

# **Hybrid Working Policy and Procedure**

## Document Control

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Hybrid working describes an approach that combines on and off campus working. Hybrid is an approach to working that encourages staff to work in a location appropriate to the task that they are undertaking, be that in the office, at home, or another location.

Hybrid working is about where staff work.

1.2 At Queen Mary, our approach to hybrid working is grounded in our Values.

Hybrid working brings important benefits through offering staff flexibility and empowerment, trusting our people to flex where they work in consultation with their manager, and being managed on their performance based on measurable outputs. These benefits can:

- help create an inclusive culture,
- support work-life balance,
- support positive staff health and wellbeing
- help achieve better outcomes including positively impacting productivity.

1.3 Through enabling staff to work in the most appropriate location to the task, hybrid working brings an important benefit for the University, in encouraging and enabling greater engagement across teams. Hybrid working also aligns to the University's sustainability agenda and enables us to make more effective use of the University's estate, reducing the need for individual offices, which are not fully utilized Monday to Friday.

1.4 Hybrid working also brings challenges. In particular, it may mean we interact less with our colleagues face to face on campus. To make it work for everyone we need to live our Values more consciously. This means:

- Ensuring we act inclusively and with pride - seeking diverse perspectives, and using and communicating everyone's strengths – even when people aren't visible.
- More intentionally communicating our shared purpose, and ambition - as we are less likely to pick this up in "chance" conversation.
- Considering the synergies of our work and how we need to work collegially to deliver our shared objectives.
- Ensuring we act ethically – being accountable for delivery and resolving issues.

1.5 Queen Mary recognises that our people have varied and diverse roles and responsibilities. The University supports managers and teams to adopt hybrid working practices where the operational requirements of a role can be met effectively. Consistency in quality and standards is fundamental. It is important to note that the operational requirements of a role include both the core tasks and activities included in the role profile, but also encompass valued added activities and engagement, recognising that attending our campuses is essential for maintaining social connectedness, social support and creativity together with cultivating a vibrant campus for our staff and students.

- 1.6 This policy recognises that academic staff carry out a broad range of work, which can include education, conducting research, delivering engagement or outreach activities, as well as administrative duties and other critical activities to support the University. Some academic staff also have clinical commitments, leadership or supervisory responsibilities, or through their research, enterprise activity or other forms of collaboration, may be working in partnership with other organisations. This policy also recognises that work patterns may vary across the academic year, especially considering the differing requirements of teaching and student support during the year.
- 1.7 Hybrid working therefore requires academic staff to work in the location which is appropriate to the task they are undertaking. While some activities may need to be delivered at locations outside of Queen Mary campuses, there are others for which working on campus is important. These would include provision of on-campus education and student support activities or the use of specialist research facilities, standard laboratory space housed on our campuses and working as part of the Queen Mary community. The need for leadership from more senior staff and presence of group heads for the development of early career academics and for PhD students is particularly important. Additionally, and of particular importance, on campus presence is needed to support cohort and community building, and staff should discuss with their Head of School / Institute Director how this can best be achieved with hybrid working and the diverse requirements of academic roles.
- 1.8 To create a positive and thriving culture it is essential that our colleagues engage in the culture and life of our campus, fostering a shared sense of community, inclusivity and belonging. As a consequence, Queen Mary will rarely support fully remote working. The opportunity for teams to come together in person provides a vital support structure as well as enabling cohesive functional team working. Our shared workspaces also provide our staff with important opportunities for informal communications, development through shared experience and observation, and networking, that are crucial, particularly early on in a career and for new staff.

## 2. Key definitions

### 2.1 Hybrid working:

This defines an approach that combines on and off campus working. Hybrid is an approach to working that encourages staff to work in a location appropriate to the task that they are undertaking, be that on campus, at home, or another suitable location.

Hybrid working is about **where** staff work. Hybrid working is an informal arrangement and does not constitute a contractual change.

### 2.2 Flexible working:

Flexible working generally describes **when** an individual works (such as working patterns, working part-time and job sharing), and is not changed by the introduction of a hybrid working approach. Queen Mary has established policies in respect of flexible working (see section 17 below).

### 2.3 Remote Working:

Work that is undertaken away from the Queen Mary campuses.

### **3. Principles**

Hybrid describes a way of working and is based on five core principles:

1. The introduction of hybrid working for a team or School/Institute/Department must be deliberate and considered, taking into account the needs of the whole team for which it is introduced, together with stakeholders and service users.
2. Our staff can work in the most appropriate environment to suit the activity being undertaken, subject to operational priorities. The parameters will be defined by the Head of School/Institute/Department.
3. Flexibility is required to ensure the business of Queen Mary continues to be delivered and the effective operation of the team.
4. In introducing hybrid working, teams must be cognisant of the needs and advantages of teams coming together in person, to support organisational culture and learning and foster a sense of inclusivity and belonging.
5. No member of staff is expected to work away from campus if this does not suit their preference or home circumstances.

### **4. Queen Mary's approach to hybrid working**

- 4.1 The degree to which hybrid working is available will be dependent on the job role and team requirements. Queen Mary will very rarely support fully remote working and a minimum weekly time commitment on campus is the expected norm (unless agreed otherwise with the relevant Director of Professional Services/Faculty Director of Operations or Head of School/Institute Director ).
- 4.2 Some roles will be more student/client facing and stakeholder dependent or location specific (e.g. laboratory based), and therefore require increased on campus presence. It will be solely the responsibility of Directors of Professional Services/Faculty Directors of Operations and Heads of School/Institute Directors to identify local needs.
- 4.3 Where hybrid working is being introduced, managers and staff will discuss operational need and seek to understand relevant individual preferences to find the best arrangement for every role, person and team.
- 4.4 The focus will be on managing by performance, based on measurable outputs, not presence on campus. Managers and staff share responsibility for ensuring that work outputs are monitored and delivered.
- 4.5 Flexibility will be required from all parties to develop the optimum approach to hybrid working, balancing the preferences of the whole team and the University's needs and requirements.
- 4.6 Some roles may require attendance across multiple campuses.

- 4.7 Some staff may have a preference to be on site more regularly than any local team norm for personal reasons. This will be accommodated.
- 4.8 Queen Mary recognises that some colleagues may require adjustments, due to a disability, e.g. working at home more regularly or in a dedicated space on site.
- 4.9 New starters may need more time on site early in their employment (e.g. for the first year), in order to engage fully in the life of the University and our community.
- 4.10 Staff must be UK based and able to attend campus as required, unless otherwise specified in their contract of employment (please refer to section 8).
- 4.11 Staff may be required to attend campus on a day they planned to be at home and must comply with all reasonable requests to attend e.g. for business critical reasons, unplanned circumstances, sickness absence, citizenship etc. As far as is reasonably possible, the University will provide two days' notice of any such requests.
- 4.12 Any arrangements that are agreed under this policy are not contractual changes. Arrangements will be reviewed and can be amended or brought to an end at short notice, subject to business need.
- 4.13 During agreed working hours, staff are expected to be working and available. Staff who are working remotely must ensure that they do so in an appropriate environment with minimal distraction. For staff with caring responsibilities it is expected that appropriate arrangements will be in place for any dependents to avoid interruption to work during normal working hours.
- 4.14 All staff must make their availability visible to others through Teams / Outlook Calendar and will be contactable via Teams/e-mail during normal office hours unless agreed otherwise with their line manager. For emergency reasons the line manager must be aware where all staff are based and that they are contactable.
- 4.15 Departments will have a minimum face-to-face meeting time expectation, based on local requirements.
- 4.16 Appraisals and performance or development related conversations should be carried out in person to foster a sense of inclusivity and belonging.
- 4.17 Managers should monitor the implementation of any hybrid working arrangement to ensure that access to hybrid working does not have any unintended discriminatory impact. This policy will be updated as we understand what works best and how to improve our approach to hybrid working, and we invite feedback on this.

## **5. Scope**

- 5.1 This Policy applies to all Queen Mary staff who are contracted to work in the UK.

5.2 This policy applies to those for whom the contractual 'normal place of work' remains the University campus or a designated University site.

## 6. Preparing for hybrid working

6.1 Decisions about where staff work should be made within a framework to ensure consistency, fairness and transparency. A simple four-step process has been established to support managers and their staff. This is set out in the Hybrid Working Toolkit.

6.2 Preparation is key to the success of hybrid working – where hybrid working is being introduced, all staff affected are strongly advised to explore the issues, options and considerations in detail to ensure that expectations are managed and opportunities maximised.

## 7. Equipment and resources

7.1 Queen Mary will provide and maintain some equipment and materials to support staff to work across multiple locations. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure that proper care is taken of such equipment and materials.

7.2 All Queen Mary staff will be provided with **one set** of IT equipment as tools for the job. Exceptions and reasonable adjustments will be made for a health or disability related condition as determined through an Occupational Health referral. Personal IT equipment (defined as a laptop, headset and laptop sleeve) may not be available in all cases. In such circumstances, a fixed desktop PC will be available on campus. It is recognised that this may have a practical impact on the feasibility of a role for hybrid working.

7.3 Beyond the equipment provided by Queen Mary, whenever staff are working at home as part of a hybrid working arrangement, it is the responsibility of the **individual** to ensure that they have:

- appropriate broadband capacity
- the VPN client (insert link) installed on their laptop or PC
- MS Teams
- access to an appropriately equipped working environment (please refer to section 7, Health and Safety)
- diverted telephone calls from their University extension to their landline or mobile phone. You can find out how to do this by visiting the following link:

<https://its.qmul.ac.uk/support/self-help/telephony/how-to/>

Should you have any problems, you should contact the ITS Helpdesk at: [helpdesk@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:helpdesk@qmul.ac.uk) and log a ticket.

7.4 Where a member of staff is unable to access appropriate broadband capacity to carry out their role, it is expected that they would work on campus.

## 8. Taking University equipment off campus

8.1 Security and confidentiality rules continue to apply to all activity conducted on behalf of the University.

8.2 Queen Mary reserves the right to require staff with Queen Mary equipment at home to bring it to campus for annual Portable Appliance Testing (PAT testing), audit and update purposes at a time of IT Services choosing. Reasonable notice will be given and attempts made to provide a range of dates and time to fit with working patterns.

8.3 Staff who work remotely are responsible for keeping all devices, documents and information associated with Queen Mary secure at all times. All staff must be fully conversant and comply with the University's Computer Use Policy (<https://www.its.qmul.ac.uk/governance/policies/regulation/>).

Specifically, remote workers are under a duty to:

- Always use a unique and strong password for their computer and any other digital devices;
- Never store Queen Mary information on personal devices;
- Ensure that all work is stored within the approved Queen Mary storage environment (e.g. OneDrive, Teams, SharePoint). Colleagues, regardless of their location, should not use hard drives, removable media or non-approved commercial cloud storage such as Dropbox;
- Never use removable media such as external hard drives or USB sticks to store or transfer Queen Mary information;
- Keep filing cabinets, drawers and other physical storage locked when they are not being used;
- Never work with sensitive data in a public space or when using public Wi-Fi;
- Always lock devices when not in use;
- Never leave devices containing Queen Mary information or Queen Mary documents unattended in a public place;
- Not install personally owned or non-licensed software on Queen Mary equipment;
- Not make unauthorised modifications to Queen Mary equipment without prior IT services approval.

8.4 The computer and other equipment provided by Queen Mary must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose.

8.5 If problems occur with University provided IT equipment used remotely, the member of staff must log the problem with IT (<https://www.its.qmul.ac.uk/services/>) and arrangements will be made to correct the problem. Staff should be prepared to attend campus to work while any equipment is unusable and until it is repaired or replaced if no alternative solution is available.

8.6 Remote printing and scanning will not be funded by the University.

8.7 All equipment must be returned promptly at the end of employment. It is the member of staff's responsibility to ensure that the equipment is returned securely and safely, to avoid loss or damage and in accordance with the relevant IT procedure.

8.8 Any confidential (or higher) waste material must be shredded or disposed of in confidential waste bins. Please see the information classification policy for definition of what is confidential. Confidential waste disposal facilities are available on campus. Wherever possible, staff should keep paper records to a minimum.

## 9. Wellbeing

9.1 Queen Mary recognises that hybrid working can bring challenges and that it may not be appropriate to all individuals or personal circumstances. Where hybrid working is not desired by employees we will allow full campus-based working.

9.2 Queen Mary is developing a range of resources and activities to support staff working in a hybrid way including:

- Team toolkit to help teams to consider how they get the most out of Hybrid working (Appendix X)
- [Pathways to Leadership](#) our leadership and management programmes to include skills to manage hybrid working.
- [Wellbeing](#) resources as well as wellbeing workshops for managers and staff
- Workshops on Chairing hybrid meetings and working in a hybrid team
- Promoting groups to form social and work networks (e.g. communities of professional practice)
- Promoting sources of support for challenging work and home situations.

9.3 Staff are encouraged to join Queen Mary's staff networks, regardless of hybrid working patterns.

9.4 In addition, employees are encouraged to speak to their line manager if they feel remote working, or indeed any aspect of work is negatively impacting their wellbeing, and if appropriate Occupational Health, The Employee Assistance Programme or their GP for further guidance and support.

## 10. Health and safety

### 10.1 Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment

All staff who work remotely, including those who only work remotely occasionally, will need to complete a [Workstation Display Screen Equipment Assessment](#) on their remote workstation. The line manager should ensure that the DSE Assessment has been completed.

### 10.2 Accidents / Near misses while working at home

Staff who have an accident or incident arising out of or in connection with work while working remotely are required to follow University procedures for [reporting such incidents](#).

### **10.3 Personal details and safety**

A member of staff should always use:

- the address of their Queen Mary Department/School/Institute for work-related post. The member of staff is responsible for making arrangements to collect their work post from campus.
- a Queen Mary mobile/landline telephone number. Queen Mary telephone numbers can be diverted to your personal mobile if desired.
- a meeting room on campus to meet students or other University clients this should never be in their home.

### **11. Working remotely from overseas**

11.1 Unless the contract of employment states to the contrary, Queen Mary contracts of employment require staff to be resident in the UK. This means that your main home is in the UK, that you live in the UK for the majority of the year, and that you pay income tax in the UK and carry out your work for Queen Mary in the UK aside from short business trips (if applicable).

11.2 Queen Mary is unable to accommodate remote working overseas due to significant difficulties with tax, social security, immigration, pension and employment legislation. The exception to this is where there is a Queen Mary requirement to work abroad, rather than a personal preference to do so. If overseas working is required, advice must be taken from the Faculty Strategic HR Partner ahead of any commitment being made.

### **12. Visas and immigration**

12.1 Staff sponsored by the university under UKVI Tier, Skilled Worker and Tier 5 Government Authorised Exchange, (i.e. sponsored staff) must take additional steps to ensure that adopting hybrid working is within acceptable parameters of respective visa conditions and reporting requirements as set out by the Home Office.

12.2 It is therefore essential that the manager or their sponsored staff member must therefore;

- Seek advice from HR ahead of adopting hybrid working ;
- Not commence any hybrid working arrangement without prior consultation with HR.

12.3 Any agreed hybrid working arrangement must be reported, by HR, to the Home Office within 10 working days of the commencement of hybrid working.

### **13. Financial regulations**

13.1 Working remotely is not financially supported by Queen Mary e.g. through contribution to heating and lighting or broadband costs. There may be transport costs savings for the member of staff and of course savings in travel time.

### 13.2 Travel expenses

The nominal 'normal place of work' remains the University campus and all staff will be expected to meet the cost of travelling from their home to campus. They may claim the cost of business travel to another location less the cost of travelling from home to campus.

### 13.3 Tax on equipment

Any equipment supplied by the University for staff to use at home remains the property of Queen Mary and is not subject to tax. Repair or replacement of such items which becomes necessary as a result of routine wear and tear or accidental damage, is the responsibility of Queen Mary.

### 13.4 Business rates

Staff will not usually have to pay business rates when working from home. For more information see the government website.

13.5 Staff cannot claim tax relief if they choose to work remotely.

## 14. Insurance cover

14.1 Staff are advised that working from home may affect the provisions of any home and contents insurance policy, and may affect your premium. Remote working may also affect mortgage provisions. Staff should therefore inform their insurers / mortgage provider / landlord before commencing home-working. There is a [template letter](#) provided at Appendix 2.

14.2 Staff should ensure that all University-owned property is used appropriately and responsibly and that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent damage and theft. Any damage or theft of University property must be reported to the line manager immediately. In the event that any equipment is lost, damaged, stolen or otherwise unavailable, the member of staff would be expected to work on campus until such time as the equipment is replaced.

14.3 All staff working remotely are covered by the University's Personal Accident, Employer's and Public Liability Insurance, as long as the rules of this Policy have been followed.

## 15. Communication and contact

### 15.1 Contact with line manager and colleagues

- Staff should follow the guidance provided in Queen Mary's meeting guidance [http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/media/hr/docs/Virtual-Meeting-Guidance\\_new-22.05.20.pdf](http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/media/hr/docs/Virtual-Meeting-Guidance_new-22.05.20.pdf)
- Staff should also follow the guidance provided in the Email Etiquette Guidance [add hyperlink].
- Staff working remotely will be expected to be working and available during their normal working hours. When working remotely, but offline, an appropriate response message should be set for emails and MS Teams status to indicate availability.

- Staff must provide their line manager with their mobile number for emergencies. Staff can elect to divert telephone calls from a University extension to their land-line or mobile phone.
- Staff must make use of their Outlook calendars showing where they are on any given day and must give their line manager and colleagues access to that calendar. Appointments for confidential entries should be made private where needed.
- It is essential that the line manager and member of staff have regular (minimum fortnightly) contact, through video or face-to-face meetings, and team briefings. All staff are expected to engage in the culture and life on campus, including coming together in person during normal working hours, where requested, to enable cohesive functional team working. Guidance on agreeing a team approach to hybrid working is provided in the Hybrid Working Toolkit in Appendix 3

### **15.2 Reporting and booking of leave and absence**

The usual provisions for taking any kind of leave (annual leave, family leave, special leave etc.) or reporting sickness absence apply. If unclear of provisions please check with your line manager.

### **16. Withdrawing a hybrid working arrangement**

- 16.1 Line managers have the ability to alter or withdraw hybrid working arrangements due to changing organisational needs or for any other reason. Discussions will take place with the staff member and where possible a notice period of one month will be given, unless a shorter period is mutually agreed. There may be occasions where a manager requires a shorter notice period for operational reasons and it is not possible for this to be mutually agreed.
- 16.2 The line manager can request that the member of staff attends their normal place of work on any normal working day if there is a business need. Reasonable notice will be given.

### **17. Interaction of this Policy with the Flexible Working Policy**

- 17.1 Queen Mary has a separate Flexible Working Policy.
- 17.2 Hybrid working reflects flexibility in terms of where you work not about when you work. The right to apply for flexible working (which does include when you work) remains open to staff who require a formal contractual change.
- 17.3 The hybrid working arrangements set out in this policy form a voluntary arrangement. The Flexible Working Policy provides permanent and structured adjustments to contractual working arrangements.
- 17.4 While Queen Mary will consider a request for flexible working from an employee who is part of a hybrid working arrangement, it should be noted that, as set out in the principles (section 2 above), the introduction of hybrid working for a team or School/Institute/Department must be deliberate and considered, taking a whole team approach. As such, any request for flexible

working from any individual member of a hybrid working team, must be considered within this context, and the wider impact on the team.

## **18. Equality, diversity and inclusion**

18.1 The University takes equality of opportunity seriously and has an [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Governance framework](#), supported by a range of Equality Policies that apply to all employees and help to promote and ensure equality of opportunity. All employees are required to familiarise themselves with and understand these policies.

18.2 In line with our Values in action, the University will ensure that this Policy is applied compassionately and sensitively. No one involved will be discriminated against or treated unfairly because of their protected characteristics and/or identity, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

18.3 In line with our Values in action, all employees have a responsibility to treat others fairly and with respect and to actively promote an inclusive culture that values diversity and maintains dignity at work.

## **19. Policy review**

19.1 This Policy is not contractual and will be reviewed from time to time.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Staff who work fully remotely**

In rare instances, fully remote working may be appropriate. Advice should be sought from the HR Partner ahead of agreeing any arrangement for fully remote working. All requests for fully remote working will require approval from the relevant Director of Professional Services/Faculty Director of Operations or Head of School/Institute Director.

Equipment:

The University will provide the following:

- a laptop, keyboard, mouse and one screen
- Any reasonable adjustments if these would have been provided on campus

Furniture will not be provided unless reasonable adjustments are being made for a health or disability related condition as determined through an Occupational Health referral.

IT equipment provided will be maintained /upgraded / replaced by the University at appropriate intervals and remains the University's property.

Visitors:

For staff working permanently at home they may need to admit authorised visitors to their home for the following reasons:

- Inspection of working arrangements and equipment for health and safety reasons
- Delivery and installation of equipment and furniture
- Repairing and servicing of University equipment
- Any other work-related purpose the University considers appropriate.

All visitors are required to give reasonable advance notice and carry proper identification which should be asked for before admitting them.

**Appendix 2**  
**Template letter to Domestic Insurance Company / Mortgage provider / Landlord**

*To use this template please read carefully and delete paragraphs which are not applicable to you.*

Name and address of insurance company /  
Mortgagor / landlord

Dear Sir / Madam

I write to inform you that I intend to commence home-working for my employer, Queen Mary University, on *date* for xx days a week.

The nature of the duties I will be carrying out at home is low-risk administrative work: reading and sending emails, typing, reading documents, marking course-work, using the telephone\* *delete as appropriate*

While carrying out computer work at home I will be logged into my employer's network and all electronic data will be stored securely on our central server.

I have completed a DSE risk assessment.

*Delete the following paragraph if not applicable:* My employer, Queen Mary will be providing the following equipment for home-working use and this equipment remains the property of my employer and will be subject to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) on an annual basis, organised by my employer.

Item	Make and model	Serial number	Cost to replace

*Delete the following paragraph if not applicable:* While working from home I will be using my own furniture, which I understand is already covered under my existing insurance policy.

I can confirm that I will not be meeting clients or visitors in my home. All business meetings will occur outside of my home.

As the nature of my work is low-risk and my increased presence at home will lower the likelihood of theft, I do not expect my premium to increase.

If you require more information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully  
Name

cc Landlord's name and address or Mortgagor's name and address