

## **FLEXIBLE WORK AT WESTERN**

In line with our response to COVID-19 and the [Workplace Flexibility Policy](#), the University recognises that the changing context of work has created opportunities for greater flexibility in the workplace. At the outset of COVID-19 many staff found themselves in roles realigned and/or redesigned to enable them to work from home. Across the University, this experience has demonstrated the value of working from home whilst equally highlighting the importance of human connectivity and the benefits of having a dedicated and dynamic on-campus environment in which to work. We recognise that staff have varied needs and therefore we aim to provide a flexible working environment that accommodates as far as possible the needs of our staff whilst maintaining effective service provision across the University.

### *Flexi Time*

COVID-19 saw an immediate response that required staff to move off campus reasonably quickly. Given that many staff realigned their work and some their entire role, the University established an environment where professional staff worked their normal 7-hour day from home without accruing flex time. Patterns of work have now been established that enable us to relax this work instruction.

The University is now lifting the direction to work no more than 7 hours per day for professional staff who elect to work within the flex scheme. If staff are required to work flexible hours to suit their work patterns, they may do so. Flexi-leave guidelines apply, including that staff should still work reasonable flexible hours and not accrue large amounts of flex hours whilst working from home. As per the guidelines, a minimum of 30 minutes' break must be taken at the completion of each 5 hours of work. For more information, please consult our [Flexible Work Options](#) and [Flexible Work Arrangements](#) webpages.

### *Working from Home*

The University recognises that while many staff are very successfully working from home, not all work can be performed effectively away from campus. Throughout the second half of 2020 staff will slowly transition back to campus through a carefully managed and staged plan, commencing with essential, on-campus roles. The return to campus plan recognises the importance of re-establishing an active and dynamic campus and workplace culture and aims to have the majority of staff working on site by the end of the year.

For many staff, working from home throughout the COVID-19 period has identified real benefits for maintaining work/life balance. In keeping with flexible work practices, the University will consider requests for staff to work from home for a portion of their working week. Staff wishing to negotiate ongoing working from home arrangements should first speak with their supervisor. Work-from-home days should be set at regular day(s) each week to enable work units to plan accordingly. Whilst working from home staff must be available as if they are working on campus, i.e., available for zoom meetings, responsive to emails, phone calls, etc.

### *Logistics in Working from Home*

Staff who elect to work from home are responsible to ensure they have a safe work environment at home. Whilst staff were permitted to take chairs and other support equipment home at the start of our COVID-19 response, it is not feasible, reasonable,

or safe to keep chairs and other office equipment at home for portions of the week. Staff with a Reasonable Adjustment Plan in place to accommodate their disability-related needs, may have specialised equipment for working at home, subject to reasonableness, where this is recommended by a medical professional. Therefore, staff who wish to work from home need to be able to self-certify that they have a safe working environment at home. Further information on setting up your home workstation safely can be found at: [Tips for Working from Home](#).

The University will shortly issue further *Working from Home guidelines*.

### *Information for Supervisors and Managers*

As the Vice-Chancellor acknowledges, “Providing flexible working options plays an integral role in developing opportunities for increased staff satisfaction, retention, engagement, and sustained organisational knowledge. When properly managed, flexible working arrangements serve to benefit the overall productivity of our University.” The [Flexible Working Business Case](#) further details the organisational benefits of a flexible working culture.

All supervisors and managers should be familiar with the University’s [Workplace Flexibility Policy](#), which provides further details of staff flexible work entitlements and your related responsibilities. All supervisors and managers should accommodate staff requests for flexible work options consistent with policy and should implement the Workplace Flexibility Policy fairly and without bias. Consult with your [Senior HR Partner](#) or [HR Advisor](#) prior to finalising arrangements.

For more information on flexible work at the University, visit our [Flexible Work Options](#) and [Flexible Work Arrangements](#) webpages. A short online training module is also available to all staff, with tailored content for managers and supervisors. For access, visit MyCareer Online and search for *Flexible Work at Western Sydney University*.

### *More information*

If you would like more advice or information on flexible work at Western, or on requesting to work from home you can visit:

- [https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/human\\_resources/ohr/your\\_employment/flexible\\_work\\_options](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/human_resources/ohr/your_employment/flexible_work_options)
- [https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/equity\\_diversity/equity\\_and\\_diversity/gender\\_equality/flexible\\_working\\_arrangements](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/equity_diversity/equity_and_diversity/gender_equality/flexible_working_arrangements)

Contact your Senior HR Partner or HR Advisor.

The University is in the process of finalising *Working from Home guidelines*. They will be open for consultation through the normal process.