtaining any permissions necessary to work from home.

6.4 Technology and Equipment
- o All permanent and fixed term contract staff will be provided with a LSBU laptop including HPLs (0.6 FTE and above). IT will provide laptops through the existing request and procurement process. HPLs working less than 0.6 FTE will need to use a desktop computer on-campus or borrow a laptop from either their department or IT whilst they are working on campus.
- o The current 'one device' policy will remain in place meaning that staff who are issued with a laptop will not retain their existing office desktop.
- o The University will continue to use Microsoft Teams to digitally support meetings held with other staff or students. Managers will need to consider and determine how and when to use Teams between staff who are on-campus and working remotely to ensure the best possible participant experience and that all staff are included. The number of participants; use of headphones in the office; audio crosstalk from people sitting in the same area; and meeting room equipment / connectivity will all influence how successful these meetings are. Please refer to the Remote Working Kit procedure
- o Staff should ensure they have appropriate broadband width to be able to support their home/remote working activities. The cost of this will not be covered by LSBU.

6.5 IT Security & Data Protection
- o Staff who work remotely are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with our organisation secure at all times. Specifically, remote workers are under a duty to:
  - practice good computer security, including using a unique laptop password and similar measures for other work devices.
  - keep all hard copies of work-related documentation secure, including keeping documents locked away at all times except when in use; and
  - ensure that work-related information is safeguarded when working in public spaces, for example by:
    - o positioning your laptop so that others cannot see the screen;
    - o not leaving your laptop unattended; and
    - o not having confidential/business-sensitive conversations in public spaces.
- o In addition, the laptop [and other equipment] provided by LSBU must be used for work-related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of your household or third party at any time or for any purpose.
- o All staff are required to undertake the online training module on IT Security. Staff should NOT send work emails containing sensitive or personal data, to a personal / non-LSBU email address, nor store them on an unencrypted USB memory stick or any other unencrypted device.
- o Every care must be taken with portable devices, particularly when being transported to and from the workplace. All lost or stolen LSBU devices, or non-LSBU devices which contain University data, or any hard copy containing LSBU data, must be reported to line managers as soon as possible and in addition to the IT Service Desk, telephone number 0207 7815 6500 or via email at ictservicedesk@lsbu.ac.uk.
- o If personal data is lost or stolen, staff must also inform the Data Protection and Information Compliance Officer as soon as is possible on dpa@lsbu.ac.uk

7. Health and wellbeing

- Organisational and time-management skills are required to ensure working patterns meet the needs of the organisation. We ask staff to be mindful that they are not overworking due to the constant access to technology. "Downtime" from work is essential and staff should not feel obliged to regularly respond to emails outside normal working hours or on weekends.

- To help maintain wellbeing, staff should ensure that they take adequate rest breaks:

  - Take a dedicated lunch break each day.
  - People who arrange meetings should consider scheduling them for 50 minutes to allow short breaks between meetings.
  - Take regular breaks to ensure they are not sitting or looking at a screen for long periods of time.
  - Ensure they take a break of at least 20 minutes during the working day (where the working day is 6 hrs or more)
  - Ensure the time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours.
  - Staff are also encouraged to avoid meetings during lunch hours, and to keep Fridays free from meetings whenever possible.

- Staff can always access the LSBU Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), delivered by Health Assured, a leading well-being provider.

- Staff should liaise with their line manager to ensure their remote working set-up is appropriate and that they are working in a safe manner. Working From Home set ups will be supported including the provision of tertiary equipment for home working in accordance with the Remote Working Kit procedure. Working From Home equipment outside of laptops must be procured though the line of management using the supplier and process set out in the Remote Working Kit procedure.

- However, they are also responsible for their own health and safety and that of anyone else who is affected (for example others in the household). Individuals must notify your line manager if:
  - they feel any discomfort due to working remotely (such as back pain); or
  - they believe that there are any work-related health and safety hazards;
  - any work-related accidents occur in their home.

- Staff should follow the usual reporting procedures for any work-related accidents that occur in their home or wherever they are remotely working.

8. **Considerations for Managers**
   - Managers should determine whether each of the roles that they manage are suitable for hybrid working (a mix of on-campus and remote working) or should be fully on-campus.
   - When considering the categorisation of roles (hybrid/ on-campus), managers should consider the requirements of the role as outlined within the job description and the activity that determines a need for campus presence. Please see the *Considerations for Managers* (Appendix 1) checklist below. If still unclear, managers should speak with their HR People Partner.

- o Managers should engage staff in discussion on the proposed working pattern for their roles. It should be made clear to staff that hybrid working is not compulsory. Staff members wishing to work on campus full time can do so. In the event of any disagreement, managers should endeavour to resolve issues locally and without undue delay.
- o Managers should assess the role requirement carefully and consider how a hybrid model will work not only for the individual, but also for the team. Managers should have a clear operational understanding of the service their team offers and balance the needs of the business and requirements of the role with the individual colleague preference.
- o Managers considering hybrid working requests should also take into consideration the requirements of service users (e.g. students and colleagues) to ensure staff hybrid working patterns will not have a negative impact on the services provided. They should ensure that colleagues have a suitable space to work at home and appropriate IT equipment (see RWK procedure).
- o Managers should encourage an outcome-based work culture, where the focus is on staff delivering quality outcomes rather than the input. It is important for managers to define their team's strategic goals, objectives and the timescale in which they should be delivered and communicate these to their teams so that staff member's responsibilities are clearly defined.
- o Managers who require staff to be on campus are responsible for providing at least 48 working hours' notice. This may be less where last-minute sickness cover is required. More notice may be required where staff need to make alterations in carer arrangements in order to attend campus.

9. Overlap with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- o Flexible Working Policy
- o Remote Working Kit procedure
- o London South Bank Agreement (for Academic Staff)
- o Clear Desk Policy

10. Equality and diversity

We will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

11. Review

All policies should be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum, or sooner if there is a change in regulatory guidance, law or best practice. Reviews will involve both HR and recognised Trade Union reps.

Appendix 1 - Considerations for Managers when assessing a new role for hybrid working

Looking at the job description, and the role activities, what are the requirements of the role?
Thinking about the role activities, which are most important for the effectiveness of the role, or the productivity of the individual?
What type of activity is most effective when and where?
What activities need to be completed on campus? And what activities can be successfully performed remotely?
How much of the role must be undertaken face to face?
What percentage of the role can be undertaken remotely and/or on campus?
Are there 'seasonal needs' e.g., high demand from students at the start of term?
Is there a minimum amount of time for each person to be on campus e.g., 2 days per week?
Is there an agreed pattern of working on and off campus?
Which roles are most effectively carried out on and off campus?
If the role is not suitable for hybrid working, are there any other forms of flexible working that might be suitable?
Working as a team
How will hybrid working be successful across the team?
Is the role student facing? If so, will there be full coverage across the week?
How and when will staff come together on campus?
Could some colleagues flex their hours to earlier or later starts/finishes?
What location best supports team productivity?
How can colleagues remain engaged both with their team and also the University community?
Seating capacity in the office – are there any constraints that should be considered?
Does anyone in your team have specific needs that should be taken into consideration?
Are the goals and objectives clear to the team?
How will you manage meetings?
When will meetings be virtual, hybrid or in person?
How will the team work together? Communication will be key, along with the opportunities for social interaction, which is inclusive of all colleagues.
What technology do individuals in the team need to work on and off campus?
Are there working practices we need to consider in order to maintain wellbeing?
How much supervision / support is required and when?
What skills do individuals in the team need to work on and off campus?
How will arrangements be reviewed?