

HYBRID WORKING GUIDANCE TO ASSIST MANAGERS

Guiding Principles

1. Decisions about the suitability and nature of hybrid working for a role is at the discretion of line managers with the agreement of their Head of Department and member of Directorate.
2. This guidance is intended to help line managers manage the effectiveness of these arrangements on an ongoing basis. This guidance may also be used as a reference for line managers when considering hybrid working requests made through a formal flexible working request.
3. Line managers are encouraged to consider this guidance when recruiting new members of staff and to set clear expectations at the start of employment.
4. This document does not apply to teaching and professors should refer to the Code of Practice for Teaching.
5. Where hybrid working is appropriate the normal requirement is that, for a full-time role, a minimum of three days will be worked onsite and up to two days remote. This split should be pro-rated for part-time roles.
6. Some roles need more on-site presence, especially those supporting students or the public.
7. The balance between onsite and home/remote working needs to be flexible to meet the needs of the role and time of year
8. Departments are expected to ensure an in-person presence throughout the working week.
9. Staff are expected to be contactable throughout the working day by email and by Teams.
10. Meetings are best held in person, as this facilitates better communication between participants, and staff should be prepared to travel to the College for meetings wherever possible, especially committee meetings.
11. Hybrid working arrangements need to incorporate flexibility to best meet the needs of the College and may be amended, unless a formal flexible working arrangement is in place.
12. No-one has a right to hybrid working or to particular days or times of year to work from home/remotely.

13. Hybrid working arrangements are not formal or contractual unless they are the result of a formal flexible working request. The right to apply to work flexibly is a statutory right protected in law. Such requests should be made in accordance with the RCM Flexible Working Policy.

Key considerations for line managers exploring hybrid working

14. Working arrangements should facilitate teamwork and collaborative working. Hybrid working arrangements should take into account the context of the role as part of a wider team.
15. Staff who are new to the College and those early in the early stages of their career particularly benefit from regularly interacting with and learning from colleagues and this is often best facilitated through in-person contact
16. Does this role have a student, staff or customer facing element, how will hybrid working impact on service delivery both generally and specifically on the days worked at home?
17. Which other departments does this role regularly interact with, what is the most effective means of interacting/ collaborating?
18. Does this role have line management responsibilities?
19. What commitments does this role have in terms of attendance at committees or college meetings?
20. Are there any technology requirements such as specialist software or equipment?
21. Could there be benefits to the College in terms of space allocation?
22. How does the proposed split work within the context of the wider team, how will the role holder maintain team working, collaborate and be an active part of the wider college community?
23. What are the performance outcomes and how will they be measured?
24. What clear expectations and boundaries do you need to set as a team in relation to methods of contact, scheduling team meetings etc?

Important points to consider when hybrid working arrangements are in place

25. If a member of your team has a formal flexible working arrangement in place you should do all you can to accommodate these arrangements
26. Consideration should be given to working patterns when scheduling team meetings, team building activities and training opportunities to ensure everyone is included.
27. Working from home should not be used as a means of providing childcare or fulfilling other caring responsibilities
28. Meetings must not be arranged to take place in the member of staff's home
29. Clear guidelines must be provided on what work is expected of the member of staff and regular meetings should take place to assess performance and output
30. Remote working can be beneficial to the work/life balance of staff but it is important to set clear expectations and boundaries.
31. Reduced daily contact with colleagues may impact effective relationship and team building and it is important to maintain effective channels of communication.

Location

32. When working remotely a member of staff's normal place of work remains the RCM. Although requests to work from home or remotely from another location will be considered on a case-by-case basis it is highly unlikely that the RCM would be able to accommodate requests to work overseas due to employment legislation and tax implications. Staff should live within reasonable commuting distance from the College. Practical guidance on home working is included in this document as an appendix.

Head of HR

Jennifer Allison
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Policy reviewed by

Human Resources

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Approved by

Directorate

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Appendix: Working from home/ remote working guidance

Health and safety

33. The RCM "Health and Safety at Work" Policy remains applicable to staff working at home. This is available on Muse or on request from the Health and Safety Manager.
34. It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to carry out a workstation/risk assessment on their home workstation/work area and to take any necessary corrective actions. Failure to carry this out may result in the opportunity of working from home to be removed.
35. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to care for their own Health and Safety and make the RCM aware of any issues that may have an impact on this. Accidents/incidents and near misses must be reported using the online accident/incident reporting form in the same way as if office based. The Incident Report Form is accessed by through RCM's intranet, MUSE.
36. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 employers have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their staff including when working from home. Useful general information can be found in the HSE website:
 - Health and safety made simple: www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/manage.htm
 - Display screen equipment assessment: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf
 - Five steps to risk assessment: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf
37. It is also important for managers to ensure staff working from home are not working in excess of 48 hours per week in line with the Working Time Regulations (unless they have chosen to opt out) and that they are having breaks from work at the appropriate times.

Equipment and expenses

38. The RCM may provide a laptop computer to facilitate home working. Additional IT equipment (such as monitor, keyboard or mouse) or furniture for the home-working environment will not be provided. Staff are expected to use Microsoft Teams for internal calls.
39. Any equipment provided by the RCM remains the property of the RCM and must be returned at the conclusion of the contract of employment.
40. Staff are responsible for ensuring that they have suitable broadband services at home and are expected to cover the cost of broadband services and any increase in domestic bills such as heating and electricity.
41. When working from home the Royal College of Music remains the 'normal place of work'.
42. If the RCM provides a member of staff with equipment, such as a laptop or a printer, to facilitate working from home; it has a duty to ensure that:
 - the equipment provided is relevant for the job
 - the member of staff is properly trained to use the equipment
 - the equipment is checked regularly and maintained so that it does not cause harm to the home-worker or others.
 - the domestic electrical systems are adequate for the equipment
 - leads, wire cables, plugs and sockets must be safe and not damaged
 - no leads are trailing, potentially causing a hazard.

Reasonable adjustments for staff with a disability

43. In accordance with the Equality Act (2010) as an employer the RCM must make reasonable adjustments to make sure workers with disabilities, or physical or mental health conditions, are not substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs.
44. Where reasonable adjustments take the form of equipment (for example, a specialist keyboard or mouse, a sit-standing desk, an ergonomic chair) these arrangements will be made by HR on the advice of a workstation assessment carried out by the Health and Safety Manager and/or the recommendations of Occupational Health. Reasonable adjustments for a home working environment will be discussed and agreed on a case-by-case basis taking into account the requirements of both a home and office based environment.
45. Home working itself may be considered a reasonable adjustment for some disabilities or health conditions. Home working may also prove effective for individuals who may not consider themselves to be disabled but who are neurodiverse. Neurodiversity includes Attention Deficit Disorders, Autism, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia. For someone who is neurodiverse adjustments to where they work, when they work and the way they are managed may help the individual in being more effective, productive and engaged.

Insurance

46. College insurance
 - The College's insurance takes into account the fact that staff may be able to work from home.
 - The College has Employers' Liability Insurance which covers its legal liability for personal injury to staff while acting in the course of their employment. This cover extends to situations where the member of staff is working at or from home
 - The College has Public Liability Insurance which covers the legal liability of the College and its staff for injury and/or property damage to third parties caused whilst on College business. This cover extends to situations where the member of staff is working at or from home
 - Incidents which may result in claims against the College's insurance cover must be reported to the line manager of the member of staff. Major incidents must be reported immediately by telephone to the line manager of the member of staff or as soon as is reasonably possible if the incident occurs outside office hours.
47. Home insurance
 - Members of staff are advised to contact their own home insurers to make the company aware that they are working from home, if on an on-going basis. This may have an impact on the home insurance. It is likely that it will be the individuals' responsibility to arrange and pay for appropriate personal home insurance cover.

Security and data protection

48. Members of staff should be aware of the requirements of Data Protection legislation.
49. It is not recommended that paper documentation be taken home however where this is necessary it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure any documents taken home are covered on their own home insurance. Where sensitive information is taken home it is the member of staff's responsibility to ensure documents are stored securely.
50. To ensure the device you are using is protected you should make sure you install updates, if you have an RCM laptop you will be automatically notified but if you are using your own device you may need to check for updates periodically. If you are using your own device you should ensure you have antivirus software installed.
51. Whether working onsite or from home it is very important to be vigilant about phishing. Phishing is a method of trying to gather personal information using deceptive emails and websites, the RCM has seen a significant increase in phishing attacks. If you are unsure about whether a website is genuine or you have received a suspicious email do not click on any links or open any attachments but instead contact the ICT team for advice.

52. Any laptop or PC must be password protected and turned off when not in use. Where the RCM provides a laptop or other equipment the device must not be used

Performance management

53. The manager and member of staff should agree the intended work output which is to be achieved during periods of working from home. This may take the form of specific pieces of work or general levels of productivity.
54. Regular meetings should take place to assess performance and output.

Termination of or change to a working from home contractual provision

55. The RCM reserves the right to terminate a contractual home-working agreement if the needs of the RCM change or if the member of staff's section is adversely affected or if there are concerns arising from an assessment of the member of staff's performance whilst working at home. The member of staff will be fully consulted before a decision to terminate is reached. Termination will be subject to four weeks' notice.
56. If a member of staff wishes to terminate a contractual home-working agreement, they will be required to give four weeks' notice.