

HUMAN RESOURCES

Work Location Guidance

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1. Purpose

The national lockdowns imposed by the Government since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic in March 2020 have required a large proportion of the College community to work remotely, either entirely from home, or a combination of working from home and working at a College location. For many, this has been experienced as an effective way of working during the pandemic and feedback from the College Wellbeing Surveys indicates that some of our community will want to continue working in a flexible way.

As information in relation to easing national restrictions is confirmed, the College will continue to identify which areas of the College and staff will be required to return to work at Campus locations, as well as at what point in time individuals will be required to return to campus and on what basis. This will be a gradual process and all staff will have the opportunity to discuss their return to work at a College location with their line manager in advance of their formal return to campus.

In the meantime, there will be areas of the College where staff are asked to continue to work remotely whilst we begin to assess if and how the College can move towards a hybrid way of working – where work is undertaken remotely and on campus.

This guidance provides a framework for managers and staff to discuss temporary work location changes in a fair and transparent way as we start to consider the space and technological requirements that would be needed on a longer-term basis to support a hybrid way of working and for future recruitment decisions.

The priorities of the College in this time of transition are to:

- maintain a safe environment for our community
- enable temporary arrangements for flexible and hybrid working where suitable
- learn from experiences and listen to the community in shaping future ways of working

All plans for returning to work at College locations will follow UK [government guidance](#).

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all current and future employees of the College except those covered by the College Charter and Statutes 2007, which applies to academic staff who are already able to determine their work pattern and location in conjunction with their Head of Department.

This guidance does not apply to casual, agency or contract workers and volunteers. Local arrangements in terms of work requirements, work pattern and location will continue to apply for these groups.

The guidance in this document is non-contractual, with the emphasis on temporary work location arrangements rather than requests to change working hours or working patterns.

This document provides supplementary guidance in addition to the [College Flexible Working Policy](#) and may be withdrawn, updated or amended at any time.

3. Joint Trade Unions

The College Joint Trade Unions, UCU, UNISON and Unite have been consulted.

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4. Equality and Diversity

The College treats equality of opportunity seriously and has an equality framework that is applicable to staff. Implementation of this guidance must be clear and transparent and not subject to any unfair discriminatory practices.

This guidance is inclusive and applies to all staff irrespective of any protected characteristic.

5. Work Location

Staff are appointed to a department, division or centre at the College and the vast majority of staff are notified of their main campus work location in their contract of employment. Some staff will have flexible working arrangements in place to varying degrees, which may include working from home for some of the time. These arrangements may have been agreed informally with their line manager or agreed formally through the College Flexible Working Policy.

The College's position on informal flexible working arrangements and right to request flexible working remains unchanged. However, in light of the change in the way people have been working since March 2020 and the expectation that more staff may want to request flexible working arrangements as they begin to return to College locations, the College has determined two categories to guide decision-making for reviewing work location on a temporary basis. The categories will also aid discussions around work location for new starters.

6. Remote Working Categories

The following categories have been established to help determine whether the work location of a role may combine working at a College location for part of the time and working remotely for part of the time, known as 'hybrid' working as a temporary arrangement:

- 1. College Location - roles required on campus or a College site 100% of the time.** Work needs to be carried out on campus; predominantly customer-facing roles requiring a physical presence to perform duties.

- 2. Hybrid – roles which can be performed through a combination of remote working and working at a College location.** There will be the need for flexibility to ensure operational requirements continue to be met and the delivery of work is maintained. The balance of remote/College location working within hybrid arrangements and the impact on the overall team will need to be carefully reviewed.

All staff, irrespective of their work location category, may from time to time with reasonable notice be required to attend campus for meetings and/or training at the request of management.

7. Remote Work Location for Existing Staff

- 7.1.** As the College identifies areas and roles that will be expected to return to work at College locations, managers should have a discussion with their staff members and consider any temporary arrangements for their work location.

- 7.2.** Managers should discuss with their direct reports their views on which category they believe their role could operate within, taking into consideration operational

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requirements and service delivery. The percentage of time that the role that might be undertaken remotely should be discussed.

- 7.3. Managers should consider the views of their staff and the operational requirements of their area, then discuss their proposal as to how their area might operate temporarily as we move out of pandemic-related restrictions with their Head of Department/nominee, or leadership team. The manager and relevant senior manager will determine the work location category and whilst we are learning how hybrid working may operate during this period, departments and managers are encouraged to be flexible with their arrangements.
- 7.4. Managers should inform their staff which category has initially been identified for their role and discuss their proposed working pattern, indicating that this proposed working pattern might change at a later date. If the temporary work location arrangement is agreed by the member of staff, the line manager should confirm this in an email to the member of staff.
- 7.5. After the initial discussion, if the member of staff does not agree with the proposed temporary work location arrangements or has put forward a change which has not been agreed to, it may be that a further discussion is needed to explore any alternatives to be determined by the manager.
- 7.6. If the member of staff wishes to pursue a request to change their work location following an informal discussion with their line manager, they may submit a formal flexible working request under the [Flexible Working Policy](#) if they meet the eligibility criteria.

8. Work Location and Recruitment

When recruiting staff to a new role, managers should consider which of the two categories the role is best suited to and how the work location and potential work pattern of the role will work with the operational requirements and functioning of the overall team. Information about the work location should be included within the job advert.

9. Remote Working Practicalities

The following sections set out important information and practical considerations for staff and managers of staff who may continue to work remotely on a temporary basis either full or for part of the time (Hybrid).

9.1. Remote Connectivity

Staff working remotely are required to have a reliable internet connection and phone signal (where applicable) to perform their roles. This is essential to allow effective communication with colleagues, students and key stakeholders and for access to relevant information and systems required for effective role performance. If it becomes apparent this is not the case, managers should review and decide if the arrangement can continue.

9.2. Accessibility, collaboration and inclusion

Virtual accessibility is an important aspect of effective remote working and staff must remain 'visible' and 'accessible', letting others know where and when they are working, within College core hours (see [Core Terms and Conditions](#)), as well as how they can be reached, whether working remotely or at a College location.

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Managers are expected to include members of staff that are either working Hybrid or at a College Location in team activities and manage hybrid teams inclusively.

All staff should utilise the suite of available and relevant equipment and technology recommended by the College to engage effectively with colleagues and other stakeholders in hybrid working scenarios.

9.3. Suitability of the remote working environment

Remote working environments should:

- be safe and secure
- be adequate in terms of space, lighting, layout and conditions
- be appropriate to the nature of the work being conducted
- enable members of staff to deliver their work in accordance with what is required of them.

Remote working is not a substitute for suitable care arrangements for dependents during working hours. However it is acknowledged that during the pandemic, care arrangements may change or temporarily cease at short notice, particularly because of self-isolation. A flexible approach should continue to apply in these situations.

9.4. Remote working outside of the UK.

Requests to perform role-related duties and work either partly or wholly outside of the United Kingdom will not usually be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances. This is due to the potential significant tax compliance risk and cost implications to the College and/or the member of staff. If working outside the UK is being considered, the [Working Overseas Guidance](#) must be referred to for further information and managers should discuss this with their Strategic HR Partner.

9.5. Maintaining safe and healthy remote working practices

Carrying out computer or paper-based work remotely is generally deemed low risk. However, to ensure staff have safe remote working arrangements, remote working staff will be required to carry out relevant assessments by the College. Guidance on computer health, workstation set up and home working is available via the [Occupational Health webpages](#). The College [Safety policies](#) also apply to remote workers, and staff should refer to these for further details.

Staff working remotely who become pregnant, develop an injury or illness or change address should notify their line manager of this as soon as possible, so that a suitable [risk assessment](#) can be conducted.

9.6. Information and Communication Technologies

The College is committed to enabling and facilitating effective remote working and guidance on working remotely can be found on the ICT [Accessing services when off campus webpage](#). All staff working at a campus location or working remotely are required to comply with the [College's Information Security Policy](#), the [Conditions of Use of IT Resources](#) and associated Codes of Practice which regulate the use of the network and hardware and software provided by the College.

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9.7. Data Protection and Confidentiality

All staff are expected to comply with the principles contained within the General Data Protection Regulation and the [College's Data Protection Policy](#) including when working remotely.

In addition, it is a condition of employment that staff must preserve the confidentiality of any personal and/or sensitive information which is made available through the course of their work, whether directly or indirectly. This applies to information about current or prospective staff or students and applies to information about any person with whom contact is made during the course of employment. Any breach of confidentiality will be regarded as serious misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.

Confidential papers should be disposed of safely and securely. Staff may do this at home if they have a shredder, otherwise, papers should be disposed of at a College location.

9.8. Non-technical Equipment

The College will provide staff with appropriate working equipment (such as a chair and desk etc.) to conduct their role at their contractual place of work. This provision will be in either the form of a designated work location and workstation or a shared working space or 'hot desk'. This will be determined by the frequency and regularity of the staff member's on campus working and the requirements of their role.

College guidance on getting the [right equipment for working remotely](#) will continue to apply during temporary arrangements where a member of staff continues to work remotely for some of the time.

9.9. Access to remote working locations

There may be, on occasion, a reason for the College to access a staff members remote working location. This could be to:

- install, inspect, replace, repair, maintain, service or retrieve College 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.

This will be discussed with the member of staff to agree a reasonable time, with reasonable notice, and will only be required when it is absolutely necessary and where there are not suitable alternative methods of achieving the required outcomes.

9.10. Contractual implications

The information and guidance provided in this document sets out the College's position on work location as a temporary arrangement whilst the impact of the pandemic on future ways of working can be more carefully reviewed and considered. As such, work location arrangements made at this time should be considered temporary, subject to ongoing review, and will not lead to any permanent contractual change.

Regardless of work location, employees are required to comply with all College policies and procedures set out in the [Core Terms and Conditions](#).

The College will continue to monitor and review the approach to work location in accordance with operational requirements.

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9.11. Personal security

Necessary meetings should take place virtually, by phone, or face to face on College premises where possible. On occasion, it may be appropriate for colleagues to meet in a mutually agreed public space outside of College, such as a cafe to have a meeting. However, it is expected that such occurrences are infrequent. 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.

For the employee's own security it is also recommended that employees who are working remotely should:

- not release personal data or information to external contacts, colleagues or students, such as home address or personal telephone number
- use College-approved technology
- ensure that colleagues are aware of the remote workers whereabouts and how to contact them

9.12. Insurance and other considerations

Members of staff working remotely are responsible for assessing the personal implications of home working for insurance, taxation, mortgage, utilities provision and any leasing and landlord agreements.

The College holds liability insurance that provides cover for legal liabilities of the College and its members of staff whenever they are engaged in College business. This cover applies irrespective of where the activity is taking place.

All members of staff are responsible for the security of the College's property within their control and for avoiding loss. Heads of Departments, managers, supervisors and remote workers must ensure reasonable steps are taken to ensure the care, custody and security of College owned assets within their control, in line with the College's Financial Regulations.

9.13. Associated costs/expenses

Imperial College does not make financial contributions to those working remotely for normal household expenses such as heating, lighting, internet and phone lines or council tax costs. However, staff may be able to claim Income Tax relief for employment expenses via the [P87 form](#).

Hybrid workers will not be reimbursed for travel to and from a College location.

9.14. Long term

The College will review the effectiveness of hybrid working and its impact on space and technology and will keep staff updated.

10. Related Guidance

- [Expenses Policy](#)
- [Return to College Campus Guidance](#)

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